The International Organisation for Knowledge Economy and Enterprise Development

Initially formed in 2001, IKED is an Independent, non-profit think-tank, with headquarters located since 2002 in Malmö, Sweden, operating on a Nordic platform (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) with diverse partners and with a global agenda to address the issues that are associated with the rise of the “knowledge-based” economy, sometimes referred to as the “learning society”, the “information society”, or “the new economy”.

Issues and Areas Addressed by IKED

IKED brings together in-depth expertise on various aspects of international economics, industrial organisation, technology, innovation, enterprise development, entrepreneurship, organisational change, institutional dynamics and knowledge/technology transfer. It addresses how “pull” needs to evolve along with “push”, and “demand” along with “supply”, in relation to accelerating technical progress, and notably the mobilization and use of information and communications technology (ICT). It further specializes in action-oriented agendas how to engineer vital boundary-crossing processes in the development and use of knowledge, including cross-disciplinary, from local to global, and linking different societal spheres.

Looking across traditional boundaries, IKED’s mission encompasses the broader economic & social implications related to the ascent of the knowledge economy. It combines analytical precision with a comprehensive approach to governance, spanning policy design and implementation based on constructive engagement of key stakeholders, and the empowerment of citizens and of users for constructive continuous change.

International

The organisation has developed a strong global network with partners and contact points in the public as well as private sectors, spanning more than 40 countries. Apart from the Nordic countries, the network includes:

Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
Nordic Connection

The Nordic countries belong to the most advanced in industrial development, innovation and the use of new technologies. The level of economic efficiency as well as social well-being is high in most respects. Nevertheless, in recent decades the Nordic countries have been struggling to capture the full returns from their seemingly advantageous position.

While challenges remain, the Nordic countries are widely viewed as constructive speaking partners. Their culture is marked by a deep-rooted belief in the value of open dialogue, exchange of experience, and shared insights.

Background on the Knowledge based Economy

As economies move into the post-industrial era, the rise of the knowledge-based economy is attracting attention around the world. New industries are being born, traditional ones are reshaped, and old barriers are torn down, as economies are transformed with newly evolving technologies, innovation processes, and practices. Knowledge is being created at a pace never seen before, and there is a rapid and continuous evolution in the needs of individuals to acquire new skills, and for organisations to manage new ways of learning and responding to real needs. Technical progress, including ICT, is intertwined with globalisation in the form of expanding international flows, not only of finance but also with regard to new ideas and changing modes of communication, the diffusion of new technologies, and human talent.

These developments bring economic, social and environmental opportunities as well as severe challenges of upheaval, transition costs and adjustment. Progress is not a given. There are huge problems arising from traditional barriers and rigidity, as well as from lack of institutional frameworks to ensure accountability in resource use and orderly conditions in rapidly evolving markets. As a result, mismanagement occurs at local, national and international level. Pressures continue to mount on the natural environment, new kinds of digital and knowledge divides arise, and whereas the well-developed societies are now marked by ageing populations others are struggling to raise and educate a vast new generation, as well as to combat states of poverty and cruel disease. In the midst of such demanding issues, security problems abound as well. None of all this can be addressed by narrow traditional approaches. The solutions of tomorrow require that creativity, innovations and entrepreneurship can flourish and be put to use today.

Many countries around the world are seeking ways to formulate a better-integrated policy approach with respect to such considerations. The challenges confronting different countries have much in common, although the specific priorities for reform may differ. At the same time, many issues require improved international frameworks that are not easily achieved in traditional multilateral negotiations, or even through today's processes of regional integration.

There is no given, optimal set-up to cherish the knowledge-based economy. All countries will have to go through a learning process, and can greatly benefit from an orderly exchange of experience, and the dissemination of solutions. Multilateral organisations carry out a number of relevant projects, but they are largely organised to address linear and more traditional issues, and are in any case unable to fully meet the prevailing demand.
Activities:

Over the years, IKED has engaged with international partners to spearhead projects in support of the ongoing transition to knowledge-based economies around the world. Examples are:

- Hosted, together with the Swedish government, the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) conference on “Globalisation and ICT, the Role of Government, Private Sector and Civil Society in an Information Society for All”, Malmö, 2003.

- Acted in the capacity of secretariat for the Finance Ministers’ project on “the Nordic Countries and the New Economy”, under the aegis of the Nordic Council of Ministers, 2003.

- Carried out work with the Baltic Development Forum, and in collaboration with the governments of Denmark, Estonia and Poland, focusing on SMEs’ integration and role in the Baltic region, 2003.

- Through an innovation policy review, IKED supported the development of an action plan commissioned by the Norwegian Prime Minister to put in place a comprehensive innovation policy. IKED’s report was published in connection with the Norwegian government’s presentation of its next round of reforms, 2004.

- Produced the “Cluster Policies Whitebook”, structuring policy challenges and the relevant policy tool box in the area of innovative clusters, 2004.

- Reviewed SME development and presented associated policy recommendations to key stakeholders in Turkey, 2005.

- Carried responsibility for convening the theme “Empowering Local Communities for the Use of ICT”, in preparation of ASEM ICT Ministerial Meeting “Promoting ICT Applications in Human Resource Development and Capacity Building”, as well as accounted for chairing capacity in the policy drafting committee, Hanoi, 2006.

- Coordinated an international project on triple helix relationships in Ethiopia drawing on experience of developed and other developing countries, and organized the international conference on “Transforming University-Industry-Government Relations in Ethiopia”, 2006, production of Ethiopian country review and conference proceedings, 2007.


- Carried out a review of venture and seed capital functions with focus on Nordic countries in an international context, 2007.

• Examined international policy developments in areas of SME development and parallel competence upgrading at firm and regional level, for the Swedish National Agency for Enterprise Development (NUTEK), 2007.

• Launched a new institutional agenda in response to the outstanding issues of authentication, accountability and trust in digital communication, producing the 2006 feasibility study, “Enabling Trust in the Digital World”, and supporting the establishment of the Global Trust Center (GTC) in subsequent years.

• Undertook policy reviews of Finland and Sweden for the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), as part of an international expert network “Building Long Term Strategies and Public-Private Alliances for Export Development in Latin American countries”, 2008.

• Jointly with partners in France, Greece, Morocco and Turkey, engaged in fostering women entrepreneurship through advocacy and practical experience in training at business labs, incubators and science parks, since 2008.

• Collaboration with international expert network on new communication tools for preventive care and wellness though empowerment of individuals and more effective health management, since 2008.

• Engaged in support of reformed science-industry relations, science park development at Al-Khodh Valley, 2008, and the establishment of ICT-innovation programme, Muscat, 2009.

• Work with the Executive Council of Abu Dhabi on Innovation Systems, Benchmarking and Indicators for Natural Resource-Based Economies, and notably the development and calibration of an innovation index tailored to the issues confronting such economies, 2009-2010.

• Training and policy work in Malaysia on the Knowledge-Based Economy, innovation and reform in the university system, since 2009.
Specific Features

IKED offers a bridge between different kinds of expertise on the one hand, and concrete initiatives on the other. Such initiatives span policy work, reform agendas, capacity building, training and various strategic efforts at international, national and regional level, engaging international organisations, governments, regional authorities, the private sector, and civil society. The distinctive features of IKED include:

A FORUM
- for structured analysis and exchange how to address the key issues that arise in the transition of diverse societies towards the knowledge-based economy.

ACTIVITIES
- a coherent portfolio of activities, including country-based as well as thematic studies, targeting cross-boundary perspectives and issues.

INTEGRATION
- engagement in processes of regional and-cross border economic, scientific & technological, and societal integration, as in the context of the European Union as well as in other parts of the world.

PARTNERSHIPS
- joint programmes and communication engaging advanced, emerging and developing economies, linking all relevant stakeholders.

EMPOWERMENT
- engaging and strengthening user perspectives, work on governance structures, articulating the demand side and means for the economy and technology to meet with real needs.

COMPETENCE
- linking theory and practice, training and workshop activity with focus on use of technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship, engaging diverse and complementary lines of expertise, mobilizing international expert networks.
Selected IKED Publications

**Country Studies**

- Towards a New Growth and Innovation Policy in Norway
- Strengthening Innovation and Technology Policies for SME: Development in Turkey: Opportunities for Private Sector Investment
- Transforming University-Industry-Government Relations in Ethiopia
- The innovation system and related policy issues in Morocco
- Chile’s Innovation System in International Comparison
- Effort and Performance of R&D in Sweden

**Thematic Studies**

- Competence Development for Growth: International Outlook and Analysis
- The Role of Venture Capital, Global Trends and Issues from a Nordic Perspective
- Handbook on Women-owned SMEs: Challenges and Opportunities in Policies and Programmes
- Enabling Trust in the Digital World
- Cluster Policies Whitebook
- Building Long-Term Strategies and Public-Private Alliances for Export Development: Lessons from Finland and Sweden for Latin-American countries

For more information about the above and other IKED Publications, see the IKED Website: www.iked.org