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CREATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL CLUSTER AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY: THE CASE OF UZBEKISTAN TEXTILE

Academic paper

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Abstract text:

The integration of science, education and production requires the joint use of the potential of educational, scientific and industrial resources and capabilities in mutually beneficial activities. These integration processes cover a wide range of different activities and are manifested in a wide variety of forms. In the areas of training, for example, advanced personnel training and retraining methods are used to underpin joint scientific research.

State support of science has increasingly become a priority for policy makers. National programs of socio-economic development have appeared, aimed at both supporting promising innovations in terms of economic breakthrough, and at stimulating socially-oriented scientific research and developments.

Currently, a number of preferential measures have been launched in the Republic of Uzbekistan to “stimulate research and innovation activities, to create effective mechanisms for the introduction of scientific and innovative achievements in business and practice, to create scientific and experimental specialized laboratories at higher educational institutions and research institutes, such as science and technology parks (Sheregi, et.al., 2012). Science and innovation potential are becoming the main factor in the country's economic development and investing in its Innovation potential is seen as a strategic resource enhancing competitiveness in the world economic system. The purpose of this paper is to review the changes in the policy framework that is introduced in Uzbekistan to stimulate the transformation of the innovative capacity of at higher educational institutions and research institutes, and to link this innovation capacity to the real economy. We review the intersection of economic restructuring through Cluster policy implementation and the infusion of innovation at cluster level, regional level and sectoral level with the example of cotton and textile industry.

We compare the large-scale measures undertaken in Uzbekistan with educational reforms of higher education system in developed countries and how these relate to the priority areas for socio-economic development of individual countries. We discuss how the labour market for trained and qualified personnel is formed at national and sectoral level and the dynamics of labour demand that emerges at cluster level, and in particular at the newly established textile clusters in Uzbekistan.

The main value and contribution of this paper is the in-depth analysis of the relationships between cluster policy and educational reforms in Uzbekistan, and between skilled labour, technological capabilities and business growth in the newly formed textile clusters in Uzbekistan.

In the context of the country's transition to an innovative path, the creation and development of innovation centers that can not only generate technical ideas, but also bring them to commercialization in the domestic and foreign markets are of particular importance. The development of the national economy on an innovative path of development is associated with large-scale investments in human potential and strategic efforts to transform the inter-firm relationships within the cotton and textile sector. Critical development target is the education, ensuring the progressive development individual professional capacity and the society as a whole,

and in particular the sphere of science and higher education.

The creation of new higher educational institutions in Uzbek regions, the opening of modern physical spaces of education and specialised personnel training, with increased institutional quotas and development of life-long learning programs are important reforms in this direction, opening the door for growth in the higher education system itself.

The paper is designed as follows: First, we review the literature on cluster growth and dynamics in the cotton and textile industry around the world. We look in particular at how textile clusters integrate supply chains and what type of inter-firm relationships emerge within these clusters. We compare price-based market mechanisms with contract-based long-term collaborative relationships, or subsidised relationships, and reflect on the restructuring of the restructuring of supply relationships in the Uzbek textile clusters. Second, we look at the dynamics of educational growth in Uzbekistan at national and regional level, linking it with the cluster development in particular regions. Third, we discuss other factors, that are known to contribute to cluster growth, such as small business support, entrepreneurship and management education, business start-ups, technology park investments and other drivers that generate agglomeration effects and regional concentration of business activities.

Finally, we review the current University-Industry linkages in selected clusters, and analyse critically the capacity for knowledge transfer or commercialisation of science, and the new emerging observations of business start-ups and spin-offs and research support measures

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