

Prospects for the Development of Walnut Clusters in a Digital Economy in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: An influential factor for the country's economic development is the development of a digital economy. This will create the basis for sustainable economic growth and help achieve the strategic goals of the region. This article compares the foreign experience of cluster policy in the field of walnuts at the national level. Various models of state management of clusters in order to develop the regional economy in the context of the digital economy have been analyzed.

Key words: walnut production, Uzbekistan, cluster, innovation, cluster approach, innovation activity.

The study of clusters is especially relevant in the context of the economic crisis. This is because there is a need to find a more efficient organizational form that will increase the competitiveness of farms.

Cluster policies determine how sectors are formed and developed based on the characteristics of specific regions. In order to increase the competitiveness of the region, it is necessary to form clusters focused on innovative development and ensure their effective operation. Regional clusters play an imperative role in the economic development of the world's leading countries and regions. The development of clusters will help increase labor productivity, create new companies, create new jobs, and increase the region's innovation potential. In addition, it will create a competitive advantage and the image of the region that will increase the flow of investment.

The cluster model is widely used in world practice as a tool to increase the competitiveness of an economic group, region or country as a whole. The main features of the cluster model are: the ability of the group to increase its share in foreign markets; availability of favorable conditions (raw materials, qualified personnel, infrastructure, training centers, research institutions, etc.) in the area; the extent to which participants have the opportunity to participate effectively in the group through strong government support, and so on.

In economics, a cluster is defined as a voluntary association of several independent companies to produce a product.

In the agricultural sector, innovation in the processing of raw materials grown on our land is a modern requirement. After all, the more industrialized the walnut farms, the broader the economic and export potential of the state, and the better off the people. Therefore, Uzbekistan has recently been paying close attention to the creation of high-tech infrastructure and the introduction of cluster methods in agriculture.

As for the advantages of the direct walnut cluster over other production structures, it is a complex of enterprises integrated into a single technological chain and a link between different segments of the population, which is an important stage in the transition to an innovative economy.

In a cluster system, both the simple farm worker and the manager work together during winter and summer. That is, they receive not only a salary during the year but also a bonus if they work well.

President Sh. Mirziyoyev also acknowledged that we see the cluster approach as the future of Uzbekistan. In this sense, it is necessary to pay special attention to the role of the swallow complex in the cluster system of our country. This is necessary for the development of the region's economy. This will undoubtedly be a worthy contribution to the Uzbek economy and one of the key factors in improving the living standards of agricultural workers.

All this unites the interests of the people and the state, and ultimately becomes a cluster - a criterion for integration, innovation, and economic growth.

In order to ensure food security in our country, it is necessary to pay special attention to the harmonious development of agriculture and the processing industry. To effectively address these challenges, there is a need to establish and develop industrial clusters based on the experience of developed foreign countries, ie the principles of cooperation and integration between the sectors of the agro-industrial complex.

Let's consider the current problems, barriers, and challenges in the field of walnut production. First of all, it is necessary to mention the following difficulties, weaknesses, and problems that hinder the sustainable development of walnut production:

- incomplete use of market mechanisms of cooperation between producers and processors on the placement of crops and their varieties in demand on the markets of agricultural products;
- low level of compliance with contract discipline by small agricultural producers;
- lack of opportunities for the introduction of modern technologies in agriculture, their storage, and transportation, the accumulation of financial resources for the independent access of agricultural producers to foreign markets;
- unsatisfactory supply of seeds and seedlings of high-yielding and high-quality varieties, which are in demand in the walnut market;
- there is a lack of adequate control over the processes of receiving, transporting, processing, and selling raw materials due to the lack of adequate use of modern information technology;
- a irrational distribution of raw materials and production resources, as well as deficiencies in the organization of logistics and engineering infrastructure, cause stagnation of production capacity, an increase in production costs due to economic losses, and a loss of profitability;
- Due to the dominance of production and export of semi-finished products, the insufficiency of high value-added products, and the lack of national brands on world markets, industrial enterprises cannot increase their revenues.

A large industrial walnut orchard could significantly impact the situation for the better in all regions, if farms, agro-firms, and small landowners were organized into cooperatives. Producing and exporting high-demand and high-efficiency agricultural products in the world is one of the leading directions in the development of the agricultural sector through the efficient use of land. In the walnut industry, they will be able to dramatically improve the situation if these cooperatives are given real mechanisms to use the resources available to them.

The newly established procurement points will play an important role in the transparent system of procurement and export. They will be able to form wholesale batches of products, sell them on the domestic market, or export them by operating as cooperatives. As a result, rural areas will be able to create new jobs and their living standards will improve.

The main directions for cluster development in the regions are:

- ✓ As a means of forming the innovative activity of enterprises according to the cluster model and of adapting the activity to the new conditions, it is essential to develop the relationship between group participants at the internal and external levels, taking into account participants' interests, relying on modern corporate governance mechanisms within the cluster, improving the regulatory and legal framework;

- ✓ In order for local authorities to have the necessary impact on the innovative activities of enterprises participating in the cluster, it must be developed mechanisms for implementing them in the region;
- ✓ It is necessary to provide the cluster participants with the necessary information, in order to establish a mutually beneficial business relationship with the cluster participants-firms, by creating a single, digital and identifiable database on effective corporate governance within the cluster;
- ✓ To organize and improve the system of continuous training, retraining, and advanced training of cluster special staff, a research center must be established.

Several farms that contribute significantly to the regional economy will have the opportunity to receive targeted benefits.

Additionally, for the development of innovation potential in the region, it is important to quickly distribute innovation news to all companies within the cluster. Cluster development allows the country, the region, and the group in particular to increase their competitiveness indices. As a result, the possibility of attracting foreign investment to the region will increase.

Clusters are a reliable factor in transforming rural areas into industrial development.

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