Internationalization and market opportunities of companies in the automotive and vehicle technology cluster

Presentation of results

4.9.2025

Tampere Automotive and Vehicle Technology Cluster afterwork

Co-funded by the European Union

TAMPERE FINLAND AUTOMOTIVE & VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY CLUSTER

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Objectives of the Study

The study focused on producing information about the cluster companies:

- **degree of internationalization**,
- **international market opportunities** of automotive and mobile machinery technology suppliers in the Tampere region.

In addition, the aim of the study was to **enhance understanding of the factors that, in the future, can support the development of the ecosystem in a way that best meets the internationalization needs of companies and stakeholders.**

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Implementation of the Study

The study was conducted between April and August 2025.The study consisted of the following phases:

- ***Data analysis*** of the group of companies in Business Tampere's automotive and vehicle technology cluster
- ***Interview study*** on the internationalization and market opportunities of companies
- ***Analyses and summaries*** of the internationalization, international operating environment, and market opportunities of automotive and vehicle technology companies
- **Reporting**

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Main conclusions

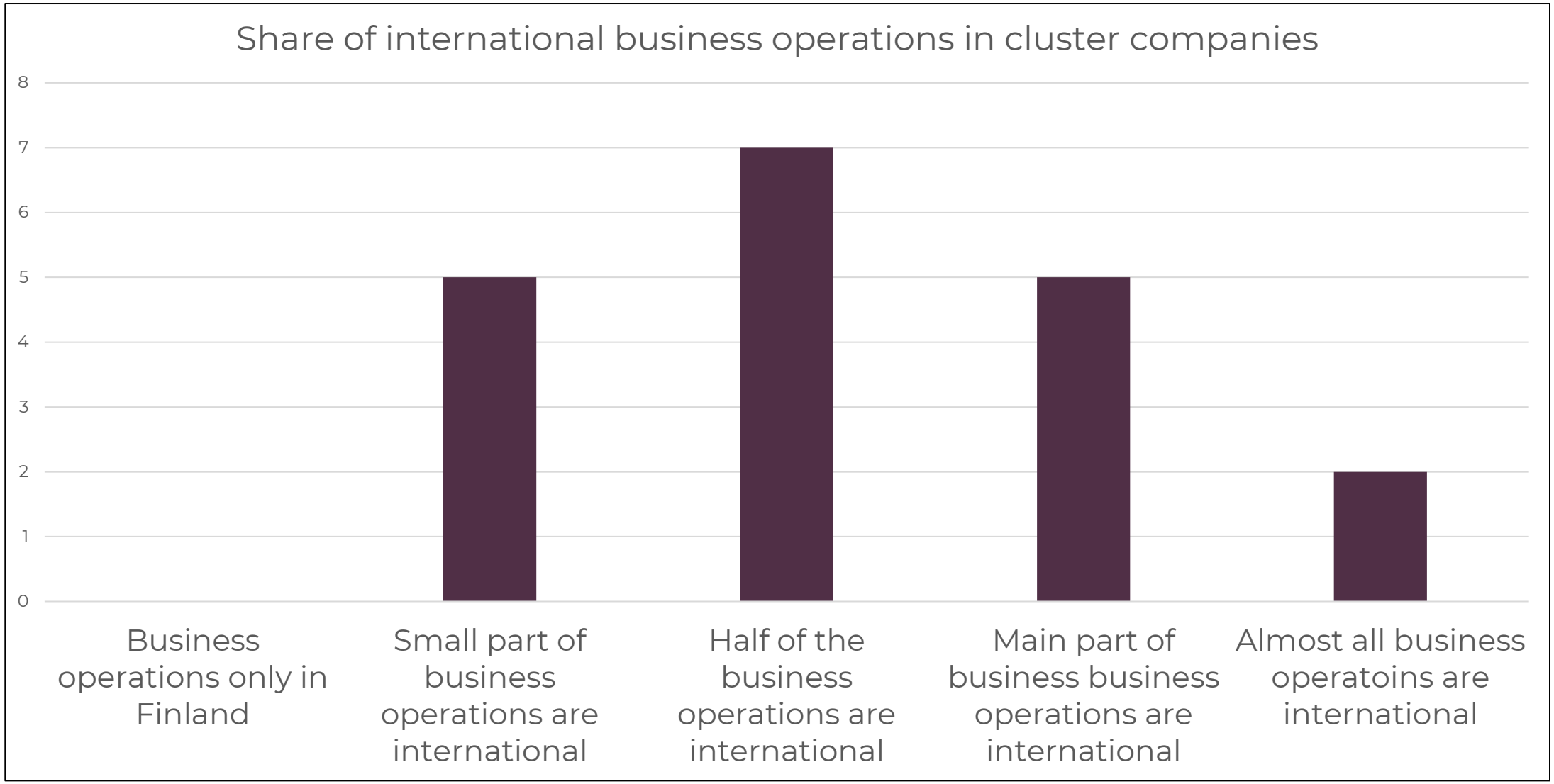
Internationalization of business operations

- In general, the **majority of the companies in the cluster have at least some level of international operations**.
  - ➢ Based on both the information obtained through company interviews and data from company websites and other public sources, the majority (at least 79%) of the cluster companies are engaged in some form of international activity.

- Domestic growth opportunities are seen as very limited, and **international markets are considered the main source for future growth**.
- From the perspective of international expansion, **companies often see the most potential in markets where they are already active**. These markets include, for example:
  - The Nordic countries, especially Sweden
  - Northern Central Europe, particularly Germany
  - The Baltic countries
- Other markets where growth opportunities are identified include especially North America, Southern Europe, and to some extent, countries in the Far East.

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Internationalization of business operations



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Internationalization of business operations

The international activity of companies in the cluster is quite diverse. According to the interviews, the most common forms are:

- **Participating in international networks**
- **International collaboration and partnerships**
- **Exporting to international markets**
- **Trips abroad to export-promotion events, trade fairs, and networking events**

Less commonly, activities include, among other things, securing international funding and investment for the company, and operating as part of a larger international company.

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Internationalization of business operations



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Key findings on companies' internationalization

+Strengths

1. Some companies have strong, well-established networks of key contacts.
2. High level of expertise and the ability to deliver internationally competitive solutions, products, and services.
3. Finnish companies have a good reputation, and some have long-standing, established experience in international business.
4. Interest in and potential for international operations within companies.
5. A strong cluster, a comparatively good offering, and solid organization.

-Weaknesses

1. Key contacts are hard to reach or missing in international markets.
2. Gaps in marketing and sales competence, as well as in resourcing and financing.
3. As an outsider, breaking into established value chains and supplier networks is difficult.
4. Gaining visibility in international markets.
5. A general operating environment and conditions where Finland is not among the top performers on all metrics.

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Key findings on development and support needs for internationalization

- Strategic partnerships (universities, foreign developers, VTT, etc.) in Finland and in target markets are necessary for developing international operations.
- Key accounts must be identified—and won.
  - Investing in point-of-contact personnel and their up-to-date market knowledge is named as a key enabler.
  - Get the sales team and maintenance/after-sales services in the target area into good shape.
- International trade fairs and networking events must be executed well and professionally to achieve impact.
- Luck and good timing are needed, but these must be enabled by going out into the world, being visible, and actively seeking contacts.

Breaking into international markets

- Identifying the right routes and channels, as well as the obstacles to overcome; improving overall understanding of international markets.

Sales and marketing

- Coordinating and expanding the sales network in international markets.
- Investing in key contacts and networks.
- Developing marketing communications—sharpen the message and ensure it reaches senior management within customer organizations.

Visibility and target markets

- Establishing operations in the most important target market areas.
- Increasing awareness in target countries (via local networks and international networks).

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Messages to the automotive and vehicle technology cluster

In general, there is no need for significant changes to the operations of Business Tampere or the automotive and vehicle technology cluster. The current activities already meet many of the companies' needs.

It is important to continue **improving the effectiveness of existing activities** and, where necessary, introduce new elements. **The following actions are considered particularly effective**:

- Networking events
- Organizing international visits and export promotion trips to international trade fairs (e.g. joint offerings, shared stands, etc.
- Cluster-organized events in Tampere that include international visitors (experts, investors, international companies)
- Providing information on international markets
- Compiling joint cluster offerings into brochures
- Building a Business Tampere expert and liaison network in target markets to promote the interests of the cluster

Key development needs include:

- Increasing synergies with other clusters and eliminating overlapping activities
- Providing more tailored services for different company groups
- Raising awareness of national and international funding opportunities
- Developing tools and methods for better coordination among cluster actors and for improving the understanding of companies' service needs
- Even stronger support in finding international contacts
- Regular updating of information on cluster actors

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Recommendations

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The list of companies involved in the automotive and vehicle technology cluster should be updated regularly and maintained in a way that better reflects the new definition of the cluster as a concentration of automotive and vehicle technology expertise.

Recommendation 2. The companies in the automotive and vehicle technology cluster should be more clearly categorized into different groups based on their internationalization needs. This would enable more purposeful coordination and allow services to be better targeted according to the specific needs of each company group.

Recommendation 3. The services provided by Business Tampere and the automotive and vehicle technology cluster should be increasingly tailored to meet the needs of different customer segments (e.g. themed events, international visits, targeted communication).

Recommendation 4. A stronger network of contact persons should be developed within the automotive and vehicle technology cluster for key international target markets. (For example, collaboration with the Oulu Automotive Cluster could be considered.)

Recommendations

Recommendation 5. The cluster should produce information about international funding opportunities and promote the utilization of such funding by companies and other organizations.

Recommendation 6. The cooperation and internationalization activities between the automotive and vehicle technology cluster and other Business Tampere clusters should be further clarified to eliminate overlaps and create stronger synergies.

Recommendation 7. To strengthen companies' internationalization capabilities, peer learning could be utilized more actively by systematically connecting experienced companies with those taking their first steps toward internationalization.

Recommendation 8. Special efforts could be made within the cluster to facilitate connections between cluster companies and large international customer companies.

Recommendation 9. The cluster should engage in national and international advocacy to ensure the global competitiveness and internationalization opportunities of its member companies.

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Comments and
questions?

Comments and Questions?

- How do the key findings sound from your organization's perspective?
  - Which findings were particularly significant, and why?
  - Did anything surprise you? Why?

- Did you find the recommendations appropriate?
  - Which recommendation was particularly important, and why?
  - Was anything important missing? What?

- Other comments and messages to Business Tampere?

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