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## PECULIARITIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC SPACE OF THE REGIONS IN MODERN CONDITIONS

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**Abstract:** The article examines the peculiarities of cluster structures development in regional economic space. The topic is relevant due to the intensification of the decentralization processes in Ukraine, the integration of Ukraine into the European Union and, in general, the globalization of the world economy. The work proves that cluster development of the territory is the most progressive and innovative approach to the development of the region in modern conditions, as it contributes to the acceleration of the innovation process and provides certain advantages to participants of the cluster. However, the formation and ensuring the functioning of these processes has a number of features that are currently not sufficiently studied and are of interest to modern science. Despite a considerable number of studies, there is a need for further study of the impact of cluster policy of regional economic space and the parameters of economic space of the region on economic growth, since methodological approaches and problems of regional development change in the process of changing economic reality and constantly require research and improvement.

The processes that hinder Ukraine's transition to an innovative model of development are studied and recommendations for supporting the cluster movement in Ukraine are given. One of them consists in the creation of an appropriate cluster policy that would be coordinated by the government taking into account the priority requirements of the development of regional economy, innovation and selected specialization. The policy of cluster development of regional economic space must be considered as a constituent element of the process of its modernization. It is determined that for the formation of innovation clusters, as well as for any territorial and sectoral innovation system, certain resources, the main of which are innovative, financial, informational and production ones, are necessary. Regions that own such resources should become the main participants, "locomotives" of innovation clusters. All elements of innovative infrastructure - innovative (technology parks, innovation-technological centers, business incubators); information (information technology centers); financial (venture funds, investment centers, insurance companies) ones - should be concentrated in their territories

**Keywords:** regional economic space, cluster, innovation potential, region, regional economy, cluster structures development, innovative infrastructure.

### Introduction

In the conditions of economic space globalization and the integration of Ukraine into the European Union, the regions play a key role in the formation of general economic landscape of the country. The intensification of decentralization processes increases the relevance of this topic, requires the clarification of the concept of "region" and research into the essential characteristics of regional economic space. As you know, the region is a unit of the global economic space, which acquires strategic importance for the prosperity of its country;

it is entrusted with the role of a locomotive in national development. The latter determines the importance of a conceptually designed strategic approach to regional development and its integration into the system of national priorities. Cluster development of the territory is the most progressive and innovative approach to the development of the region in the conditions of the "new economy", which is described in terms of the network organization of management and the key role of information in economic processes.

The necessity of carrying out a full-scale policy of cluster development in the course of the modernization of regional economic space is explained by the innovativeness and high degree of efficiency of relevant mechanisms for economic activity organization, which are based on the voluntary integration of resources and horizontal coordination of economic entities activities.

The introduction of regional and interregional clusters ensures the modernization of regional economic space based on the use of the innovative potential of the region, intensification of the entrepreneurial function, investments attraction, increase in the enterprises competitiveness based on the use of synergistic effects of interaction, and also allows to solve the issue of the region's population employment and ensuring of social stability.

Methodological approaches and problems of regional development change in the process of transforming the economy reality from classical theories (where a region is an accumulation of natural resources, population, means of production, etc.) to modern ones (where a region is a multifunctional system with an innovative vector of development) (Wozniak, 2015).

In geographical interpretation framework, the concept of "region" is understood as a certain district, territory, a unit defined by geographical boundaries, which has certain physical and geographical parameters. However, although the territorial component is the basis of the formation and functioning of the region, nevertheless, "region" should not be equated with the concept of "territory" and considered exclusively a geographical category, since only the territorial component is not enough to call a certain territory a region. It is the presence of specific economic, ethnographic, religious, social and cultural composition that is a necessary prerequisite for the formation of a region on a certain territory (Shpileva, 2009).

In modern conditions of economic development, regions and territories function in a multidimensional economic space with an infinite number of interregional interactions, therefore the conceptual-categorical apparatus of the regional development theory is interconnected and, undoubtedly, the concept of "region" is closely correlated with the concept of "space". Thus, Professor M. Butko (2016) defines a region as a space formed on the basis of sustainable development with homogeneous natural and resource potential, specialization in the sphere of material production and its integral infrastructure, specific ethno-cultural, historical and economic features, as well as with administrative and political organization and national institutional base. The analysis of scientific sources makes it possible to state that regional economic space is most often considered by researchers in two aspects: in a simplified approach, where economic space is understood as a territory allocated within the national economy boundaries, characterized by a conditions commonality for the implementation of economic processes and phenomena, and a broader approach that defines economic space as a form of existence of multiparametric type matter (Prokopiuk, 2016).

Thus, the researchers B. Danylyshyn *et al.* (2007), M. Fashchevskii and L. Chernyuk (2006) define economic space as "...spatial form of economic activity organization, which is formed by production relations, that is, connections between functioning economic systems, objects and subjects of entrepreneurial activity." At the same time, these scientists focus on the fact that it is "...an economic system regulated by a person or society, the functioning of which is mutually determined by relations, connections between nature and society, and economic relations between business entities".

T. Mirzodaeva (2004) also defines the space by combining the system and process approaches: "it is a dynamic system that includes flows of all available development resources, infrastructure

channels through which these flows move and localized centers of logistic management of these flows". O. Baviko (2012), V. Rodchenko and Yu. Prus (2016), R. Matvienko (2013) define economic space as a certain environment. In the first case, the scientist (Mirzodaeva, 2004) focuses on economic processes: "the environment of economic processes in the territory (norms, rules, traditions, conjuncture)", in the second, attention is focused on interaction: "... the environment of interaction between economic entities that exists within the process of information exchange and entry into a single network system of relationships" (Matvienko, 2013; Rodchenko & Prus, 2016).

A. Prokopiuk (2016) defines economic space as "a force field, in which the determining elements are the poles of growth, and the processes are the diffusion of innovations. At the same time, the permanent qualitative transformation of its centers (nuclei) due to the generation, implementation and diffusion of innovations is considered to be the driving force that ensures the constant development and reproduction of economic space. Economic space of the region should be studied through impulses formed in the centers of economic activity concentration and the degree of their impact on the environment. Therefore, economic space can go beyond the boundaries of the administrative region as well as be smaller than the territory of the entire region".

Spatial economy has received active development in foreign literature since the 1950s, when W. Izard (1998) noted that the departure from space compresses everything in the economy to a point, turning economic theory into a "wonderland without spatial dimensions", although the spatial factor entered the field of view of foreign economists much earlier - from the 19th century, for example, J. Thünen's theory about the regularities of the placement of agricultural production, the theory of placement of industrial enterprises by V. Launhardt and A. Weber, general theories of placement by V. Christaller and A. Lösch.

Modern global challenges make certain corrections in the interpretation of the "economic space" definition, therefore the authors consider economic space as a set of processes of production and economic activities of the region enterprises, which occur under the mutual influence of spatial and economic characteristics of the territory development, global transformational shifts, develop depending on the needs of high-tech business and leading stakeholders.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine increases the relevance of this topic, prompts modern scientists to study the issues of post-war reconstruction of the Ukrainian spatial economy (Nijkamp & Kourtit, 2023).

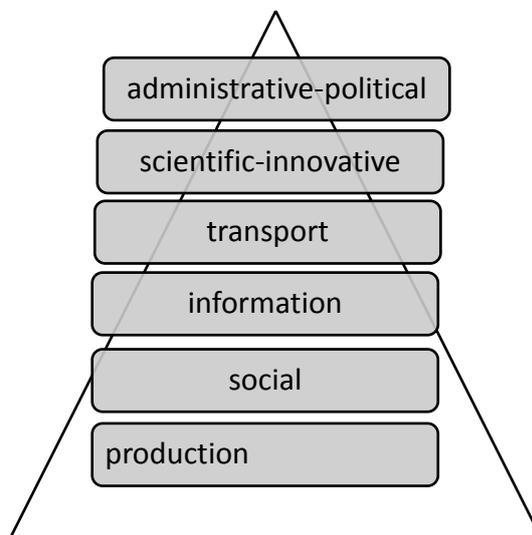
## **Results and discussion**

Under the influence of globalization and informatization processes, there was an evolution of the theories of spatial development, which led to the transformation of the paradigm of economic centers of space. As a result of the development of industrialization processes, large cities have become centers of spatial formation and basic factors of spatial development, where objects of various industries and locations of the population employment are concentrated.

In modern conditions, characterized by the rapid development of information technologies, digitalization and the growing role of intellectual labor, the centers of economic space formation become the territories that are most suitable for human life, which leads to a change in the centers of gravity of industrial, human, and infrastructure resources. That is why, considering and evaluating the state of development of regional economic space, it is necessary to distinguish several of its components (Figure 1): administrative-political, scientific-innovative, transport, information, social, production ones.

In the conditions of globalization, innovative receptivity and the ability to implement an innovative strategy for regional development are the main factors for ensuring the competitiveness of regional economy and further positive structural changes.

An increase in the effectiveness of managing structural shifts in regional socio-economic systems leads to an increase in demands for regional innovation policy and the formation of an innovative microclimate in the region. A necessary condition for this consists in the developed innovation infrastructure formation, network innovation systems, as well as a cluster approach to the implementation of innovation policy. It is the clusters that form a specific economic space for the expansion of free trade sphere, free movement of capital and human resources, and therefore perform the functions of structural elements of the global system.



**Figure 1** Components of regional economic space

Source: Rodchenko & Prus, 2016

M. Porter (2000) explains the interest in clusters by the fact that they are more adequate object of analysis, because "they reflect important connections in the sense of technologies, skills, information, consumer needs, etc., which are impossible in terms of the analysis of a firm or an industry", which justifies "the rationality of collective interaction and the adequate role of the government". He has analyzed and described the phenomenon of clusters based on the results of a study of the most successful companies in the world. In his works, he defines a cluster as "a geographically close group of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, firms in related industries, as well as associated institutions (such as universities, standardization agencies, trade unions) of a specific area, "connected" by bonds of commonality and complementarity, which compete, but also cooperate".

Ukrainian scientist M. Voinarenko (Voinarenko & Dubnytskyi, 2019) defines a cluster as a "territorial and sectoral voluntary association of enterprises that closely cooperate with scientific institutions and local authorities in order to increase the competitiveness of their own products and economic growth of the region".

Based on the essence of the cluster concept, it can be concluded that the main goal of clustering is to increase the enterprises competitiveness, which will contribute to the sustainable development of regional economic space and the growth of its export potential, strengthening the competitive status of the region, and intensifying entrepreneurial activities.

Economy clustering is becoming widespread in the world as the main tool for developing competitiveness, stimulating innovation, attracting investments, and creating modern technologies (Bilyk, 2019). The experience of developed countries shows that the possibilities of the cluster approach are used to solve problems aimed at boosting the economy of certain industries and regions.

For example, in Europe, the creation and effective operation of clusters are significantly related to the processes of finding and implementing modern innovative mechanisms of economic activity, primarily the transition to the smart specialization concept. Such a transition is associated with the following factors:

- the growth of Europe's global competition and a certain lag behind the main global competitors, primarily the USA, China, and the countries of Southeast Asia. Having a huge scientific and technological potential, the EU countries increasingly lost the technological "race" in key sectors and in general in terms of the level of innovative development;
- failures of past periods of development due to a significant share of low-efficiency centralized projects;
- the loss of leadership positions in industry as the basis of economic development (low competitiveness of existing enterprises and transfer of a significant part of industrial production outside the EU) (Barannik, 2021; European Expert Group, 2020).

More than 3000 clusters exist in the EU. Their members employ over 50 million people. They account for almost every fourth job in Europe (61.8 million jobs or 23.4% of total employment) and about half of the jobs in export industries (50.3%) (European Panorama, 2020).

The documents point out that productivity in clusters is 25% higher than average productivity. Cluster members are more likely to plan to increase turnover than non-members, are more likely to adopt advanced technologies, and have a higher propensity for digital and sustainable innovation. All small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Europe will have to make a digital and green transition. In this respect, SMEs clusters and organizations should receive capacity building and clear information on EU programmes, tools and instruments to allow them to facilitate this transformation (European Expert Group, 2020).

Clusters attract much more investment than individual companies. This, as a rule, is facilitated by the multiplicative strengthening of the actions of enterprises actions that unite to achieve a common goal - increasing individual competitiveness based on the use of aggregate competitive advantages. The example of different countries and regions of the world, where clusters are located, arouses the interest of local, regional and national executive authorities of other countries, which motivates them to pursue cluster-oriented policies. As modern practice shows, the degree of clustering of economic activities in the world is quite high.

The European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change report provides comprehensive information on cluster support in 29 European countries, including an in-depth analysis of 30 national clustering programs in 20 countries and 55 regional programs in 27 regions. Such specialized cluster support policies and strategies are widespread both in Europe and around the world. Despite the fact that in different territories each specific development and implementation of a cluster policy depends on the context and general validity relative to the national/regional policy, certain similarities can be found in all of them. In particular:

- clusters are supported with the help of separately allocated programs or by integration into other programs of economic support;
- most often cluster policy is related to innovation, research, development and technological support. Thus, clusters are a platform for cooperation between various subjects in specific territories in the direction of research and development of technologies and innovations;
- cluster support is also often focused on the promotion of SMEs - the business segment that represents the majority in many industrial ecosystems;
- most cluster policies pursue a mixed strategy, supporting both emerging and mature industries. From this perspective, cluster support programs aim at industrial transformation, using clusters as facilitators of change.

Despite rather high activities of the created clusters at local, national, and international levels (in particular, participation in the European cluster collaboration platform), Ukraine lags far behind in the implementation of state policy and strategy. According to the data of the Doing

Business 2020 (Doing Business, 2020). rating, even before the full-scale invasion of Russia, Ukraine ranked 64th among 190 countries in the rating of ease of doing business, which indicates a much lower attractiveness and favorable national conditions for business development compared to EU member states.

Therefore, among the main recommendations for supporting the cluster movement in Ukraine is the creation of an appropriate cluster policy, which would be coordinated by the government, taking into account the priority requirements of regional economic development, innovation and selected specialization. Otherwise, the policy, which is not coordinated by the government, becomes a situational set of programs and directives that may contradict each other and hardly have a chance for long-term development (Shimko, 2022).

The competitive advantage of Ukraine consists in a significant scientific and technical potential, the availability of highly educated specialists in natural sciences, information technologies and programming (Pidorycheva & Lischuk, 2023). The IT sector, which until February 2022 was one of the largest exporters of IT services in Europe with annual growth of 25-30%, demonstrated high stress resistance and adaptability in 2022 and, according to the results of the study of the IT Ukraine Association, even increased by 2.2% (Grzegorzczuk, 2022).

However, the transition to an innovative development model in Ukraine today is impossible due to:

- absence of a clear strategy for innovative infrastructure development, a structured management of its implementation, and a consistent state policy;
- dominance of property redistribution processes in Ukraine, which are natural antipodes of innovative processes;
- distribution of labor, goods and services existing on the international market, which in general complicates the situation of Ukraine and forces it to regain its place;
- gravitation of state administration bodies to sectoral principles of economic management, as opposed to the need for the urgent implementation of functional principles (subordination of units to a single goal, the same criteria for the work of all units, clear and coordinated work for a common result).

The war on the territory of Ukraine, which increases the regions polarization according to indicators of economic activity and negatively affects the spread of spatial integration processes, is the indisputable brake on the development of economic space. Internal challenges of the country's spatial development, such as: high differentiation of regions in terms of development rates and standard of living, dramatic reduction in the population, development of transport infrastructure mainly in the direction of western regions and restrictions on transport infrastructure to the east, limiting access of enterprises to modern technologies, are observed. In addition, there is a problem of overconcentration of resources and technologies in large urban agglomerations.

An increase in the effectiveness of managing structural shifts in regional socio-economic systems leads to an increase in demands for regional innovation policy and the formation of an innovative microclimate in the region.

The intensification of integration processes, the formation of a developed innovation infrastructure and network innovation systems, as well as a cluster approach to the implementation of innovation policy is a necessary condition for this. The intensification of integration processes should theoretically affect the dynamics of regional development and, as a result, the synchronization of their cycles of business activities with the national cycle. Consequently, the dynamics of business activities in some regions may be more or less synchronized.

In order to intensify the spatial development of the country's regions, modern projects of interregional cooperation are needed as a reserve for economic growth. In the conditions of disparity of economic processes occurring in the regions, it is necessary to "stitch" economic space of the country, which should not be limited only to interregional integration. This process should take place at all levels: local and regional ones.

The idea of regional economies clustering is not something new for Ukraine. In 2020, the project of the National Program of Cluster Development until 2027 was developed (Industrial clusters, 2021). Clusters are an interesting alternative for the development of small and medium enterprises (Bylok *et al.*, 2016). They are useful in the process of creating innovations and knowledge flow, improve the access of medium-sized enterprises to the global market, business efficiency, and contribute to increasing the competitiveness of medium-sized enterprises (Betáková *et al.*, 2021). Companies in clusters are more active in innovation (Balog, 2016).

Cluster drives the common growth of SMEs and the sharing of resources (Chen *et al.*, 2022). According to G. Gereffi and J. Lee (2016), SMEs of a small startup scale, when facing operational problems such as insufficient R&D capabilities, difficult access to resources, and fund shortage, often adopt the industry cluster concept to reduce international trade barriers. Moreover, there is a strong link between innovation and competitiveness: innovation can positively impact a country's competitiveness and economic growth (García-Sánchez *et al.*, 2018). A country's high competitiveness is very important since it helps the state have a more maintainable economy and eventually improve its living standards (Hakhverdyan & Shahinyan, 2022).

For business, cluster policy means optimal integration into the regional and national economy, increasing competitiveness due to: stability of development conditions within the cluster, general corporate strategy; equal access to resources, including financial, technological, personnel ones, etc.; possibility of using price competition as a result of reducing the costs of producing products and providing services; possibility of a more flexible and faster response to changes in consumer demand due to closer communication with consumers; reduction of "barriers" and risks associated with the organization of a new enterprise.

The development of strategies for the territories development taking into account the cluster approach is one of the cardinal measures to increase the regions competitiveness and achieve their intended goals.

Today, clusters are considered only from the point of view of regional or branch projects. Thus, UCA (Ukrainian Cluster Alliance, 2023) recorded 5 directions of cluster formation in 2022-2023, which became the most successful within the framework of the Professionals4Ukraine program: organization and holding targeted events with the participation of Ukrainian clusters (conferences, webinars, business visits to EU countries, etc.); integration and joining of Ukrainian clusters to European or global networks and/or development projects; involvement in grant projects or provision of direct financial assistance to strengthen the sustainability of cluster initiatives in Ukraine; connection with other sources of funding or with influential organizations that can provide assistance (functions of networking, matchmaking, etc.; consulting assistance to clusters and their participants).

The most significant examples of such clusters formation in economic space of the country are the following:

- formation of bilateral cooperation programs with Ukraine by market segments (on Smart.City, Smart.Industry and Cyber-security topics);
- deepening of cooperation between the clusters of the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance and foreign partners (Germany) regarding the formation of the cluster initiative "Photonics", which has served as a trigger for the activation of Ukrainian specialists in Dual-use segments, as well as medical clusters;
- development of cooperation with EU cluster associations, especially with Czech and Polish associations;
- involvement of Ukrainian clusters in joint projects, for example CIMES cluster, France.

Unequal socio-economic development of regions requires a differentiated approach to them, taking into account their actually established role in the economy and territorial structure of the economy. The process of creating innovation clusters should take place in accordance

with the specifics of the regions: levels of regional innovation potential, financial security of regional budgets, innovative activities of regional enterprises, levels of their industrial development.

In this regard, it is particularly important to implement a cluster innovation policy at the interregional level by uniting regions into groups according to the level of their innovative development in order to diversify the methods and tools of innovative development managing of each of the groups.

The role of the region in the innovation clusters formation is determined, first of all, by the nature of the region's innovative development strategy, which, in turn, depends on the qualitative and quantitative composition of innovative and related resources. Regions that have formed clusters will be able to solve the main part of problems, for example, clusters take on the solution of most social problems of the territories; clusters are aimed at improving the infrastructure of the region in which they work; clusters provide new jobs; the welfare of the territories where clusters work is ensured (Petkova & Proskurin, 2006).

The strengthening of global trends, which, according to the theory of leadership, carry the principles of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) or BANI (brittle, anxious, nonlinear, and incomprehensible) and cause the necessity to form new approaches to further development of economic space of regions and actualize the role of cluster structures in it. Against the background of strengthening of all these factors and the absence of a clear perspective of the end of the war in Ukraine, it is necessary to focus not only on the formation of interregional clusters, but also on regions readiness to cooperate with international partners and to internationalize clusters.

In order to further support these projects, first of all, it is necessary to take several important steps:

- update of the existing seven-year State Regional Development Strategy (SRDS) (2021-2027), which should become the basis for further post-war development of the regions. This document should provide guidelines for further development of regional economic space and the formation of interregional cluster structures;
- support for the development of economic space of central and western regions, which in these conditions can serve as locomotive regions for further support of eastern regions, which need rapid post-war recovery;
- cooperation and creation of cluster structures with western companies, using the tools of industrial and technological parks;
- involvement of local governments to support the formation of clusters at the local level (as an example, the formation of the Health Cluster, which has expanded its presence at the national level in all 24 regions to coordinate the growing number of organizations involved in humanitarian response at the national and regional levels).

## Conclusions

The policy of cluster development of regional economic space must be considered as a constituent element of its modernization process. The rationalization of the regional economy structure is proposed to be carried out on the basis of an active cluster policy and the determination of priorities for the regions innovative development, support for the innovatively active business development as an important component of the structural policy of the region, consolidation of the efforts of all society members to stimulate the investment activities of the region.

For the formation of innovation clusters, as well as for any territorial and sectoral innovation system, certain resources, the main of which are innovative, financial, informational and production ones, are necessary. Regions that own such resources should become the main participants, "locomotives" of innovation clusters. All elements of innovative infrastructure such as:

- innovative (technology parks, innovation and technology centers, business incubators);
  - information (information technology centers);
  - financial (venture funds, investment centers, insurance companies) ones
- should be concentrated in their territories.

The development of nationwide and regionally oriented strategic development programs aimed to adapt domestic industry to EU standards and ensure innovative competitive advantages on international markets should be an important basis for the implementation of the European integration economic policy of post-war Ukraine. The development of innovative initiatives of business entities in the conditions of cluster organization of production is an important direction of accelerating integration processes into the European economic and innovation space.

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### Conflict of interest

None.

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## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ РОЗВИТКУ ЕКОНОМІЧНОГО ПРОСТОРУ РЕГІОНІВ В УМОВАХ СУЧАСНОСТІ

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**Анотація:** В статті досліджено особливості розвитку кластерних структур в регіональному економічному просторі. Актуальність теми зумовлена активізацією процесів децентралізації в Україні, інтеграцією України до Європейського Союзу та, загалом, глобалізацією світової економіки. В роботі доведено, що найбільш прогресивним та інноваційним підходом до розвитку регіону в сучасних умовах є кластерний розвиток території, оскільки він сприяє прискоренню інноваційного процесу, надає учасникам кластера певні переваги. Проте формування і забезпечення функціонування зазначених процесів має низку особливостей, які на сьогодні не вивчені достатньою мірою і становлять інтерес для сучасної науки. Незважаючи на значну кількість досліджень, існує необхідність подальшого вивчення впливу кластерної політики регіонального економічного простору та параметрів економічного простору регіону на економічне зростання, оскільки методологічні підходи та проблеми регіонального розвитку змінюються в процесі зміни економічної реальності і постійно потребують дослідження та удосконалення.

Досліджено процеси, які перешкоджають переходу України на інноваційну модель розвитку та наведено рекомендації для підтримки кластерного руху в Україні, однією з яких є створення відповідної кластерної політики, яка би координувалася урядом з урахуванням пріоритетних вимог розвитку економіки регіонів, інновацій та вибраної спеціалізації. Політику кластерного розвитку регіонального економічного простору необхідно розглядати як складовий елемент процесу його модернізації. Визначено, що для формування інноваційних кластерів, як і для будь-якої територіально-галузевої інноваційної системи, необхідні певні ресурси, головними з яких є інноваційні, фінансові, інформаційні й виробничі. Регіони-власники таких ресурсів мають стати основними учасниками, «локомотивами» інноваційних кластерів. На їхніх територіях мають бути зосереджені всі елементи інноваційної інфраструктури: інноваційні (технопарки, інноваційно-технологічні центри, бізнес-інкубатори); інформаційні (інформаційно-технологічні центри); фінансові (венчурні фонди, інвестиційні центри, страхові компанії).

**Ключові слова:** економічний простір регіону, кластер, інноваційний потенціал, регіон, регіональна економіка