e-Solutions to Cluster Analysis and Knowledge Sharing

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Panellists

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The emergence of Smart Specialisation and regional innovation policy as part of national industry policy is a result of more than four decades of analysis and empirics, which have reshaped the understanding of the role played by innovation in economic development and in particular its relationship with geography. Cluster polices (Porter, 1990) and more recently Triple Helix Cluster policies (Leydesdorff, 2012) which combine the roles of ‘academia,’ ‘Government’ and ‘industry’ have had a significant impact in regard to innovation and economic growth, providing a more coordinated approach. What started as a relatively narrow sectoral and science based R&D way of thinking about innovation policy has developed into a much more multi-dimensional policy approach involving industry, institutions, agencies and cross border collaborations. Industry clusters have been particularly useful in helping policy makers understand how certain sectors can grow through developing regional strengths.

This panel session is focused on ‘e-Solutions to Cluster Analysis and Knowledge Sharing,’ and explores how eTechnologies are becoming more ingrained in the day to day running of cluster organisations and state mandated development agencies. The panellists presentations relate to two distinct areas: 1) ‘Cluster Analysis,’ focused on the assessment of cluster networks and developing polices aimed at economic growth, and 2) Cluster ‘Knowledge Sharing’ relating to the day to day operations of a cluster, communications between its members and policy supports to realise shared visions.

Cluster Analysis is a focus of two panellists, Marc Pattinson, Inno Group, France and John Hobbs, Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland. Marc Pattinson’s work is primarily engaged in the areas of innovation, regional economic development, programme evaluation and cluster support and Marc is an approved Gold label cluster auditor. The inno group serves research institutions, clusters, businesses, policy institutions and development agencies across Europe and Internationally. Marc will present the analysis toolkit used by the European Cluster Observatory when analysing clusters across Europe developed on behalf of DG GROWTH. With its origins in Harvard Business School through the work of Professor Michael Porter, the observatory continues to develop as a toolkit for developing innovative cluster policy initiatives http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/cluster/observatory/index_en.htm.

John Hobbs presents V-LINC an eSolution methodology for identifying, recording and analysing the linkages that firms in clusters engage in. It categorises business linkages, and groups them by geographic scope. Furthermore, V-LINC records the business significance of linkages based on the perceptions of firm personnel who engage in the linkages with other companies and organisations. Data for V-LINC analysis of linkages is collected through structured interviews of company personnel. V-LINC maps give a visual representation of the relative reliance on local, national, European or Global linkages of a company, or when combined, of a cluster. V-LINC facilitates policy development at regional and national levels, through the aggregation of data from a sample of firms. Initial applications of V-LINC have been conducted on European ICT clusters through the BeWiser FP7 funded project www.be-wiser.eu.
Cluster ‘Knowledge Sharing’ is a focus of Tamara Högler, CyberForum e.V., Germany and Darja Radić, Automotive Cluster of Slovenia, both of whom have practical experience as cluster managers working in Industry. Tamara Högler’s work is primarily focused on innovation and internationalisation. She will present CyberForum’s approach to boost regional innovation by trust-building, pro-active connecting of companies as potential cooperation partners and supporting their internationalisation activities. She will describe the Business Roaming Agreement, that can be seen as a soft-landing platform for companies that want to become international but lack either experience in this topic and / or a vast “internationalisation budget”, as well as illustrate the potential of EU-funded projects as appropriate tools for innovation and internationalisation. Some perspectives from the Smart BusinessIT initiative (www.smartbusiness-it.de) a regional Cluster Accelerator Programme developed in Baden-Wuerttemberg, and the UPSIDE FP7 funded project (www.upside-project.eu) will also be shared.

Darja Radić, maintains that knowledge is no longer limited by geography space, rather knowledge flows globally, without borders. Companies need to capture the best know-how available globally, in locations beyond their regional and national boundaries. Linkages between clusters in different locations which offer complementary strengths can provide access to the most advanced technologies and know-how. There is a need to provide better opportunities for cluster in relation to cross-regional and tran-regional cooperation. New policy approaches can enhance such cooperation through policy measures, which support job creation via industrial transformation. We have to better understand the policy framework of clusters from different regions, and various cross-sectoral solutions which are essentially a combination of knowledge, experiences, industrial landscape and conducive framework conditions. Ms. Radić presents the peer review approach, experiences and lessons learned within the poly4emi project http://www.poly4emi.eu/. 