

OECD GLOBAL FORUM ON THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY: ICTs, INNOVATION, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

This was the first Knowledge Economy Global Forum in Latin America organised by DSTI in conjunction with EDU in the framework of the CCNM work programme (CCNM Activity I.B.2.1). The Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank provided additional support. There were over 270 registered participants from 30 countries, including 13 OECD countries, with high level panels and participation. Brazilian S&T Minister Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg, Deputy-Ministers and senior policy officials from Brazil and other Latin American and Caribbean countries, plus World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, UN ECLAC representatives participated. Very good panel presentations, including opening and closing statements by the Brazilian Minister Sardenberg and Deputy-Minister Pacheco, Deputy-Secretary General Schlögl, and interventions from ECLAC, IDB, World Bank. Summary documents and all presentations will be placed on the OECD web-site.

This Global Forum is one of a series of events underpinned by analysis where OECD is the leading organisation in the field. This Forum promotes internationally coherent approaches to the formulation of policy strategies, the sharing of experiences and practices, and an environment that encourages growth of (and removal of barriers to) the digital economy and e-business, including increasingly important security issues.

The OECD Agenda and knowledge economy strategy and policy framework was well received and considered very relevant in the Latin American context.

Summary of main points from the Forum:

1. Policies and analysis for the knowledge-based economy are structural and microeconomic. Building the knowledge-based economy requires long-term investments with long-term outputs, impacts and consequences.
2. International structural, institutional and business linkages and the international policy context are increasingly important for knowledge economy policy.
3. Policies for the knowledge economy are not about pushing from the supply side, and / or from above by governments. Public goods and services and content have to be shaped by the user side in conjunction with the supply side.
4. Policy frameworks. The Forum stressed the importance of pulling together policy for the inter-related drivers of growth –ICTs, innovation and human resources.
5. The digital divide. This is not only a hardware and equipment problem. The key issues are access, use and outcomes from the use of ICTs and associated technologies.

6. Innovation is a market- and business led process that is dependent on efficient collaboration between public and private research. Conducive framework conditions, including regulations governing public/private partnerships, are key.
7. Financial incentives to innovation have a role to play but existing support instruments need be better integrated, with priority to those that have the highest leverage on business R&D. International co-operation in S&T policy need to be enhanced.
8. Education key issues in the Latin American context are attaining universal access (e.g. at secondary level), raising average attainment levels, improving quality, and increasing involvement in training and life-long learning strategies.
9. Heterogeneity. There are very different economic structures, economic potential, industrial activities and institutional capacities across Latin America and Caribbean countries and there is no “one-size-fits-all” formula for policy priorities and sequencing.
10. Policy dialogue must continue and intensify globally on these issues to find a common set of core policy principles to ensure national policies are compatible despite regional diversity.
11. Knowledge policy frameworks are the first step. Of crucial importance are priorities, sequencing, implementation, outcomes and evaluation.
12. Time frames are long. Policy frameworks adapt over time, and policy frameworks have to fit economic and structural realities. Changes in ICT policy frameworks and policy priorities are being reviewed in the OECD-APEC Global Forum: Policy Frameworks for the Digital Economy (Honolulu, 14-17 January 2003).