

TCI 5th Annual Conference
Cairns, Australia

Conference Review and Draft Communique



THE
COMPETITIVENESS
INSTITUTE

OBSERVATIONS - General

- ☑ Clustering concepts do not alone guarantee success and require long-term private and public sector stewardship**
- ☑ Clusters are not a silver bullet**
- ☑ Silo effects limit “whole of government” alignment to support clusters. Proactive clusters make integration of government effort more feasible**
- ☑ Quality economic and social infrastructure needed to support cluster development.**
- ☑ Interregional linkages between clusters is taking place (example: Optics) – but still under-studied and under-reported**

OBSERVATIONS - Innovation

- ✓ Clusters ideal vehicle to maximise rate of innovation via Regional Innovation Systems – “The Cluster is the innovation system”**
- ✓ Well defined regions (Catalunya, Scotland, Slovenia) approach RIS with a more holistic approach**
- ✓ For developing countries there is no alternative to The High Road: Innovation and change as driver. Majority are stuck. Successful countries have used FDI combined with local capabilities (see UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2002/3)**
- ✓ Dissemination of leading edge work is slow to bureaucrats and decision-makers alike. Need better mechanisms to broadcast best practices**

OBSERVATIONS - Integration

- ☑ Focus on technology is important, but not enough. New Game in Town is to fully integrate institutions, authorities, policies and cluster stakeholders.**
- ☑ Need to broaden participation in TCI from labour representatives, educators, industry, as well as technologists**

OBSERVATIONS – Leadership

- ☑ Crucial role of industry leadership and bottom-up approaches. Without this, sustainability is elusive and genuine economic transformation is impossible.**
- ☑ How to adapt Civic Entrepreneurship model to different cultures and political environments?**

OBSERVATIONS – SME's

- ☑ The impact of clusters on SME development is being shown to work across the world. Implementation is the key for sustainable success.**
- ☑ However, implementation methods vary widely, as do their results, and TCI needs to continue and expand information exchange in this critical area.**
- ☑ The involvement of SMEs can be accelerated through collaboration between associations, chambers of commerce and industry stakeholder forums which include broad community participation**

OBSERVATIONS – Measurement Issues

- ☑ Policy makers are increasingly anxious for measures of the effectiveness of clustering activities.**
- ☑ Few results in this area were reported at this conference, but a new initiative by the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness and Competitiveness.com of Barcelona is getting under way**

OBSERVATIONS – Agenda for TCI

- ☑ Participants are still looking for how to move from analysis to implementation. Feedback on Introductory Cluster Course quite positive, but can ways be found for cluster practitioners to share their knowledge throughout conference, and beyond?**
- ☑ There is a clear need to raise the professional level of practitioners of cluster development -- otherwise, the clustering concept runs the risk of getting a bad name**