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Clusters, Cluster Policy, and Swedish Competitiveness

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Abstract

Proximity enables firms to take advantage of knowledge spill-overs and exploit supplierdemand linkages with other entities engaged in related activities. Cluster strength thus seems to be one of the important determinants of prosperity differences across geographies. How can cluster-based economic policy help Sweden succeed in global competition? The report "Clusters, Cluster Policy, and Swedish Competitiveness in the Global Economy" approaches this central question through three different steps. First, what can be learnt from the academic research on clusters so far? Second, what conclusions can be drawn from the debate about whether cluster policy is at all useful, and how can it be structured to achieve the best possible impact? Third, what does this mean in terms of implementing a cluster policy for Sweden? The author outlines specific recommendations on how policy should be designed to improve cluster dynamics, how the fundamentals can be changed to make the emergence of strong clusters more likely, and the extent to which cluster processes can be a channel back into overall competitiveness policies at the regional and national level.

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