

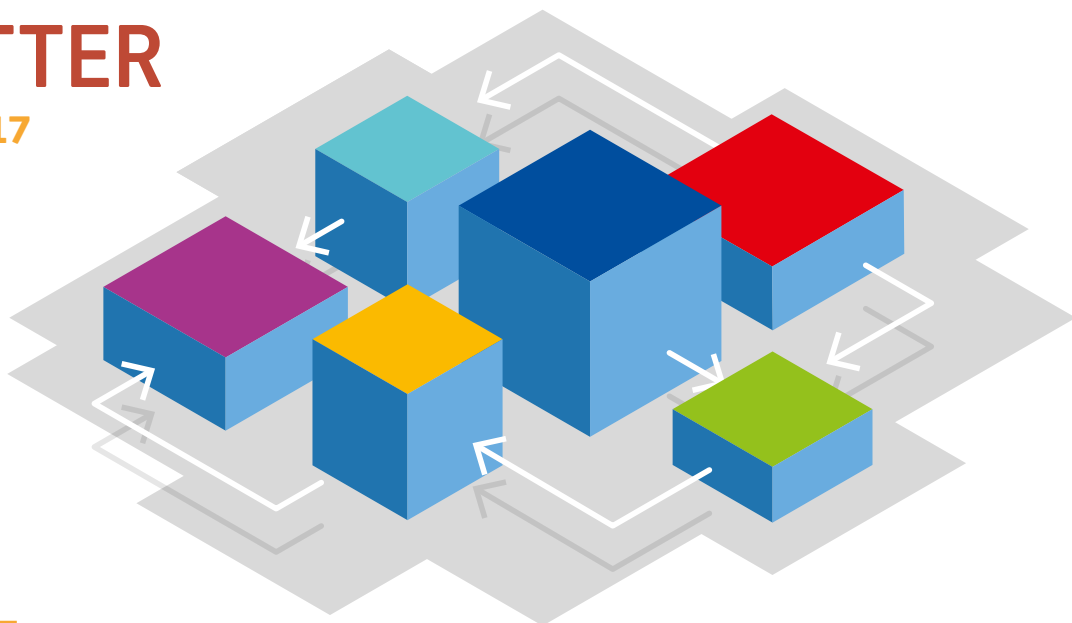


European
Commission

European Cluster Observatory

NEWSLETTER

Issue #5, March 2017



From the Editor

Since this is my first editorial for the European Cluster Observatory Newsletter I would like to wish you an extra special warm welcome to the fifth edition of this newsletter. In it you will find a summary of the latest activities that the European Cluster Observatory team has been delivering as well as exciting news on what lies ahead in 2017.

This issue presents an overview of the work regarding the support given to the six model demonstrator regions for modern cluster policy. The support from the European Cluster Observatory was aimed to give the regions the necessary tools to design and test their cluster support programmes and identify how the transformative power of innovation can contribute to shaping industrial value chains, sectors and emerging industries. The lessons and experiences gained from these pilot actions will be shared with the wider cluster community and may help others to design better cluster programmes.

The European Cluster Observatory continues to improve its cluster mapping tools and related services. For example, in this issue you will be able to discover the newly launched regional ecosystems scoreboard and its methodology that is now available via the European Cluster Observatory web site. It aims to help policy makers to better understand the dynamics of their regional ecosystems and highlight policy areas that could be addressed to overcome identified growth bottlenecks.

Internationalisation will feature as a major priority in 2017. First of all, our [new Cluster Go International call](#) has just been published with the deadline of 23rd of May to shape new European Strategic Cluster Partnerships. Second, a number of matchmaking events will be organised by our [European Cluster Cooperation Platform](#). This includes a high-level EU Cluster Mission to Washington (US) on 15-19 May and a matchmaking event with Taiwan in Brussels set for 26-27 June.

Together with our Commission colleagues, we are also intensifying our support for strategic inter-regional collaboration in the context of our thematic Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation. Its [first Steering meeting](#) gathered 16 lead regions that outlined their support needs on behalf of 51 regions. A new call for European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialisation investments will be published soon to encourage joint actions. Moreover, a Commission Communication on smart specialisation is planned before the summer to reflect on the lessons learned so far.

At a bigger scale, the European Commission has also started a process of real stock-taking. The launch of the Commission's [White Paper](#) earlier this month provided reflections and five scenarios for the future of the EU27 by 2025. The debates to be held will address amongst other the social dimension, globalisation and the role of clusters that was identified in a number of the scenarios, given their importance for the future competitiveness of Europe's economy.

On a personal note, I am sure we can achieve great things together in 2017! Having been responsible for international and stakeholder relations at the Joint Research Centre, I believe we need to maximize the role of clusters and smart specialisation for strengthening regional innovation ecosystems. I am looking forward to a fruitful collaboration on this with all of you.

Best wishes,

Dr Ulla ENGELMANN

*Head of Unit – Clusters, Social Economy and Entrepreneurship
of the European Commission's Internal Market, Industry,
Entrepreneurship and SMEs Directorate-General*

Launch of the Regional Ecosystems Scoreboard

The objective of the **Regional Ecosystems Scoreboard** is to **identify, describe and capture the quality of framework conditions in the regional ecosystem that can foster or eventually hinder the creation of dynamic cross-sectoral collaboration for innovation and entrepreneurship** revealing both enabling and constraining mechanisms. The Scoreboard is designed primarily for policy-makers responsible for regional, industrial and cluster policies. Its focus is not on measuring and ranking performance as in the case of other related regional scoreboards available at EU-level. The emphasis of the Scoreboard is rather placed on the **Conditions** and on the **Dynamics** that characterise the quality and nature of the regional ecosystem.

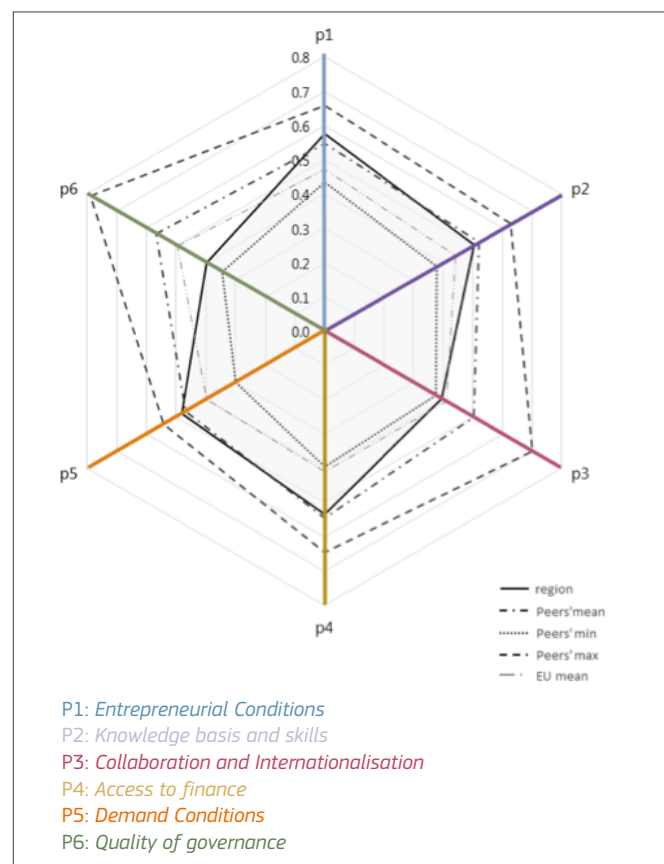
The Scoreboard covers all regions within the 28 EU Member States at the so-called NUTS 2 level or NUTS 1 level in the case of Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom. It is organised around **five key dimensions** complemented with a horizontal sixth dimension of the **quality of governance** and sixteen sub-dimensions that determine the quality of conditions of regional ecosystems aiming at fostering regional innovation-driven entrepreneurship and structural change.

The five key dimensions covered in the Scoreboard are the following:

- *Entrepreneurial conditions*, including metrics on the regulatory framework available for starting a business, the availability of an entrepreneurial culture in the region, and the attractiveness of the region in relation to the quality of its infrastructure.
- *Knowledge basis and skills*, measuring the availability of human resources in the region, vocational training and lifelong learning, and skills in the region (technical, interdisciplinary and e-skills).
- *Collaboration and internationalisation*, aiming at understanding general system linkages, cross-sectoral linkages, the levels of regional specialisation and the openness of the region.
- *Access to Finance*, including metrics on the attitudes of regional investors and private financing, the quality of the legal framework supporting access to finance, the availability of public financing to investors and the use of EU Structural Funds in support of regional businesses.
- *Demand Conditions*, exploring the effects of private demand (market dynamics, buyer sophistication) and public demand (e.g. public procurement) on the regional ecosystem.

Over the last few months, a total of 60 indicators have been collected and analysed. In addition, data was collected through a survey with cluster managers, regional development agencies and regional policymakers with the participation of about 450 stakeholders across 153 regions in the EU.

The figure below presents the overall results of the regional ecosystem scoreboard for the model demonstrator region Nord-Pas-de-Calais (now Hauts de France).



The figure shows that the average for the peer regions of Nord-Pas-de-Calais (dash-dot dark grey line) is above the EU average (dash - double dot light grey line). This indicates that these regions present, on average a better innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem than the European average. Nord-Pas-de-Calais is very close to the average for the peers' group in terms of Entrepreneurial Conditions, Knowledge basis and skills, Access to finance and Demand Conditions. However, it falls behind in terms of Collaboration and Internationalisation (close to the EU average and almost reaching the minimum value among its peers) and Quality of governance (where it is situated well below the EU average).

All indicators and the **dynamic online tool** of the **Regional Ecosystems Scoreboard** are now available on the European Cluster Observatory [website](#). After selection of a country and region, the tool provides a quick presentation of overall results, more detailed results for 17 sub-dimensions and Regional Ecosystem Scorecards for each region that compares results also with peer regions.

In addition, it provides a **policy action dashboard** that highlights the results and proposes policy action areas that could be most promising in resolving regional bottlenecks. (see Table below).

Table 1 RES Scorecard Nord-Pas-de-Calais

	value	rank	EU28 mean	mean	Peers status		value	rank	EU28 mean	mean	Peers status	
indexval	0.48	81	0.44	0.53								
p1	0.58	48	0.47	0.55			p4	0.53	31	0.41	0.55	
c1	0.66	80	0.60	0.68			c11	0.63	36	0.49	0.57	
ind1	0.87	24	0.63	0.80			ind39	0.50	60	0.42	0.47	
ind2	0.40	102	0.43	0.45			ind40	0.58	59	0.46	0.44	
ind3	0.66	93	0.67	0.68			ind41	0.76	49	0.56	0.63	
ind4	0.70	80	0.67	0.78			ind42	0.68	16	0.50	0.76	
c2	0.46	87	0.43	0.47			c12	0.55	109	0.54	0.62	
ind5	1.00	1	0.51	0.77			ind43	0.25	131	0.41	0.40	
ind6	0.54	55	0.39	0.54			ind45	0.84	69	0.67	0.84	
ind7	0.08	172	0.36	0.26			c13	0.52	26	0.27	0.50	
ind8	0.66	38	0.54	0.55			ind46	0.12	23	0.12	0.21	
ind9	0.00	157	0.34	0.23			ind47	0.92	12	0.41	0.79	
c3	0.61	23	0.39	0.50			c14	0.44	54	0.34	0.45	
ind10	0.64	74	0.57	0.65			ind48	0.34	84	0.32	0.39	
ind11	0.78	15	0.29	0.47			ind49	0.53	47	0.36	0.52	
ind12	0.42	53	0.31	0.37								
p2	0.50	78	0.44	0.52			p5	0.48	71	0.40	0.47	
c4	0.49	82	0.43	0.55			c15	0.38	114	0.40	0.43	
ind14	0.42	82	0.38	0.51			ind50	0.42	97	0.46	0.48	
ind15	0.36	116	0.39	0.49			ind51	0.60	69	0.51	0.70	
ind16	0.69	37	0.51	0.65			ind52	0.18	78	0.19	0.19	
c5	0.56	84	0.49	0.56			ind53	0.33	126	0.43	0.36	
ind17	0.55	67	0.47	0.49			c16	0.58	48	0.40	0.50	
ind18	0.63	138	0.71	0.77			ind54	0.56	83	0.57	0.57	
ind19	0.50	33	0.29	0.42			ind55	0.56	39	0.39	0.46	
c6	0.46	46	0.41	0.45			ind56	0.60	45	0.41	0.55	
ind20	0.44	46	0.39	0.48								
ind21	0.57	53	0.52	0.60								
ind22	0.16	91	0.16	0.17								
ind23	0.67	38	0.56	0.64								
p3	0.39	116	0.41	0.50			p6	0.40	156	0.50	0.57	
c7	0.45	86	0.43	0.56			c17	0.40	156	0.50	0.57	
ind24	0.45	74	0.42	0.64			ind57	0.31	168	0.46	0.55	
ind25	0.89	64	0.78	0.77			ind58	0.36	149	0.51	0.54	
ind26	0.08	120	0.15	0.25			ind59	0.38	117	0.42	0.48	
ind27	0.38	91	0.38	0.56			ind60	0.55	111	0.59	0.70	
c8	0.41	140	0.46	0.61								
ind28	0.56	87	0.52	0.65								
ind29	0.41	108	0.44	0.49								
ind30	0.25	139	0.43	0.68								
c9	0.31	136	0.36	0.40								
ind31	0.27	133	0.32	0.35								
ind32	0.27	152	0.39	0.43								
ind33	0.39	83	0.36	0.41								
c10	0.41	95	0.40	0.45								
ind34	0.15	150	0.29	0.29								
ind35	0.70	75	0.60	0.66								
ind36	0.43	82	0.38	0.47								
ind37	0.20	102	0.20	0.26								
ind38	0.56	50	0.50	0.60								

color codes

	Value above 1 stdev over the ref. region mean
	Value within 1 stdev from the ref. region mean
	Value below 1 stdev under the ref. region mean

Alternatively to the graphic representation, the detailed results for Nord-Pas-de-Calais can be presented in a Scorecard format. This shows the value for the normalised indicator, the rank of the region as compared to all regions in Europe and the mean value in Europe, the mean value for the group of peer regions and a colour code that shows whether the region presents a relative advantage (green), relative disadvantage (pink) or neither or them (orange) with regard to its peers. Relative advantage and disadvantage is calculated on the basis of standard deviations from the mean value.

The results show the dimensions, subdimensions and components in which Nord-Pas-de-Calais is particularly weak with respect to its peers:

- Trust in people (Ind9) within the Entrepreneurial conditions dimension
- The Collaboration and Internationalisation dimension and, particularly within it; the following indicators: Number of co-working spaces (Ind30), Specialisation in knowledge-intensive services (Ind32) and FP7 leverage (per capita)(Ind34)
- The Quality of governance dimension, particularly, the Quality of regulatory environment (Ind57).

In focus: Progress of the six model cluster demonstrator regions

Model regions for future-oriented cluster policy

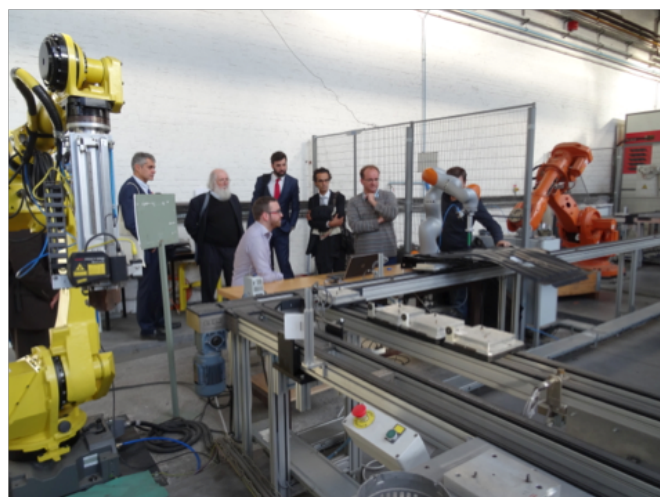
With the European Cluster Observatory the European Commission intends to demonstrate new or better ways of **designing and implementing modern cluster policies**. A modern approach means in particular to take maximum advantage of the transformative power of innovation towards shaping industrial value chains, sectors and emerging industries. **Six model demonstrator regions** were selected from 44 applications across Europe following a call for the expression of interest in 2014, namely Centro (Portugal), Hamburg (Germany, Lapland (Finland), Nord-Pas de Calais (France), Stockholm (Sweden) and the West Region (Romania) (see also Newsletter issue #1).

The six regions received several kinds of tailor-made advisory support services from the European Cluster Observatory team between 2015 and 2016. Their experience and good practices offers a comprehensive and multi-angle perspective of different ways of implementing modern cluster policies, which can possibly serve as models and inspirations for other regions to design their own approach.

The support provided to the demonstrator regions by the European Cluster Observatory contained four steps. In the first step, a **survey** of the key actors of the clusters provided an overview of the current state of development in the region. In the second step, a **pre-assessment** was carried out, to understand the status of the policy and implementation process in the region. In a third step, during a **two-day workshop** an expert team of the European Cluster Observatory developed the central aspects of the regional concept with the relevant regional actors. The fourth step, a final **policy briefing**, summarised the activities and provided a set of recommendations and an action plan for further progress.

The following articles present a short description of each of the six pilot projects with a special coverage on their workshops. More detailed reports for each region can be found on the European Cluster Observatory website under the title **"Proceeding Reports of the Model Regions"**.

► Nord-Pas-de-Calais region pushing for Factories of the future



The support to the Nord-Pas-de-Calais model demonstrator region (now known as Hauts de France region since the 2016 territorial reform) was officially kicked off in April 2015 during the **pre-assessment visit** conducted on behalf of the ECO expert team. This two-day visit allowed the team to meet with the region's main innovation eco-system stakeholders, including Regional Council authorities and the Development and Innovation Agency of the North (NFID). It also allowed them to acquire first-hand knowledge on the regional cluster landscape, as well as to understand the process and rationale behind the **Factories of the Future (FoF)** policy project. The FoF initiative represents the main focus of the analysis conducted as part of the support exercise. It intends to use the transformative power of innovation to shift traditional industries to the 'factories of the future' paradigm as a means of re-invigorating the region's industrial ecosystem, increasing competitiveness and providing a source of sustainable growth. Clusters and cluster organisations have played a key role in the design of the FoF policy project and roadmap, and are expected to continue doing so during the implementation phase of the policy due to their longstanding relationship and knowledge of the region's industrial value chains.



The pre-assessment visit helped the ECO team to draft a pre-assessment report on the innovation eco-system and cluster landscape of the region and the FoF initiative, which acted as the main input for the peer assessment meeting conducted in September 2015.

The **peer assessment** meeting provided the opportunity to analyse and discuss the policy and project in more detail. During the meeting, the experts listened to presentations given by a number of the region's key innovation stakeholders including regional council representatives, NFID personnel and cluster representatives. During the two-day meeting, experts also had the chance to visit some of the region's landmark R&D and innovation centres and infrastructures - of direct relevance to the FoF initiative - such as the 'Agile Factory' platform hosted by the Arts et Métiers School in Lille, as well as the Euralogistic Regional Excellence Cluster. The preliminary results were jointly presented by ECO experts and NFID during the MANUFUTURE conference which took place in Luxembourg on Nov. 23th -24th, 2015.



"The exercise with the European Cluster Observatory was extremely useful for the implementation of the policy project on the **Factories of the Future (FoF)**" declared Jean-Christophe Godest, from the regional agency NFID. "The ECO support allowed us to bring the discussion among policy makers and clusters to a new level by providing an external perspective. Currently the Regional Council (and NFID) can play the role of "orchestra conductor" by implementing a well designed and articulated action plan that is in line with European best practice standards."

Peer review team: Matthieu Lacave of ECO team; Alberto Pezzi, ACC 10, Spain, Policy Advisor; Bill Greenhalgh Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, Policy Advisor; and Zita Zombori, Innopartners, Hungary, Cluster Management Expert.

► The Stockholm Digital Health Cluster

Sweden has a knowledge-based economy and a firm commitment to the continued development of ICT, life sciences and healthcare. Stockholm is an international stronghold both within the areas of ICT and life sciences. The region is home to cutting-edge technology, a highly skilled workforce, strong research and development, infrastructure and some of the world's most advanced users on the frontiers of ICT technology. The city has a unique potential to **become an international centre for the development of digital health solutions** – a rapidly expanding area at the convergence of ICT and life sciences. The challenge lies in integrating and **building bridges between complementary sectors**. Developing the cluster concept further is seen as an opportunity to better support SMEs and increase investments in digital health, to keep the big companies in the region and to facilitate interactions between SMEs and healthcare providers. In order to exploit the cluster potential the Stockholm Science City Foundation presented the concept of the Digital Health Hub to the European Cluster Observatory.

The **peer review** of the concept, which took place on October 7th and 8th, 2015 in Stockholm focused on the following aspects:

- What does modern cluster development mean in practice and what are the particular challenges for the Stockholm Digital Health Cluster in this regard?
- What do the stakeholders expect from the Stockholm Digital Health Cluster?
- Strategic mapping of cluster actors and cluster value chains: creating a "business model" for the cluster.



Peer review team: Per Spindler (CEO of BioPeople – Denmark's Life Science Cluster), Emily Wise (Lund University) and Thomas Lämmer-Gamp (Member of the ECO Team).

► West Region, Romania – a hub for cluster development in the South Eastern part of the Europe

The West Region located in Romania occupies about 13.4% of the country and includes 2 million inhabitants. It benefits from many competitive strengths: relatively modern infrastructure, easy access to neighbouring countries, a skilled workforce, a tertiary education sector that is strong in natural sciences, mathematics, computer sciences, food and agriculture, medical and veterinary sciences, and a largely pristine natural environment. The region has an apparent comparative advantage in automotive, and information and communication technology (ICT) and a latent comparative advantage in agro-food and tourism. Furthermore, due to multi-ethnicity and multilingualism the region is an important attractor for foreign direct investments (with 7.6% of the total national FDI inflow). However, challenges are posed by noticeable regional disparities between the multi-industrially developed counties (Timisoara and Arad) and the more mono-industrial ones (Caraş Severin and Hunedoara).

Based on these framework conditions, the West Region of Romania, represented by the West Regional Development Agency, presented to the European Cluster Observatory the challenge of becoming a hub for cluster development in the South-Eastern part of the European Union by the further extension of transnational cluster support policies and their implementation in the three neighbouring regions in Romania, Hungary, Serbia – and later extended to the Danube Strategy Regions or even beyond. In the long term, this should lead also to a broader take-up of innovative solutions and to more and better cohesion between the different regions in South-East Europe.

A peer assessment expert team participated actively in a two-day peer review meeting that took place on September 9th and 10th, 2015 in Timisoara. The team consisted of three high-level experts and a selected number of the region's key innovation stakeholders, including a number of cluster managers, also from the neighbouring regions. The main focus of the discussion was on the following topics: Which policies can foster cross-sectoral, cross-regional cooperation in the West Region and beyond regional cluster policy and the regional strategy? Are there already good practices of cluster policies to foster cross-sectoral cooperation and how to motivate industry to go cross-sectoral? Another important topic of the common analysis was the question, which needs, drivers and barriers to facilitate inter-regional actions exist and have to be kept in mind.

Within the peer review process, a set of activities and recommendations for a scheme to implement the approach has been discussed. The next steps will require the regional players to translate these results into an operational concept, keeping in mind the hampering factors, which are influencing the region in a special manner: e.g. the very different level of maturity of the involved clusters as well as the necessity to establish a powerful cluster management culture into the cluster organisations in the first place.



Peer review team: Lucia Seel (Lucia Seel International Consulting), Nikos Vogiatzis (Corallia), Enric Pedros (FEMAC), and Thomas Koehler as the ECO Team member.

► Cluster Bridges of Hamburg

Hamburg's clusters are characterised by a high degree of economic dynamism and have given the city a clear-cut competency profile, which attracts human resources, businesses, and foreign investments. This has given Hamburg a huge capacity for innovation and makes it able to compete with the international front-runners.



To better harness this specific innovation potential, the model demonstrator region approach of Hamburg, which is advocated by the Behörde für Wirtschaft, Verkehr und Innovation (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Transport and Innovation) aims to **set-up a coordinated process for building and using cluster bridges**. Cluster bridges can be understood as long-term cross-clustering areas with high innovation dynamics between different clusters from different technological domains. With such a systematic process, Hamburg's cluster policy aims to develop approaches that **organise temporary alliances of strategic relevance between the cluster organisations**. Cluster bridges aim to channel cross-cutting issues through existing and well-established cluster structures. At the same time Hamburg strengthens the established clusters to reach world-class performance. By implementing the model demonstrator region approach, Hamburg sought the assistance of the European Cluster Observatory in the development of a systematic approach and organisation for cross-clustering issues and formats accompanied by a proposal for implementation.

The **peer assessment** expert team consisted of a group of four high-level experts and a significant number of the region's key innovation stakeholders including all nine cluster managers actively participated in the two days meeting.

Among others, the **peer review** focused on the following topics:

- Where are the gaps for cross-cluster collaboration in Hamburg?
- How to prioritise cross-cutting issues?
- What could be instruments for implementation?
- How to promote openness in the community towards cross-sectoral cooperation and new concepts?
- Which funding instruments / programmes can be used? Does Hamburg need new funding programmes?
- What policies, programmes, or approaches can be adapted from other regions?



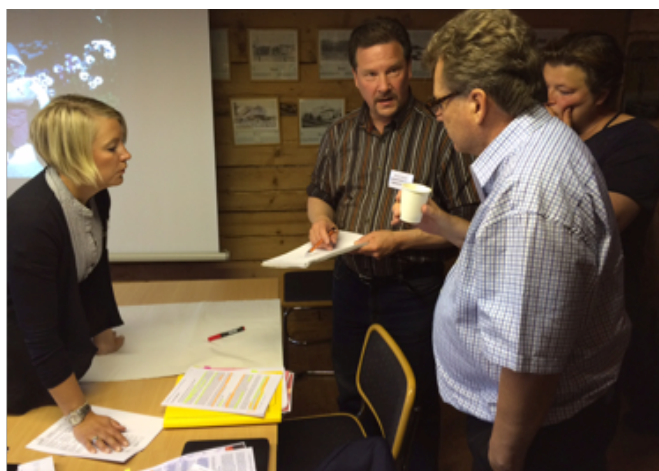
A new support scheme to implement the cluster bridges approach has been jointly designed during the peer review process. It contains a budget for funding capacity development for the cluster organisations involved, as well as training and coaching activities for cluster management teams to learn how to best involve enterprises in cross-sectoral innovation processes.

Peer review team: Dr. Christian Ketels (Harvard Business School), Dr. Thomas Christensen (Novo Nordisk Foundation), Werner Pamminer (Business Upper Austria) and Dr. Gerd Meier zu Köcker (Head of ECO Team).

► **Lapland – Modern Cluster of Arctic Industries: Sustainable Utilisation of the Arctic Natural Resources**

The Lapland region in North Finland has less than 200,000 inhabitants but is home to companies with an annual turnover of EUR 10 billion and abundant natural resources. It aims at becoming the leading Arctic region in the sustainable utilisation of natural resources. The Regional Council of Lapland prepared in 2013 the smart specialisation strategy for Lapland (Lapland's Arctic Specialisation programme) to guide its investments under the European Structural and Investment Funds. It points out that Lapland largely relies on its natural resources and natural conditions.

Historically, the key sectors have been process industry (metal industry, forestry industry) and tourism. Recently, the mining industry has experienced strong growth in the industrial and business service sector. Lapland's competitive advantages include effective transport connections, logistics and a strong traditional industry, the advanced use of information technology, expertise in international tourism, unspoilt nature, high quality of living, excellent range of research and development services, and access to extensive educational services. Challenges are posed by remoteness and long distances, arctic conditions, a need to increase the number of growth-oriented SMEs, the need to increase the number of foreign companies and experts, declining population, and challenges related to combining large-scale investments with qualitative living environments.



The Region of Lapland presented to the European Cluster Observatory experts the challenge of **developing a “modern cluster of Arctic industry” that aims at utilising arctic natural resources through eco-innovative and resource-efficient solutions**. In this context, the process industry was identified as the key driver for the development

of a circular economy in Lapland that can also present technological and service innovations to the European and global markets.

The **peer review**, which took place on August 27th and 28th, 2015 in Kemi-Tornio focused on the following aspects:

- Concept of the Arctic industry clusters – what is the crux in the matter?
- What makes a good cluster strategy – identifying the needs to target and the right players in a region; refining the intervention logic of the cluster: getting the objectives and measures straight.
- Cluster services and financial sustainability.
- Going beyond cluster organisations: what else can be done by regions to promote SME development? Experiences from other European regions.
- Integrating Lapland in the European cluster landscape: developing new value chains through cross-cluster collaboration.
- Evaluating and monitoring of cluster development – tools for monitoring progress on a daily basis and readjustment of strategy and services.

Peer review team: Dr. Christian Ketels (Harvard Business School), Dr. Thomas Christensen (Novo Nordisk Foundation), Werner Pamminer (Business Upper Austria) and Dr. Gerd Meier zu Köcker (Head of ECO Team)

► **Portugal's Centro Region – a living lab for active and healthy ageing and efficient use of resources for a new industry**

The Centro Region, located in mainland Portugal lying between Lisbon and Porto, covers 31% of the country's total area. The region has about 2.3 million residents representing 22% of the country's total population. In 2013, the region accounted for 18.5% of the national GDP and generated 19.1% of the export activity of the country. The regional economy is rather diversified – encompassing both low technology level industrial sectors as well as high-tech sectors such as health services, biotechnology, telecommunications, new materials (particularly the moldings industry), ICT, and renewable energies. There is a strong regional potential for using the indigenous resources for the production of renewable energy using water, wind, solar, geothermal, biomass as well as biogas and bio fuels.

The Centro Region presented to the European Cluster Observatory the challenge to address the four focus areas identified in its smart specialisation strategy (RIS3), namely: sustainable industrial solutions; efficient use of natural endogenous resources; technology in the service of quality of life; and territorial innovation. The aim is to maximise their impact on the further successful development of the regional economy and to explore spill-over effects of key enabling technologies, especially to foster emerging industries towards the reinforcement of the competitiveness of the regional economy.

Furthermore, Centro Region aspires to maximise the impact of clustering on its economy and particularly to deliver transformative power based on innovation. In order to implement the strategy and mobilise the clusters that are important for the region's priorities, the region plans to follow the vision of being a living lab, led by regional assets and needs. This living lab approach will be focused on two interdisciplinary areas: active and healthy ageing and efficient use of resources for a new industry.

A multinational peer assessment expert team consisting of three high-level experts and the majority of cluster managers, also from several national clusters, participated actively in a two-day peer review meeting. This took place on September 28th and 29th, 2015 in Coimbra.

The main focus of the discussion was on the topics such as: How to enhance competitiveness, growth, and innovation through cluster cooperation? Are there already good practices of cluster policies, based on cross-sectoral cooperation available? Which key success factors to foster cross-clustering and regional/cross-regional activities can be defined? How to coordinate the dialogue and the activities between clusters and regional policy makers, to translate the results/findings into field activities?

Some recommendations and structural elements for an implementation scheme have been discussed during the peer review process. The next steps for the regional players will require them to translate them into an implementation plan, including directives and steps for the involved cluster organisations to achieve the goal of the model regions. These new steps will also need to be integrated into a national level cluster policy debate.

“Clusters are assuming a very important role for regional development, considering their capacity to aggregate value, knowledge and common objectives regarding a large range of stakeholders they gather (SMEs, research centers, universities and policy makers) in promoting the regional economic development, employment and growth. Technological roadmaps have been developed within the clusters, looking for trends and anticipating training needs, future qualifications and jobs, and research activities to be developed. This process has been implemented in close articulation with the Centro Region in Portugal.”

Rui Tocha, General Manager of the Portuguese Engineering & Tooling Cluster, Portugal.

“It’s very important for the region’s development and competitiveness the recommendation of having a very active and clear cluster policy, to support clusters and use the cluster experience and its aggregation ability to the RIS3 process and to boost the emergence of a new industry. In this sense, I must emphasise the unique and leading role of Centro Region in Portugal that has involved clusters in the definition, construction and practice of their smart specialisation strategy from the start.”

Victor Ferreira, Manager of the Sustainable Habitat Cluster, Portugal.

Peer review team: Prof. Augusto Medina (SPI), Darja Radic (ANTEJA), Christian Altmann (Clusterland Oberösterreich), and Thomas Koehler as the ECO Team member.



Cluster Model Demonstrator Regions Summary of Next steps

In terms of dissemination, the final policy briefing report and pre-assessment reports were published on the European Cluster Observatory [website](#).

Latest cluster policy news

Discussions on the Future of Europe include cluster policy



The Commission's **White Paper** (“Reflections and Scenarios for the EU27 by 2025”) released in March 2017 addressed five possible scenarios for the future of the European Union. It is a document addressed to Member States and European citizens more largely. European industrial cooperation and research and innovation were given a

priority focus in all scenarios. Clusters were specifically mentioned in two scenarios. Scenario 4 entitled “Doing less more efficiently” pushes for “**further cooperation on space, high tech clusters and the completion of regional energy hubs.**” Scenario 5 entitled “**Doing much more together**” focuses on further developing the single market, promoting joint investment in innovation and research, and the creation of “Silicon Valleys” in Europe, that could “**host clusters of venture capitalists, start-ups, large companies and research centers**”.

New cluster matchmaking events in the US in May and with Taiwan in June



EU clusters to the USA. The aim is to support transatlantic cluster cooperation for strategic business partnerships. As part of this EU Cluster

From 15th to 19th May 2017, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and BILAT USA 4.0 will organise a high level delegation visit for

mission, a C2C matchmaking event, three cluster visits and a U.S.-EU cooperation seminar will be organised at TechConnect World Innovation in Washington, D.C. building upon the EU-US Cluster Cooperation Arrangement. For more information, click [here](#).

In addition, the date for the next matchmaking event with Taiwan in Brussels has been set for 26-27 June, with more information available at the [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#).

Successful first European Industry Day



event was designed to take stock of existing actions, and stimulated a debate on a joint vision for the long-term future of European industry.

The [European Industry Day](#) on the 28th of February in Brussels gathered over 400 participants, from key industrial players, global trend shapers and high level policy makers on the future of European industry. The

During the event, the Commission identified gaps to make further progress towards smart, clean and innovative industry that creates employment and high living standards for European citizens. Speakers included representatives from the European Commission (DG Internal Market, Industry, SMEs and Entrepreneurship and DG Research and Innovation) the Committee of Regions, the European Investment Bank, the European Parliament, Business Europe and the European Trade Union Confederation. A number of speakers made specific reference for regions to organise their “innovation ecosystems” and facilitate interregional cooperation. A recording of the event is available [here](#). A repeat of the event is planned.

Regions discuss the way forward for strategic interregional collaboration under the Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation

The first Steering Committee meeting of the [Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation](#) took place on 17 March 2017 at the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs in Brussels. It gathered 16 lead regions, several Commission services and the Committee of the Regions. They discussed the way forward for strategic inter-regional collaboration. The support activities targeted at the committed regions were presented and the lead regions outlined their specific support needs for creating joint investment projects.

The lead regions – that represent 51 regions across the EU engaged in the Platform – presented the state of play of their regional

partnerships that were proposed and are managed by the regions themselves. So far, partnerships have been established under 8 thematic areas that include advanced manufacturing for energy applications, bio-economy, efficient and sustainable manufacturing, 3D printing, industry 4.0, innovative textiles, nano-enabled products, and production performance monitoring systems. Six new themes are currently under preparation, which include medical technologies, smart production and circular economy in power intensive industries, integrated photonics, sports, tourism safety, and security dual use of defence industry. One of the lead regions will host the next Steering Committee meeting, foreseen to take place in around 6 months.



New Cluster Go International call published for establishing European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going International beyond Europe



A new call for proposals of the Cluster Internationalisation Programme under the COSME has just been published with a budget of 5.79 million and a deadline of 23rd of May for proposals to shape new European Strategic Cluster Partnerships – Going International (ESCP-4i). The call is open to cluster organisations or business network organisations interested in intensifying their collaboration across European

countries and across sectoral boundaries in view of leading international cluster cooperation in fields of strategic interest towards third countries beyond Europe. This call includes a specific strand for clusters involved in earth observation applications, with a separate call for clusters active in dual use technologies, products and services in the Defence and Security sector expected to follow during the 3rd trimester of 2017.

A separate call for proposals to promote European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialisation investments (ESCP-S3) in the context of the [Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation](#) with a budget of 2.8 million will also follow. A [partner search tool](#) has been made available at the European Cluster Collaboration Platform.

Next Newsletter Highlights

ECO Newsletter issue #6 is planned for April 2017 and will highlight the latest reports and analytical tasks prepared by the ECO Team: <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/cos-clusint-2016-03-01-cluster-go-international>

Contact

The European Cluster Observatory is implemented through a service contract from the **“Clusters, Social Economy and Entrepreneurship”** unit of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

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Please find further information, or follow the European Cluster Observatory activities, at: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cluster/observatory>

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