European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Country factsheet

Portugal

Content

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration

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Introduction

This document presents an overview of the cluster policy in Portugal. Given the 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 European Semester Country Report for Portugal.

The European Semester was an instrument introduced to coordinate the EU Member States economic policies and address the economic challenges faced by the EU. Its goals are "to ensure sound public finances, to prevent excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the EU, to support structural reforms to create more jobs and growth, and to boost investment". Thus, it focuses on the following areas: business environment; financial and fiscal stability; green economy; public administration; labour market and skills; and, social protection and cohesion.

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, European as well as global economies have been subject to severe output losses. In response, policymakers at EU and national level have acted decisively and made very significant financial resources available to tackle the threat of a prolonged downturn. This was carried out through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, National recovery and resilience plans have been drafted in each Member State to ensure a recovery that addresses the challenges identified in the European Semester. In Portugal, clusters contributed to the drafting of the plan to mitigate negative sectoral impacts by informing on needs and feasibility whilst also presenting proposals for future directions, projects and initiatives.[1]

Portugal's recovery and resilience plan responds to the urgent need to foster a strong recovery and making Portugal future ready. The reforms and investments in the plan will help Portugal become more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions. Clusters are mentioned in one of the reforms related to the promotion of research, development and innovation and innovative investment by companies through clustering strategies for collaborative innovation dynamics. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing Russian military aggression against Ukraine has also taken its toll on EU companies and industrial ecosystems, highlighting the significance of policy efforts in supporting SMEs and clusters.
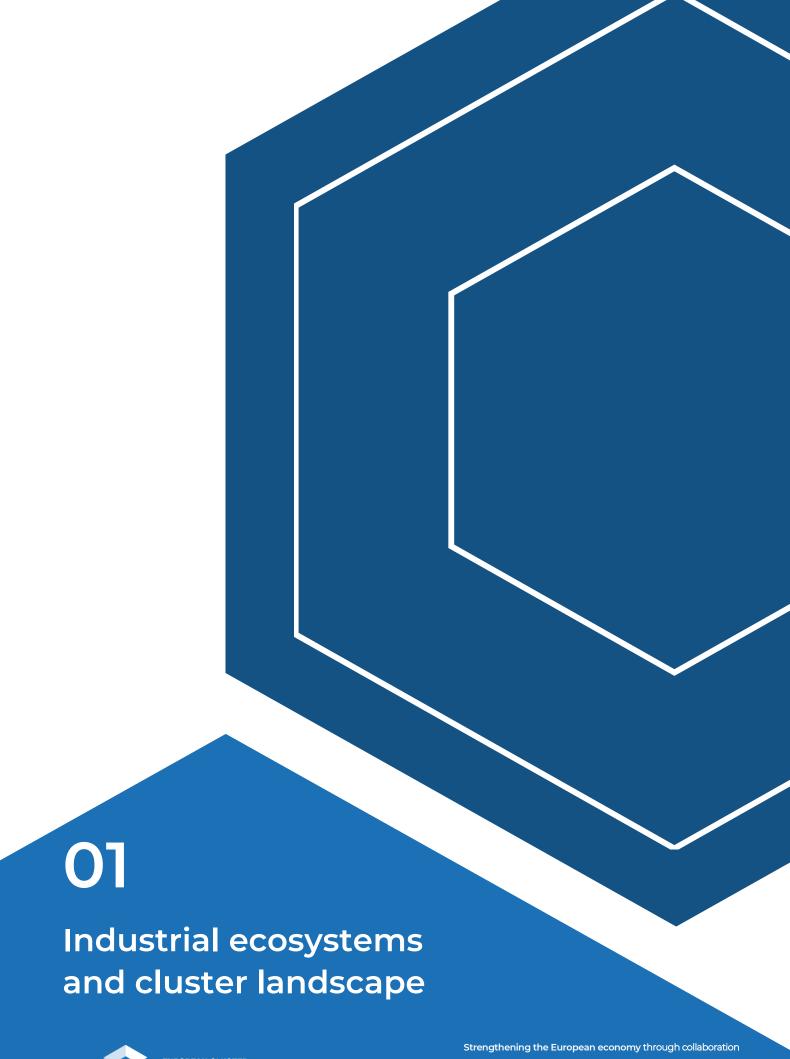
The ERDF Partnership Agreement 2021-2027 for Portugal includes the promotion of clustering strategies and innovation dynamics, the collaborative approach to strengthen the R&D system, crucial in the development of applied research and in supporting business Innovation.

In the following, a succinct overview of the cluster policy in Portugal will be provided. The structure of this factsheet generally encompasses:
1) an overview of the industrial ecosystems and cluster landscape in Portugal
2) an overview of the national cluster policy and an insight into the regional cluster policy,
3) an assessment of the state of play of the national cluster policy.

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[1] AED Cluster Portugal (2021). AED Cluster Portugal contributes to the national Recovery Plan. Available under: https://www.aedportugal.pt/en/news/aed-cluster-portugal-contributes-to-the-national-recovery-plan/ (last access 27.01.2023).

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01

Industrial ecosystems and cluster landscape

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1. Industrial ecosystems and cluster landscape

Employment in the 14 ecosystems in the country

As part of its Industrial Strategy (March 2020), the European Commission has selected 14 industrial ecosystems that are particularly relevant in Europe and encompass all players operating in a value chain.[2] The classification of the 14 industrial ecosystems have been calculated by aggregating NACE 2 -digit activities, following the methodology established in the European Commission.[3]

In Figure 1, the employment share of Portugal and EU27 in each industrial ecosystem is shown relative to the number of employed persons in the 14 industrial ecosystems. The ecosystems are ordered, from top to bottom, according to the amount of employment in the country. When the bar for the country is higher than that of the EU27, it indicates that the country is more specialised in that ecosystem. Here, the three main ecosystems by employment for Portugal are "Retail", "Tourism" and "Construction". In a number of industrial ecosystems ("Tourism", "Agri-Food", "Textile") Portugal has an employment share higher than the EU27 average, which indicates the relative strength of the country in those industrial ecosystems.

Figure 1: Employment in the ecosystems

Source: ECCP (2022), own elaboration based on data from Eurostat.

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[2] see here for more information https://clustercollaboration.eu/in-focus/industrial-ecosystems (last access 09.01.2023).

[3] see European Commission (2021): Annual Single Market Report, SWD(2021)351.

Regionally relevant nodes (agglomerations)

Economic activity, and therefore employment, is not equally distributed in all regions. Specialisation can be measured through Location Quotients (LQ) that reflect the relative specialisation of an activity in a region compared to the EU average. If the LQ for a given activity-region combination is above 1.5, it is considered a specialisation node and if the activity accounts for at least 1 % of total employment in the region, it is considered regionally relevant.[4] The following tables shows the total number of regionally relevant specialisation nodes (agglomerations) in each region in the country and identifies the top five most specialised of these nodes. The first table focuses on the 88 NACE 2-digit activities or sectors, totalling 54 in the country, while the second table is based on the 14 ecosystems, which total 10 in the country.

Table 1: Number of regionally relevant sectoral nodes and Top 5 nodes by region (NACE)

Region	# of nodes	Node 1	Node 2	Node 3	Node 4	Node 5
PT11: North (Portugal)	9	C15 - Manuf. of leather products	C14 - Manuf. of wearing apparel	C13 - Manuf. of textiles	C31 - Manuf. of furniture	C16 – Manuf. of wood and wood products
PT15: Algarve	8	I55 - Accommodation	I56 - Food & beverage services	F41 - Construction of buildings	N82 - Business support activities	A01 - Crop & animal production
PT16: Centre (Portugal)	6	C23 - Manuf. of other non-metal mineral products	A01 - Crop & animal production	C25 - Manuf. of fabricated metal products	F41 - Construction of buildings	N82 - Business support activities
PT17: Lisbon Metropolitan Area	8	N82 - Business support activities	N80 - Security, investigation activities	M70 – Head office activities	T97 - Households as employers act.	I55 - Accommodation
PT18: Alentejo	6	C11 – Manuf. of beverages	A01 - Crop & animal production	A02 - Forestry & logging	C10 - Manuf. of food products	N82 - Business support activities
PT20: Azores	10	H51 – Air transport	I55 - Accommodation	A01 - Crop & animal production	T97 - Households as employers act.	F41 - Construction of buildings
PT30: Madeira	7	I55 - Accommodation	F42 – Civil engineering	A01 - Crop & animal production	N82 - Business support activities	I56 - Food & beverage services.

Source: ECCP (2022), own elaboration based on data from Eurostat.

Overall, there are fewer ecosystem nodes than the regionally relevant sectoral nodes by NACE sectors. This more concentrated agglomeration can at least partially be linked to the methodology of measurement of the 14 industrial ecosystems. On a general level, Portugal's employment strength in the industrial ecosystems "Tourism", "Agri-Food", and "Textile" compared to the EU27 average (see Figure 1) is also reflected in the regionally relevant sectoral nodes and regionally relevant ecosystem nodes of the different regions.

For instance, the region North (PT11) has regionally relevant sectoral nodes such as manufacturing of leather products (C15), wearing apparel (C14) and textiles (C13) and also "Textile" as a regionally relevant ecosystem which underlines the region's strength in this sector. Other regions (e.g., Algarve) have regionally relevant sectoral nodes such as accommodation (I55) and food and beverage services (I56) which is reflected in their regionally relevant ecosystem node ("Tourism"). A number of regions (e.g., Alentejo) have a regionally relevant ecosystem node in the ecosystem "Agri-Food". Simultaneously these regions have regionally relevant sectoral nodes in sectors such as manufacturing of beverages (C11), crop and animal production (A01) and forestry and logging (A02).

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[4] for more information on the methodology please see the methodology note: https://clustercollaboration.eu/in-focus/policy-acceleration/country-factsheets-on-cluster-policies-and-programmes (last access 09.01.2023).
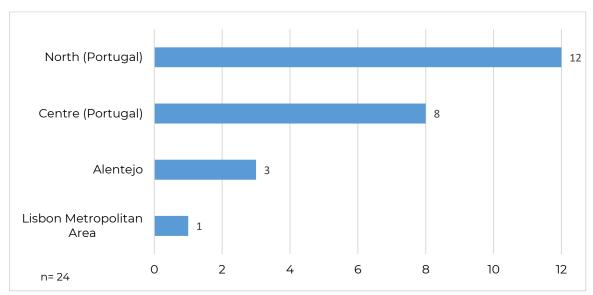
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Table 2: Regionally relevant ecosystem nodes

Region	# of ecosystem nodes	Node 1	Node 2	Node 3
PT11: North (Portugal)	1	Textile	-	-
PT15: Algarve	1	Tourism	-	-
PT16: Centre (Portugal)	3	Agri-Food	Textile	Energy-intensive industries
PT17: Lisbon Metropolitan Area	1	Tourism	-	-
PT18: Alentejo	1	Agri-Food	-	-
PT20: Azores	1	Agri-Food	-	-
PT30: Madeira	2	Agri-Food	Tourism	-

Source: ECCP (2022), own elaboration based on data from Eurostat.

Cluster organisations in the regions

There are 24 cluster organisations registered on the ECCP in the country. The majority of these registered cluster organisations are located in the region "North" (12 cluster organisations) followed by Centre (8 cluster organisations) and Alentejo (3 cluster organisations). In the Lisbon Metropolitan Area one cluster organisation is profiled on the ECCP. The following figure shows the presence of cluster organisations in the different regions.

Figure 2: Cluster organisations profiled on the ECCP

Source: ECCP (2022). Note: the data for the analysis was extracted on 14/10/2022.
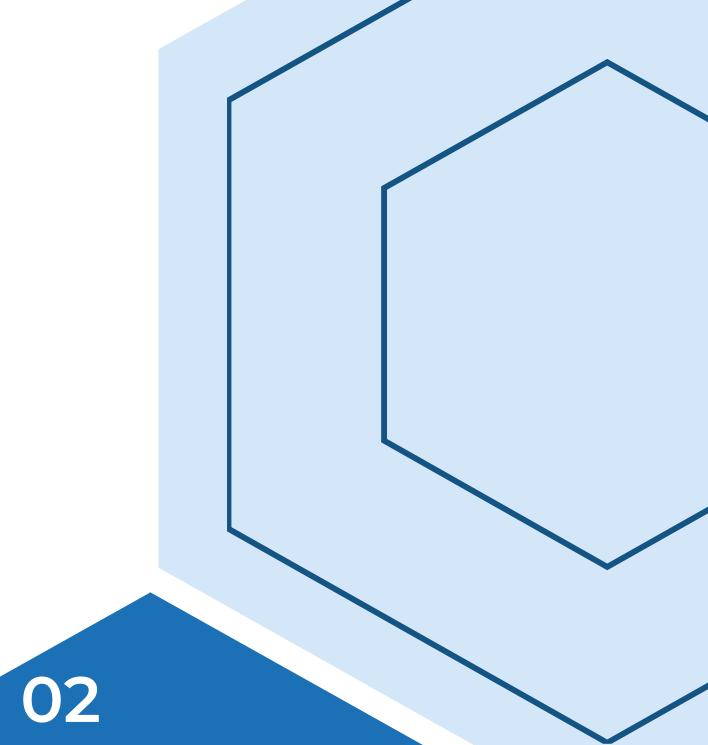
SMEs (82%, EU: 84%) followed by research organisations (10%, EU:7%) and large enterprises (9%, EU: 9%) constitute the majority of member organisations of Portuguese cluster organisations with profiles on the ECCP. From a thematic perspective, these Portuguese cluster organisations are operating in the following industrial ecosystems. Since not all cluster organisations on the ECCP provided this information, the number of cluster organisations with an allocated industrial ecosystem is lower than the overall number of cluster organisations in the country.

- Digital (4 cluster organisations)
- Renewable Energy (2 cluster organisations)

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- Agri-food (2 cluster organisations)
- Creative & Cultural Industries (2 cluster organisations)
- Mobility-Transport-Automotive (1 cluster organisations)
- Construction (1 cluster organisation)

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National cluster policy, programmes and initiatives

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2. National cluster policy, programmes and initiatives

In this section we provide an overview of the existing Portuguese cluster policies on a national level.

The breakdown is presented in the form of a table, with the first column showcasing information on the aspects which constitute the policy (beginning with 'Policy Objectives', following with 'Policy Focus', etc.). The second column represents the case of a Portuguese national cluster policy.

Within the table the text presented in bold (black) depicts standardised categories across country factsheets (56 in total for 2022), which are applied for comparative purposes. This is followed by a complementary descriptive text to provide more insights about the cluster policy in Portugal.

Policy type:	National cluster policy
Policy name:	Clusters de Competitividade (Competitiveness Clusters)
POLICY OBJECTIVES	**Strengthening cooperation between companies or industry and RTDI actors** **Increasing competitiveness and boosting scale up of SMEs** **Supporting internationalisation activities** **Enhancing the visibility of clusters** **Fostering R&D activities, technology development and implementation** **Fostering innovation and strengthening innovation ecosystems** **Supporting the consolidation of existing cluster organisations** **Promoting entrepreneurship, start-ups and spin-offs** **Promoting employment and upgrading skills and competences** **Enhancing territorial cohesion (through RIS3)** **Strengthening the network of cluster organisations/cross-clustering** **Cluster analysis and support for policymaking**

Policy type:	National cluster policy
Policy name:	Clusters de Competitividade (Competitiveness Clusters)

In 2017, with the support of the IAPMEI, the Portuguese Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation, under de Ministry for Economy and Digital Transition, the Government accredited 20 cluster organisations as Competitiveness Clusters, through the Programme Interface, aimed at bringing together academia, research and industry. The Programme Interface is the instrument used to allocate funds provided by the various Operational Programmes. There are currently 18 Competitiveness Clusters active, as mentioned above.

Competitiveness Clusters are defined as platforms that aggregate knowledge and skills and play a central role in the industrial policy and economy, having made a remarkable contribution to strengthening the country's competitiveness. Such role includes a strong focus on innovation and technology transfer, digitalisation, identification of training providers, and training of providers, strengthening the link between start-ups and industrial enterprises, internationalisation, circular economy, and energy efficiency.

The Government and 18 Competitiveness Clusters signed the Sectoral Pacts for Competitiveness and Internationalisation (Pactos Setoriais para a Competitividade e Internacionalização) to increase the competitiveness, innovation and internationalisation of Portuguese businesses, thus improving the national economy.

The main objective of the Pacts is to implement a set of actions and measures to:

- Contribute to the dynamization of ecosystems associated with clustering dynamics.

- Increase cooperation and collaboration relationships for the development of initiatives in various axes of intervention.

- incentivise circular economy and an efficient energetic and ecologic transition,

- improve the institutional and regulatory conditions of the business ecosystem,

- promote Industry 4.0,

- Foster the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce

- accelerate exports by consolidating the external attractiveness factors of the country,

- boost internationalisation and promote R&I.

For instance, the Pacts include six key actions, which are adjusted according to the different cluster organisations:

1. Provision of training, retention and attraction of talent;

Policy type:	National cluster policy
Policy name:	Clusters de Competitividade (Competitiveness Clusters)

	2. Increase added value of products and promotion of circular economy,
	3. Innovation and I&D,
	4. Promotion of internationalisation and attraction of foreign investment,
	5. Promotion of the national ecosystem of start-ups,
	6. Funding access.
	The Pacts signed between the Government and clusters also include other public and private actors of relevance for the sectors, which will support the implementation of policies that benefit the development and internationalisation of businesses. For this purpose, a Monitoring Committee (Comissão de Acompanhamento) was created, constituted by entities, which, due to its missions can contribute to the execution of the measures included in the Sectorial Pacts and which is chaired by the Office of the Secretary of State of Economy. * (composition of the Monitoring Committee: management organization of each cluster, and high-level representatives of COMPETE, managing entity for Structural Funds, ANI - National Innovation Agency, AICEP Portugal Global - Trade & Investment Agency (AICEP), Cabinet Office of the Secretary of State of Internationalization, Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Employment, IAPMEI - Portuguese Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation and the IEFP – the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training of Portugal)
POLICY FOCUS	**Cross- sectoral** Even though no specific sectors are mentioned, the cluster organisations that have signed Pacts determine the sectoral focus of the policy to a great extent. There are Pacts in the following fields: aerospace, railway, petrochemical, fashion & footwear, sea, raw materials, sustainable living, smart cities, textile, agri-food, health, construction, automobile, ICT, production technologies, and wine. These are aligned with the priorities of the Portuguese Government.
RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES	**In charge of drafting:** Ministry of Economy and Sea **In charge of implementation:** IAPMEI and several other entities **Oversees the implementation:** IAPMEI The Ministry of Economy is the main responsible body for the policy, which is implemented by the IAPMEI - Portuguese Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation. Furthermore, the IAPMEI is responsible for accompanying, monitoring and

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Policy type:	National cluster policy
Policy name:	Clusters de Competitividade (Competitiveness Clusters)

	evaluating the Competitiveness Clusters and their progress towards the objectives set in the initial work programme approved.
	To monitor and support the implementation of the strategies associated with the Sectoral Pacts, a Monitoring Committee was created (Please see above), chaired by the Deputy State Secretary for the Economy.
	IAPMEI acts as a facilitator, promoting the articulation of the Competitiveness Clusters with other public and private organizations and supports the dissemination of important information to national Clusters and about the national cluster organisations to other players.
BENEFICIARIES	**SMEs**
	Cluster organisations
	Research organisations
	Academic institutions
	Business organisations
	The policy targets cluster organisations in key economic sectors. The collaborative dynamics of the clusters are expected to facilitate the spillover of the benefits to member organisations, the business environment, and, Portuguese society as a whole.
	Each cluster has a management organization and several associated members, including SMEs, sectorial and business associations, universities and research centres.

INSTRUMENTS	**Financial**	**Funding collaboration initiatives**
		Support to R&D projects, etc.
		Supporting market entry (e.g. testing, proof-of-concept, prototyping, demonstration projects)
		Financing start-ups
		Innovation: voucher, support to hire PhDs, cooperation with R&I actors

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Policy type:	National cluster policy
Policy name:	Clusters de Competitividade (Competitiveness Clusters)

	Technical assistance	**Support for hard skill development: knowledge transfer, intellectual property, entrepreneurship, export advice, market intelligence**
		Support for soft skills development: coaching, management training, upskilling/reskilling
		Support for networking and partnership building (at national and/or international level)
	Explanation	The national public support directly granted to Competitiveness Clusters is conveyed mainly through the Support System for Collective Actions (SIAC) for "Networks and other forms of Partnership and Cooperation".
		However, Clusters Management Entities and Clusters members can and do participate in a wide range of initiatives. Some key figures:
		- 508 M€ of IAPMEI incentives paid to companies associated with the clusters (2016-2022)
		- 6.7 M€ paid in 2020 under the Support System for Collective Actions (SIAC)
		- 265 M€ of HR training incentives
		- 39 consortia with the participation of clusters within the scope of the Mobilizing Agendas (in the scope of the Recovery and Resilience Plan) with a global investment volume of around €6,180 million
		It is worth mentioning that 14 Digital Innovation Hubs involving 11 Clusters were approved and that some clusters are involved also in Test Beds.
HISTORY	Period	**Unlimited period**
	Ending year *(for policies with limited period)*	-
	Starting year	2008
	Explanation	No ending date is indicated.

Policy type:	National cluster policy	
Policy name:	**Clusters de Competitividade (Competitiveness Clusters)**	
BUDGET	Overall	There is no specific budget directly dedicated to clusters.
	Annual	-
	Source of funding	COMPETE 2020 and Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Plan
POLICY	Availability	**Ex-post**
EVALUATION	Results	According to the data collected on the situation as of 31 December 2021*, in the set of 15 clusters analysed, there was a universe of 2,339 entities in which small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent the majority group, with around 50 %. In this analysis, it was observed that in 2021, still a year under an economic environment strongly conditioned by pandemic, the 15 clusters showed an increase of 125 associates, corresponding to an increase of 5.6 % compared to the previous year. Regarding the Technical Team Variation, compared to the previous year, it is observed that in 2021, the number of clusters with positive variation (9 clusters) far outweighs the number of clusters with negative variation (2 clusters), considering the allocation time of the technical teams (FTE — full time equivalent). Overall, it was notorious to strengthen technical teams to compensate for the significant reduction in the previous year (2020). With regard to Forecast Activities Initiated, it is noted that around 70 % of clusters have already started all planned activities (100 %). In the indicator New Activities, 67 % of clusters have started new activities. In some cases, these new activities are being understood as a partial replacement of those originally planned. Overall, for the year 2021, a budget execution, by the Clusters Management Entities, of approximately EUR 5.6 million was reported, representing a 50 % reduction compared to the previous year. This amount implemented in 2021 corresponds to around 13 % of the total expected investment and is below the expected annual execution value in the order of 20 %. The multiannual budget for all Clusters has not changed significantly from the previous year and now stands at EUR 43 million. The Collective Action Incentive Systems (SIAC) financed 56 % of the activities of the managing entities, unlike in previous years which accounted for around 90 % of the public funding, which demonstrates the effort made and the success achieved in diversifying the sources of funding. *Recognized Competitiveness Clusters: 2021 Monitoring Report. The sources of the data used in the report were the reports received from cluster management entities. The report focuses on the analysis of a set of 15 Clusters that reported their activity in due course.

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Policy type:	National cluster policy
Policy name:	Clusters de Competitividade (Competitiveness Clusters)

	As regards the Sectorial Pacts, the Monitoring Committee, as already mentioned, collaborates with the clusters in the implementation of the actions included in the sectoral pacts and periodically evaluates the progress made in pursuing the objectives of the sectoral pacts, based on documents, meetings and dialogue with the clusters.
	As main outputs of the Portuguese cluster policy, it can be highlighted:
	- Closer dialog between the Cluster Managing entity and the members of the Monitoring Committee and other organizations whenever necessary
	- Monitoring Committee meetings with each cluster
	- Better understanding of the clusters needs
	- Solutions for clusters´ needs (training, internationalization, national calls, among others)
	- More intra and inter clusters activities & networking
	- Clusters studies aiming at to identify solutions
	- Working groups between cluster, representatives of the government and representatives of private and public entities
POLICY ALIGNMENT WITH THE EU PRIORITIES	**Green economy** **Digitalisation** **Resilience**

03

State of play of cluster policy

3. State of play of cluster policy

This section presents an overview of the state of play of Portuguese cluster policy in the form of a quantitative and qualitative assessment. The data below illustrates how the country ranks in terms of **maturity of cluster policy at the national level**. The maturity assessment is based on a combination of factors presented in Chapter 2, which receive a score based on the existence or absence of a given element in the cluster policy.

Note: the maturity assessment does not reflect the performance of a country, but only the degree of development of their national cluster policy at the moment of data collection (Q3 2022). The assessment illustrates how the country scores for each of the four criteria (policy scope, continuity of cluster policies, evidence of performance, cluster support instruments) compared to the maximum score that they can reach. Please refer to the **Annex** for a detailed overview of the categories and the scoring system.
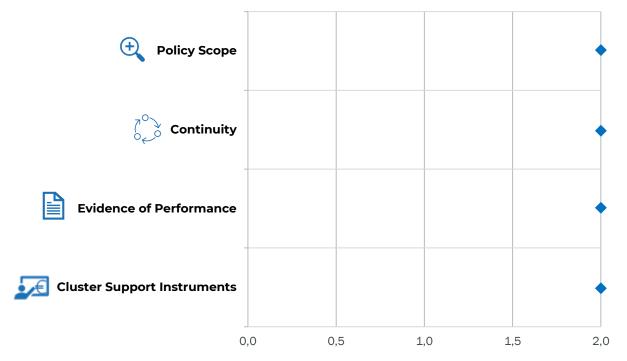
The table below presents an overview of the **maturity assessment for Portugal** for 2022. The total score of Portugal is 8 points out of 8.

Portugal	MATURITY ASSESSMENT	Max score	Actual score
POLICY SCOPE	Absence of cluster policy	0	
	Broad policy	0,5	
	Sectoral policy	1	
	National and/or regional cluster policy	2	**2**
CONTINUITY	No cluster-specific policy available	0	
	Cluster policy established recently	0,5	
	Cluster policy established between over 2 and 10 years	1	
	Cluster policy established over 10 years ago	2	**2**
EVIDENCE OF PERFORMANCE	No evaluation and / or monitoring available	0	
	Existence of evaluations of past policies	0,5	
	Existence of monitoring or an ongoing / interim evaluation	1	
	Existence of monitoring and ex-ante or ongoing / interim evaluation	2	**2**
CLUSTER SUPPORT INSTRUMENTS	No instruments for cluster development	0	
	Financial support for cluster development in the broader and / or sectoral policy	0,5	
	Financial or technical support for cluster development in dedicated cluster policy	1	
	Financial and technical support for cluster development in dedicated cluster policy	2	**2**
TOTAL (8)			**8**

Source: ECCP (2022).

Drawing from the table above that showcases the scored points in Portugal's cluster policy, the Figure below portrays the **degree of maturity** across four categories related to the national level cluster policy.

Figure 3: Maturity of cluster policy – Portugal

Source: ECCP (2022)

The text below provides a **qualitative description** of the state of play of the cluster policy in Portugal, which is complementary to the maturity assessment presented above.

Policy scope

In terms of policy scope and approach there are Pacts in the following fields: aerospace, railway, petrochemical, fashion & footwear, sea, raw materials, sustainable living, smart cities, textile, agri-food, health, construction, automobile, ICT, production technologies, wine. These are aligned with the priorities of the Portuguese Government.

Continuity

The concept of cluster was introduced in Portugal in the 1990s, leading to some strategies with little impact in practical terms. By 2003, the European Commission still included the country as one of the 15 MS with no explicit strategy to support clusters. Approved in 2005, the Technological Programme aimed to reinforce the economic competitiveness of Portugal based on knowledge, technology and innovation investments, and featured the first pack of cluster policies and measures, but it was in 2008 that a cluster policy was officially implemented in Portugal. The "Strategies of Collective Efficiency" (Estratégia de Eficiência Colectiva, EEC) considered clusters as one of the typologies of ECC. In the next political cycle, the reference to cluster organisations gained momentum as instruments to promote competitiveness by enhancing the existing dynamics in different areas, such as innovation, digitalisation, capacity building or circular economy.

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In 2017, with the support of IAPMEI, the Government accredited 20 cluster organisations as Competitiveness Clusters through the Programme Interface. There are currently 18 Competitiveness Clusters active.

Recognizing that the success of public policies depends on the capacity of civil society to mobilize for a common strategy and mission, in particular on the ecosystem structures associated with the dynamics of clustering, with which it was important to establish close relations of cooperation and collaboration that favoured the development of concerted initiatives to achieve common objectives, 17 Sectorial Pacts for Competitiveness and Internationalization were signed between the Ministry for Economy and Digital Transition and the Competitiveness Clusters, with the support of IAPMEI.

Evidence of performance

The "Evaluation of the Strategy and Implementation Process of the Strategies of Collective Efficiency" ("Avaliação da Estratégia e do Processo de Implementação das Estratégias de Eficiência Coletiva Tipologia de Clusters") (2012), which preceded the current policy, showed positive results in the implementation of the policy and promotes its continuity. Some of the points to improve referred to the weak association of the policy to the programming instruments and the absence of a governance model, as well as the link between the Strategic Initiatives for Collective Efficiency (Iniciativas Estratégicas de Eficiência Coletiva, EEC) policy with the National System of Innovation, the Scientific and Technological System and the Territory. The results obtained by the 18 Clusters recognised were rather different: while some clusters opted for focusing on R&I, others were oriented to internationalisation, and whereas some invested in infrastructure, others did it in immaterial factors such as patents, collective branding, etc. The Competitive Clusters initiative constitutes a continuation of the EEC featured in Portugal 2020 (OP COMPETE).
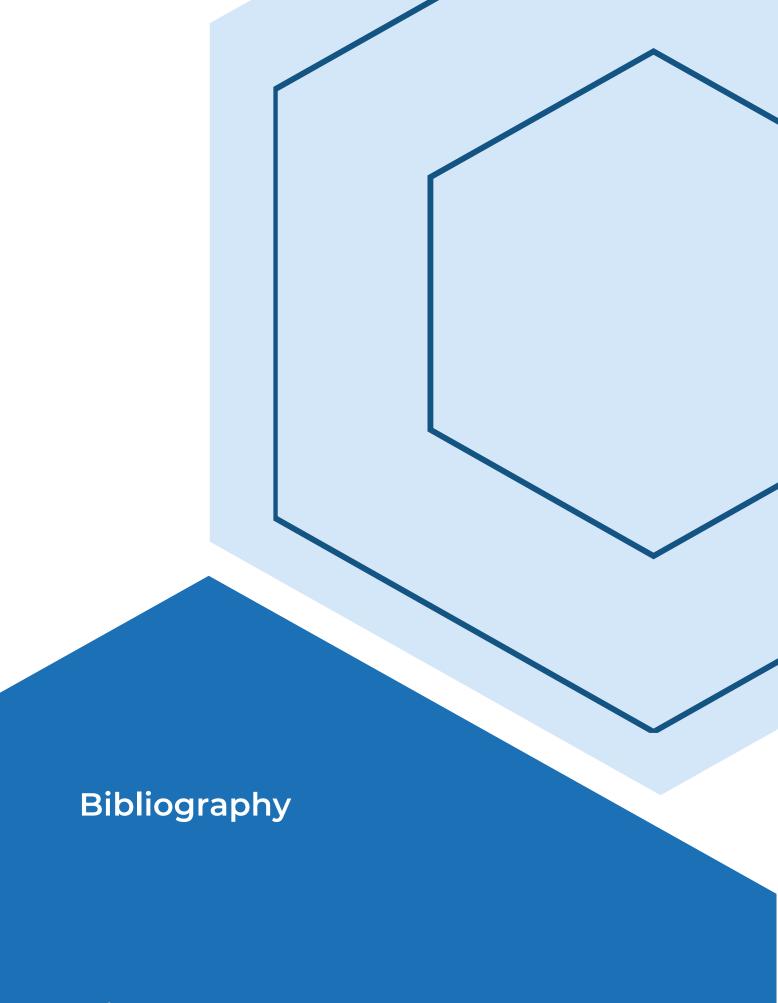
Cluster support instruments

The national public support directly granted to Competitiveness Clusters is conveyed mainly through the Support System for Collective Actions (SIAC) for "Networks and other forms of Partnership and Cooperation".

Cross-regional / international cooperation

The European Cluster Partnerships have been launched by the European Commission to encourage clusters from Europe to intensify collaboration across regions and sectors.

Portugal cluster organization have been involved in 30 consortia of the European Strategic Cluster Partnerships, out of which 18 partnerships were focusing on ESCP-4i, 11 partnerships in ESCP-4x and one partnership was focusing on ESCP-S3. Consortia partners came from 22 different EU member states (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LV, NL, PL, RO, RS, SE, SK, TR, UK). Nine Portugal cluster organizations participated in the INNOSUP-1 initiative with partner organisations coming from 21 countries (AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IS, IT, LT, LV, NL, NO, PL, SE, SI, UK).

In the 2021-2027 funding period, the Single Market Programme supports clusters as part of the Joint Cluster Initiatives (Euroclusters) for Europe's recovery. From Portugal, seven clusters are part of seven Euroclusters with partners from 16 countries (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, IT, LV, NL, PL, SE, SK). These Euroclusters are EuroBoosTEX, GEMSTONE, IKAT, MedBan, PIMAP4SUSTAINABILITY, POLREC, Silicon Eurocluster and xBUILD-EU. Collectively, they cover 13 out of 14 industrial ecosystems ("Proximity and Social Economy" is not covered).

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Annex

Criterion of maturity assessment	Description	Scoring (points between 0 and 2)
Policy scope	assessment whether the country has a dedicated cluster policy, or cluster creation and/or development is targeted through broader policies, e.g. foreign trade policies, labour and social policies or specific sectoral policies, e.g. industrial policy tourism policies, agriculture policies	**absence of cluster policy = 0** **existence of broader policies = 0,5** **existence of specific sectoral policies = 1** **existence of targeted cluster policies = 2**
Continuity of cluster policies	assessment of the duration and experience of the country in carrying out cluster policies. This criterion assesses only existence of targeted cluster policies and not broader policies or sectoral policies	**absence of policies supporting cluster development = 0** **cluster policy established recently (within the last 2 years) = 0,5** **cluster policy established between over 2 and 10 years = 1** **cluster policy established over 10 years ago = 2**
Evidence of performance	assessment whether there are evaluations of past and ongoing policies and a monitoring system in place. The existence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms determines the degree of policy development in the country	**no evaluation and / or monitoring available = 0** **existence of evaluations of past policies, e.g. ex-ante = 0,5** **existence of monitoring or an ongoing / interim evaluation =1** **existence of monitoring and ex-ante or ongoing / interim evaluation =2**
Cluster Support Instruments	assessment whether the policies provide any instruments to support the policy implementation, being these financial and/or technical support	**no instruments for cluster development =0** **financial support for cluster development in the broader and / or sectoral policy = 0,5** **financial or technical support for cluster development in dedicated cluster policy = 1** **financial and technical support for cluster development in dedicated cluster policy = 2**

Source: ECCP (2022).