Ecuru and Mutambi Successfully defend their PhD's

Two PhD students Joshua Mutambi and Julius Erucu on November 28, 2013 successfully defended their Phd theses. The two were students under the Sida Program. They both did their research in cluster systems and incubation.

Dr Ecuru defended his thesis titled "Unlocking Potentials of Innovation Systems in Low Resource Settings". This study examined the dynamics, challenges and opportunities of developing innovation systems in low resource settings with a particular focus on Uganda. It applied perspectives of technoscience and concepts of innovation systems, triple helix as university-industry-government relationships, mode 2 knowledge production and situated knowledges in understanding the context, identifying key policy issues and suggesting ways to address them. A mixed methodology combining both quantitative and qualitative methods was used in the study. Findings from the study underscore the need for greater interaction and learning among actors in the emerging innovation systems in Uganda and eastern Africa in general. The university is likely to play a key role in fostering these interactions and learning because of its growing pool of entrepreneurial scientists who are enthusiastic about moving their research results and innovations to market. In this way, the university working closely with firms could become the locus for research and innovation. However, for this to happen, first, specific policies and strategies with clear goals and incentives to promote growth of particular innovation systems should be put in place. Second, the government needs a clear national policy, which provides for both core funding to universities and research organizations, and regular competitive grants for research and innovation. Third, business incubation services are necessary so that good business ideas and models can be developed and tested. Fourth, public organizations should make administrative processes less bureaucratic, more cost-effective and efficient. This especially concerns processes involving procurement and financial management, research project approvals (for ethics and safety), technology assessments, contracting and licensing and other registration services. The findings and conclusions from this study demonstrate that technoscience perspectives and innovation systems approaches can be adapted and used to identify and explain conditions that promote or hamper innovation in low resource settings as well as policy options to address the constraints.

Dr Joshua Mutambi's thesis titled "Stimulating Industrial Development in Uganda through Open Innovation Business Incubators" focused on understanding the nature of micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMES) innovation performances within firms, the role of triple helix interactions, national innovation systems and business incubators. Application of open innovation business incubation was defined. An open innovations incubation model was developed as an appropriate model for Uganda and other low income countries. This is aimed at stimulating industrial development through promotion of sustainable MSMEs. This work was under the sponsorship of Sida.