

This is a quick summary of the workshop entitled "How to innovate in traditional clusters".

As it was mentioned in the plenary session, the territory is conditioning the implementation of clusters strategies. "Territory" considered as a range of socio-economic conditions that include not only the different sectors and their links to certain municipalities but also the relationships with scientific and technological centers and the links between companies.

The regional experiences presented in the workshop, showed many peculiarities and some similarities. There were also different stages of development in the exercises. So, firstly some remarks of the different presentations will be made and finally some conclusions will be appointed.

The experience of the Technological Institutes network in Valencia has much to do with the type of companies present in this region (93% of microenterprises). This network provides services to the SMEs especially in innovation. The BICs and the offices opened in different municipalities complete a variety of infrastructures serving the SMEs. A new approach to traditional clusters has been established by the promotion of the "housing" cluster, an hypersector that covers all different sectors concerning home appliances and technologies.

The experience of Lucca paper district and its "Door to door" initiative was interesting because it started at a local scale, was tested and then an extended formulation was proposed. The district was there for many years but it was after a bottom-up approach when the cluster was established. It was also pointed out the importance of the presence of a competence centre and the harmony among institutions.

The cluster policy in Varese (in Lombardy Region) underlines that clusters are useful to supply services to groups of SMEs that otherwise they couldn't afford. In the task of identifying clusters, a rupture in conventional wisdom is needed and this strategic analysis is the key issue. The voucher system established to create relationships with the centres of excellence was interesting for many attendants to the workshop. This system is not a genuine cluster element but it helps to increase the famous 'social capital'.

The motor district in Emilia-Romagna is a consortium that has created a structure divided into workgroups and operating in areas of interest for the companies. A long list of activities are programmed for every year and the priority is settled by a matrix that measures the value for members and the implementation costs in terms of time, risks and money. They remark as it was mentioned in the plenary session the role of the team work as a key topic in the cluster.

Finally the Piedmont Region presented its Innovative Actions Program based in how to transform industrial clusters into digital clusters. Again, a long-tradition region in clusters policy look for the consensus to give another step-beyond in the competitiveness race.

Trying to find out some conclusions, it can be said that some of the concepts used in the Regional Innovation Strategies projects or in the innovative Actions projects such as the regional consensus or the bottom-up approach are present in these exercises. This is the only way not to fail in choosing or identifying clusters.

Other conclusion it can be underlined after analyzing the experiences is that it is better not to generalize or find out too much similarities.

I prefer to say that I know something about the Technological Institutes network in Valencia, or something about the Lucca paper district, the 'metadistricts' in Lombardy, the motor supply chain cluster in Emilia-Romagna and the transformation of clusters in Piedmont than saying that I know about clusters in general because every reality is different enough.