



Innovation Relay Centres and Innovating Regions in Europe
Central Unit

IRC-IRE Workshop

Clustering as a driver of innovation at regional level

Rationale:

Clusters have become a key component of innovation policy and are viewed as a critical element underpinning regional development. Regional and national governments try to replicate successful experiences. Today it is not clear, however, what methodology should be used to create clusters and how to support them. In any case, support is to be adapted to the local conditions of the geographical area that hosts a given cluster. Many IRE regions have developed cluster support actions as part of their Regional Innovation Strategies.

Aims:

This workshop brings together various experiences successfully implemented in several European regions to support clusters. The event will present the rationale behind policy actions to develop and support clusters, as well as concrete examples and achievements of regional clusters. The workshop will demonstrate the critical factors lying behind the success of the regional schemes presented. The event also aims to further discussion between practitioners and facilitate a mutual learning process by presenting various methodologies (including the key steps/milestones) to cluster development and support, the problems encountered and related solutions and also the achievements of these initiatives. The goal is also to find out whether the various experiences share common issues that could lead to the identification of a common methodology/process to create and support clusters.

Agenda: See the **agenda** below.

Venue: Hotel Esplanade, Piazza I° Maggio, 46, Pescara (Italy).

Language: **English** will be the working language.
Simultaneous translation from Italian to English will be provided.

Participation: This workshop will be **free of charge**.

Transportation: A shuttle service will be available for participants arriving in Rome:

Itinerary	Day	Departure	Arrival
From Rome Leonardo da Vinci (Fiumicino) airport to Pescara	Wednesday 25 February	20:00	Approximately 22:30
From Pescara to Rome Leonardo da Vinci (Fiumicino) airport	Friday 27 February	14:30	Approximately 17:00

Participants arriving at Abruzzo international airport (<http://www.abruzzo-airport.it/inglese/homei.htm>) can reach the centre of Pescara by bus or taxi (20 minutes).



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Agenda

Thursday, 26 February 2004

- 08:30 Registration
- 09:00 **Opening**
Mr Donato Di Fonzo, Regional Minister for Industry
- 09:15 **Industrial districts in Abruzzo**
Mr Flaviano Montebello, President of District Vibrata – Tordino – Vomano
- 09:30 **The European Commission's new call for proposals for regional actions – future community regional innovation policy**
Dr Michael Busch, Enterprise DG, European Commission

I. From cluster planning to implementation: methodological aspects and practical experience

Chairperson: Mr Ercole Cauti – Abruzzo

- 10:00 **Yorkshire Forward: A Regional Innovation Strategy based on cluster development**
Mr Adam Getliff, Yorkshire Forward
- 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:20 **The Basque country's aerospace cluster**
Mr José Juez, HEGAN - Aeronautics and Space Cluster of the Basque Country
- 12:20 **Networking and clustering in the West of Ireland**
Mr David Deighan, Shannon Development
- 13:20 Lunch
- 14:30 **The Alpine Wellness Cluster**
Mr Günther Blunder, Land Tirol Wirtschaftspolitische Koordinationsstelle
- 15:30 **Italian industrial districts: the example of Castel Goffredo hosiery district**
Mr Giancarlo Leoni, Provincia of Mantova
- 16:30 Coffee break



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- 16:45 **Round table discussion with all speakers**
Chairperson: Ms Lena Mårtensson, IRC-IRE Central Unit
- 17:30 **End of 1st day**
- 19:00 **Dinner**

Friday, 27 February 2004

II. New approaches and trends for driving cluster policies

Chairperson: Mr Ercole Cauti – Abruzzo

- 09:00 **Flemish cluster policies: phases, expectations and achievements**
Mr Bart De Caesemaeker, IWT Flanders
- 10:00 **ACENET: the lessons learnt in the IRE Thematic Network dealing with clusters**
Mr Nils Gabrielsson, INNO AG
- 10:40 **Coffee break**
- 11:00 **Enterprise clusters and networks in Europe**
Ms Nathalie Oghlian, European Commission
- 11:30 **Recent developments and achievements of clusters**
Mr Emiliano Duch, Competitiveness
- 12:30 **Round table discussion with all speakers**
Chairperson: Ms Lena Mårtensson, IRC-IRE Central Unit
- 13:00 **Closing**
National Minister
Mr Giovanni Pace, President of Abruzzo
- 13:30 **End of workshop**



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I. From cluster planning to implementation: methodological aspects and practical experience

Yorkshire Forward: A Regional Innovation Strategy based on cluster development

The Regional Innovation Strategy project of Yorkshire and the Humber, launched in the mid-1990s, laid the ground for the region's cluster strategy. Fifteen business-led networks were set up around the sectors offering the greatest potential for the region, which developed common strategies for their industries. When the regional development agency Yorkshire Forward set up the region's first economic strategy, clusters were given a central role. To ensure that the region's industry-related strengths are exploited, Yorkshire Forward focuses on the five key clusters: advanced engineering and metals, bioscience, chemicals, digital industries, and food and drinks. The cluster approach aims to provide advantages to concerned companies such as an infrastructure that meets their needs, greater access to specialised information and R&D, better access to qualified staff and suppliers, and increased motivation and innovation due to the competition that is created within the cluster. Yorkshire Forward's specialised support measures for each cluster include the establishment of specialised science parks and links with research and development.

The Basque country's aerospace cluster

Set up in 1997, the Aeronautics and Space Cluster of the Basque Country (HEGAN) is a non-profit association of Basque aeronautics companies that promote the technological, research and innovation structures of the aerospace sector in the Basque Country. Apart from numerous companies, HEGAN brings together a number of support organisations based in the region, such as technology centres, the University of the Basque Country and the Government's Department of Industry of the Basque Country. HEGAN aims to be an international reference model as an association that provides a collective response through cooperation to the challenges of the Basque aerospace sector.

Networking and clustering in the West of Ireland

The challenge for enterprise policy and the enterprise sector in Ireland is both to produce goods and services more competitively and to increase the value of the good and services that are produced. This will require the complementary strengthening of business enterprises and the business environment. Networks of SMEs in the Shannon region and in the west of Ireland have evolved to support both these challenges. The presentation will look at the Atlantic Technology Corridor, the European Digital Media network and the Shannon Knowledge Network and show how each contributes to regional growth.

The Alpine Wellness Cluster

Launched in the year 2000 within Tirol's Regional Innovation and Technology Transfer Strategy (RITTS), the Alpine Wellness Cluster aims to develop innovative health tourism products and services, thereby enhancing the Austrian Tirol region's reputation as a high-quality destination. The Alpine Wellness Cluster is developing a new spirit of co-operation among Tirol's traditional tourism enterprises by bringing them together with health-equipment makers, building contractors, healthcare professionals and scientific experts.

Italian industrial districts: the example of the Castel Goffredo hosiery district

Industrial districts play an important role in the Italian economy. The industrial districts are characterised by high product specialisation and are made up of small, often family-owned companies. The districts



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have strong internal linkages but communications with the outside are often much less developed. The objective of the Regional Innovation Strategy in East Lombardy is to remove barriers to innovation and improve the information flow between companies and other actors. Innovation Exchange Groups involving entrepreneurs, research centres and development centres have been launched with the aim to develop new or improved products. The Castel Goffredo hosiery district is one industrial cluster that is diversifying its activities. Several of its companies have started producing underwear in addition to their traditional lines.

II. New approaches and trends for driving cluster policies

ACENET: the lessons learnt in the IRE Thematic Network dealing with clusters

ACENET looks at the development of methodologies to set up and manage clusters and company networks. The network brings together 11 European regions, representing fifteen clusters in fields such as biotechnology, maritime/shipping, agro-food, automotive, plastics, metal, textiles and wood. ACENET has identified several good practice cases around topics such as internal cluster communication systems, company-to-company interaction, public institution-to-company interaction, financing and management. The network partners have also validated a set of recommendations on how to foster the process of setting up and developing clusters and company networks.

Flemish cluster policies: phases, expectations and achievements

Over the last ten years Flanders has put a lot of effort into creating technology clusters in order to exploit company synergies, for instance in innovation and training. From the initial focus on traditional and new industrial sectors, Flanders has moved to high-tech sectors. Since the first call of the "Cooperative Innovation Networks" scheme in 2001, about 40 cluster projects have started. Clusters have been established in a diversity of technological domains, including e-security, multimedia, biotechnology and digital signal processing. The response to a third call for proposals in October 2003 was a success with over 40 project proposals, and it is expected that all important technology sectors in the region will be covered shortly. The clusters have been supported by the creation of centres of excellence such as the Flemish Institute of Biotechnology (VIB) and the Inter-University Micro-Electronics Centre (IMEC). The centres of excellence are set up to attract new companies and foreign investors to the region as well as to stimulate indigenous companies.