

The logo for CLUSTERS3 Interreg Europe, featuring a stylized orange and yellow geometric shape to the right of the text "CLUSTERS3" in a bold, black sans-serif font, with "Interreg Europe" in a smaller font below it.

CLUSTERS3
Interreg Europe

Clusters3 Conference

Innovation Workshop Findings

22.03.18

Overview

Invest NI's event team asked Big Motive to design and facilitate a workshop as a key element of the Clusters3 conference. We approached the workshop with a plan to generate raw material that could help to shape a clusters policy for Northern Ireland. We set out to achieve this outcome by facilitating a series of collaborative exercises with the goal of solving a set of specific problems through the formation of clusters.



Workshop structure

We facilitated the workshop with teams assembled from the audience of conference attendees. Each team discussed their observations from the morning sessions with a view to agreeing on a problem to be solved through a series of creative exercises, designed to focus the teams' thinking on the benefit of forming clusters. The workshop was structured as follows:



1. Active listening – Capture 'kites and anchors' (things that can help us along and things that could hold us back) from speakers and keynotes
2. 'How Might We' – Agree a 'bite-sized' problem to solve, and develop opportunity statement for team to work on
3. 'World Of..' – Design the ideal cluster to solve your problem
4. Advertising Campaign – Create an 'ad campaign' that articulates the benefits and principles behind your cluster
5. Cluster Canvas – Assemble the key elements of previous exercises into an action plan in the form of cluster canvas

01 Active Listening

Participants were given an 'active listening' brief at the start of the day to gather 'clues' from all of the speakers to feed into the creative session in the afternoon. Using a simple structure - 'Kites and Anchors', they captured 'things that could help us along' (kites), and 'things that could hold us back' (anchors) on post-its, to use as inputs for generating solutions.

*Definition,
Implementation and
Monitoring tools within
clusters to measure
participation (GAIA)*

Example 'Kites' -
Things that could help us

*Within cluster policy,
having a level playing field
makes forming clusters
more easy and accessible*

*Cluster policy puts the
emphasis on the business
agenda, rather than
academia, so there are
silos in the formation of
clusters*

*We need people who
understand the social as
well as the technical
context - universities need
to be more responsive*

Example 'Anchors' -
Things that could hold us back

02 How Might We

Teams assembled and discussed their anchors observed from the morning. Six of the seven teams decided on a specific and having brainstormed a set of questions, converged upon a single opportunity question to work on. The following questions were defined by the teams:

- How might we **get the users closer to or more closely involved** with the clusters so that businesses can align their innovation efforts towards user needs?
- How might we **improve cluster manager training** to positively influence cooperation among SMEs and therefore build trust?
- How might we **engage the SME sector into adopting a joint strategy** to foster sustainable competitiveness and growth while maintaining motivation and interest?
- How might we overcome the barrier of regional thinking to **become more internationally competitive** and to provide a safe space for clusters to flourish?
- How might we **develop the cluster managers** to grow clusters and inform policy?
- How might we **create an environment of trust** to enable stakeholders to work together?

02 How Might We – analysis

Following discussion, participants prioritised the following problems as the greatest barriers needing to be addressed.

FOCUSING ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION

The end user or customer is often detached from the problem the cluster has been set up to tackle. So how can clusters be formed around a problem that exists for an individual or audience? How can the cluster be formed and managed to ensure it never loses sight of this human dimension?

NEED FOR SKILLED CLUSTER MANAGERS

For clusters to work properly, they must be formed for optimal collaboration. This requires agreement upon a shared set of goals, an understanding of what each cluster member is bringing to the table and trust between members throughout the cluster? These aspects of an effective cluster don't emerge organically and therefore need to be facilitated and nurtured by a skilled cluster manager. But how might we create a process for training cluster managers, ensuring that more clusters are managed effectively and that policy is informed by success?

BLUEPRINT FOR ENGAGEMENT

Effective clusters are able to maintain motivation throughout a given project. It is essential that cluster members are aligned on a set of goals and growing capability with a view to economic growth. How might clusters be managed effectively to clearly define the cluster's purpose as well as ensuring alignment with members?

CLUSTERING FOR INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Clusters can offer an effective solution for international competitiveness but this needs to be understood by members and members need to enter the cluster committed to the goal of internationalisation. How can clusters be set up to ensure that narrow regional thinking is set aside to make way for a more ambitious set of objectives?

03 Solutions

Using a projective exercise to imagine solutions around the ideal cluster, teams each designed the 'World Of.' to describe what their ideal cluster might be.

- Extend the 3D model into 4D - (Windmill model).
Facilitating a citizen initiative - the cluster should serve a purpose to civil society and not just firms, universities and government. Make it **easily accessible and with a common language**. Continuously gathering feedback for better innovation. Being clear on the benefits to each user
- **Bigger picture for the greater good** - aligned around common goals and complementary skills; technical, commercial, interpersonal, creative and innovative.
- Managing the power imbalance through a **joint strategy to encourage and sustain positive competitiveness and growth** - make it transparent with shared benefits, and access to networks to accelerate growth
- For clusters managers to positively influence SMEs, they need to be trained in a way that is cross-sectoral with a **global mindset - upskilling, focusing on social skills**. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts - Academia, SMEs and Policy Makers can drive **positive change by teaming up** and becoming more open in achieving goals

03 Solutions

- **Cluster excellence model to support cluster managers**, and to make the clusters a brand in their own right. **Dynamic, flexible model**, context specific and reacts quickly to ecosystem. **Digitally enabled** in structure - regional, national and international. Empowers managers in best practice leadership for the betterment of the whole cluster
- **Diverse structure** (SMEs, companies, academics). **Mutually beneficial with a culture of trust** and improved visibility - pre-empt potential issues. Legal identity umbrella organisation - select community aiming for economic impact by joining forces
- **'One World' - environment of openness, trust and working together**. Shared commercial focus, clear governance. Open to all levels of skill, innovation and experience. Tech driven, data-sharing cloud. Contracts and IP
- **Balance and optimise collaboration and competitiveness** - cluster formed of select and diverse members, with mutually leveraged benefits and an ethos of trust. Identify the right challenges to encourage collaboration. 1 & 1 = 4; agreed vision and commercial goal

03 Solutions – analysis

The essence of the ideal cluster can be summarised in the following 'themes';

LIFT THE CURTAIN ON CLUSTERS

The word cluster is a mystery to many. We need to make it easy to understand and access clusters, and have a common language around what it stands for and how it benefits users. Having an inclusive policy around how the groups are structured to allow for user-led and SME perspective as well as the usual suspects - businesses, academics and government.

BIGGER PICTURE FOR THE GREATER GOOD

When it comes to creating socio-economic growth, $1 + 1 = 4$. How can we encourage that diverse range of skills and experience, and foster the spirit of collaboration? We need to be clear on the benefits and communicate that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. By inviting users to contribute equally and share knowledge, they can create economic growth and accelerate innovation. How can we encourage sharing in an open and transparent way, and build strong bonds of trust?

UNITED POWER OF CLUSTERS

By having a joint strategy and access to networks in specific areas of expertise, we can create strong and competitive collaboration. How can we give people access to the right people and information at the right time, so they have the foresight to pre-empt what's coming next, and to do something meaningful with it? How can we optimise collaboration and competitiveness?

THE KNOWLEDGE

For clusters to flourish, the right training and skills are necessary to get the foundations right and make it grow - and this comes from the top down. Those managing the clusters need to be trained in a way that is cross-sectoral, with a global mindset - upskilling, focusing on the social skills. How can we ensure the right tools and practises are in place within clusters to get them off the ground and ensure they're successful?

03 Solutions - Benefits of the 'ideal cluster'

The second step in generating the 'ideal cluster' was for teams to articulate the ruling principle, benefits and structures behind each cluster, through designing an 'Ad Campaign' to attract their target audience to their 'World Of.'

- Interdisciplinary learning: support, sharing knowledge. Diverse structure with a culture of trust & transparency
- Access to global opportunities & networks
- Strong R&D partnerships
- Small & connected
- The whole is greater than the sum of the parts - multiplied efforts
- Visionary - the ability to pre-empt potential issues
- Increase wealth & sales through sharing and building together
- Empowerment, best practice and leadership for the betterment of all
- Easily accessible and inclusive of civil society, not just businesses, government and academics

03 Solutions - Guiding Principles/Beliefs

- Socio-economic growth
- Transparent & trustworthy environment
- Open minded and inclusive
- Access to competitive intelligence, leading to specialist groups/ projects
- Challenging our limits together
- Led by enterprise, learning & training
- Learn from each other
- Human and empathetic - no jargon, speak in simple, real terms
- Celebrate success and learn from mistakes
- Accessible to different levels of skills and experience
- Establish collaborative partnerships, particularly with academia
- Strong & competitive collaboration
- Inspire successful enterprise
- Rowing the boat in one direction
- Joint strategy to accelerate growth

03 Solutions - Structures/Tools

- Digital platform, mentoring, networking
- Establish a standard framework
- Provide online training to benchmark
- Create tiered partnerships (gold, silver, bronze)
- Have contracts and IP in place
- Free collaborative intelligence as shared currency
- Legal identity
- Improved visibility of market trends
- Early market insight/foresight to build critical mass
- Dynamic, flexible and responsive excellence model

Cluster Canvas

1. Opportunity Question
Insert your 'How might we'

2. How we solved it
Describe the Cluster solution you came up with for the
'World of.. 'exercise

3. Bring it to life
*In more detail - What are all of the principles,
benefits, structure and beliefs of your ideal Cluster
(from your Ad Campaign)*

4. Why it makes a difference
How it solves a need - potential impact

5. What needs to happen next?
Actions to move it forward

Cluster Canvas

Team outputs

1. Opportunity Question
Insert your 'How might we'

bring users closer to the cluster so that businesses can align their innovation efforts towards user needs

2. How we solved it
Describe the Cluster solution you came up with for the 'World of...' exercise

extend the 3 model into a 4 model

by understanding "why"

3. Bring it to life
In more detail - What are all of the principles, benefits, structure and beliefs of your ideal Cluster (from your Ad Campaign)

4. Why it makes a difference
How it solves a need - potential impact

more + better innovation

better environment to live, work + play

5. What needs to happen next?
Actions to move it forward

WE HAVE ... LONG TERM HORIZON + "VISIONS"



The Cluster Canvas

1. Opportunity Question
Insert your 'How might we?'

Encourage SME'S to commit and join a cluster

2. How we solved it
Describe the Cluster solution you came up with for the 'World of... exercise'

openness, transparency and free collaborative intelligence and mutual success are a shared currency.

3. Bring it to life
In more detail - What are all of the principles, benefits, structure and beliefs of your ideal Cluster (from your Ad Campaign)

- Establishing Collaborative partnerships particularly with academic
- with appropriate interaction / support by government.
- Involvement of Private n.p. Unions
- (governance)

4. Why it makes a difference
How it solves a need - potential impact

→ Long term Sustainable growth for the cluster members - SME
→ Creating Scale with business
ET → Access to MARKETS, NETWORK & KNOWLEDGE

5. What needs to happen next?
Actions to move it forward

- o ACCESS TO MARKETS, NETWORKS & KNOWLEDGE.
- o BUILD RELATIONSHIPS / PARTNERSHIPS WITH ACADEMIA.

The Cluster Canvas

Cross Sectoral Connected Social Skills

led by enterprises

Benefits

Learning → Training

Quality people

improve quality of cluster managers

need to positively influence SME'S

Skills Global Upskilling

More Mindset

TO BUILD TRUST

See point 3

Partnership

Exchange of knowledge

Establish a standard framework

Provide on-line training to benchmark

Create standard - GOLD - SILVER - BRONZE

Structure

We inspire successful enterprises

We share

We are trend setters

We build trust

We are smart

We increase wealth sales

The Cluster Canvas

1. Opportunity Question Insert your 'How might we'?

HOW MIGHT WE
... CREATE AN
OPEN ENVIRONMENT
OF TRUST WHICH
WOULD ENABLE
ALL 4 GROUPS OF
STAKEHOLDERS TO
WORK TOGETHER?

Successfully
together for
common
commercial
goals/visions!

2. How we solved it Describe the Cluster solution you came up with for the World of 'exercise'

WHO LIVES HERE

- Cluster MIND & world
- Shared space
- "Co DESIGN"
- Those who are open to sharing skills

- opens to engage with all 4 groups

- Transparency with all included
- Contracts / lip
- Respect all cultures / differences

- 1+1=4
- agreed vision (commercial goal)
- Trustworthy, honest + deliver on time

Levels of Innovation / skill & expertise

4. Why it makes a difference How it solves a need - potential impact

Our world is an open ecosystem based on Trust, ethics and exchange - share skills & expertise that support Co-creating - working and a great value creation

5. What needs to happen next? Actions to move it forward

- Re-frame value equation
- Communication of vision to all stakeholders

Develop a * Agree & Road Map
• P.O.A
• Structure Follow-up Planning - (meeting) online deliveries

- Know-the-boat!
(in one direction)

ONE WORLD
HOW WE BEHAVE?
• Common goals
• Common focus
• Focus on Big picture

• Forward thinking
• Future is OK!
• Everyone's goal
• Awareness of all & Enrich

The Cluster Canvas

1. Opportunity Question Insert your 'How might we'?

HOW MIGHT WE
... OVERCOME BARRIERS
OF REGIONAL THINKING TO BECOME MORE
INTERNATIONALLY COMPATIBLE &
PROVIDE A SAFE SPACE FOR
CLUSTERS TO FLOURISH?

COMMON GOALS
COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS
TRUST

COMMUNICATE
TRUST
EXCHANGING
SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

WE HAVE FUN TOGETHER

MECHANICAL
COMMERCIAL
INTERPERSONAL
CREATIVE
INNOVATIVE

CREATIVE
INNOVATIVE
APPROACH

LEADERSHIP AND FACILITATION AS CASE
WE LEARN FROM EACH OTHERS

WE WORK TOGETHER FOR A COMMON GOAL

2. How we solved it Describe the Cluster solution you came up with for the World of 'exercise'

OPEN & TRUSTING EMPATHY

WE BELIEVE IN SHARING AND COLLABORATING FOR THE GREATER GOOD!

WE CELEBRATE SUCCESS AND LEARN FROM MISTAKES

WE EMPATHISE

BIGGER PICTURE
'GREATER GOOD'

3. Bring it to life In more detail - What are all of the principles, benefits, structure and beliefs of your solution (from your Ad Campaign)

Cluster Canvas

PLANET JANUS

The Cluster Canvas

1. Opportunity Question
Insert your 'How might we'

BALANCE/OPTIMISE
COLLABORATION +
COMPETITION

2. How we solved it
Describe the Cluster solution you came up with for the 'World of...'

A PLANET OF SELECT, DIVERSE
MEMBERS WITH AN ETHOS
OF MUTUALLY LEVERAGED BENEFIT

3. Bring it to life
In more detail - What are all of the principles, benefits, structure and beliefs of your ideal Cluster (from your Ad Campaign)

- LEGAL IDENTITY
- GREATER THAN SUM OF PARTS
- IMPROVED VISIBILITY OF MARKET TRENDS
- CULTURE OF TRUST

4. Why it makes a difference
How it solves a need - potential impact

LARGER ECONOMIC IMPACT THAN
ACHIEVABLE ON THEIR OWN.

5. What needs to happen next?
Actions to move it forward

- SET UP UMBRELLA ORG.
- FOCUS POLICY
- FUNDING

↑ RESEARCH/ VALIDATION

↓ EVOLUTION WITH CHANGING BUSINESS MODEL



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 Inspiring Europe

The Cluster Canvas

1. Opportunity Question
Insert your 'How might we'

HOW MIGHT WE DEVELOP
CLUSTER MANAGERS TO
GROW CLUSTERS AND
INFORM POLICY?

2. How we solved it
Describe the Cluster solution you came up with for the 'World of...'

WE PROPOSED A CLUSTER
EXCELLENCE MODEL TO
SUPPORT CLUSTER MANAGERS
AND

3. Bring it to life
In more detail - What are all of the principles, benefits, structure and beliefs of your ideal Cluster (from your Ad Campaign)

DYNAMIC FLEXIBLE MODEL
CONTEXT SPECIFIC
REACTS QUICKLY TO ECOSYSTEM
DIVERSE LEARNING
↑ KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE
FLEXIBLE, DIGITALLY
ENABLED IN STRUCTURE
REGIONAL, NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL
EMPOWERMENT OF MANAGERS
BEST PRACTICE LEADERSHIP
FOR THE BETTERMENT OF
ALL!

4. Why it makes a difference
How it solves a need - potential impact

- CLUSTERING IS RECOGNISED
AS A KEY DRIVER FOR INNOVATION
AND GROWTH
- Cluster becomes a valuable
brand in its own right

5. What needs to happen next?
Actions to move it forward

- CREATE/IDENTIFY
INNOVATION NETWORK
- INFRASTRUCTURE TO
SUPPORT
- CREATE BUY-IN
- IDENTIFY SKILLS
GAPS
- QUADRUPLE HEXIX.

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Thanks

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