

Partner Organization Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

For the interviewee - The main focus of this interview is on:

- Reasons for cluster engagement
- Ways in which the cluster facilitated innovation and engagement in the regional ecosystem
- Suggestions for cluster improvement

The bolded sections below represent topics covered in the Partner Organization Interview with example questions included for each topic. Exact questions are subject to change based on organization-specific context.

Probe for barriers, facilitators, and local and contextual influences.

Reasons for cluster engagement

- What were your organization's goals/reasons for engaging with the cluster? (e.g., innovation, supporting the overall ecosystem, seeking funding)
 - Did the cluster help you achieve these goals? Did you encounter any difficulties achieving these goals?
 - What cluster events or activities were most beneficial to your organization's priorities? Did cluster participation allow you to achieve any goals that your organization would not have been able to achieve otherwise?

Ecosystem engagement

- What did the cluster do successfully to help you connect to the ecosystem (business networks, suppliers, and/or clients) in your region? What did not help?
- What kinds of barriers did you encounter related to participating in the innovation ecosystem?
- What can the cluster do to encourage your participation or (if already engaged) to have a more proactive role in the development of the ecosystem?
- How did the cluster facilitate collaboration and exchange of information between your organization and **small businesses**?
 - Please provide suggestions for ways the cluster can improve collaboration and exchange of information between organizations like yours and small businesses in your industry and region.

Innovation

- How did the cluster facilitate innovation within your organization? *Note: In this context, innovation can mean developing new or improving existing technology, products, services, or production/delivery methods.*
 - What did the cluster do that was successful, what did not work?
 - Please provide suggestions for ways the cluster can facilitate innovation among your organization and small businesses.

General feedback

- General feedback about the cluster? What did the cluster do that was successful? What did not work?