

# MAPPING OF INNOVATION

## INTRODUCTION

The set of reports entitled “The Mapping of the Innovation” is a spin-off of the project on Regional Systems of Innovation (RSI) for the city of Etobicoke. RSI Etobicoke was sustained by the generous contributions of the Industrial Adjustment Services of Human Resources Development Canada, and has been directed by the Etobicoke Joint Adjustment Committee (EJAC). I thank the committee members for their generous time contributions to the Committee and Nancy Green for her support and encouragement through its deliberations.

In February 1994, the Etobicoke Joint Adjustment Committee (EJAC) was organized to ‘research and propose ways and means of developing technology strategies for further economic development in Etobicoke’. “The Mapping of Innovation” covers the results of the studies for initiating a regional innovation strategy. These studies were instrumental in enhancing the EJAC’s activities and were able to guide EJAC to a much broader outlook for the basis of a regional innovation strategy.

As the reader will notice the set of integrated reports which collectively form the ‘Mapping of Innovation’, has a robust methodological approach. The author’s background, as an engineer and a plant designer, assisted him in examining the very basis of the classification of the factors of production into ‘land’, ‘labor’ and ‘capital’. He called it the Static model of production. In the meetings of the Committee he pointed out the deficiency of this model concerning the lack of a proper role for ‘knowledge’. He argued that in this context, it would hardly be possible to carry out a comprehensive study about the interaction between economic development and innovation.

By scrutinizing the different stages of the Linear model of innovation, the “Mapping of Innovation” underlines the deficiencies of the linear approach as the main platform of the tacit technology strategies of the industrial countries, since WW II. This set of reports articulates the Holistic model of innovation which regards innovation as a socio-technological process for the application, development and generation of knowledge to design, develop, create, distribute and sell goods and services.

The Mapping of Innovation give us a chance to observe a new vista of innovation from the stand point of the Holistic model, a view definitely not possible in the context of the traditional pipeline view towards innovation.

It appears the deep valley between the ‘technological’ and ‘social’ innovation is still unbridged.

“The Mapping of Innovation” reports collectively underline the following main conclusions:

- ‘Innovation’ is the engine of economic development and essential for social prosperity.
- Innovation, as a socio-technical phenomenon, should not be limited to a technical dimension, where increasing the expenditures on some programs would automatically lead to further innovation, economic development and social prosperity. There is much more to innovation than executing R&D projects. Social and learning aspects of innovation should cover the whole of society and should not be confined solely to education programs.
- The traditional linear model of innovation, where research is assumed to lead directly to innovation, may not assist in comprehending a wider view of innovation. The Linear model is probably outdated as a proper tool to develop innovation.
- Regional innovation plans are an integral part of any comprehensive or national system of innovation.

Since May 1994 the European Commission has initiated a set of projects aimed at developing innovation strategies in the European regions. After setting up Regional Innovation Strategies - RIS in more than 70 European regions (one out of four regions) it is interesting to note that there exist many commonalities between the conclusions of RSI Etobicoke and RIS in the European Community.

The collective results of RIS Etobicoke, including ‘The Mapping of Innovation’, and a comparative study on the European Commission’s initiative on regional innovation strategies are going to be discussed at a meeting in Toronto on February 21, 1997. The meeting will bring together participants from the three tiers of government in Canada to share ideas and exchange thoughts on the further development of regional systems of innovation in Canada.

**Barrie Wray, P.Eng.**

Chairman, Etobicoke Joint Adjustment Committee

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