

Regional Innovation System in ASEAN

- Advantage of the region's production network
- Spillovers within the region

What is an innovation system? And does ASEAN have a region-wide innovation system? Generally speaking, an innovation system is the "network" of institutions in the public and private sectors whose activities and interactions initiate, import, modify and diffuse technologies. In this sense, an innovation system could exist for a particular nation, a region within a nation, or, conceptually, a region comprising several nations. Specifically, a *national* innovation system comprises firms, universities, nonprofit entities, and public agencies that produce or support the production of science and technology within national borders. We can infer from this view that innovation systems that span sectors in the same country should have more in common with each other than they do with the same industrial sector in other countries.

It is also known that although ASEAN has been developing economic integration, members have been less active in engaging intra-ASEAN technological cooperation than their interaction with ASEAN's dialogue partners: Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, Japan, the EU, and the United Nations in the past decades. A survey by ASEAN's Committee on Science and Technology (COST) reveals that for the most part, cooperation means foreign aid. Joint projects with Australia in food protein research have been funded by Australia; energy research with the United States is funded by the United States; cooperation in marine sciences is funded by Canada; and materials science research has been funded by Japan (ASEAN, 1987-88; 1988-89; 1989-90). In the latter case, Japan is providing coordinator for the project, as well as equipment and training in Japan (ASEAN Secretariat: 1988-1989). However, it is interesting to note that outside partners tend to serve as a catalyst for intra-ASEAN cooperation. Germany, for example, signed a technical cooperation agreement with ASEAN which includes the provision of assistance in intra-ASEAN cooperation in technology transfer and vocational training (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1991: 32; cited in Minden, 1995: 319).

ASEAN. 1987-88. *Annual Report of the Standing Committee*. Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat.

_____. 1988-89. *Annual Report of the Standing Committee*. Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat.

_____. 1989-90. *Annual Report of the Standing Committee*. Jakarta: ASEAN

Secretariat.

Far Eastern Economic Review. 1991. "EC and ASEAN." 7 February.

Minden, Karen. 1995. "Science and Technology Cooperation in the Pacific Rim: Bilateral and multilateral Perspectives." In Denis Fred Simon, ed., *The Emerging Technological Trajectory of the Pacific Rim* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe), 315-37.