



International Conference on Applied Economics, ICOAE 2015, 2-4 July 2015, Kazan, Russia

Innovation clusters in the Russian economy: economic essence, concepts, approaches

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Abstract

The article focuses on the notion of the innovation cluster in the Russian economy, analyzes its specificity within the Russian economic environment, the ways of adaptation of the existing approaches to the Russian economic realities. The article dwells on the role of the innovation cluster development in the process of economic growth of Russia, highlights the positive regional experience in the stated sphere.

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Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of ICOAE 2015.

Keywords: innovation cluster, regional economy;

1. Introduction

The innovative modernization of the Russian economy is the priority direction for the new cycle of changes in the Russian economy. The local and regional authorities are considered to be the key actors in the course of achievement of this goal and accordingly they are to reorder the priorities. At the previous stage their major task consisted in creation of the favorable conditions for the development of the entrepreneurship with the purpose of attracting investment into the regional economy. But the conditions are changing and the matter of sustainable development of the region is being placed in the forefront, as well as the question of promotion of the innovative activity that supposed to provide for qualitatively new scale of the production performance growth, the diversification and

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improvement of the structure of the regional economy, the growth of the competitive capacity of the products and services.

The solution of this problem is impossible within the traditional schemes of the territorial and sectorial management of the regional economy, it requires the application of new approaches to the organization of the innovative activity that would be able to implement the existing competitive edge of the regional economy as well as to create new one (Ogolyova, 2007). In the modern circumstances the competitive edge of the regional economy to a great extent is determined by its capability of the rapid generation and implementation of the new technologies (in the field of microelectronics, telecommunication, computers, robotics, biotechnologies etc.).

2. Theory

In the effectuation of the technological breakthrough an important role is assigned to the process of regional integration of the companies and organizations that perform various functions (starting with research works and personnel training up to production processes and the products transportation) and united by the common technological process that results in the high-tech product created by the joint efforts of all the participants of this process. The most expedient form of their integration is the cluster. The nominal occasion for its origination can be a regional program the implementation of which causes the consolidation of the interests of the plant facilities, the governing bodies, the consulting and financial organizations, the educational establishments. In this case the effect will be achieved through the establishing situation on the market of high-tech products while there will occur the competition not between the separate enterprises, but between regional industrial and research-and-production complexes that will ensure the reduction of transaction costs due to the technological and scientific and production cooperation of the companies.

In legal aspect the cluster is treated as an alliance of entrepreneurs whose participants are bound by the strategic cooperation agreements (Bespalov, 2012). In the economic aspect the cluster members take over the liabilities to coordinate their actions in the spheres of finance, marketing, investment etc. Cluster affiliation is of free will. The main motive for integration of the enterprises belonging to different proprietors are supposed to be the final results (profit, improvement of the quality of the products and services etc.) that are provided by the cluster approach to the economic activity management.

The foundations for the cluster approach were given in the works of Marshall and Schumpeter, so that as the historical basis of the cluster approach we can name, the Marshall's "industrial region" with its agglomerations on the one hand, and Schumpeter's innovations that prompt the economic growth within that agglomerations – on the other. Hence, cluster serves to solve two problems: 1) reduction of the transaction costs due to the close location of the integrated firms, 2) transition of innovations from firm to firm that contributes to the increase of productivity in the cluster as a whole.

Nowadays the interest in the cluster approach is in many respects associated with the works of Michael Porter (Porter, 2005) who defines clusters as a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities.

Porter singles out several functions of clusters in the economic development of every country:

- Clusters are the critical engines in the structures of the national and regional economies. The prosperity of the region depends on the significant positions in a certain number of the competitive clusters.
- Clusters may determine the fundamental tasks in the national and regional business activity: clusters to a great extent correspond with the nature of competition and microeconomic factors that influence the competitive advantages.
- Clusters provide a new mode of thought in the sphere of economy and the efforts on its structural development. Hence, cluster forces the interchange of the roles of the private business, the government, the trading associations and educational and research institutions in the context of economic development and impels the specification of the common opportunities, not mere general problems of the firms and companies of various patterns of ownership.

According to the opinion of G.Yasheva (Yasheva, 2007), there are national peculiarities of the cluster policy:

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