

SUMMARY OUTCOME MEETING OECD CLUSTER FOCUS GROUP 4/10/1999, OECD, PARIS

Participants

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Pim den Hertog	Dialogic, The Netherlands (coordinator)
Ludo Peeters	Institute for Applied Economic Research (ITEO), Flanders
Marc Tiri	Institute for Applied Economic Research (ITEO), Flanders
Ninett Ribisch	Department of Trade and Industry, Denmark
Theo Roelandt	Ministry of Economic Affairs, The Netherlands
Marianne van der Steen	Ministry of Economic Affairs, The Netherlands
Anne-Christine Strandell	NUTEK, Sweden
Patrick Vock	Swiss Science Council, Switzerland
Laura Paija	ETLA, Finland
Tuomo Pentikäinen	VTT, Finland
Anders Ekeland	STEP, Norway (coordinator Focus Group Human Mobility)
Jean Guinet	OECD Secretariat
Svend Remoe	OECD Secretariat
Daniel Malkin	OECD Secretariat

Introduction OECD secretariat

The work of the Cluster FG is linked to the wider OECD NIS project, the work of the other Focus Groups (human mobility, innovative firms/firm networks) and the wider OECD policy agenda. It is in particular stressed that work on industry-science linkages has a high priority within OECD. Further it was emphasised that the Focus Groups should as much as possible present intermediary products and take into account the policy agenda within OECD (esp. The December/June TIP meetings). Mr. Svend Remoe will for the next 1,5-2 years support OECD secretariat in co-ordinating NIS project. A framework paper for all three NIS Focus groups will be distributed next week.

Introduction & update cluster work

From the tour de tables it is apparent that at least within the countries represented work is proceeding on:

→ cluster methodology e.g. :

- trade based I/O data and possibly a multi-country I/O-table [Flanders];
- planned econometric analysis [VTT, Finland];
- non-I/O identification methods of clusters [Denmark];
- mapping institutional setting of clusters [Netherlands];
- updating Porterian framework [Finland];
- use of cluster analysis to estimate likelihood of investment change in transport [Bergman]
- regional clusters and issue of international component of clusters [Norway]
- sub-national understanding of clusters, effect of planning on cluster formation [England]

→ cluster case studies e.g.:

- ICT (including content!) and well being clusters [Finland];
- multimedia, construction, EMTV [Netherlands];
- semiconductors, agro-food, offshore, ??, opto-electronics, forestry, creative and tourism cluster (Scotland)
- agro-food and other clusters [Norway]

→ cluster policy-making e.g.

- 2nd generation Resource Areas [Denmark];
- Cluster Monitor initiative [Netherlands]
- Pro-active approaches towards clustering/breeding ground [Flanders]
- Interest in evaluation cluster policies [various countries]

Further a clear policy interest in clusters was mentioned for Sweden, Switzerland, Norway.

Outcome discussion on contents and actual planning workprogramme

Apart from very interesting presentations by Laura Paija on how ETLA plans to study the Finnish ICT-cluster (see handouts) and Marc Tiri on techno-economic clusters in Flanders using I/O-data (see handouts) the discussion focussed on the balance between the three main lines within the focus group i.e. cluster methodology, comparative case studies and cluster policies and ways to proceed here. It was generally felt that case study work should be emphasised in this stage of the FG work to better understand specificities of innovation dynamics and innovation styles in particular countries and cluster. However, it was also concluded that new methodological work, not necessarily based on I/O-data, would be appreciated. With regard to the policy-component it was mentioned that we are no longer only interested in cluster policies persé, but even more in how adopting a cluster perspective in innovation policy-making affects general lines of policy-making (such as education, competition policies etc). The latter could be done using the cluster studies.

After having taken stock of those clusters in which individual teams have an interest and/or experience the discussion focussed on selecting the clusters to internationally compare and how to organise the comparative case studies itself. Dimensions mentioned for selecting the clusters were: deep versus wide/thin clusters (1); case studies should be able to cast light on science-industry relationships (2); lowtech/mature versus high tech/young clusters (3); focused versus clusters based on more generic technologies (4); possibility to derive lessons on how policies have influenced the cluster and a practical consideration: availability (5). Eventually the following 3-4 clusters were selected:

Cluster (co-ordinating country)	Participating countries
Information & Communication cluster (Finland)	Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, England, Netherlands, Sweden (to be confirmed), Flanders (to be confirmed)
Agro-food (Norway)	Scotland, Denmark, Finland, Flanders (to be confirmed)
Construction (Netherlands)	Denmark, Belgium, Finland
Automotive (?)	Sweden (to be confirmed), Belgium (to be confirmed), US (to be confirmed)

It was further agreed that an approach for performing these case studies should be designed before the end of the year. Ideally this be a mixed qualitative/quantitative approach (Porter-plus) with a set of guiding questions. A still unsettled issue is: how to deal with the international/global dimension of clusters. Co-ordinating countries would be responsible for synthesising the case studies. Further, as to allow for co-ordination, case co-ordinators would be part of the steering committee (hence Laura Paija, Johan Hauknes, Pim den Hertog).

On cluster methodology it was concluded that in the programme ahead there is room for methodological contributions. All countries are welcomed to step forward with approaches here (even if provided by others in their respective countries). Apart from the contribution of Flanders (techno-economic clusters using I/O-data) and Sweden (more qualitative ways of identifying clusters) there is one opportunity of making a cross-country I/O-based comparison in identifying clusters. This material has already been collected for about 7 countries, but further analysis is needed. The group of Ludo Peeters – possibly together with Tuomo Pentikänen - could in principle perform such an analysis, but funding is an issue which needs to be solved first. It was further mentioned that non-I/O-based ways of identifying clusters should be solicited for e.g. looking at intersectoral labour mobility or identifying regional clusters.

The policy line was only discussed to a limited extend e.g. the need to evaluate cluster policies and to assess the impact of the cluster approach as a policy perspective on other fields of policy-making. More comprehensive updates as to how clusters and clusters policies are being perceived in Norway (Johan Hauknes) and in Sweden (Anne Christine Strandell) were given. Finally it was mentioned that the fact that cluster policies are mostly practised in relatively small countries possibly reflects the fact that industrial clusters here are in fact regional clusters.

Outcome discussion on practicalities

The following practical aspects were discussed:

- Members steering committee: all those originally proposed (Ludo Peeters, Johan Hauknes, Ed Bergman, David Charles, Pim den Hertog) as well as Laura Paija from ETLA and Svend Remoe from the OECD secretariat. The idea is that the steering group develops ideas on the case study approach chosen, solicits fine methodological contributions, helps in preparing the cluster workshop, a joint publication and makes sure fine inputs are made towards the OECD policy agenda. A maximum of 3-4 meetings is foreseen, as much as possible coinciding with other occasions as to limit costs of travelling.

- 3rd workshop in spring 2000 (end of march/april) as an opportunity to present intermediate results to a wider (policy) audience. A format for the workshop will be provided by the steering committee in due course. IWT possibly will host a policy oriented meeting at the end of the work as to further disseminate the outcomes of our studies (begin 2001, to be confirmed)
- Joint publication: if we succeed in coming up with fine studies and papers the OECD in principle is prepared to help in making this publication. This publication is seen as an extra trigger for especially researchers to bring in studies. A proposal on the joint publication will be provided by the steering committee in due course.
- Financial matters. Apart from difficulties in getting the comparative I/O-analysis financed no problems were mentioned here.
- Time planning. In principle the project is foreseen to be finished end of September 2000. Possibly producing the joint publication will take somewhat longer, but should be ready by the end of 2000. In general we will have to make sure that we organise the research and reporting in parallel with OECD (TIP) meetings. First step will be to outline and detail our approach for the case studies and present this at the TIP-meeting 6/7 December 1999. There we will make a last call to interest in particular non-EU countries. Then we plan intermediate results to be ready before the workshop and draft reports for summer break.