


# The 7 Stepping Stones to creating Clusters of Change

**Increasing your cluster's value means engaging in targeted strategic initiatives. The 7 Stepping Stones, developed by Clusters of Change and presented at TheCAP, sum up the characteristics crucial for 21st Century clusters. They aim to create ripple effects for maximum impact – and they help cluster managers identify meaningful actions along the way.**

 Don't worry about tackling everything at the same time! Identify priorities based on your individual cluster set-up.

## Clusters need to be ...

### ... open and multi-collaborative:

Don't only concentrate on your own members. Search for partners and alliances on all levels, i.e., businesses, academia and in the investment community. PLUS, open up geographically to an inter-regional level to be able to tap into global value chains.

### ... innovation-driven ecosystems:

Innovation and entrepreneurship need to be put at the heart of what clusters do. They know their markets and are perfectly placed to connect start-ups and industry to facilitate purposeful innovation.

### ... inter-connected:

Not just in Europe but globally. Then they can act as a smart mechanism that turns start-ups into scale-ups on a pan-European level.

### ... cross-sectoral collaborators:

As multi-disciplinary work is crucial for innovation.

### ... mission-oriented:

To drive development in key areas. For example, the European Battery Alliance has brought clusters out of their silos to collaborate on a critical topic. However, cluster managers do not need to wait for EU initiatives. Set up your own missions on a regional level. This is also a good way to get start-ups involved (launch a competition)!

### ... involved in reskilling and upskilling:

The digital transformation comes with major challenges for the global workforce. Clusters can take the lead, identify needs for upskilling/reskilling in their sector and offer solutions.

### ... SDG-driven:

Clusters can become accelerators for sustainable development goals.