India leads in inclusive innovation in Asia

How can innovation promote globally inclusive well-being? The "Inclusive Innovation Atlas" analyzes which Asian countries offer the best conditions for progress and sustainable development – an innovation-driven economy that simultaneously benefits all population segments. India is one of the leaders among the 21 countries surveyed.

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The comparative study "Inclusive Innovation Atlas" measures for the first time Asian countries' potential for inclusive innovation – that is, their capacity for a sustainable social and economic development that benefits all segments of society without doing harm to the environment. In short, as the study's experts emphasize, the point is to do "more for more for less."

The study examines 21 countries and compares them according to 72 indicators. The study shows that a country must have two things in place in order for inclusive innovation to take off.
On the one hand, inclusive innovation must be driven by certain social, economic or ecological pressures to address specific problems. On the other, a country must feature factors that enable inclusive innovation, such as stable institutions.

**Three groups of countries with different types of potential**

The Inclusive Innovation Atlas defines three clusters of countries, each with different framework conditions for the development of inclusive innovation. Each country’s unique combination of challenges and opportunities derives from their specific historical development and domestic structures.

The first cluster of countries includes countries like Bangladesh, Laos and Myanmar, each of which feature weak institutions. As a result of their weak institutional frameworks, these countries struggle with creatively counteracting challenging environmental, social or societal conditions.

The second cluster includes countries such as India, Indonesia and the Philippines. These countries also face several challenges which nonetheless drive the search for innovative ideas. Yet these countries are equipped with more stable institutions, more flexible societies – and therefore a greater capacity to effectively address challenges.

In India, for example, the strong need for new ideas dovetails with existing social and structural conditions.

"India is a model case for inclusive innovation at its best."

Parvati Vasanta, India expert at Bertelsmann Stiftung

China, Bhutan, Vietnam and Thailand make up the third cluster of countries. These countries benefit from favorable conditions and an above-average capacity for meeting challenges. In contrast to the first two clusters, the combination of enabling factors and the need to address challenges is less pronounced among the countries in this group, which means the breeding ground for inclusive innovation is less apparent.

The study’s analysis underscores the need to respond to the specifics of each situation. This can involve relying heavily on the potential for inclusive innovation – that is, on new ideas and the inventive capacity and healthy drive for development found within a population. In other cases, however, it may make more sense to pursue development cooperation strategies.
Leaders in business, civil society and politics can learn from the potential of inclusive innovation

The Inclusive Innovation Atlas offers an empirically based introduction to the subject for leaders in politics and civil society, for development cooperation organizations, for social entrepreneurs and start-up founders, but also for medium-sized and large enterprises looking to get involved in the field of inclusive innovation. It highlights a social and economic development strategy that has yet to receive the attention it deserves. A crucial aspect of inclusive innovation are the socioeconomic outcomes it delivers by making it possible to promote social cohesion and yield financial profit. In order to meet the needs of people in low-income countries and enable their participation in society, the concept offers a new approach that can complement others pursued via charitable projects, corporate social responsibility and development aid.
There are several Asian countries with great potential to leverage innovations for sustainable and inclusive social transformation processes. But the study also encourages us to think about the extent to which innovation can contribute to sustainable social development processes in Germany and Europe.
The authors Dr. Henning Kroll and Dr. Peter Neuhäusler from the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research in Karlsruhe (Germany) developed a two-dimensional matrix for the Inclusive Innovation Atlas study with 72 indicators that were derived from an evaluation of primary and secondary data. This data and matrix were then used to identify and compare the potential for inclusive innovation among Asian countries. In addition, the authors evaluated a total of 77 responses from experts in 21 Asian countries to inquiries regarding existing activities in the field of innovation that are specific to each country. The results of the surveys have been incorporated into the indicators as empirical data.

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