Contribution by

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Smart Specialisation and the New Industrial Policy: Finding a Path towards the Information Society

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The views presented here are the contributor's and do not necessarily reflect the views and the position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
Smart Specialisation and the New Industrial Policy:
finding a path towards the information society

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The age of a new industrial policy

- Beyond policy conformism - exports and foreign investment – the two fetishes of the Washington Consensus...

- ....countries need to stimulate and promote the formation of capabilities through policies which are targeting new (knowledge-based) activities
Smart specialisation: a policy concept having a political salience
Smart specialisation emphasizes strategic and specialized diversification
It will help countries to find a sustainable and feasible path towards information society
The big question

• For what domain, what activity, a country would benefit from and should specialize in R&D and innovation?
  – Countries cannot do everything in STI so they need to focus on certain domains
  – They need to focus by developing distinctive and original areas of specialisation (not by imitating each other)

• These domains where innovative projects will complement the country’s other productive assets
• Not only for the best: **innovation is multi-dimensional; not only one game in town**
  
  – **Basic inventions and development of applications**
  
  – **Information society**

• **At minimum smart specialisation strategies transform less advanced regions into good followers**
• All the policy challenges....
  – Supporting the discovery process
  – Detecting discoveries and making sound evaluation of potentials
  – Defining a process which will empower those actors most capable of realising the potential

• ... require *unusual observation and analysis capabilities* by policy makers
Pulp & paper
Engineering
Agro-foods
Tourism

2012?
Horizontal policies & neutral instruments
R&D tax credit, small business innovation plan, universities, ICT infrastructure....
Discovering opportunities
Entrepreneurial discovery vs ‘simple’ innovation

2012?
Pulp & paper

Engineering

Agro-foods

Tourism

New business
High tech
Surprise!

ICT

2012?
Making a sound evaluation of potentials
Technological and market opportunities
Supply conditions (local and extra-regional)
Finance requirement
International benchmark
Future value of the structural change

Pulp & paper
ICT
Engineering
Agro-foods
Tourism
New business
High tech
Surprise!

2012?
• SSS comes at a certain point in the development cycle where degrees of local commitment and development have already occurred
  
  – A policy that reinforces a growth process is to be preferred to the lottery of very early stage
Empowering those actors most capable of realizing potentials
Supply conditions (human capital)
Coordination (service providers)
Connection to extra-regional resources
Entry and agglomeration

Pulp & paper
Engineering
Agro-foods
Tourism

New business
High tech
Surprise!

ICT

2012?
Tourism 2012

New business High tech surprise!

Engineering

Agro-foods

Tourism

Pulp & paper

2015?

Med tech

ICT

2012

Bio-tech
Tourism
Engineering
Agro-foods
Med tech
Bio-tech
New business
High tech surprise!
IT
Pulp & paper
2015?
2012
2012?
modernisation
IT
Engineering
2013?
Agro-foods
Tourism
New business
High tech surprise!
radical foundation
modernisation
diversification
Med tech
Bio-
• SSS is neither about *innovations everywhere* nor the lottery of very early stage

• It is about discovering opportunities, evaluating potentials and supporting subsequent growth processes *to find a distinctive and realistic path towards information society*

  – Not promoting sectors but «new activities»
What are the structural conditions and policies which will increase the likelihood of such event?
Countries are open
Extra-regional ressources
and linkages are key
(Market, Expertise, Neighborhood)
Regions are open Extra-regional ressources and linkages are key (Market, Expertise, Neighborhood)
• Smart specialisation?

• A policy process to find an original and feasible path towards information society
Thanks!