

mesopartner Africa

Capacity Building Series

*Practically improving the performance of the private sector
within the context of local economic development*

EVENT 2: 28 September 2010

Diagnosing local and regional innovation systems

The topic

Industries within the Southern African region are under pressure to improve their competitiveness and performance due to increased international competition. A critical element in the improved performance of an industry is related to the innovation systems that surrounds these firms. While the methods and mechanisms to improve the performance of individual firms are fairly well known (and broadly applied), the practice of identifying, diagnosing and improving innovation systems concentrated in specific areas are not yet widespread. This is partly because of the fact that innovation systems are invisible to most firms (and policy makers), and that the topic is often seen as being too abstract and theoretical.

In attempting to understand the factors that influence the innovative behaviour of a group of enterprises, there are several lines of enquiry that will reveal the complex system that shapes their behaviour. A thorough understanding of the interplay between knowledge, technology and different kinds of innovation enables practitioners to identify systemic leverage points that can be tweaked to stimulate increased innovative activities. If systemic leverage points can be identified, the behaviour of multiple actors can be influenced, and we can then go beyond innovation in just a single enterprise or organisation to increased innovation within a larger system.

Who should participate?

This capacity building event is aimed at private sector development practitioners and individuals involved in the organizational development of institutions such as universities, municipalities and other forms of public and private institutions. The content of this event will allow these practitioners to understand the concepts and main theoretical underpinnings of innovation systems, and will lay the foundations for the analysis and improvement of specific innovation systems.

Content to be covered during this event:

- Main theoretical principles of innovation systems
- distinguishing between national, local and regional and sector innovation systems
- understanding the difference between innovation within firms, and innovation systems
- The relationship between the region and innovative performance of industries
- 4 lines of inquiry to diagnose the factors that affects the performance of a specific innovation system
- Different analytical instruments that can be applied to understand elements of the innovation system
- aligning public and private supporting institutions to the innovation needs of an industry
- facilitating a process of incremental change within an innovation system

If you would like to participate in this event, complete the registration form and send it to Annelien at ac@mesopartner.com or fax 0866 501 099.