



THE FUTURE OF CLUSTERS THROUGH
cross-country and cross-region collaboration

20TH TCI
GLOBAL
CONFERENCE

7-9 NOVEMBER 2017 · COLOMBIA



CALL FOR PROPOSALS – GUIDELINES

Although TCI Network and its work on clusters and competitiveness is all about collaboration, the 20th TCI Global Conference aims at emphasizing the importance of deepening collaboration between countries and regions, as a way to further improve competitiveness. While some progress has been made in this regard, there is still ample room for catalyzing this type of collaboration. Moreover, this collaboration gains further relevance in the current complex geopolitical context, in which countries and regions are looking not far beyond their borders, indeed are looking ever more inward. In this context, institutional frameworks supporting cluster agendas appear to be appropriate instruments to spur this collaboration, especially since they have increasingly been adopted worldwide as a fundamental part of local development policies.

The 20th TCI Global Conference –which will take place in Bogota, Colombia on November 7, 8 and 9, 2017– will allow interactions between cluster and competitiveness professionals of many countries and regions, looking to exchange experiences and build synergies that lead to better competitiveness and cluster policies, better implementation of programs and concrete agendas, and better interactions among actors and clusters that result in a more competitive private sector.

In line with the above, a number of parallel sessions and participatory workshops will be held on the second and third day of the conference, in order to dive deeper into the following three tracks that materialize the overarching theme stated as “The future of clusters through cross-country and cross-region collaboration”:

- Better policies
- Better implementation (practice) of these agendas
- Better business and joint activities between actors and clusters from different regions and countries

We invite you to participate in this call for proposals and present your latest work alongside other practitioners in the parallel sessions and interactive workshops. To participate, please visit www.tci2017.org and submit your proposal in accordance with the instructions below:

- Fill in the form you will find at <http://www.tci2017.org/Program/Call-for-Proposals>
- Indicate the title for your contribution
- Summarize your ideas in an abstract of max. 500 words (please be concise, there is no additional space for further information)
- Please submit your proposal in English
- You will see that each theme has a context that sets the scope, as well as some leading questions that further focalizes the discussion that we want to have in each parallel session. Therefore, each leading question will lead to a different parallel session, for a total of 28 potential parallel sessions. Please make clear the theme and the leading question you are contributing to (only answer one question per proposal).
- You may submit more than one proposal. Please use a different form for each proposal and indicate in each case the theme and leading question you are contributing to.

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- Only one final proposal per presenter will be accepted in the program to allow more participation. The content committee will reach a final decision based on the quality of the submitted proposals.
- Each proposal must be presented by only one contact person at this point; if there are more authors of the proposal, you can specify it later in the process, when we will ask the presenters for updates on the information to be published in the program. A joint-presentation in the program is also an option, organizers will discuss with selected presenters.

Additional important information:

In order to increase the quality of parallel sessions, this year the number of sessions, as well as the number of panelists per session/workshop, will be limited. The content committee will select the proposals that best fit into the overall program and the specific session assigned, and will inform selected proponents by email no later than **June 29th** with further instructions to complete your registration.

Note that your registration (including payment) is required for final confirmation of your participation in the conference program. If full registration has not been received by **July 18th**, your proposal will not be considered.

The contents committee reserves the right to eliminate or combine sessions, depending on the quality and number of proposals that are received, this means that as the program develops, sessions may change and your proposal may be placed in a different session. We will regularly share the latest version of the program, so please bear this in mind when making your conference planning and travel arrangements.

Key dates:

- Open call for proposals online: **May 8th, 2017**
- Deadline for submission of proposals: **June 8th, 2017**
- Notification selected proposals: **June 29th, 2017**
- Deadline for early bird registration (payment included): **July 14th, 2017**
- Publication of program with speakers included: **July 25th, 2017**

Tracks, themes, and leading questions:

1. Better policies

a. Theme: Modern industrial policy and clusters

Context: The concept of “industrial policy” has been making a comeback in the last decade. Sometimes dubbed as “modern industrial policy”, sometimes as “productive development policies”, as the IADB calls them, the concept is back in fashion, especially after the Great Recession, for it is seen as —at least— part of the solution to the stagnant productivity of countries around the world. While there are several definitions of modern industrial policy, one that comes in handy could be that of “efforts undertaken jointly by the public and private sector to identify and address all types of failures (i.e. market, government, system, etc.) that hinder economic upgrading and diversification”. Even though academia has made a lot of progress in

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addressing the question of why countries and regions should include modern industrial policies as part of their policy toolkit, it hasn't made much progress in addressing the how's:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2	Leading question 3
What does the academic and empirical literature have to tell cluster practitioners and policymakers on how to implement the practice of competitiveness and cluster-based agendas?	What policy strategies and/or instruments should be put in place in order to foster economic upgrading and diversification?	How can cluster initiatives and cluster policy in general be part of a modern industrial policy toolkit? What do cluster based development agendas have to say with regards to how to implement modern industrial policy?

b. Theme: National vs. local cluster policy interaction

Context: Coordination problems are common in the implementation of policies, in general, and especially when those are related to competitiveness. In particular, one of the greatest challenges is that of coordinating national (or supranational) policies with regional (or local) policies and agendas, not only due to the multiple players and governance structures interacting at different levels, but also because of the difficulty of aligning different objectives, instruments, and approaches:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2
What types of coordination schemes and incentives have to be put in place to guarantee this multi-level interaction?	Now, there are often times when a national policy exists but there is no local policy or agenda being implemented. The reverse situation is also often the case: no national level policy but a local policy or agenda is taking place. And sometimes you face the "ideal" situation where there is both national and local level action going on, but you face the multilevel coordination challenge. In this context it is worth asking how to make the most out of each of the previous situations, namely: (i) you have a local development agenda but no national policy; (ii) you have a national policy but no local development agendas; (iii) you have both national and local agendas (how to combine them)?

c. Theme: Evaluation

Context: Despite some progress, evaluation of cluster-based agendas is still an elusive topic; especially given methodological (i.e. econometric) issues that make it difficult to attribute causality to cluster policies and agendas with regards to economic results. However, many efforts have been undertaken around the world with various approaches that try to capture the effect of cluster agendas on different economic variables that range from impact on GDP to social capital building, while other approaches aim at evaluating just the quality of cluster efforts in the form of their governance and agendas:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2
What are some of the soundest and most profound efforts in carrying out cluster evaluation and how have they dealt with methodological difficulties?	How has cluster evaluation been used to adjust and improve cluster efforts and agendas?

d. Theme: Peace and inclusiveness

Context: A large portion of recent political and social unrest around the world has its roots in the fact that globalization might be leaving a large portion of society behind. Despite deeper integration having been a powerful engine for global growth in the last decades, the benefits have not been equally divided, with some people bearing an unequal share of the costs. Now, even though Colombia’s post-conflict scenario involves many other complexities, a common challenge with that of the rest of the world is how to get some segments of the population that might have been left behind “on board”:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2
What role can clusters and local development agendas play in order to get those segments of society that globalization might be leaving behind “on board”?	Thinking specifically about the post-conflict situation Colombia is facing, how can cluster development initiatives and local development agendas in general become instruments for peace? What role have these types of agendas played in the consolidation of social and economic stability in the aftermath of conflicts in other parts of the world?

e. Theme: RIS3 and clusters

Context: Research and Innovation Smart Specialization Strategies (or RIS3), which started as a EU policy, are increasingly being adopted worldwide. Even though the concept may seem pretty straightforward, regions around the world are struggling with its implementation:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2
What role should cluster initiatives play in the implementation of a RIS3 agenda?	One of the central objectives of RIS3 is fostering economic diversification. Moreover, RIS3 has “entrepreneurial discovery” as one of its conceptual tenants. How can clusters be used to implement “entrepreneurial discovery” in the context of a RIS3 agenda, when it is well known that cluster initiatives are generally focused on reinforcing current strengths rather than enabling change?

2. Better implementation (Practice) of these agendas.

a. Theme: Management of competitiveness agendas

Context: There are no silver bullets with regards to management practices of competitiveness agendas at the national and local levels. For example, many countries and regions go into drawn out, painstaking processes focused on trying to design the best, most detailed long term plans. On the other hand, some recent trends suggest iterative processes (i.e. Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation – PDIA) as a better option, where you rapidly move from design to action to adjustment and back to action, in an ongoing process. Other examples of management practices include nested cycles of monitoring, bumping up coordination failures, and using “rules of thumb” (70/30 rule) for revising plans, among others:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2
What are examples of good and bad practices in managing the implementation of competitiveness agendas at the national and local levels?	Competitiveness and/or cluster agendas generally involve the articulation of many government agencies and/or ministries. However, public-public coordination is one of the most difficult things to attain. What are some of the best management schemes and incentives to ensure a decent coordination level among public actors?

b. Theme: Management of cluster initiatives

Context: Cluster management seems to be more of an art than a science, which makes learning from experience one of the most important ways to improve its implementation:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2	Leading question 3	Leading question 4
Moreover, cluster management is fraught with failures. However, cluster practitioners don't generally like talking about them, despite the learning opportunities those failures could provide other practitioners. In this context, a relevant question to ask is: cluster management, what not to do?	It is widely known that leadership skills are one of the 21st century key skills in order to have a successful professional career. However, what specific leadership skills are needed, or leadership tips could be provided, to ensure leading cluster initiatives in an effective way?	When working on cluster initiatives, defining the core sector, or sectors, where most of a cluster initiative agenda will be focused, is not an easy task, as it might seem from an academic perspective. One could go for a very wide scope, running the risk of an overly general, and not very effective, agenda. Or one could define a very narrow scope, which might increase its impact but could leave out many of the cluster's actors. What criteria should be used to set the right scope of a cluster initiative and define an effective cluster agenda?	Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have changed the way we live, the way we work, the way we interact. However, not much has been said with regards to how ICTs have changed the way cluster management is being implemented. What are some innovative ways in which ICTs are being used to support cluster management and the interaction between cluster actors?

c. Theme: Governance of cluster initiatives

Context: There are many ways cluster based agendas could be organized via different institutional arrangement schemes. Some of them can work in one context while failing in others, but there will always be lessons to be learned and shared:

Leading question 1
From a governance perspective, what are some of the best ways to organize cluster initiatives?

3. Better business and joint activities between actors and clusters from different regions and countries.

a. Theme: Internationalization and clusters

Context: Recent economic and political uncertainty has led to a globalization backlash that could hinder the prospects for global economic growth:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2	Leading question 3
What efforts could be undertaken from the standpoint of cluster and local development agendas in order to countervail the probable protectionist wave that might derive from this backlash? What can be done to really make clusters go international?	Despite this globalization backlash, getting countries and regions engaged in global value chains has become one of the most important development challenges. What role could cluster initiatives play in fostering this engagement?	Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has proven to be key in fostering local competitiveness, as top international players bring along their know-how, innovation, and access to global value chains. What role should cluster initiatives and policy play in attracting and maintaining FDI?

b. Theme: Role of clusters in science, technology, and innovation agendas

Context: It is very well known that science, technology, and innovation (including R&D) agendas are increasingly becoming multisectoral and multidisciplinary, requiring the interaction of many partners, research groups, and companies.

Leading question 1	Leading question 2	Leading question 3
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<p>What could be done to foster these interactions among cluster actors from different countries and/or regions?</p>	<p>A lot of innovation is supposed to happen at the boundaries between different sectors. What could be done to incentivize science, technology, and innovation projects involving different clusters?</p>	<p>Making use of the digital economy can be one of the most effective ways of breaching productivity gaps in sectors and clusters. What are some examples of successful agendas undertaken to increase the use of the digital economy to spur productivity in clusters and/or sectors?</p>
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c. Theme: Entrepreneurship and clusters

Context: There is increasing evidence that entrepreneurship activity is stronger in the presence of strong clusters. However, not many cluster initiatives are undertaking efforts in order to spur new business formation, start-ups, and spin-offs, as part of their agenda.

Leading question 1	Leading question 2
<p>What are some successful examples of clusters agendas and/or projects that are actively pursuing increasing entrepreneurship activity?</p>	<p>What role should incubators and accelerators play in cluster development agendas? What incentives schemes should be put in place so that these instruments deliver better results?</p>

d. Theme: Academia-Business collaboration

Context: It has been more than 20 years since the triple helix concept stated that the academia, industry, and government triad had the potential to achieve innovation and economic development through better generation, transfer, and use of knowledge. However, few regions have actually mastered putting business and academia together in order to achieve growth-enhancing cooperation:

Leading question 1	Leading question 2
<p>What is the secret behind those successful experiences?</p>	<p>Moreover, one of the most pressing economic challenges we face is that of skills mismatch: academia is not being able to cope with the ever-changing private sector demand for talent. Human capital agendas have been at the core of cluster initiatives. What are some successful experiences of these agendas that can be replicated in other settings?</p>

e. Theme: Creating Shared Value

Context: Clusters and Creating Shared Value (CSV) are intrinsically related concepts, with the former being considered as one of the three ways in which business can create economic value by creating societal value—as per Porter and Kramer’s 2011 paper. When companies actively participate in cluster development agendas—for example, when they are active members of a cluster initiative, working alongside other public and private actors—, any benefits derived from these coordination efforts will not only accrue to their individual “bottom lines”, but will also have positive externalities over many other firms that are part of the cluster. Porter and Kramer’s 2011



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paper also talks about two other ways the private sector can engage into “creating shared value” initiatives: by reconceiving products and markets and by redefining productivity in their value chain.

Leading question 1
What are some examples of successful experiences of CSV efforts within cluster initiatives? How can clusters promote shared value business opportunities?

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