

CLUSTER EVALUATION

KEY TO UNLOCKING LEARNING AND
IMPROVEMENT

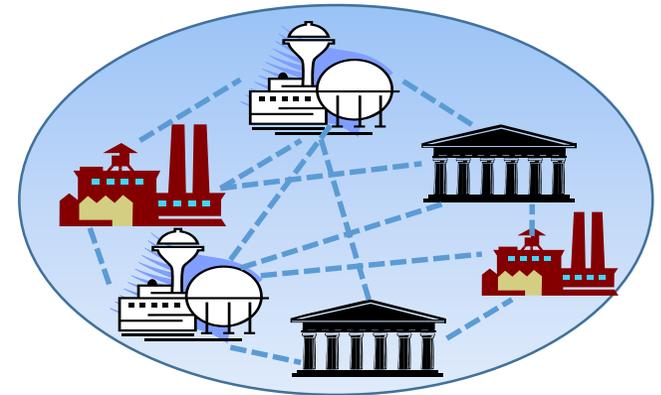
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DO CLUSTER POLICIES WORK?

- A big question, an increasingly common question, and a difficult question ...
- Characteristics of clusters mean **many of their impacts are intangible and difficult to isolate**
 - Built on 'soft' collaborative dynamics
 - Typically have a long-term horizon
 - Spill-over to agents outside the cluster initiative
 - Interact with other competitiveness policies
 - Extremely heterogeneous
- Shortage of cluster evaluation research & practice:



Impacts of clustering:
Reasonable evidence of firm-level impacts



Impacts of cluster policy:
Much weaker evidence



COLLABORATING TO IMPROVE PRACTICE

- A forum for learning collectively around common, complex & important cluster evaluation challenges
 - Meeting twice a year since 2013
 - Brought together over 100 people
 - Mix of academics, policy-makers, practitioners



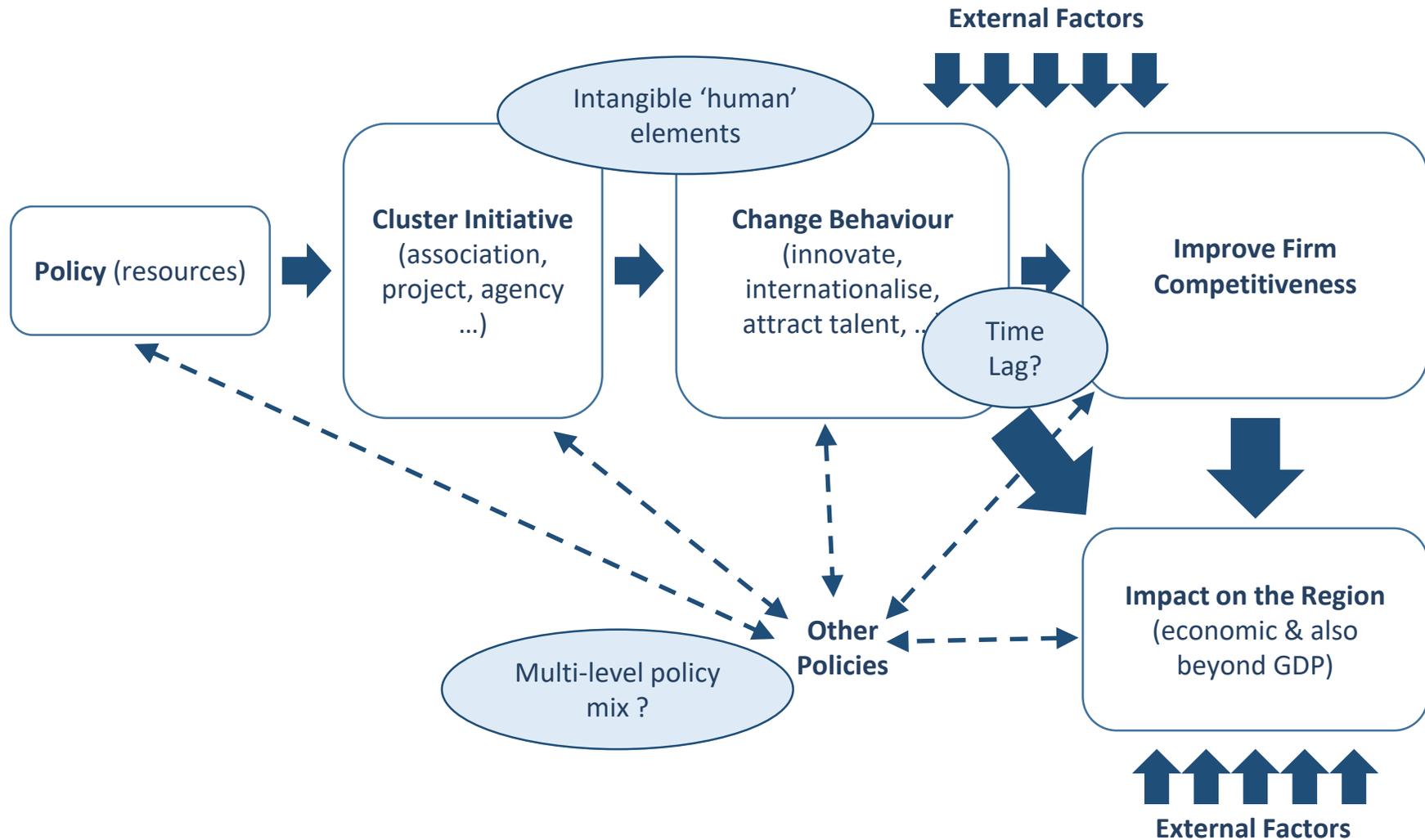
www.tci-network.org/evaluation



Evidencing the value of cluster policy is only part of the question

The bigger issue is how we can ***use evaluation to learn and do things better***

HOW SHOULD CLUSTER POLICIES WORK?



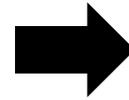
FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTS

| Level | Short-term results (1-3 years) Cluster participants | Long term effects (3-10 years) Cluster participants & beyond |
|---|--|---|
| Individual Actor (A) | Perceptions & Behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competence development - Knowledge exchange - Capacity to innovate - Involvement in collaborative activities | (Economic) Performance experienced by individual actors |
| Collaborative Group/Cluster Initiative (C) | Perceptions & Behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement of different actor groups - Dynamics of linkages over time - Perceived value of collaboration | |
| | Collaboration Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of cluster management - Leadership - Processes | |
| Territorial System (S) | Competitiveness and international attractiveness of innovation eco-system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in behaviours and performance of system Effectiveness of business and innovation support system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in structures, policies and institutional arrangements | |

CLUSTER LEARNING IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY



- Revision of cluster policy in 2014/2015
- New tools for cluster evaluation identified as key challenge

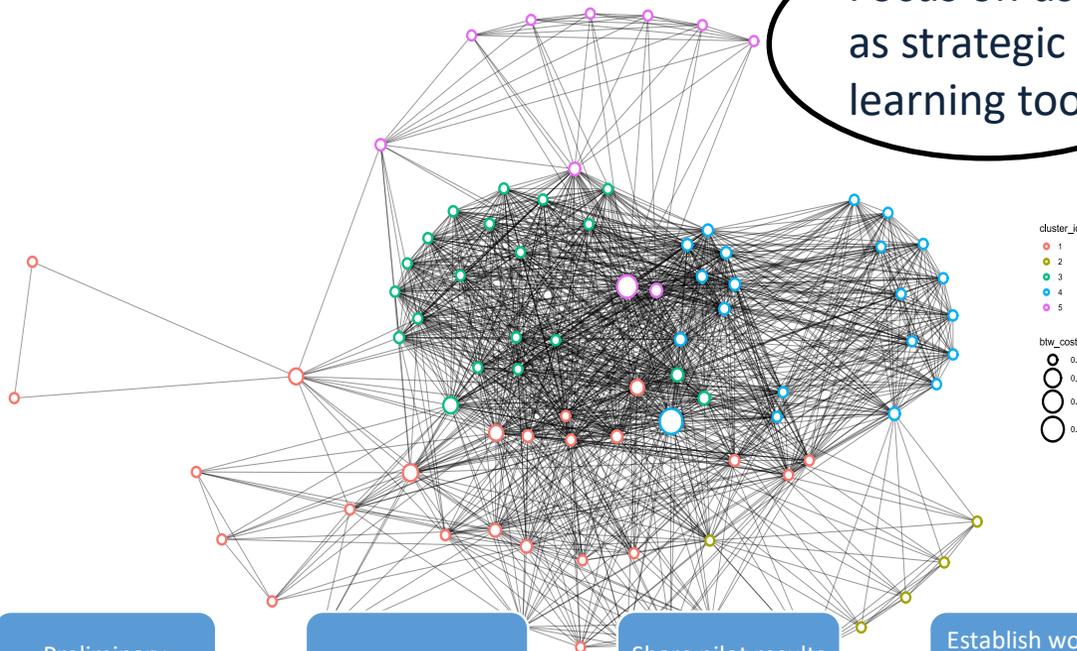


Aim to improve cluster policy and cluster practice by experimenting with new monitoring and evaluation approaches



Focus on using as strategic learning tools

1. Understanding ‘voice of users’
2. Leveraging programme data to understand network dynamics



Cluster evaluation is the key to unlocking learning and improvement around how clusters work and how policy engages with clusters

Our learning points to three key ingredients to make this happen:

1. View evaluation as a strategic learning tool

- Move beyond evaluation as audit
- Strategic intelligence feeding improvement
- Essential part of policy & cluster initiative governance

2. Employ a basket of data, methods & tools

- Context is king (region, policy, audience, timing ...)
- Quantitative methods useful, but never give whole picture
- 'Story telling' important for capturing 'human element'

3. Co-design evaluation with stakeholders

- Evaluating 'triple helix' processes requires triple helix engagement
- Stakeholder 'buy-in' ensures usefulness of intelligence generated



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