Digital Clusters Research
Self Assessment Tool
Briefing note
December 2014

The following questions/criteria form the basis of a 'Self Assessment Tool', which has been developed to support a piece of work being undertaken by Iain Bennett and Graham Hitchen, on behalf of the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN). The Tool is being developed by the KTN to help inform future investment plans by Innovate UK and others. The objective is to identify and clarify the success factors and needs of digital clusters from the perspective of the businesses, investors and stakeholders within it, in a way that can help other investors and policy makers better understand how to help it grow and thrive.

The criteria set out below are gleaned from the Boston Consulting Group research on London's digital cluster (http://mikebloomberg.com/files/Building-Digital-City-London.PDF).

The criteria set out map across to the BCG work, and – although they are not articulated as questions here – they could easily be developed into a set of 'measurable' components within a qualitative survey environment.
Also, a number of them would be corroborated by data which could be gathered from fairly easily-accessible sources. These are marked with *

Strong Talent Pipeline
- HEI graduates* [ie. quantity and quality of graduates and post-grads in relevant subject areas – not strength of research]
- Number of Engineers and Programmers in the workforce
- Experienced executives – people who have set up and run companies, and bring management experience to the cluster.

Vibrant Tech Community
- Formal and informal mentoring – formal programmes + a culture of shared learning, tapping into skillset of experienced people
- Networks and meet-ups*
- Magnet companies* - big technology companies, with knowledge, infrastructure, people etc.
- Visibility – extent to which the cluster is committed to marketing, promotion and push for inward investment

Local Capital throughout the journey
- Angel investors/networks*

- Seed funding
- Growth finance
- VCs*

Robust and Flexible Infrastructure
- Broadband*
- Office space*
- Other infrastructure, such as Transport, which could act as a barrier or promoter of growth
- Market infrastructure - connectivity to other markets, including London

Co-ordinated City Government support
- Mayoral leadership (or equivalent)
- Joined-up private and public mechanisms/forums
- City-led initiatives to support the cluster

Maximising Local Specialisms
- Size and strength of local industry segment(s)*
- Local industry/sectoral strengths mapped against some of the criteria above: graduates, big companies, networks etc.