Industry Cluster

The Cluster Concept
Germany is home to an impressive number of regional and national networks and clusters. The rapid proliferation of science and industry clusters can be attributed to Germany’s advanced level of industrial diversity aligned to a sustained and forward-looking innovation policy. Clusters are perhaps best understood as referring to a fixed geographical locus in which a complete industry supply or value chain can be found. As such, clusters represent self-sufficient networks made up of companies, research institutions and other public and private organizations joined by a set of shared objectives. Clusters can be industry, technology or innovation objective led, and follow a range of interaction models (science-science, science-industry, and industry-industry) subject to requirements. Geographical proximity and complementary area of activity help promote an interactive culture of mutually advantageous knowledge transfer between the different cluster actors. Cluster pooling of resources along the supply chain creates a competitive environment conducive to sustainable innovation and accelerates the commercialization process for improved “time-to-market.” In an age in which global markets govern, specialist industry clusters have a significant role to play in helping companies, technology locations, and even countries, secure a decisive competitive international advantage.

Germany’s Cluster Policy
Germany has embarked on a proactive industrial policy to provide the necessary infrastructure and frameworks to support leads markets and technologies for the twenty-first century. The country’s forward-looking cluster policy has its roots in the mid-1990s with the creation of a number of national and federal support programs (e.g. “BioRegio” Competition) to support productivity and innovation – particularly at the small and medium-sized enterprise level – through cooperation between regionally aligned value chain partners.
Eastern Germany is home to a diverse number of industry networks and clusters that act as important impulse givers in their respective sectors. The federal and state governments have launched a comprehensive raft of measures to support cluster development, based on each individual state’s respective industry, science and research strengths. The German federal government’s cluster strategy encompasses the following activities:

- Competition to promote exchange processes between universities and companies
- Region-specified measures to foster the development of clusters
- Measures to foster the development of clusters in individual fields of technology
- Cross-industry competence creation

**Cutting-edge cluster competition**

**High-Tech Strategy**
Launched in August 2006, the “High-Tech Strategy” represents the first national concept to bring key innovation and technology stakeholders together in a common purpose of advancing new technologies. The initiative combines the resources of all government ministries, committing billions of euros annually to the development of cutting-edge technologies as part of a broader policy framework conducive to innovation. Specific focus is provided to supporting SMEs and innovative start-up companies in research-intensive industries.

**Supporting innovative SMEs**
More than EUR 1.4 billion in funding was made available to SMEs for cutting-edge research purposes in 2013 alone, with SMEs enjoying a disproportionately high share – around half – of federal government R&D funding for industry.

**New High-Tech Strategy**
Building on the achievements of the High-Tech Strategy to date, the new High-Tech Strategy accords clusters a special role in attaining its stated objective of establishing Germany as a global innovation center and industry and export nation. Improving regional SME contact to international centers of growth and value creation is central to the new strategy, with the promotion of innovation in Eastern Germany likewise afforded special priority status.
CONTACT US

Silke Poppe
Director

 +49 30 200 099-0
 Submit your question