Innovation potentials and innovative networks in European metropolitan regions: Some empirical evidence from the Metropolitan Area of Stockholm

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Abstract

Interregional competitiveness and the relationship between technology and competitiveness has increasingly become the object of considerable interest. The stimulation of innovation potentials within a region is becoming more and more decisive in the competition between regions. Although a precise definition of the term innovation potential is difficult, there is no doubt that it is essentially the stock of knowledge and its use which makes up the innovation potential of a region. This stock, however, is an inert factor. Its conversion into innovation underlines the importance of linkages and relationships in everyday innovation processes. Firms pursue co-operative agreements in order to gain rapid access to new technologies or new markets, to benefit from economies of scale in joint R&D and production to tap into essential resources of know-how and to share risks. These linkages possess a number of features which make the network mode a distinct from inter-firm organisation. This paper attempts to give a clear documentation of current innovation activities in the metropolitan region of Stockholm between the three major actors in innovations systems: industrial firms, producer services and research institutions. The presented results are based on representative surveys within an international comparative study in three major metropolitan areas in Europe (Barcelona, Stockholm and Vienna). The results of this research will be relevant for an understanding of how and why different industries build cooperative relationships in metropolitan regions. The results will also provide insights for policy efforts that can help to nurture and expand the regional economic base in the face of the current rapid globalisation of production.

Keywords: Innovation potential, Innovation networks, Metropolitan regions, Stockholm