The Technium initiative started in 2001 with an initial Business and Innovation Centre established in the Swansea docklands area. Early success of this first Technium building led to the concept being rapidly proliferated into a pan-Wales network of primarily sector-focused centres. Whilst the Welsh Government withdrew its support for the Technium network initiative in 2010, the individual centres continued under a range of ownerships and the historic initiative is of continued interest, particularly in respect to regional policy. A vibrant policy and practice debate subsequently emerged, together with strident media comment. Lack of coherence between Technium Centres and weaknesses in monitoring systems has meant this debate has been poorly informed. This case study helps address the evidence deficit within this debate by revisiting the initial Technium Swansea initiative and its subsequent development. The case study provides insight into what can realistically be expected of such initiatives in the short, medium and long term, with realistic time-horizons for ‘success’ and the role of learning for knowledge-based development in similar initiatives and regions.

Abstract:

The Technium initiative started in 2001 with an initial Business and Innovation Centre established in the Swansea docklands area. Early success of this first Technium building led to the concept being rapidly proliferated into a pan-Wales network of primarily sector-focused centres. Whilst the Welsh Government withdrew its support for the Technium network initiative in 2010, the individual centres continued under a range of ownerships and the historic initiative is of continued interest, particularly in respect to regional policy. A vibrant policy and practice debate subsequently emerged, together with strident media comment. Lack of coherence between Technium Centres and weaknesses in monitoring systems has meant this debate has been poorly informed. This case study helps address the evidence deficit within this debate by revisiting the initial Technium Swansea initiative and its subsequent development. The case study provides insight into what can realistically be expected of such initiatives in the short, medium and long term, with realistic time-horizons for ‘success’ and the role of learning for knowledge-based development in similar initiatives and regions.

Keywords:

Incubation, Clusters, Regional Innovation Systems, Regional Policy

College:

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