

community should follow the successful example and use the cluster approach for business development, first of all, in the regions of the country, where it is especially important to maintain the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, to attract additional investments in the regional economy.

For an in-depth analysis of clustering, as well as for the formation of cluster strategies in Belarus, the EU experience in assessing the effectiveness of clusters using the "three stars" methodology will be useful.

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### THE EXPERIENCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE FORMATION OF CLUSTER INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS

### ОПЫТ ЕВРОПЕЙСКОГО СОЮЗА В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ КЛАСТЕРНЫХ ИНИЦИАТИВ И ПРОГРАММ

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*Ключевые слова: кластер, кластерная политика, Европейский Союз, инновации, инновационная стратегия, региональная программа.*

*Abstract. The purpose of the article is to study the European experience in the formation of cluster programs. The ways of organizing interventions within the framework of regional cluster policy are studied. The analysis of cluster initiatives and EU programs, including goals, objectives and areas of activity, is carried out. The*

*directions of formation of successful cluster initiatives of practical interest to Belarus are formulated.*

*Аннотация. Цель статьи – изучение Европейского опыта формирования кластерных программ. Изучены способы организации интервенций в рамках региональной кластерной политики. Проведен анализ кластерных инициатив и программ ЕС, включая цели, задачи и направления деятельности. Сформулированы направления формирования успешных кластерных инициатив, представляющих практический интерес для Беларуси.*

The experience of the European Union in the formation of cluster initiatives and programs is very much in demand in Belarus for making decisions on the implementation of the Cluster Concept for innovative development.

In Europe, in most cases, support for cluster programs is carried out within the framework of regional innovation strategies. In regions such as Catalonia (Spain), Norte (Portugal), Wallonia (Belgium), Hovedstaden (Denmark), Normandy (France), Baden-Württemberg (Germany), there are regional cluster development programs.

The annual budget for cluster programs is quite varied – from 144 million euros in France for the Pôles de compétitivité program to 57 million euros in the UK (under the Strength in Territories fund) and 45 million euros in Germany for various programs. The sources of funds for the existence of cluster programs are the state and the participants themselves, paying certain contributions, private investments from various associations, foundations, international organizations. At the same time, it is important to note that the rapid popularization of the ideas of cluster development and cluster policy has caused skepticism from the academic community. Some researchers note the paradox of cluster policy or question the very need for government participation in the formation of clusters.

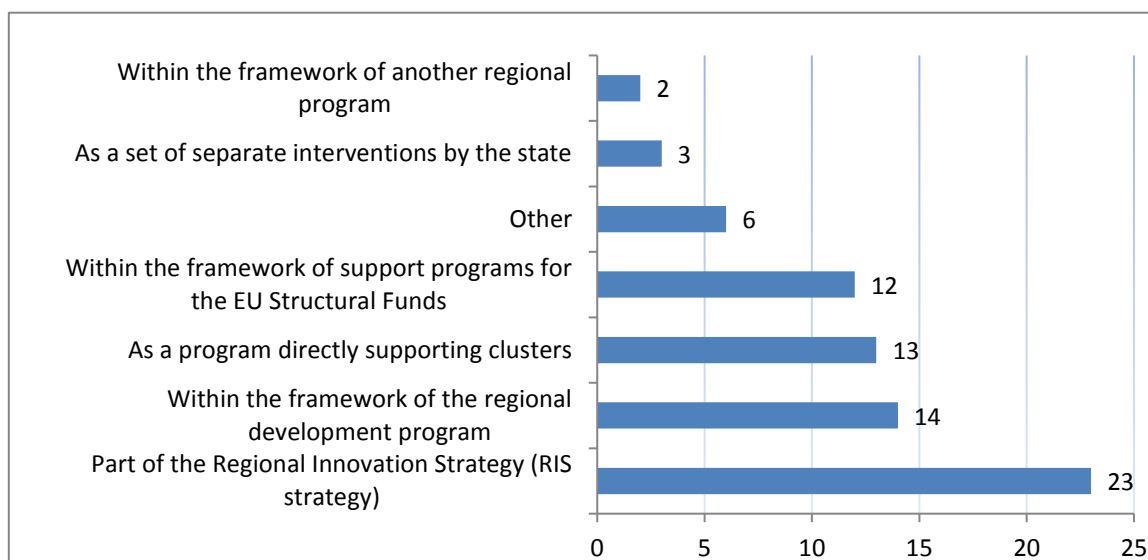


Figure 1 – Method of organizing interventions within the framework of regional cluster policy

Source: based on [3, 5].

The EU supports the clusters mainly through the European Regional Development Fund and its Regional Innovation Strategies program. Its main directions are the following:

- making innovations one of the priorities of regional policy;
- an increase in the number of innovative projects implemented by firms;
- development of cooperation and cooperation between enterprises and government agencies.

One of the organizations that stimulate the development of clusters existing in Europe - the European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis (ESCA) – was created to provide advice and disseminate knowledge and methodology to all participants in cluster development. As part of its activities, ESCA is engaged in the promotion and dissemination of best practices in cluster management through benchmarking and awarding "quality marks" to clusters and cluster management companies; forms a methodology for the formation of cluster development programs, and also supports an expert network on cluster development issues. European cluster initiatives and programs are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Cluster initiatives and EU programs

Name of the cluster initiative and programs	Goal	Tasks, directions of activity
European Cluster Alliance	Pooling of resources and further development effective cluster policies avoiding redundancy and duplication functions at the national level	development of political dialogue at the EU level between national and regional government bodies responsible for the development of the cluster politicians and those who run or finance the cluster programs
Europe INNOVA	Enhancement competitiveness and innovation development	– creation an innovative laboratory for the development, testing and promotion of new innovation support tools to simplify the creation process innovative enterprises; – become the main pan-European platform for managers individual companies, cluster managers, investors, politicians, within which they will have the opportunity to discuss, develop, test and share “best innovative practices”
The European Cluster Observatory	Access to statistical information about clusters, their participants, regional cluster policies in Europe. Activities are targeted at pan-European, national, regional and local policymakers as well as cluster leaders and representatives of SMEs	– analyzes and prepares reports on regional conditions of competition, transnational networks of cluster development, clusters in new industries, studying the best practices of creating cluster organizations; – functioning of the official European cluster mapping tool, providing access to sectoral and cross-sectoral as well as regional data on clusters and providing information on their geographical concentration in Europe in a visual form

**SECTION 2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION  
AND SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

Cluster partnership «EcoCluP»	Promotion of environmental solutions through clusters. Working in eco-innovative industries such as waste processing, water purification, reclamation of disturbed lands, pollution control, environmentally friendly sources energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– implementation developing strategies for the internationalization of clusters;</li> <li>– promoting eco-solutions to the European market;</li> <li>– encouraging the exchange of skills and experience between cluster participants and cooperation in the field of R&amp;D;</li> <li>– creation of training programs for cluster managers;</li> <li>– organization of trainings and coaching programs</li> </ul>
Cluster partnership “ABCEurope”	Expansion of partnerships between European biotechnology clusters and their members to create world-class biotechnology clusters in the EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– development of tools to support the internationalization of small and medium-sized biotechnology enterprises;</li> <li>– developing and testing new, more effective measures and tools to support innovation of SMEs and providing better tools to cluster managers;</li> <li>– provision of legal protection of intellectual property – development of standard agreements in the field of intellectual property rights;</li> <li>– facilitating access to the objects of the pan-European scientific and research infrastructure of individual clusters and organizations</li> </ul>

Source: based on [1, 4, 8, 10].

The formation of such associations makes it possible to identify the needs of enterprises and organizations participating in the cluster in personnel, the amount of funding for cluster projects, thematic events, consulting services, information about potential partners, to promote the development of a modern legal and regulatory framework in the field of regulating the activities of clusters, to promptly inform about possible financial, organizational and information support, organize joint projects with the participation of the maximum number of clusters and cluster organizations, ensure greater transparency of government procedures and decisions for cluster members, provide equal access to information and support for cluster members, ensure collective interests when entering various markets, including international.

A study of the above initiatives and programs allows us to formulate the following main features of a successful cluster initiative:

- taking into consideration the interests and specific needs of the members of the association;
- providing information support and ensuring lobbying of interests;
- significance both at the regional and national level;
- awareness of national executive authorities about cluster;
- initiatives in the region or their determination of the right directions for the formation of clusters;
- taking part in specialized events initiated by the government;
- active positioning both at the regional and national and international levels (participation in competitive procedures, specialized events, surveys, etc.);

- the presence of a fairly clearly expressed innovative component;
- formation within the framework of the cluster initiative of a management team, cluster development centers, etc.

These directions are of practical interest for Belarus.

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