



TCI NETWORK

27<sup>TH</sup> TCI GLOBAL CONFERENCE  
THE COLLABORATIVE FUTURE  
AI & HUMAN PROGRESS THROUGH CLUSTERS  
OCTOBER 8 -10 CHIHUAHUA MEXICO

# FOCUS TALK

Sharpen existing tools  
or get a new toolbox?



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# Sharpening existing tools or get a new toolbox?

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*A Policy for the Future: from traditional cluster policies to transformative agendas*

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9 October 2024*



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INNOVATION  
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THE GLASGOW  
SCHOOL OF ART**

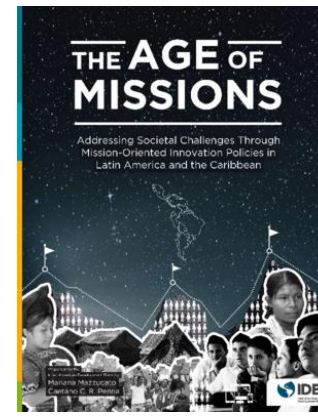
# Main messages of this focus talk

1. *Cluster initiatives are an existing (and successful) tool for collaborative action to foster innovation and competitiveness*
2. *New policy orientations toward addressing societal challenges lead to questions on whether cluster policy can also play an effective role in addressing transformative agendas*
3. *A repurposing (and sharpening) of the cluster policy tool has potential implications for design, mobilisation, implementation and evaluation*

# A changing economic development policy landscape

## More strategic policy agendas ...

- Mission-oriented policies
- From 'old' to 'new' industrial policy
- Transformative innovation policies
- Beyond smart specialisation strategies



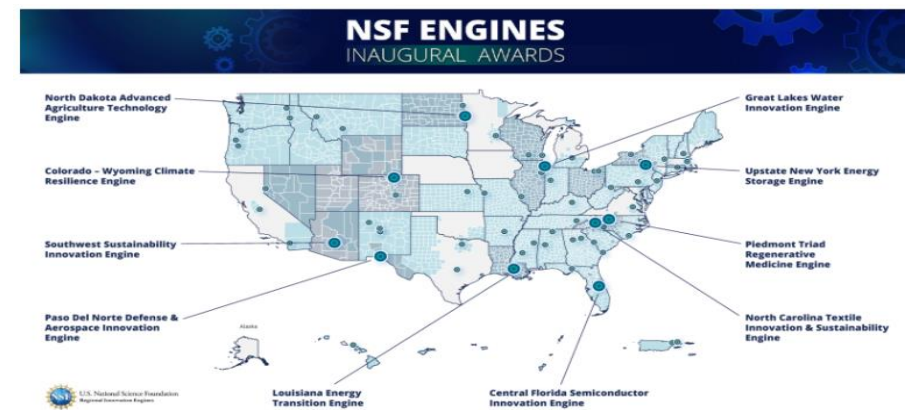
## ... Responding to

- Climate emergency
- Demographic shifts
- Agenda 2030
- Geopolitical volatility

**Can existing policy tools be sharpened or repurposed to fit transformative agendas?**

# Place-based institutional solutions to foster experimentation and collaboration are key “tools of transformation”

- STI cooperation between firms, researchers and governments is crucial to accelerating the development and diffusion of solutions for transformative change
- Coordination across a range of government departments and agencies, as well as different levels of governance, can help facilitate transformations
- To achieve mission goals, participants need the flexibility to propose various solutions and manage projects as portfolios, enabling experimentation, cross learning and discovery of ‘what works’



# TCI 2023 in Reykjavik

We started to reflect on the consequences and implications of this shifting policy landscape for cluster policies and cluster initiatives that are seeking to be transformative



# Some implications uncovered in Reykjavik for ...

## DESIGN

- Adjust objectives of policies / initiatives
- Build in long-term vision
- Develop more integrated policy mixes

## MOBILISATION

- Involve a broader range of actors
- Actively facilitate cross-cluster interaction
- Work to span political (and funding) cycles

## EVALUATION

- New data and info management needs
- Sharing, mentoring and story-telling
- Connections across clusters and places

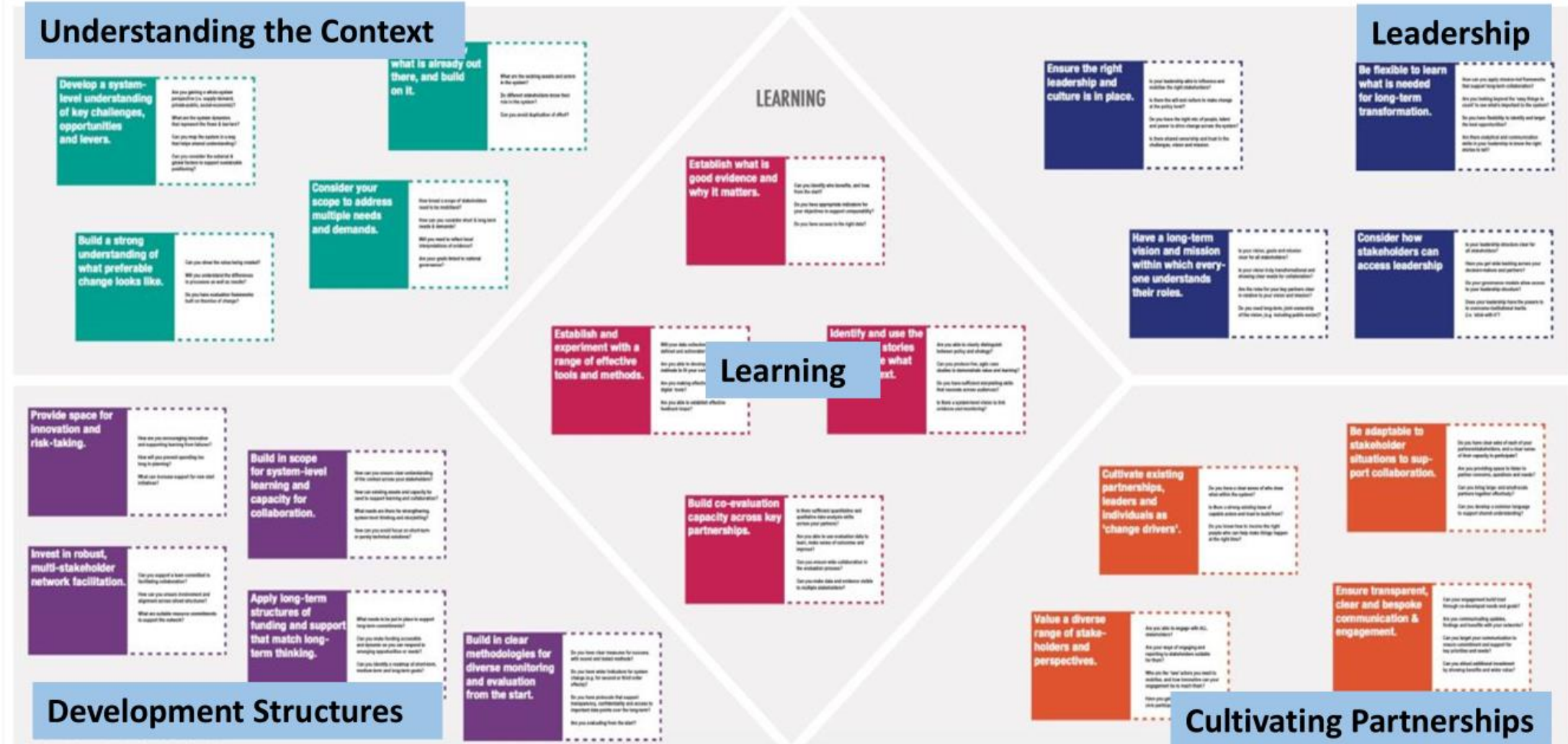
## IMPLEMENTATION

- Develop common language and vision
- Build on traditional collaborative tools
- Experiment with new transformative tools

# ... and recent international KE programme



## Innovation Strategies for System-level Transformation Principles Canvas





# Transformative potential of clusters

Leveraging the power of collaborative action to deliver firm-level innovation and growth

... but also contributing to system-level transformation

- New directionality
- Inclusion and mobilisation of a broader range of actors
- Implementation of actions to address user and demand-side perspectives
- More reflexive and learning-oriented approaches to evaluation



## CLUSTER PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTS



HIGHER LEVEL SYSTEM EFFECTS

# Emerging examples of transformative cluster-type initiatives



BE-ST



## Basque and Catalan Clusters

- Long trajectory in cluster policy
- Catalan introduction of concept of 'creating shared value' within cluster policy to foster systemic transitions (food, mobility, energy)
- Basque exploration of clusters' contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

## Innovation Centres in Scotland

- Evolution of programme aims from industrial growth to economic and societal benefits (including net zero)
- Built Environment for Smarter Transformation (BE-ST)
  - Mobilising actors from different disciplines and business sectors
  - Expanding portfolio of collaborative actions (business models, standards, procurement)

## Vinnväxt initiatives in Sweden

- Reorientation over time to use SDGs as driving force for renewal and transformation
- Addressing challenges in digital health, green chemistry and agricultural technology
- More active engagement of public sector actors
- Accompanying researchers to foster stronger reflexivity in tracking system change

# Clusters as agents of system-level transformation?

Characteristics:	Traditional cluster policy initiatives	Transformative cluster policy initiatives
<b>System boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sector or thematic area</li> <li>- Regional or local</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New mixes of activities</li> <li>- Broader geographies</li> </ul>
<b>Directionality/aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic growth</li> <li>- Competitiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainable competitiveness</li> <li>- Addressing societal challenges</li> </ul>
<b>Actor mobilisation and coordination</b>	Triple helix (firms of different sizes, academia, public sector)	Pentahelix (triple helix + investors/capital, civil society) and beyond
<b>Demand articulation</b>	Demand understood as trends in the market (firm vs. user perspective) and linear approaches to development and market dissemination	Demand understood from the perspective of challenge owners (including public sector demand), and approaches that integrate users in open innovation models
<b>Reflexivity in evaluation</b>	Monitoring and evaluation typically focused on actor-level capabilities and performance	Monitoring, evaluation and learning processes that include a focus on tracking system-level change

# Wrap Up

- Our cluster policies and initiatives provide a vital collaborative infrastructure to address system-level, transformative aims
- Emerging examples demonstrate the possibilities of sharpening the tool of cluster policy in this direction
- The challenge is to push further and continue to sharpen cluster policy so that it remains at the cutting edge of policy
- This requires adaptations to policy design, mobilisation, implementation and evaluation
  - An enabling policy framework
  - Sustained build-up of capacities in cluster initiatives



# Thank you!



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