Clusters as Drivers of Green and Digital Transition in Regional Innovation Ecosystems

Innovation in the Aerospace, E-mobility and Nautical sectors in Umbria

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CONTEXT

THE CLUSTERS MEET REGIONS SERIES

EU regions need to be able to compete with other more advanced and emerging economies in the fast changing economic and social environment, in particular in the post-Covid-19 recovery period. Clusters develop more easily in urban and regional ecosystems with a favourable administrative and regulatory environment and access to skilled labour, markets, financial and business support services.

What really matters is the involvement of clusters in regional economic governance, in policy design and implementation at regional level.

Regional authorities need to know their clusters and understand how they can shape, improve and effectively help in the design and the implementation of regional development policies. On the other hand, cluster organisations and their members should take actions and implement projects that are relevant for the economic development of their local communities. They should engage in collaboration with other European clusters

in the same or related economic activities and thus complement regional assets and reinforce capacities to lead green transition, accelerate digital transition and build resilience.

The "Clusters meet Regions" workshops bring together clusters and policymakers of the EU, national, regional and local level to learn from each other on how to better use clusters to strengthen industrial ecosystems, serve national/regional economic development and liaise with other regions with similar transition challenges.

The Clusters Meet Regions event in Foligno (Umbria)**,** on 24–25 June 2025, will explore how clusters contribute to regional industrial transformation, exploring how they can support the **green and digital transitions**, in the **aerospace**, **e-mobility**, and **nautical sectors**.

Organised by **Sviluppumbria** in collaboration with the **Umbria Region**, and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) on behalf of the European Commission, the event will highlight how regional strategies support cluster-based innovation, decarbonisation, and competitiveness**,** in alignment with Umbria's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3)**.**

The event will demonstrate how the Umbria Region and Sviluppumbria foster a strong innovation ecosystem by:

- Encouraging partnerships and building connections between startups, big companies, research institutions, and regional entities.
- Financing R&D projects and the creation of new enterprises to boost economic growth and competitiveness
- Boosting internazionalization, innovation and intersectorial technologies to support clusters

- Ensure Access to Markets facilitating connections between local innovators and international markets to help products and services scale.

- Invest in Talent Development working with universities and technical schools to develop skills

- Exploiting technology and digital infrastructure, promoting the use of data analytics

A key focus of the programme will be on **hydrogen** as a central technology for decarbonisation, within the broader context of EU energy and climate objectives. The event will serve as a platform to reflect on the European hydrogen strategy and showcase regional initiatives that contribute to its implementation.

In addition, the programme will feature case studies from Umbrian clusters, success stories in European cooperation, and site visits to innovative local enterprises. Participants will also explore the wider ecosystem of support services, including international cluster collaboration, the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), and the role of regional development agencies in scaling innovation.

Focus Areas

- Decarbonisation and hydrogen technologies in industrial ecosystems

- Strategic development of the aerospace, mobility, and nautical clusters
- EU and regional funding instruments for innovation and transformation
- The role of skills, entrepreneurship, and business support in S3 implementation
- Internationalisation and interregional cooperation models

Target Audience

This event will bring together:

- Regional and national **cluster organisations**
- **SMEs**, large companies, and technology providers
- **Regional development agencies**, innovation hubs, and DIHs
- **Public authorities**, managing authorities, and S3 policymakers
- **EU institutions**, networks and project consortia
- **Investors**, business angels, and financing intermediaries