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Theme: Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as a Catalyst Towards Achievement of East African Community Vision 2050

Strengthening the Linkages Between the Industry And Academia In The EAC

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ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY

• In EAC this rarely occurs
• Industry rarely generates some practical interests in the universities
• Close industry – academia linkage will provide the basis for strong innovation system that will lead to increased competitiveness
• Innovation and competitiveness are considered to be intertwined factors which contribute to the strength of an economy,
• Countries have to compete for international markets therefore countries have to develop policies that will foster innovation and strengthen competitiveness of the economy
1. **Industry Solutions**

- Allowing industry and academia to work together provides unique opportunities for finding solutions for future innovation which could lead to more efficient technologies leading to increased productivity and reduced cost per unit of production.

- The reduced cost of goods will translate to increased profit margins for companies while making the product more competitive.

- One of the most sustainable solutions for long term sustainability is localized solutions for characteristically unique problems.

- Academia-industry collaborations can stimulate companies’ internal research and development programs.

- The academia can help industrial scientists identify current research that might be useful in design and development of innovative processes and potential products.
2. On-job training:

• Strong of Industry- academia linkage will promote internship programs that will enable interns to gain practical experience in industrial activities. They will have experiential learning.

• The interns will also be able to put into practice the knowledge that they have gained in class. Contribute to the work force of the industry.

• They can also provide some solutions to the industry through their research projects. Thus the internship programs can provide solutions to skills gap in the industry.
Benefits of strong academia-industry linkage

3. Research as a tool to product competitiveness:

• Strong Industry-academia linkages would provide the basis for strong innovation system, whereby research and development is oriented towards demands in the market and the society which then would enhances competitiveness.

• Competitiveness is one of the challenges faced by firms all over the world.

• Firms cannot achieve competitiveness without having profound innovation system in its processes and products.

• One of the key aspirations of EAC is to attract and sustain investments in the different sectors of the economies in the Partner States so as to spur socio-economic development and reduce poverty. In that regard, information from research is critically needed to guide investment choices and decisions.

• The evidence-based research provides technical solutions that are required by the industry players. The innovation system would provide innovations that the industry would adopt and make them into commercial products.
Benefits of strong academia-industry linkage

4. Economic Growth/Development:

- The academia-industry linkage is important in the long term sustainability of economic growth and competitiveness of the industrial products.
- The industries in the west were strengthened by the academia-industry linkage.
- Commercialization of high technology products becomes possible through strong academia-industry linkage.
- Universities are usually the hub for innovation where academics develop new technologies, procedures, processes and systems that can be utilized by the industry, spawn growth of new industries.
- Innovations that academia comes up with through research are taken up by the industry would developed into commercial products or practical applications that benefit the society (social benefits).
Benefits of strong academia-industry linkage

5. Human Resource/Skills Development:

• The economic growth in EAC has spurred demand for well-trained human resource to support the growing economies and the emerging economic opportunities, and to satisfy the expanding labor market.

• In this regard, the developments in the Community, such as the Common Market Protocol, Customs Union and Monetary Union, and the move towards regional integration implies that universities and other higher education institutions in the region should respond positively by developing training and research programmes that meet the human resource capacity needs and skills that would lead to sustainable socio-economic development of the region.
Benefits of strong academia-industry linkage

6. Long term sustainability:

• Synergy between academia and industry will spur continuous research and development of new technologies and innovations that will aid in sustainable economic development.

• Academia would develop/review academics programmes so that they address the needs of the industry as well as the EAC vision 2050

• This will produce human resource that is knowledgeable and competent in handling industrial needs

• It's important that academia has strong working relationship with local industries to address global challenges for more long-term sustainability.
Benefits of strong academia-industry linkage

7. Knowledge sharing:

- The academia would provide consultancies to the industry.
- The industry personnel with technical know how will come to universities and give practical based lectures to students.
- Industry would facilitate networking among academia and industry for best practice sharing, and building partnership for collaborative R&D, technology and innovation initiatives.
- Industry can also gift academia with equipment (academia benefits)