

Report of ClusterFY Interregional Seminar and Study visit

Date: 17–18 October 2017

Venue: Groningen, Northern Netherlands

ClusterFY Interregional Seminar

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Interregional seminar was moderated by Emily Wise, Consultant and Research Fellow, IEC AB and Lund University. During the seminar presentations have been delivered by invited speakers and experts. Questions and discussions followed each presentation.

Mr. Eise van der Sluis director of Samenwerkingsverband Noord-Nederland (SNN), welcomed all the participants of the Interregional Seminar.

Dr. Ir. Jan-Jaap Aué, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, introduced the EnTranCe: Centre of Expertise Energy introduced the Energy Valley project activities with the application of R&D and technologies and the specific actions that were taken in order to develop the strong project partnership.

Rima Dijkstra, the ClusterFY project coordinator, Agency for Science, innovation and Technology, has introduced the **ClusterFY** project, its goals, activities and the consortium. She presented the importance of transnational collaboration, macro-regions, it's impact on the implementation of regional Smart Specialization and how ClusterFY seeking for the Industrial Modernization through the application of KET's.

Henrik Bjerregaard, CEO Clean Cluster (Denmark), presented the project “**Northern Connections**”, a partnership of 21 clusters, cities, regions and knowledge institutions working together transnationally to create North Sea Region innovation in the energy sector.

Emily Wise, Consultant and Research Fellow, IEC AB and Lund University, made a presentation ‘Cluster Policy Trends and latest EU priorities’ and presented the main cluster policy and development trends.

After the Panel Discussion on Cluster Strategies and Policy Development took place. The main discussion topics were:

- Cluster strategies and development of cluster policies;
- Interregional collaboration and Smart Specialization (ERDF);
- Role of European regions in the clusters policy and development.

The 5 panellists (below) made presentation of the cluster policy perspectives (5 minutes each):

- Northern NL panellist kicks off (including some of the results from background study)
Gerrit van Werven, CEO Energy Valley
- North Sea regional representative Henrik Bjerregaard, CEO Clean Cluster (Denmark);
(<https://www.linkedin.com/in/henrik-bjerregaard-9914b810/>)
- Mrs. Christina LEUCUTA, Senior Advisor CLUSTERO-Romanian Clusters Association (RO)

- Anu Manickam, researcher of Cluster dynamics and Regional Development: focusing remarks on policy trends and how they are translated into action on regional level; can include comparisons of different parts of the world (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/anumanickam/>).

This panel discussion was focused on cluster policies and how they are translated into practice in various regions. Emily Wise (moderator) started the panel discussion by providing a short overview of cluster policy trends and latest EU policy priorities related to clusters. The panellists were then provided their perspectives on cluster policy trends, and on how current policy priorities are translated and enacted in their regions.

The main insights were:

- Different trends of cluster policy priorities in each country and the different level of maturity
- In more developed regions already the local or regional authorities takes the active role in the development of cluster policy, proactively involved into the development of the cluster strategy and activity agenda in order to impact the industrial modernization, strengthen the collaboration among the science and business also the application of high added value technologies;
- Mainly all countries/ regions use cluster development policy in order to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs (its' members). Clusters became more mature and make more influence on the region's and country's economy;
- Still the challenges on more proactive and active collaboration, especially on interregional collaboration. The key areas for improvement for the cluster support policy tools to strengthen interregional collaboration, cross-sectorial and cross-cluster collaboration.
- The most important development areas for regional/national policies still valid the support tools for strengthening cluster development focusing on the regional challenges, especially addressing the social challenges that are able to united different institutions and ecosystems, for eg. Energy, clean tech, healthy ageing, etc.

The second part of the seminar started with the presentation on 'Key Enabling Technologies for Cluster Development' made by Vilma Puriene (ClusterFY expert), an international innovation policy expert. She introduced the short overview of KETs, the main idea of KETs and their relation to clusters on the EU level, how they are interlinked with the EU initiatives on emerging market developments and what are the benefits of application of KETs, how clusters serve as a platform for employing KETs seeking to solve the social and economic challenges.

After presentation, the Panel Discussion on how to enhance the competitiveness of clusters and their members SMEs through their employment of KET's and involvement into innovative value chains have started and moved the discussion from a policy focus to a more operational focus – exploring how clusters can make better use of key enabling technologies and become more integrated into (global) value chains. The key themes were discussed:

- KET's and cross sectoral linkages
- Innovative value chains
- Building opportunities

The main panellists (below) provided a short overview of their experiences on clusters in relation to KETs and/or Value Chains (5 minutes each), followed by a moderated discussion. Experiences

- Gerard Berendsen, expert on value chains and owner Twente Quality Centre (NL) (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/gerardberendsen/>)
- Hans Praat, Smart Factories NL (TBC) (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/hans-praat-9b80bb2/>)
- Vaidas Gričius, Director of the Industry and Trade Department at the Ministry of Economy of Lithuania
- Anu Manickam, researcher of Cluster dynamics and Regional Development: focusing remarks on policy trends and how they are translated into action on regional level; can include comparisons of different parts of the world (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/anumanickam/>).

The moderator Emily Wise guided a discussion by posing questions to the panellists on the exploitation of KETs and other cross-cutting technologies that are playing a significant role for cluster development and collaboration at all levels: national, regional and international. Also its' crucial role for integration of SMEs and/or clusters into international value chains.

The main insights were:

- KETs are not yet efficiently “embodied” into the regional context, it is still missing the direct support for cluster initiatives, test/demo platforms within universities which would encourage clusters to promote the employment of KETs
- KETs are commonly employed by the SMEs and clusters but still faces the barriers of hard identification of real KETs. The support policy to modernize and increase productivity, encourage cross-sectoral linkages, move up the value chain would benefit of the efficient employment of KETs for solving the regional social and economic challenges;
- Clusters are the main platform for SMEs to help them to engage in/become integrated in global value chains (e.g. market intelligence, new network/commercial contacts, new knowledge/research contacts);
- More focus the country/ regional cluster policy on opportunities to improving the use of KETs/cross-sectoral linkages and integration into value chains. The new or upgraded policy initiatives to support clusters' stronger usage of KETs and stronger engagement/integration with global value chains by employing the opportunities of the emerging industries – by promoting the cross-sectorial and horizontal actions.

After the two panel discussion sessions, **the World Café two sessions** started. The six mentors were appointed to act as a coordinators of World Café session and to facilitate the discussion of the main issues that are described below:

- Cluster strategies and development of the cluster policies
- Role of European regions in cluster policy and development
- Interregional collaboration and Smart Specialization (ERDF)
- KET's and cross sectoral linkages
- Innovative value chains
- Building opportunities

The rest of the participants were divided into the six groups and were shifting from one coordinator to other and discussed all the issues above.

The main highlights were made:

- It is very important for cluster development to have the common cluster strategy to describe the main cluster development and the cluster policies role in it is very important;
- Role of European regions in cluster policy and development is high as it makes direct impact on EU economy and competitiveness as well as on solving the EU social and economic challenges;
- Clusters and its development policy can make the influence on promotion of Interregional collaboration and efficient implementation of regional Smart Specialization strategy;
- The promotion of cross-sectorial and cross-border collaboration can enable employment of KET's and cross sectoral linkages for application of technologies and integration into the global/ new/innovative value chains.

Report on ClusterFY Study Visits to Northern Netherlands

Date: 18 October 2017

Venue: Groningen, Northern Netherlands

The study visit started by visiting the **European Institute for the Biology of Ageing (ERIBA)** and welcome words of Henk Heidekamp- the Managing Director of ERIBA.

Nick Cramer – Project coordinator of HANNN made a presentation of Healthy ageing network and its efforts to unite the regional R&D&I potential also actively involving the region's authority to solve the social challenges. Healthy ageing network is an economic/business cluster targeting a societal challenge, working as a “umbrella network” with other networks/clusters. The aim of the Healthy ageing network is to become a MAN-MADE BLUE ZONE (longevity).

Main essential issues:

- Healthy food habits
- Daily movement
- Social engagement
- Well-being
- (All at the same time!)

Nick presented how cross-sectorial approach helps to forming new chains (new international strategy for health) as the aim of such collaboration is to “create coalitions with people who want the same thing” – different actors who are interested in contributing in some way.

The strategy of collaboration:

- Build coalitions
- Education
- Projects/activities

This is how Healthy ageing network came from a cluster strategy to influence industry (new products...economic gain) and now on its agenda to broaden coalitions and work with multiple industries (cross-sectoral).

Nick, provided an example of a **different type of cluster/initiatives** how to promote the collaboration:

- Try to work with other clusters to affect their businesses
- Address gaps in business development (e.g. healthy lifestyle)
- A cluster with a societal mission (in the first place)

Healthy ageing network applies different types of cluster activities: focuses now less on business development and more with building environments (to test/demonstrate new types of behaviours), to build environments that are different from the first place, building new chains/coalitions of people, trying to involving different actors.

Nick also pointed out that role of the region was also very important for their developments. As regional smart specialization strategy (S3) in Northern Netherlands started from societal impact (“A higher level”) seeking to the economic impact is also affected (as a side effect).

This is an example of differences between “old/traditional view” of clusters (focused on matchmaking, business development, etc.) vs. new view of clusters.

That is why types of results/impact also different (relations/coalitions broader, “higher level”/societal change types of results).

The network has a strategy “to stimulate a healthy lifestyle”, but it is also needs to be evaluated. Nick surprises all the participants by announcing that they do not track results (shown through the 30-year Lifeline project).

Therefore, according to Nick, the attraction of the support/funding over time is still very important, as:

- Important to set right goals/expectations from the start (perhaps not good to promise economic results)
- Focus on getting private funding (more than public funding), allows more flexibility
- Getting EU (ERDF) funding at the start was CRUCIAL!

Rogier van der Stijl, the Business Developer of **Campus Groningen** presented the idea of open access campus. His department role is:

- Facilitate the linkages and partnerships through events, facilities;
- Provide services of infrastructure of smart data (AI and big data) and Advanced materials (nano) the enabling knowledge/KETs (the blue rings) used in addressing societal challenges, as “Societal challenges cannot be solved with only technical solutions”
- The staff of 7 people –is a central organization – working as ‘ambassadors’ in different faculties;
- Service of Life Cooperative – a cooperation of companies that hire in the university to facilitate;
- Also work with: Innovation projects, Education, Purchasing infrastructure, Etc.

Rogier emphasize that Campus tries to facilitate the ecosystem through ‘risk-sharing’ services (investment funds and other financing forms, collaboration with SNN).

Then the study visit continued to **the Water alliance**.

Hein Malenkamp – the managing director of Water alliance introduced the “Water TechInnovation eco-system” and its main idea. He presented that the linkages among the different challenges (food, water, energy) influenced them to look for the technological innovations and solutions. Therefore, the Water alliance became the ecosystem that facilitates the development and application of the technologies and innovations related to the water environment (from the idea to the market). He stresses the important of the science, applied research and business, connectivity of different competencies, disciplines with the business approach and application as well as the human resources (talent pool to be constantly grown).

After the study visits, Rima Dijkstra, the ClusterFY coordinator, asked each of the project partner to highlight the main outputs and thoughts that game out of ClusterFy meeting (both interregional seminar and study visit) in Groningen.

Find here all the presentations:

Interregional Seminar: [several](#)

Study visit HANNN: [Nick Cramer](#)

Study visit Water Alliance: [Hein Molenkamp](#)