



EUROPEAN CLUSTER  
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

# Country factsheet

United States

An initiative of the European Union



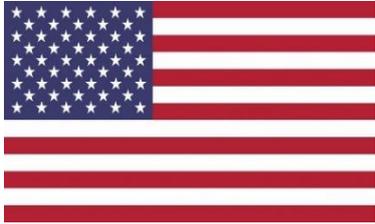


## Contents

Contents .....	2
Introduction .....	3
1. National cluster policy, programmes and initiatives .....	5
2. State of play of cluster policy .....	10
Bibliography.....	13



## Introduction



This document presents an overview of the cluster policy in the United States. Given its importance to contextualise the cluster policies (and related) analysed in the factsheets, a comprehensive outlook of the country in socioeconomic terms can be consulted in the [OECD Economic Survey: United States 2020](#).

The “Economic Surveys” present the major challenges faced by the country, evaluates the short-term outlook, and makes specific policy recommendations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented economic shock to the United States and global economy. The American Rescue Plan <sup>1</sup> will change the course of the pandemic, build a bridge towards economic recovery, and invest in racial justice. The American Rescue Plan will address the stark, intergenerational inequities that have worsened in the wake of COVID-19. The US clusters are not mentioned in the plan.

---

<sup>1</sup>American Rescue Plan: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/legislation/2021/01/20/president-biden-announces-american-rescue-plan/>

01

## National cluster policy, programmes and initiatives



EUROPEAN CLUSTER  
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration



## 1. National cluster policy, programmes and initiatives

Policy type:	National cluster policy	Broad Policy
Policy name:	Regional Innovative Cluster Initiative	Maritime Blue 2050 Strategy Maritime policies
<b>POLICY OBJECTIVES</b> 	<b>Strengthening cooperation between companies or industry and RTDI actors</b> <b>Increasing competitiveness and boosting scale up of SMEs</b> <b>Fostering innovation and strengthening innovation ecosystems</b> <b>Promoting employment and upgrading skills and competences</b>	<b>Strengthening cooperation between companies or industry and RTDI actors</b> <b>Increasing competitiveness and boosting scale up of SMEs</b> <b>Fostering R&amp;D activities, technology development and implementation</b> <b>Fostering innovation and strengthening innovation ecosystems</b> <b>Promoting entrepreneurship, start-ups and spin-offs</b> <b>Promoting employment and upgrading skills and competences</b> <b>Enhancing the visibility of clusters</b> <b>Supporting cluster excellence and professionalisation of cluster management</b> <b>Cluster analysis and support for policymaking</b>
	<p>The regional innovation clusters initiative is part of the US Small Business Administration's Innovative Economy Clusters Programme. The policy objectives are to support small businesses in connecting with innovation assets, support commercialization and expansion into new markets.</p>	<p>The goals of the Maritime Blue Strategy are to encourage a thriving low carbon maritime industry, set Washington State as a global innovation hub, encourage collaboration amongst industry partners, increase workforce development and recruitment, and to build a world class cluster through cluster coordination. The strategy will ensure the growth of the maritime industry through other initiatives such as making Washington State a gateway for imports, exports, and maritime activities.</p>
<b>POLICY FOCUS</b> 	<b>No specific Focus</b>	<b>Sectoral</b>
	<p>There is no particular focus. At the launch of the pilot programme in 2010, there were seven innovation clusters. In 2019, an additional seven regional innovation</p>	<p>Focuses on the Maritime Industry in Washington State.</p>



		clusters were added, these clusters focus on rural small business creation. In total there are fourteen innovation clusters.	
<p><b>RESPONSIBLE</b></p>  <p><b>AUTHORITIES</b></p>	<p><b>In charge of drafting</b></p> <p><b>Provides funding</b></p> <p><b>Oversees the implementation</b></p>	<p><b>In charge of drafting</b></p> <p><b>In charge of implementation</b></p>	
	<p>Through the U.S. Small Business Administration, the government provides support and funding for the Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative. It also oversees how funds are allocated and implemented.</p>	<p>The Initiative was drafted by the Washington State Department of Commerce and is implemented by the Washington Maritime Blue cluster organisation.</p>	
<p><b>BENEFICIARIES</b></p> 	<p><b>SMEs</b></p> <p><b>Research organisations</b></p> <p><b>Academic institutions</b></p> <p><b>Large firms</b></p> <p><b>Cluster organisations</b></p> <p><b>Business associations</b></p>	<p><b>SMEs</b></p> <p><b>Research organisations</b></p> <p><b>Academic institutions</b></p> <p><b>Large firms</b></p> <p><b>Technology centres</b></p> <p><b>NGOs</b></p> <p><b>Cluster organisations</b></p>	
	<p>The initiative targets clusters that support small businesses by establishing a network of large businesses, universities, SMEs, investors, research organisations and business associations.</p>	<p>Maritime Blue Cluster members include industry members such as Tote Maritime, Public Agencies and Municipalities, Research institutions such as Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Academic institutions such as University of Washington, Non-profit organisations such as Green Marine and Maritime Clusters such Sea Ahead BlueTech Innovation.</p>	
<p><b>INSTRUMENTS</b></p> 	<p>Financial</p> <p><b>Support to R&amp;D projects, SMEs becoming cluster members, etc.</b></p> <p><b>Innovation: voucher, support to hire PhDs, cooperation with R&amp;I actor</b></p>	<p><b>Funding collaboration initiatives</b></p> <p><b>Support to R&amp;D projects, SMEs becoming cluster members, etc.</b></p> <p><b>Financing networking events</b></p> <p><b>Financing start-ups</b></p>	



	<b>Technical assistance</b>	<p><b>Support for soft skills development: coaching, management training, upskilling/reskilling</b></p> <p><b>Support for networking and partnership building (at national and/or international level)</b></p>	<p><b>Support for hard skill development: knowledge transfer, intellectual property, entrepreneurship, export advice, market intelligence</b></p> <p><b>Support for soft skills development: coaching, management training, upskilling/reskilling</b></p> <p><b>Infrastructure: coworking spaces, offices, incubation and accelerator spaces, research centres, technology parks etc.</b></p> <p><b>Infrastructure: coworking spaces, offices, incubation and accelerator spaces, research centres, technology parks etc.</b></p> <p><b>Support for networking and partnership building (at national and/or international level)</b></p> <p><b>Marketing activities: advertising, communication, events, fairs, and so on</b></p>
	<b>Explanation</b>	<p>The initiative funds activities that increase small business participation in cluster activities, promote innovation, and enhances economic development and growth. This includes providing funds for mentorship and counselling of small businesses and providing services.</p>	<p>Maritime Blue Strategy funds activities that relate to R&amp;D, incubation, education and training of workforce, communications, outreaches, and collaboration projects. Maritime Blue Strategy through in-kind support from Port of Seattle hosts the Maritime Innovation Center that provides a space for cluster programs, co-working space and accelerators and incubators.</p>
<p><b>HISTORY</b></p>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Unlimited</b>	<b>Limited period</b>
	<b>Ending year</b> <i>(for policies with limited period)</i>	2023	2050
	<b>Starting year</b>	2010	2019
	<b>Explanation</b>	<p>The policy was launched in 2010 as part of the pilot programme Innovative Economies. An additional seven cluster organisations were awarded funding in 2019. Each cluster organisation contract is for a base year and four option years. However, there is no indication that the overall initiative is for a limited period.</p>	<p>The Governor (Jay Inslee) assembled the Maritime Innovation Advisory Council in December 2017 to develop a strategy that supports the Maritime industry. The strategy is to ensure Washington State has a thriving Maritime industry by 2050.</p>



 <b>BUDGET</b>	<b>Overall</b>	Data unavailable.	Data Unavailable- there is no concise information on the overall budget, however there is information about grants and donations from individual stakeholders.
	<b>Annual</b>	Base Year-EUR 376,000 per cluster organisation.	Data unavailable.
	<b>Source of funding</b>	The Small Business Administration and private investors.	US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, through the Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) provided a €446,627 (\$500,000) grant to the programme. €446,627 (\$500,000) was given through in-kind support from Port of Seattle (providing space for Washington Maritime Innovation Centre). The Port of Seattle also donated €8,932,559 (\$10.5 million) to the initiative and the State Government allocated €4,466,279 (\$5 million) to the initiative in the 2019-2021 Biennial Capital Budget to support efforts of Port of Seattle. Maritime Blue Cluster Members also pay a membership fee.
 <b>EVALUATION</b>	<b>Availability</b>	<b>in-itinere</b>	<b>no policy evaluation</b>
	<b>Results</b>	In the first 3 years of the initiative (2010-2013), participants increased by over 500%. There was also a 43% increase in small business participation in cluster activities. Employment amongst cluster-associated firms grew by 6.9%, revenues also grew by 6.9% compared to non-cluster associated firms that grew at only a 3.5% rate.	The strategy was implemented in December 2019, therefore there is no policy evaluation at this time.
<b>POLICY ALIGNMENT WITH THE EU PRIORITIES</b> 		<b>Social inclusion</b>	<b>Social inclusion</b>

02

## State of play of cluster policy



EUROPEAN CLUSTER  
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration



## 2. State of play of cluster policy

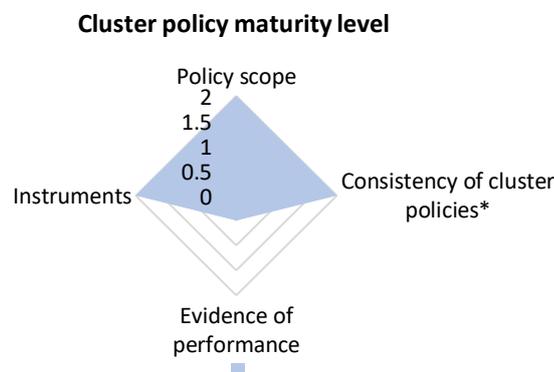
The data below illustrates how the country ranks in terms of maturity of cluster policy. The maturity index is based on a combination of factors presented in Chapter 2 and which are scored based on their existence:

- **Policy scope:** whether the country has a dedicated cluster policy, or cluster creation and/or development is targeted through broader policies (existence of broader policies = 1 point; existence of targeted cluster policies = 2 points)
- **Consistency of cluster policies:** assessment of the duration and experience of the country in doing cluster policies. This dimension assesses only existing cluster policies and not broader policies (no cluster policies available = 0 points; < 10 years of experience or > 10 years (but interrupted) = 1 point; > 10 years (but with clear continuity) = 2 points)
- **Evidence of performance:** the existence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms determines the degree of policy development in the country (no evaluations = 0 points; existence of evaluations of past policies or in-itinere = 0.5 points; existence of ex-ante and/or ex-post evaluations = 0.5 points)
- **Instruments:** whether the policies provide any instruments to support the policy implementation, being these financial and/or technical assistance (1 point for each type of instrument available)

It is important to note that the maturity does not reflect the performance of a country, but only the degree of development of their cluster policy at the moment when the data was collected (2020 and 2021). The maturity index illustrates how the country scores for each of these four dimensions (policy scope, consistency of cluster policies, evidence of performance and instruments) compared to the maximum score that they can reach.

	United States	Maximum score
Policy scope	2	2
Consistency of cluster policies*	2	2
Evidence of performance	0,5	1
Instruments	2	2

*\* This dimension is scored solely if the country has a dedicated cluster policy and it assesses only cluster policies*



State of play of cluster policy in the country

Availability of evaluations for terminated policies



<b>Policy evaluation (for terminated policies)</b>	Massachusetts Life Sciences Initiative: 2008-2018. Life Sciences Initiative has been very successful in creating jobs and bringing investment to the State of Massachusetts. The number of companies in the Massachusetts Life Science Centre (MLSC), the implementing agency of the Life Sciences Initiative program is 8,940. This represents a 50% growth rate compared to the overall industry which had a growth rate of 14% from 2009 to 2016. Venture Capital investment in MLSC companies also reached \$2.1 billion from 2009 to 2017. MSLC companies had 3,460 innovative patents and clinical trials totalled 453 by MSLC companies from 2009-2017. Due to the success of the original policy (2008-2018), the policy was extended for another 5-year period in June 2018.
<b>Policy approach in the country</b>	<p><b>Policy support for the activities of cluster organisations</b></p> <p><b>Broad-based framework policies to support cooperation effectiveness</b></p> <p><b>Cluster approach used directly by national/regional development agencies</b></p>
<b>Continuity</b>	<p>The United States Federal Government has not always been directly involved in cluster policies, it has however through federal agencies such as US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in the past played a supportive role by creating policies and situations for cluster organisations to be successful.</p> <p>In recent years, the US has begun to have a more direct role in encouraging innovation clusters. In 2007, Congress passed the America Competes Act, the act includes authorisation of innovation clusters without funding. In 2010, the Obama Administration through the Small Business Administration (SBA) launched Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative (RIC) to support industry clusters. As part of the SBA's Innovative Economy Clusters programme, the agency supports two types of Innovative Economies: Regional Innovation Clusters and Advanced Defence Technologies. In 2012, the Obama Administration also invested over EUR 155 million to support regional innovation clusters through the Regional Innovation Strategies program (RIS), regional cluster initiatives such as Washington's Maritime Blue Strategy has benefited from this. In addition, the administration created a taskforce called Taskforce for the Advancement of Regional Innovation Clusters (TARIC) to develop and administer grant competitions. However, in recent years the current administration (Trump Administration) has reduced funding for R&amp;D projects, government's role in cluster initiatives have reduced, R&amp;D projects have taken a more private sector focus.</p>
<b>Consistency</b>	<p><b>&gt; 10 years (but with clear continuity)</b></p> <p>There are no national cluster policies in the US. The US however has several broad policies at the national and regional level. At the National level broad policies there are policies such as Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative and Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) programme. At the regional level, broad policies such as the Massachusetts Life Science Initiative encourage collaboration through investing in innovation through public-private partnerships and R&amp;D with academic and research institutions.</p>

# Bibliography



EUROPEAN CLUSTER  
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration



## Bibliography

- Bannister, Susan. "A New Role for Government in Accelerating Life Sciences Innovation: The Massachusetts Life Sciences Initiative." Presentation at the Barcelona Bioregion Forum. November 25, 2016. [www.slideshare.net/biocat/a-new-role-for-government-in-accelerating-life-science-innovation-the-massachusetts-life-sciences-initiative-susan-bannister](http://www.slideshare.net/biocat/a-new-role-for-government-in-accelerating-life-science-innovation-the-massachusetts-life-sciences-initiative-susan-bannister).
- Data Catalog. "Regional Innovation Clusters". Assessed August 5, 2020. <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/regional-innovation-clusters>
- Executive Office for Administration and Finance. "FY2010 House 1 Budget Recommendation Policy Brief." <https://budget.digital.mass.gov/bb/h1/fy10h1/prnt10/exec10/pbudbrief23.htm>.
- European Cluster Collaboration Platform. USA: SBA Regional Innovation Cluster awardees revealed. Assessed August 5, 2020. [www.clustercollaboration.eu/news/usa-sba-regional-innovation-cluster-awardees-revealed](http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/news/usa-sba-regional-innovation-cluster-awardees-revealed)
- European Commission. "European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change. Cluster programmes in Europe and beyond. May 2019". Assessed August 5, 2020. [www.clustercollaboration.eu/sites/default/files/news\\_attachment/cluster\\_programmes\\_in\\_europe\\_and\\_beyond\\_0.pdf](http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/sites/default/files/news_attachment/cluster_programmes_in_europe_and_beyond_0.pdf)
- MassBio. "MassBio's Impact 2020 Strategic Report." March 15, 2016. Assessed July 16, 2020. [www.massbio.org/news/recent-news/massbios-impact-2020-strategic-report/](http://www.massbio.org/news/recent-news/massbios-impact-2020-strategic-report/).
- MIT Industrial Performance Center. "Strengthening the Innovation Ecosystem for Advanced Manufacturing. Pathways & Opportunities for Massachusetts." 2015. <http://ipc-archive.mit.edu/sites/default/files/images/Report.pdf>.
- Robert H. Wade. "The paradox of US industrial policy: The development in state in disguise." In Transforming Economies: Making industrial policy work for growth, jobs and development – Introduction by José M. Salazar-Xirinachs, Irmgard Nübler, Richard Kozul-Wright (Eds). International Labour Organisation. 2014.
- State of Washington Department of Commerce. "Washington Maritime Blue: A strategic Alliance for Maritime Innovation & Sustainability." 2019. [http://maritimeblue.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Blue-Membership-Slidedeck\\_4-7-19.pdf](http://maritimeblue.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Blue-Membership-Slidedeck_4-7-19.pdf).
- Stendahl, Max. "Gov. Baker signs \$500M, 5-year life Sciences bill." Boston Business Journal. June 15, 2018 [www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2018/06/15/gov-baker-signs-500m-5-year-life-sciences-bill.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2018/06/15/gov-baker-signs-500m-5-year-life-sciences-bill.html).
- U.S. Economic Development Administration. "Washington State Department of Commerce." Assessed July 17, 2020. [www.eda.gov/oie/ris/i6/2017/awardees/wa-state-doc.htm](http://www.eda.gov/oie/ris/i6/2017/awardees/wa-state-doc.htm).
- U.S. Small Business Administration. "SBA Announces New Regional Innovation Cluster Awards to Advance Small Business Growth". Assessed August 6, 2020 [www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-announces-new-regional-innovation-cluster-awards-advance-small-business-growth](http://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-announces-new-regional-innovation-cluster-awards-advance-small-business-growth)
- U.S. Small Business Administration. "SBA Announces Support for 10 Regional 'Innovative Economies' Clusters, Local Job Creation". Assessed August 5, 2020 [www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-announces-support-10-regional-innovative-economies-clusters-local-job-creation](http://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-announces-support-10-regional-innovative-economies-clusters-local-job-creation)
- U.S. Small Business Administration. "SBA Counseling and Training Resources". Assessed August 5, 2020. [www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/oed\\_files/Clusters.pdf](http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/oed_files/Clusters.pdf)
- U.S. Small Business Administration. "The Evaluation of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative. Year Three Report". July 2014. Assessed August 6, 2020. [www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/aboutsbaarticle/SBAClusters\\_Year3\\_Report.pdf](http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/aboutsbaarticle/SBAClusters_Year3_Report.pdf)
- SSTi. "SBA announces funding for regional innovation clusters". Assessed August 5, 2020. <https://ssti.org/blog/sba-announces-funding-regional-innovation-clusters>
- Washington State Department of Commerce. "Maritime Blue Strategy. World Class Cluster." Assessed July 17, 2020. <https://maritimeblue.org/cluster-2/>.
- Washington State Department of Commerce. "U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$500k in Washington state maritime sector innovation." September 22, 2017. [www.commerce.wa.gov/news-releases/u-s-department-of-commerce-invests-500k-in-washington-state-maritime-sector-innovation/](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/news-releases/u-s-department-of-commerce-invests-500k-in-washington-state-maritime-sector-innovation/).
- Washington State Department of Commerce. "Washington Maritime Blue." Assessed July 27, 2020. <https://maritimeblue.org/>.
- Washington State Department of Commerce. "Washington state maritime investment study points to tech innovation for growth." September 19, 2019. [www.commerce.wa.gov/news-releases/washington-state-maritime-industry-investment-study-points-to-tech-innovation-for-growth/](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/news-releases/washington-state-maritime-industry-investment-study-points-to-tech-innovation-for-growth/).
- Washington State Department of Commerce. "Washington State's Strategy for the Blue Economy. Charting a Course to 2050." January 2019.



Washington State Governor's Office. "Maritime Blue: Washington's strategy for a 'Blue Economy'." January 8, 2019. <https://medium.com/wagovernor/maritime-blue-washingtons-strategy-for-a-blue-economy-ea9425004d0e>.  
American Rescue Plan: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/legislation/2021/01/20/president-biden-announces-american-rescue-plan/>