



# Discussion Paper - Germany Cluster Internationalisation

## Key Facts

SBA 10 Sub-dimension: 10.1.1-1.3

**Country:**  
Germany (EU)

### Further Facts & Figures:

- bw-i has 65 full-time staff
- bw-i commissioned the *ClusterAgentur BW* to be operated by a private body
- The *ClusterAgentur BW* is financed by EU Regional Development Funds
- Is mentioned as good practice in the *Smart Guide to Cluster Policy* (2016) by DG GROW (F.2.)
- Provided 145 individual and group coaching sessions for clusters
- Overall 550 staff from clusters have participated in trainings
- Over 1200 match-makings within regional clusters and internationally
- Represented and lobbied for BW clusters in 120 cases on the international level
- Further EU funding of EUR 2 Million was acquired for clusters

## A. Policy Level

The **Baden-Württemberg International (bw-i)** is the semi-public economic development agency of the southwestern German state of Baden-Württemberg (abbrev. as "BW"). In line with the state's internationalisation policy, **bw-i** initiated the **ClusterAgentur**, which supports the cluster- and network management of Baden-Württemberg on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The main objective is to support internationalization by tailor-made and demand-oriented solutions for clusters in the state.

The cluster policy summarised in a 2011 position paper by the Ministry of Economic Affairs stresses the following principles: **Internationalisation** may pose a challenge for small entities, but brings opportunities for cluster action; leveraging potential for **internationalisation** needs cluster-thinking, size, and economies of scale; expansion of markets helps risk management.

### BACKGROUND

- **bw-i** was founded in 1984 in the form of an "Export Foundation".
- In 2004, it was re-organised into a limited liability company with main shareholders: The state of BW, the state bank of BW, regional guilds association, regional assembly of chambers of commerce.
- Also in 2004, **internationalisation** facilitation was added to its portfolio.
- In 2014, **bw-i** initiated the **Cluster Agentur** to support cluster initiatives in their **internationalisation** process by tailor-made and demand-oriented solutions.



Snapshot from the Cluster Atlas of the Federal State





## B. Programme Level

The **Cluster Agentur** is in itself a semi-permanent “program” of the **bw-i** and by this a program of the state of Baden-Württemberg. The program-level is therefore presented here by referring to **Cluster Agentur’s** service lines:

- Regional and **international** events and cross-cluster networking.
- Cluster database with cluster leaders and members categorised into sectors and sub-regions.
- Specific know-how in **internationalisation** of high-tech sectors such as e-mobility or aerospace.
- Publication of the annual “Cluster-Atlas”, a user-friendly mapping as a gateway to the state of Baden-Württemberg for potential **international** partners.
- Management of the he quality label "Cluster-Excellence Baden Württemberg", with which automatically the Gold label of the *European Cluster Excellence Initiative* (ECEI) is awarded.
- Self-learning and self-test provision for the excellence label.

In addition to these permanent service lines, the **Cluster Agentur** adds value in particular with tailor-made internationalisation advisories for the clusters, which consist mainly of elements detailed below.

## C. Action Level

The below actions are presented in the form of “good practices within a good practice” They reflect **Cluster Agentur’s** success stories linked to concrete actions with clusters below.

- **proHolz GmbH**(wood cluster):The advisory focussed on strategy development, partner identification and financing models. Through the successful screening of the EU funding landscape and the coaching on “concept development for EU funding”, the wood cluster became a pan-European hub for new developments.
- **BioRegio STERN**(biotech):The advisory consisted of a detailed target market analysis, targeted matchmaking, and guided meetings for deeper collaboration. Today, BioRegio STERN- member firms trade with foreign clusters e.g. in the Netherlands (Innovation Quarter) and Denmark (Danish Welfare Tech Cluster).
- **Cyber-LAGO e.V. und CyberForum e.V** (Digitalisation): During an IT-tool lab session, management system needs of participating clusters were identified and a suitable Customer-Relationship-Management (CRM)-system proposed and explained.
- **Cross-cutting**: Through cross-sectoral dialogue within the region with 50 firms, over 40 new product and service ideas were developed to target international markets.

## D. Key Success Factors

- The **Cluster Agentur**program capitalises well on **bw-i’s** existing internationalisation experience.
- The program itself takes a corporate attitude and acts agile, responding to specific needs quickly.

