

October 2014

Dear reader,

in a few days' time, the European cluster community will assemble in Brussels for the European Cluster Conference 2014. The conference which is organized by the European Cluster Observatory set up by the European Commission's Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General puts cluster's role in Emerging Industries on the agenda: *"Stimulating cross-sectoral cooperation and innovation as well as helping SMEs to access finance, new industrial value chains and to go international are seen as key drivers. The potential of clusters and cluster organisations, notably in emerging industries, need to be better exploited to achieve this objective."*
(see >> [Conference Programme](#))

CluStrat as a strategic project implemented by the CENTRAL EUROPE programme co-financed by the ERDF aims at the development of new cluster concepts in the context of emerging industries such as active ageing, sustainable development and mobility. The transnational consortium of 18 partners has been working together since 2011 to develop a joint strategy on new cluster concepts in view of Emerging Industries and cross-cutting issues for central Europe – which has now been adopted. New approaches on how to activate the potentials of clusters have been designed by cluster policy makers and practitioners, and translated into new actions and measures that were tested in several pilot actions.

This issue of the project's newsletter features:

- # **Spotlight: The Joint Strategy for new Cluster Concepts adopted in CluStrat**
- # Conference "New Cluster Concepts for Cluster Policies in Europe"
- # Teaming up and reaching beyond central Europe: CluStrat at the Open Days
- # Prospects: What's coming now?

>> [LINK: Visit our project website if you want to learn more about the project before you go on!](#)

Spotlight: The Joint Strategy for new Cluster Concepts adopted in CluStrat

Contents: Developing a joint strategy on new cluster concepts that deploy clusters' potential role in view of Emerging Industries in central Europe has been among the core objectives of CluStrat from the very beginning. The Final Strategy has now been adopted and is based on the following elements: the (existing or to be) clusters, the identified emerging industries, and the cross-cutting issues. The strategy applies a systemic and challenge-driven approach to cluster policy and clusters' role in regional innovation systems, and acknowledges the importance of considering the variety of the existing clusters landscape in EU and of cross-sector collaboration within, among and beyond clusters. Furthermore, it builds upon the potentials vesting in Key enabling Technologies for the Emerging Industries.

Against this background, new cluster concepts are deployed around the following four pillars:

- 1) Involvement of key enabling actors (KEA) specialized in key enabling technologies and other relevant actors such as Knowledge-Intensive Business Services (KIBS)
- 2) Entrepreneurial cluster management, which is opening up to intra and inter-cluster collaboration for firms, involving organizations from different sectors
- 3) Convergence of smart specialization strategies and regional cluster objects, proposing cross-cluster cooperation including the collaboration of clusters within the region as well as with extra-regional organizations
- 4) Consideration of the demand side in order to identify new market niches and researching and developing innovation in the field of emerging industries.

From this, 14 policy implications derive, for instance:

Policy Implication 3: In accordance with the smart specialization framework, which stresses the potential of the combination of regions having different strengths and competences, a forward-looking cluster policy identifies and exploits – on a transregional and transnational scale – opportunities for cross-cluster cooperation being useful to improve competitive chances of clusters and regions in emerging industries.

Policy Implication 4b: In the context of selective policies to favour clusters, a crucial aim is that of the evolution of CMOs toward an entrepreneurial approach, so that they get capable of identifying and proposing to cluster firms (or their combinations) business opportunities in emerging industries and to offer occasions of trans-regional cooperation.

Policy Implication 7: To arrange occasions and contexts to exchange information, experiences and knowledge represent a key infrastructure to develop cooperation and innovation projects in the emerging industries.

>> [LINK: The *Final Strategy is available for download at the project website*](#)

Development process: The conceptual framework and core elements outlining the joint approach were defined already in early 2013, following a mapping of potentials in the project regions in the Emerging Industries Active and healthy Ageing, Sustainable Development / Green Economy and Sustainable/ Intelligent Mobility. In order to transfer the findings into a holistic and effective strategic framework, strategy elements were translated into concrete cluster actions that were piloted in the project regions from September 2013 and well into 2014. The joint strategy was fully deployed including the experiences and results of the pilot actions in May and June 2014. The strategy development was driven by four Transnational Policy Dialogue events during which important impulses for the strategy development were acquired and feedback on preliminary versions obtained.

The strategy was elaborated by Veneto Region in cooperation with University of Padova, Department of Economics and Management, with inputs and constant review from the whole consortium and especially the Lead Partner Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum, the project's associated partners and external stakeholders from the project's Strategic Advisory Board and other contexts. The strategy development was coordinated by Veneto Region as the responsible work package leader.

Conference “New Cluster Concepts for Cluster Policies in Europe”

On 18 September 2014, the CluStrat consortium shared its results with an international audience of close to 120 participants in Venice. The conference was opened by Marialuisa Coppola who is Veneto's Regional Minister for Economic Development Research and Innovation. The minister highlighted the importance of the strategic project for Veneto region, where CluStrat has indeed been employed to deliver a strong policy convergence between the regional smart specialization and cluster policy design. Subsequently, the project approach and joint strategy were introduced and the implications in terms of future actions and policy recommendations presented.

>> [LINK: Conference report and download of presentations](#)

The project impact is indeed visible in each project region. “When starting the project three years ago we stepped into unknown land. Today we can say that each partner region has explored the land, laid new seeds and even started harvesting”, said Dr. Petra Püchner, Managing Director of Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum who is coordinating the project.

“Boosting emerging industries identified during CluStrat Project – i.e. active ageing, green economy and sustainable mobility – and fostering fertilization between them and traditional manufacturing sectors, even now characterizing the central Europe area and above all Veneto Region, means to develop new and more competitive cluster concepts. They have to be based on smart specialization strategies, enhancing cross-fertilization between traditional production sectors and technological and innovative ones. CluStrat project has been a great opportunity to work together and exchange experiences with partners, becoming also a testing ground to develop a new regional law on clusters and able to better support innovation and anticipate new trends” said Mr Antonio Bonaldo, Director of Research and Innovation Dept. Veneto Region, who was hosting the conference and had coordinated the joint strategy development in the project as a work package leader.

>> [LINK: Press release on final conference](#)

Impressions from the Final Conference of CluStrat on 18 September 2014 in Venice



Teaming up and reaching beyond central Europe: CluStrat at the Open Days

“Boosting innovation through interclustering strategies and smart specialisation policies” – on 08 October 2014, the lead partners of CluStrat and the South East Europe strategic project ClusterPoliSEE organized a joint workshop to share the findings of the two strategic projects at the Open Days in Brussels. Close to 100 participants from various countries participated in the workshop and following networking debate. The results of both projects, potentials for cross-project capitalization as well as implications for future cluster and cluster policy support measures in European Territorial Cooperation programmes – and beyond – were discussed with representatives from the European Commission’s Directorate-Generals Regio and Connect as well as the Joint Technical Secretariats of the CENTRAL EUROPE and South East Europe Programmes.

>> [LINK: Conference documentation including presentations](#)

Impressions from the OPEN DAYS workshop on 08 October 2014 in Brussels



Prospects: What’s coming now?

Single Action Plans to be published: Action plans serving as an implementation manual for transferring the pilot action schemes to other regions / contexts / industries will be available shortly.

Joint Action Plan, Joint Actions and Policy Recommendations to be published: A Joint Action Plan for implementation of the joint strategy in the regional and national systems, proposals for Joint Actions at transnational / macro-regional level and related policy recommendations will be adopted.

... We invite you to visit our [project page](#) to access our [project results](#) and “stay tuned” – as more project results are published in the weeks to come!

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For questions, remarks, suggestions etc. please contact Nina Fritz (fritz@steinbeis-europa.de / 0049-(0)711-123-4024).

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