

What are CLUSTERS?

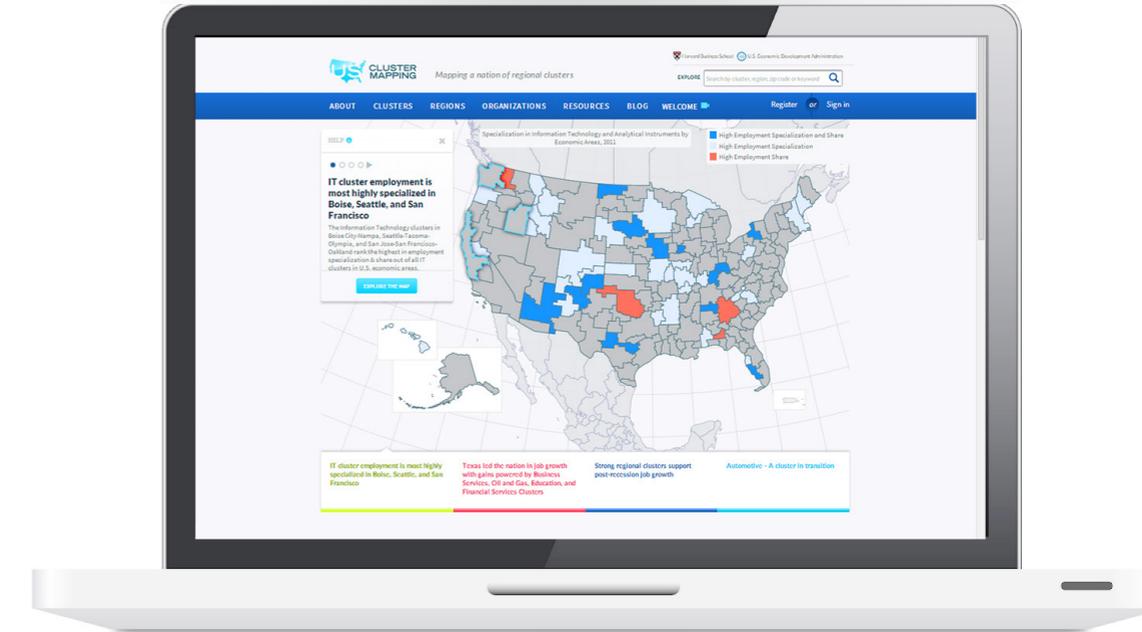
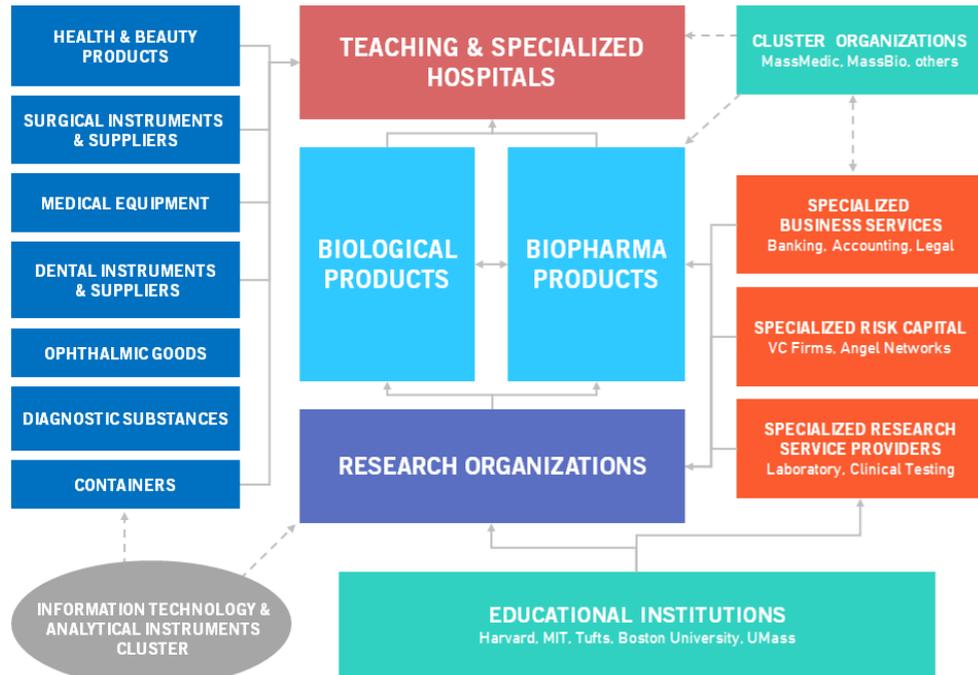
A **cluster** is a regional concentration of related industries. Clusters may consist of companies, suppliers, and service providers, as well as government agencies and other institutions. They emerge naturally in the market process, providing productivity benefits to companies as they grow in size.

Research over the last decade has shown that clusters are **a striking feature of all successful and growing economies**. They play a fundamental role in driving regional competitiveness by encouraging higher rates of job growth, wage growth, new business formation, and innovation in the regions they are located in.

Clusters capture important linkages of technology, skills, and information that cut across firms and industries. Moreover, viewing a group of companies and institutions as a cluster highlights opportunities for mutual improvement and provides a framework for organizing policy action and public-private collaboration.

The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project has identified **51** types of clusters in the U.S. economy. Examples of prominent clusters in the United States include financial services in New York City, information technology in Silicon Valley, video production and distribution in Los Angeles, and biopharmaceuticals in Boston.

The Boston Biopharmaceuticals Cluster



Questions?
Contact us at cmp@hbs.edu

The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project is a joint initiative of the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

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<http://clustermapping.us>

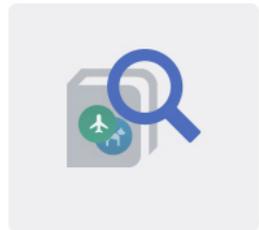
Mapping a nation of regional clusters



HARVARD | BUSINESS | SCHOOL
Institute for Strategy & Competitiveness



ABOUT *the* PROJECT



Conduct state-of-the-art academic research on clusters.



Create a website to provide open access to the research and data.



Impact economic policy and development.

The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project is a national economic initiative that aims to strengthen U.S. competitiveness by understanding the economic performance of clusters and regions across the United States.

It is based at the [Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School](#), with support from a number of academic and regional partners and a federal grant from the [U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration](#).

The project provides an interactive website for [user-driven, visual data on clusters and regions across the United States](#). It benchmarks the economic performance of individual clusters and regional business environments, and also provides a community for organizations, policymakers, and researchers to share and discuss best practices in economic development, policy and innovation.

By partnering with the U.S. Economic Development Administration and Department of Commerce, this project addresses key policy implications of clusters as an instrument to reinvigorate U.S. competitiveness and lay the foundations for more sustainable economic growth.

for POLICYMAKERS



FEDERAL POLICY

This initiative provides federal policymakers with the data and facts to implement successful policies and programs to [drive economic development in America's regional economies](#).

Research on the presence of clusters has recently oriented federal policy toward [addressing the needs of clusters and mobilizing their potential](#). It is critical for the United States to reevaluate its regional economic challenges in order to strengthen its position in the global economy and achieve sustainable growth.

STATE & LOCAL POLICY

The project aims to bridge data into action and impact among regional economies across the United States. Using the website's tools, state and local policymakers can [build and customize their own maps and charts](#), focusing on a particular region or cluster, or even comparing its performance to that of other areas. The data exploration tools are user-friendly and interactive, and employ state-of-the-art geographic and charting visualizations that [allow for the data generated to be easily shared and applied](#) to regional strategies, policies, and programs.

for RESEARCHERS



The objective of cluster mapping is to create a [comprehensive dataset on the presence of clusters across geographies](#). Grounded in the leading academic research in this field, the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project produced an unprecedented algorithm that allows for the systematic generation and comparison of clusters covering the entire U.S. economy.

Apply the cluster mapping data and definitions to your own statistical research

Although empirical research demonstrates the benefits of clusters to regional economic prosperity, there is very little empirical research that evaluates successful cluster policies. The project seeks to [build on the cluster mapping research](#) by providing researchers with the data to create a range of new analyses on the impact of clusters on economic outcomes.

The project has made this cluster mapping data readily accessible to the public through the interactive website, as well as a host of other relevant regional business environment and economic performance data.

for the PRIVATE SECTOR



The project invests in a highly optimized, modern website to enable private sector entities to make effective use of the cluster mapping and regional economic data and provide businesses and organizations with [the data and strategies they need to capitalize on their region's assets](#).

The cluster mapping data provides a lens to understand the underlying drivers of a region's unique mix of jobs, relative wages, employment growth, formation of new firms, and patenting performance. It also reveals new insights on the role of strong clusters in driving regional economic performance

and strategic competitive advantages for firms.

A key component of the website is an organizations registry that presents a community network for practitioners to [learn about ongoing initiatives across the country](#) and share their best practices, studies, and news reports.

Understand the context and dynamics of your region's unique business environment



USER STORY

Laura McKinney

Executive Director of New Carolina

As Executive Director of South Carolina's non-profit council on competitiveness, Laura McKinney is responsible for developing a cluster strategy to strengthen the economic competitiveness of South Carolina. In particular, she is interested in how clusters are steering the state's economy and having a measurable impact on its success. Together with New Carolina's executive committee and task forces, Laura has been using the U.S. Cluster Mapping website as a one-stop source for data to incorporate in a comprehensive statewide competitiveness index for South Carolina. The website provides her with the metrics to benchmark the outcomes of SC clusters against that of clusters in other U.S. states. She and her team are now better positioned to take the next step in producing an unprecedented index that informs the competitive position of South Carolina's clusters in the nation.