

THE NATURE OF CLUSTERS AND PROSPECTS FOR THEIR USE IN AGRICULTURE

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Annotation: *In this article, the significance of Uzbekistan's agriculture in the country's economy and historical changes in this branch are presented, and the stages of its development process are shown. At the last stage of development, the advantages of the cluster system, which is being successfully implemented in developed countries, and the promising possibilities of its application in agriculture are described.*

Key words: *cluster, geographical concentration, economic activity, sectors, economy, project.*

Relevance of the topic. In Uzbekistan, agriculture is one of the largest sectors of the country's economy. It employs 44 percent of the country's labor force, and its arable land is 4.4 million hectares, or 10 percent of the total land area. By the end of 2021, the share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the gross domestic product of the Republic of Uzbekistan was 26.9% compared to 27.1% in 2020.

The agriculture of the new Uzbekistan began in 1991 with the reorganization of large collective farms and state farms, as in all republics after the disintegration of the former Union. After Uzbekistan gained independence, the process of transition to a market economy began. After 1992, it led to the emergence of three types of farms: traditional homesteads were organized into "cooperative farms", Uzbek companies, agricultural production cooperatives or corporate forms (joint-stock companies, limited liability companies, companies). Between small farms and large companies, a new category of medium farms or "farmers" (farms) was introduced.

In 2006, «farmers», 12.5% by «farmers» and the remaining 12.5% by various corporate farms controlled 75% of the cultivated land. The situation with animal husbandry is completely different: 95% of cows are raised in "peasant farms", 4% in peasant farms, and only 1% in cooperative farms. "Farmers" produced 62% of the gross product in agricultural farms, 32% in peasant farms, and only 6% in cooperative farms.

Over time, there was a demand for radical reforms in agriculture. In this direction, world practice has confirmed that the development of clusters serves the expansion of opportunities and a positive multiplier effect for the economy. In many countries, cluster initiatives are considered as the most important component of the innovation policy, which also indicates a well-thought-out long-term approach of the state to the integrated development of regions. In the context of developed countries, cluster development is of additional importance. Vast, often underdeveloped areas, the

lack of developed transport corridors and the fact that most of them belong to "landlocked developing countries" are a characteristic feature of the geo-economic development of developed countries. With a competent approach to their formation, clusters can become a tool that contributes to the unified economic development of countries and increases their competitiveness by creating new growth centers.

Resolution No. 733 of the Cabinet of Ministers dated December 4, 2021 "On approval of the regulation on the procedure for organizing the activities of cotton-textile clusters" was adopted. The regulation was developed in accordance with the President's decision No PF-14 of November 16, 2021 "On measures to regulate the activities of cotton-textile clusters".

The establishment of the cotton-textile cluster is carried out by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers based on the conclusion of the Republican Commission. In this case, the granting of a plot of land to the cotton-textile cluster based on the right of lease is carried out based on the application of the applicant in accordance with the procedure established by law.

In agriculture, a cluster is an association of agricultural producers through cooperation in production, processing, product sales, delivery, procurement and credit.

The economic development management system of Uzbekistan includes the gradual formation of the cluster policy. The concept of long-term socio-economic development of Uzbekistan until 2020, approved by the decision of the Government of Uzbekistan dated November 17, 2008 No. 1662, provided for the creation of a regional network. The production clusters realize the competitive potential of the regions and ensure the flow of investments to the regional economy.

The implementation of the cluster policy is associated with a number of difficulties, one of which is the vague definition of the concept of "cluster" and the difficulty of determining its boundaries in space.

One of the founders of cluster theory M. Porter gave several definitions of cluster.

Clusters, - wrote M. Porter is interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, as well as organizations related to their activities (for example, universities, standardization agencies, trade associations) geographically concentrated groups in certain industries, competition, but the same working together at the moment.

Another definition given by M. Porter describes a cluster as a form of network that occurs in a certain area, where the proximity of companies and institutions provides certain forms of society and increases the regularity and influence of interactions. This is followed by a defined and extended definition: clusters are geographically connected groups of companies and related organizations that operate in a certain area and are characterized by common activities and complement each other. Clusters include many interrelated industries and other entities important to

competition including government and other institutions such as universities, standards agencies, think tanks, and trade organizations.

The definition of the industrial-innovation cluster given by Porter about 20 years ago did not help the development. However, there are still a number of problems in the content of the "cluster" concept. In addition, if the characteristics of the cluster are not clear, there is a risk of wide interpretation of the term cluster.

According to E. Kupriyanov, all the signs of a complete cluster should be divided into general - special, which are characteristic not only of the cluster, but also of other related objects (for example, a network of companies or agglomeration) cluster (cooperation, innovative activity, presence of a critical mass of participants).

A common feature of a cluster is a geographical concentration in a specific field of activity.

Geographic concentration. A cluster includes organizations located close to each other.

Some scholars acknowledge that the idea of proximity in modern conditions is not necessarily based on territorial proximity or physical distance. Technological advances allow successful remote collaboration thanks to information and communication technologies, that is, what was said in the 90s is happening.

However, despite E. Kutsenko's actively developing contacts based on the use of various forms of communication, it is impossible not to agree that organizations (firms) can form clusters only with the enterprises where they are located. It can be seen that geographical concentration leads to a number of positive effects, the strength of which decreases with increasing distance between organizations.

Geographical concentration as a marker of clustering allows us to exclude a number of events that resemble clusters but are not clusters. First, we will talk about company networks. The network concept does not emphasize the necessity of geographic concentration of economic entities (although in many cases this condition is clear). Accordingly, if a network does not have a geographic definition, it is not a cluster, but if such a definition is visible, then a cluster can be assumed to exist.

General scope of work. Belonging to a cluster implies the closeness of the enterprises included in it in terms of types of economic activity. Otherwise, the concept of a cluster would be similar to the concept of an agglomeration, a highly urbanized area. However, the cluster is always defined thematically: information technology cluster, biotechnology cluster, automotive cluster, etc. This means that the constituent elements of the cluster are united by a single field of activity (as a rule, we are talking). organizations included in a single value chain with common technology, common buyers or suppliers).

The presence of only general signs of a cluster does not allow the considered formation to be called a cluster, because the latter is also characterized by the presence of special features. Distinctive features of the cluster: presence of a "critical

mass" of participants, high degree of connection of cluster participants and innovative activity of cluster participants.

The existence of a "critical mass" of cluster participants. A cluster can consist of companies that produce final products and services (usually exported from the region), components, equipment, a system of specialized service suppliers, as well as professional educational institutions.

Indicators describing the high level of employment in the enterprises and industries included in the cluster, the number of enterprises and organizations belonging to the industries included in the cluster are the indicators that can be considered.

To form a complete cluster, it is necessary to reach a certain critical mass of its participants (number of companies, number of employees), which determines the transition from quantity to quality (achieving a synergistic effect). The experience gained in European countries shows that in order to reach a critical mass, it is necessary to create a cluster, which should include at least 30-50 organizations.

High degree of connection (cooperation) of cluster participants. One of the main success factors of cluster development is the presence of high-density connections with organizations united in one field of activity, as well as with other entities of the regional economy (buyers, suppliers, scientific and educational institutions).

Joint (cluster) projects are gradually becoming the most relevant type of interaction between cluster participants. A joint (cluster) project is a project that unites some or all of the cluster participants aimed at the development of the cluster. A distinctive feature of joint projects is the self-identification of organizations as a cluster entity. Thus, a joint project is a cluster-specific view of the interdependence of organizations.

A cluster is always a concentration of innovatively active enterprises. Innovative activity implies the active orientation of firms to innovative development (continuous improvement of competitive advantages through various types of innovation: technological, organizational and marketing).

Thus, a complete cluster has two general and three specific properties that are independent of each other, as shown in Figure 1 below:

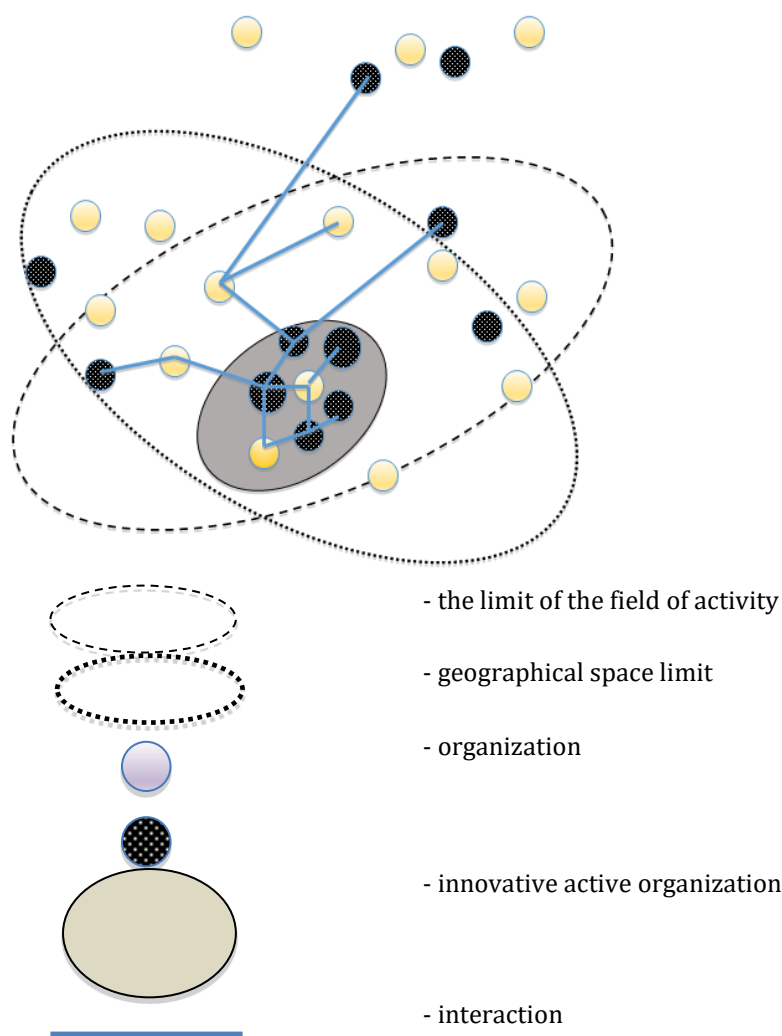


Figure 1. Main characteristics of clusters

Source: Kutsenko E.S. The question of the concept of cluster, protocluster and economic agglomeration. Discussion paper

The main directions of state regulation at the regional and municipal level are activities such as determining and analyzing the potential for cluster formation, supporting cluster initiatives, conducting expert evaluation and selection of cluster projects, helping to develop relations between potential participants of the cluster, and supporting specific clusters. projects and their continuous monitoring. In addition, it is necessary to provide developed infrastructure in the areas where clusters are located.

Thus, in conclusion, it can be said that our research conducted within the framework of this direction made it possible to identify and describe the directions of the state cluster policy used in Uzbekistan. Despite a number of important measures taken by the government for the development of innovative clusters in Uzbekistan, it is still one of the most urgent issues of today to do serious work on regulating the clustering processes and further systematizing the currently used methods in order to move the state economy to the innovative path of development.

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