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LABOUR MARKET
INTELLIGENCE PARTNERSHIP

CAPABILITIES, INNOVATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS A NEW APPROACH TO PLANNING POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

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**UKFIET – IPR Seminar on Education and Economic Development, University of Bath
20 June 2014**

The challenge: developing a new planning approach for South African post-school education and training



- ❖ How do we address skills gaps in South Africa to improve alignment between what the E&T system produces, and the needs of the public and private sectors?
 - ❖ What set of provider institutions are required?
 - ❖ How can industry and education organisations work together to produce relevant graduates?
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- The current approach tries to create projections for skills needed in specific sectors and reconfigure public institutions to address these needs better (whilst taking account of equity considerations)
 - However, it does not address innovation, interaction and improving capabilities

An interactive capabilities approach



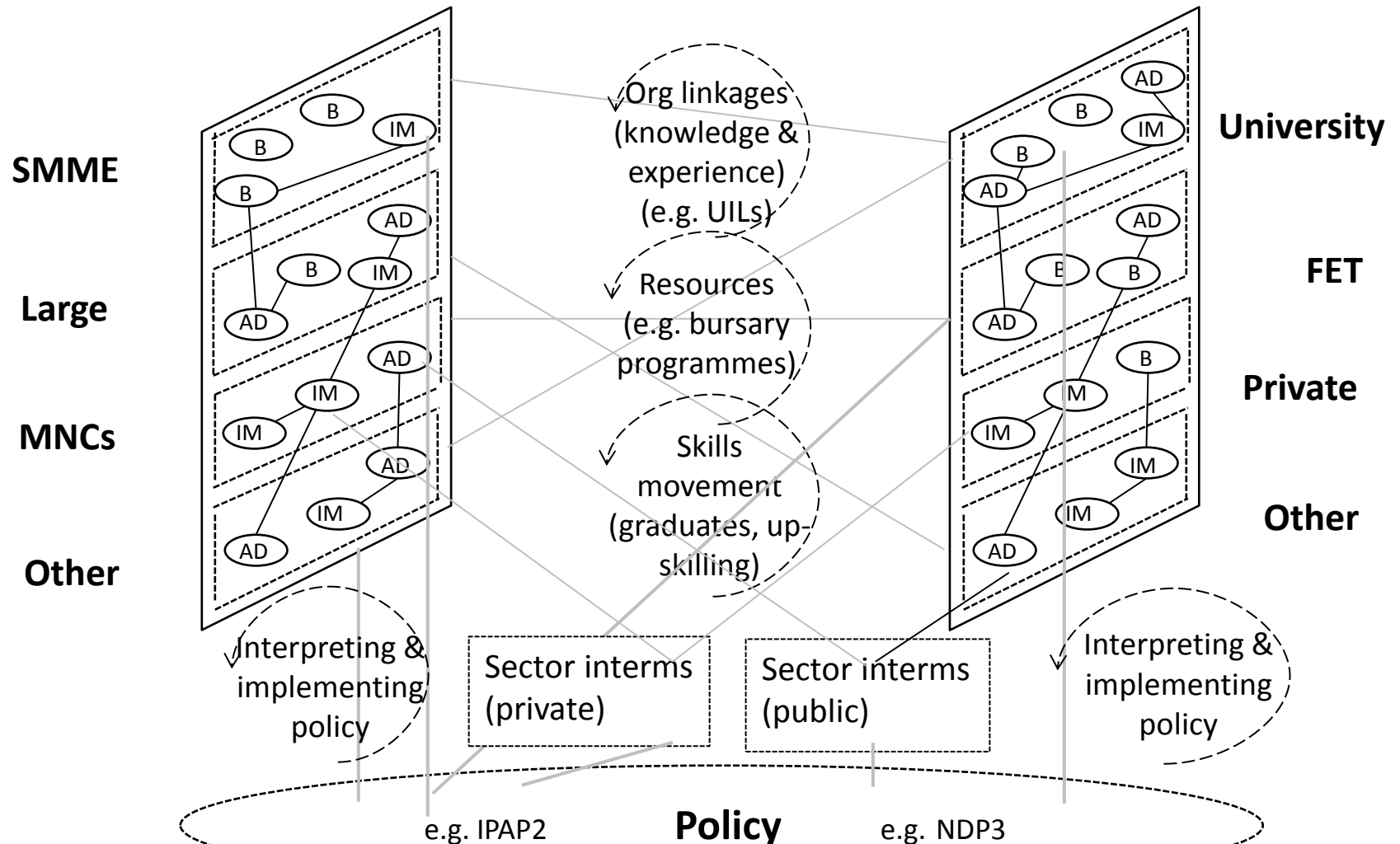
- ❖ As part of the US\$10m Labour Market Intelligence Partnership, funded by DHET, we are researching the potential of looking at the interactive capabilities of education and training providers, sectoral intermediaries and firms in three sectors:
 - Sugar (growing and milling)
 - Automotives (tier 1 component firms)
 - Astronomy (the Single Kilometre Array Project)
- ❖ Automotive case study reviewed existing literature; examined policy documents; interviewed 81 respondents from public and private further education and training providers, intermediary organisations (including industrial development zones, employers' organisations and trade unions) and firms; and administered instruments on capabilities and networks.
- ❖ Focused on the Eastern Cape province, one of three spatial nodes in the sector.

Capability building processes in the sectoral system of innovation

SKILLS DEMAND

MECHANISMS/STRATEGIES

SKILLS SUPPLY



6 key findings of the automotive case study



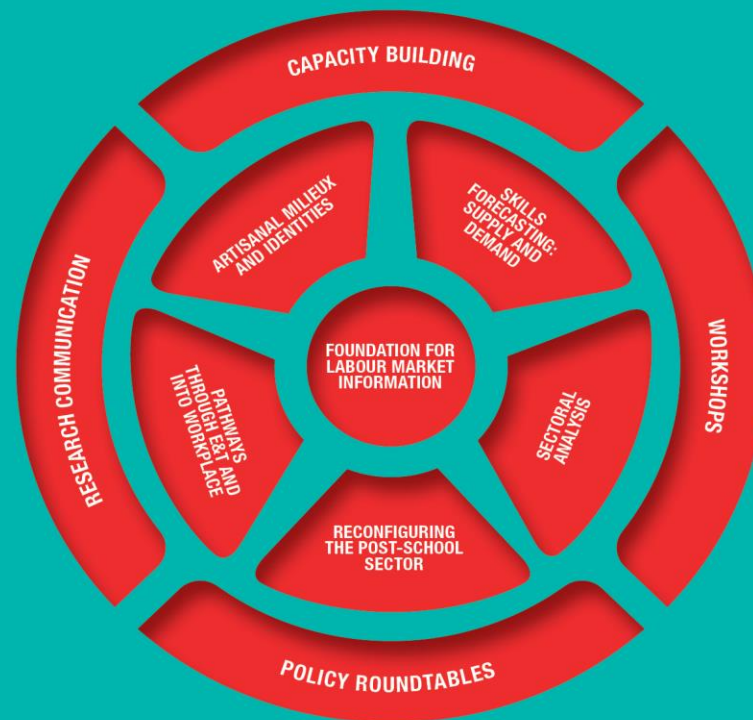
1. There have been valuable efforts to interact to build capabilities within the sector. However, their effectiveness is constrained by the global logic of the automotive sector that places limitations on the skills needed at the provincial level.
2. Unsurprisingly, the capabilities of the provincial post-school education and training system to interact within the sector are directed primarily at manufacturers, rather than component firms.
3. If South African tier 1 firms are to be more competitive locally and internationally, then there is clearly a role for skills development. Much of this is likely to be concentrated on short inputs rather than traditional award bearing programmes.
4. There are initiatives underway to raise the skills and competitiveness of South African component manufacturers. Making sure that public providers are capable participants in these initiatives is vital to their continued relevance.
5. There are no guarantees that a more innovative automotive components cluster can be achieved given the constraints and disciplines under which it operates. Nonetheless, there is a pressing need to support the sector to continue as an important contributor of employment, exports and skills.
6. Enhanced national policies and systems are needed but the real educational planning focus should be on building more capable local institutions and networks.

6 key messages on post-school planning



1. The technological capability approach offers a radically new way of thinking and acting about the responsiveness of post-secondary education and training institutions.
2. Rather than a focus on central planning mechanisms and structures, it highlights the need to build capabilities within institutions, networks and systems to be able to innovate.
3. The creation of a distributed process of capacity development and network enhancement is a task in which the state must work particularly strategically with private and public intermediary organisations.
4. The approach insists on shifting attention towards economic sectors and how the post-school education and training system supports them.
5. A focus on technological capabilities emphasises how innovation and improvement come about through learning and communicating.
6. A system of sectoral innovation is multi-scalar in nature and this requires policy approaches that can ensure that decisions are being made at the appropriate scalar level.

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