



AER Conference:
“Regional Innovation in the European Context”
Linz, Upper Austria, (A), 27-28 October 2008

RATIONALE

WHAT IS INNOVATION?

At the start of the 21st century, the EU is facing new challenges including globalisation and transition from industry to knowledge-based economy. The Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas call for further development of the EU's competitive advantage through innovation and creative potential that exists within its borders to ensure that the EU is leading and steering the new developments in the world economy. Contrarily to the classical economic models which thrived on natural resources and geographical advantages, people are at the core of innovation and focus must be made on highlighting their knowledge and capacities.

WHY A CONFERENCE ON REGIONAL INNOVATION?

If Europe's innovative and creative potential lies in its people, then it is also true that it lies in its regions. When we talk about regional innovation, we suggest a form of change that generates productive improvements, enhanced performance, but also sustainable growth and development.

- there is a need for awareness building on the importance of innovation and its implications in modern day economy
- the role of regions is crucial in innovative policies and must be further underlined
- regions are always interested in knowing how their neighbours tackle similar policies

WHO IS THE TARGET PUBLIC?

- regional decision-makers and regional civil servants active in the field of innovation or willing to develop policies in this direction
- local, national, European or international stakeholders
- academics and representatives of the business world
- stakeholders looking to develop projects and to find project partners

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT?

The **different parts of the event** (plenary, market place, information workshop, presentation workshop and training workshop) will **respond to specific needs, and ensure diverse outputs and results.**

PLENARY SESSION

- to provide information on EU initiatives in support to innovation (FP7, Interreg)
- to build awareness on the importance of innovation

MARKET PLACE

- to facilitate networking
- to find partners for projects
- to inspire other regions to develop similar projects

INFORMATION WORKSHOPS

- to open the debate on the role of regions in bringing innovation to Europe through specific themes including clusters, SMEs or governance
- to provide information and allow participants to ask questions
- to illustrate the role of regions in creating innovation policies

PRESENTATION WORKSHOPS

- to bring to light some of the best regional initiatives in the field of innovation
- to inspire other regions to carry out similar projects
- to illustrate concretely how innovation can be tackled in specific fields

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

- to give concrete advice on how to set up projects for regions wishing to develop activities in this domain through the exchange of best practice and the analysis of existing projects in different workshops
- to present methodologies to encourage innovation in regions through specific training sessions
- to share hands on solutions to concrete problems experienced in the regions

More information on the workshops and attendance criteria is attached to this invitation package!