

Summary

The competitiveness of Switzerland is submitting to the tensions between globalization, the latest technological developments as well as the sustained ability to innovate. The dynamic innovations as a result demands from economy, society and its policies a constant process of training, and the adaption for staying competitive in the long term. Does the Swiss system of innovation respond to this challenge? Does the necessity of reform exist to support and maintain the long term prosperity and the quality of life today?

The competitive position of the Swiss at this time is still extremely favorable. The main interest of this study however is to reinforce the future competitiveness of Switzerland's platform of innovation. One endeavors, from the study and appreciation of the Dutch system of innovation, to extract the conclusions regarding possibilities for improvements in Switzerland.

This report aims to develop theses relative to the Dutch innovation systems and recommendations for the resolution of actions concrete for Switzerland. It must serve to create discussions on the process of change over the long term. The study centers on the following four themes: possibilities to develop human resources, innovative businesses within their environment, the roles of the research institutions and Universities, as much as interaction between the various contributors. Besides the study of available written resources, the study rely's on the in-depth interviews of experts, which were conducted by the group in charge of the project.

In summary, one could characterize the strong points and particulars of the Dutch innovation system in this manner.

- Strong market presence in basic and continuous training

Client orientation in high schools and student population is as much a standard as the innovative structure and products are characteristics, and the tendencies of the Dutch in basic and continuous training. One well studied interaction between private business, semi-private and government entities aims to satisfy the needs of training for a society oriented around knowledge and innovation

- Imitation and support of the market as a priority of economic policy

The internationalization, the processes and the evolution of the market are fundamentals accepted by the economy and Dutch society. The Government accepts these tendencies and tries through various initiatives to obtain behavior positioned towards the market.

- Collaboration between semi-private research institutions, universities and corporations

The collaboration between semi-private research institutions, and the industrial sector is intensive in the Netherlands; the channels of circulating the application of R&D results on the market, respectively in their businesses, are well established, due to the fact that the organized changes take place within the universities and research institutions, and that cooperation is project oriented.

- Reinforcement of the collaboration between the participants of the innovation system

Dutch institutional regulations and policies (in matters of innovation and technology) favor the interaction between the different contributors. Plus, one creates public dialog on future technological developments and their effect on society. The transfer of knowledge and the process of training create favorable conditions for the adaptation and flexibility in the Dutch innovation system.

This report and theses have been presented and discussed during one of the successful round table meetings attended by experts from both Switzerland and the Netherlands. It is on this basis that suggestions of improvements have been elaborated, in-order to reinforce Switzerland's innovation system. SATW proposes the following recommendations:

- Promotion of the quality of education and R&D through the process of evaluation

Promotion of the quality in Switzerland's system of training and in the R&D of Schools of Higher Education. Wide circulation of publications of evaluation reports and possibilities, according to the evaluation of incentive measures or sanctions.

- Reinforce market influence and independent organization for the supply and demand of training through new concepts of financing

Develop a system of scholarships and simultaneously raise the taxes of studies for the students, in view of the reinforcement of purchasing power as an incentive for training applicants. Encouragement that the students complete their training in a useful time. Responsible financing of training instructors with the investments in the infrastructure. Work study practices for the students.

- Encouragement of projects in the „Seed“ and „Start-Up“ phases through improved framework conditions, advice and finance

Development of a market for promising „Start-Up“ projects, creating a structure and place to start. Improve the possibility of finance („Seed“ funds according to Twinning Initiatives), accompanied by the „Business Angles“ and the sponsors in the „seed“ and „start-up“ phases.

- Support the innovation and diffusion processes by a network of advisers, the transfer of knowledge and the possibility of learning

Promotion of a innovation network. Development of a network of advisors for SME (Syntens). Continued training of entrepreneurs, dialog on the perspectives of the future. Transfer of knowledge through human mobility (KIM initiative).

- Define research priorities on the basis of a wide consensus, by the creation of Competence Centers

Creation of Competence Centers according to strategic themes in order to concentrate the national R&D means. Reinforce the dialog between the economy, sciences, and the public about activities centred on R&D to be created in Switzerland.

- Promote the cooperation between Schools of Higher Education and business by the professionalism within a matrix organization

Simplify and reinforce the interface between Schools of Higher Education and private economy by an organization of Schools of Higher Education concentrating on solving problems and on the market. Using modern methods of management, thereby resulting in higher professionalism for the promotion of projects with the business.

- Promote public dialog on technology and science by regular events and reports

Promotion of public relations and development of corresponding networks. Institutionalizing science and technology weeks. Create monitoring systems and report on the science and innovation systems.

- Bring together the procurement of work and continued training

Promotion of private employment agencies to engage in continued training. Bonuses for the reintegration of the unemployed. Continued training reinforced by the Schools of higher education. Development of an incentive system which makes the continued training attractive as much as for the employee as for the employer. Encouragement of flex-working for highly qualified personal.