

Title: A knowledge – based approach for the assessment of regional systems' competitiveness.

Presenter: Guido Sechi

Affiliation: Bari University of Applied Sciences, Italy/SSE Riga

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A knowledge – based approach for the assessment of regional systems' competitiveness

Guido Sechi, PhD candidate

The current research project concerns the topics of regional industrial development and innovation dynamics, focusing on Latvia and Riga. The research has been conducted with a peculiar attention to transitional economic contexts. In particular, the research activity was aimed at identifying possible guidelines for the definition of firms' relational assets affecting innovative performance in the context of local and regional industrial systems.

The first phase of the activity consisted of a massive review of theoretical and empirical works (books and papers) concerning different but linked scientific threads, in particular: 1) theoretical models for the description of local and regional industrial systems; 2) approaches aimed at describing territorial innovation dynamics, and identifying (and measuring) territorial innovation enabling factors; 3) models for the definition and classification of organisational intangible assets (with a peculiar focus on the 'intellectual capital' thread).

The second step consisted in defining, on the basis of literature and original statistical data, a framework for identifying the main relational activities of firms operating in local / industrial systems, focusing in particular on those activities which are related to knowledge and innovation. The set of actors which interact with firms was pointed out, and a purpose-based classification of knowledge-related activities into three networks was proposed.

The third step consisted in the definition of a set of indicators (and proxies) able to measure the intensity and, to a certain extent, the quality of innovation and knowledge-related relational activities of firms. The indicators were classified on the basis of the previously defined framework for activities.

Further developments should consist in the empirical testing of the model, by measuring the correlation between proposed indicators and innovative performance for regional / local industrial systems' firms, and verifying the possible dependence of results on other context factors (e.g. capital / labour intensity of the industry; macroeconomic context).