

Innovation Communities as Model Platforms for Education, Research Opportunities, and Career Development

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ABSTRACT

The creation of technology platforms (so called “innovation communities”) through integration of different laboratories and companies stimulate an improvement of the internal organizational structure of the participating (public/private) institutions. This approach allows also to maximize the impact of research on economic growth and societal wellbeing, through the integration of divisions, and the creation of core facilities that are commonly available to the reference partners (or external users) [1, 2].

Together with the “local integration” of Institute’s infrastructures and the development of common research initiatives, it is of paramount importance to establish a connection with “external” research units involved on similar/complementary technological topics, within a national and/or European network. This connection allows the strengthening of the innovation community in its capacity to conduct research at a level that ensures the maintenance of a prominent position in the country [2, 3]. The partnership agreement that brings together research centers, universities and leading companies creates a dynamic consortium, with a mission of boosting innovation in a specific geographical area, stimulating economic growth and creating a new class of future entrepreneurs and new jobs. In this respect, innovation communities represent also excellent model platforms for education, research opportunities, and career development [4, 5].

We analyze the some innovation communities developed in (the south of) Italy, such as the Technological Districts or Scientific and Technological Parks, where the institute’s research priorities has been addressed, in most cases, by the local socio-economic needs or vocation of the reference region. We also outline the future perspectives in the framework of the EU programs and the possible strategies for the development of innovative and user-inclusive innovation communities [5].

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