

Summary of previous round of the debate:

Staying Competitive: innovation, product development and adaptation

Participants characterized innovation as a “private business” that requires “creative development”. The idea of innovation originating from the public sector was thought to be quite challenging. It was noted that academic research has its own logics and cannot be compared to profit-driven R&D. The role of public universities in the innovation process is thought to be one of building capacities in marketing. It was noted that SMEs in the processing sector will require assistance if they are to stay on top of the ever changing requirements brought about by globalization.

This discussion will now look into how the needs of SMEs might be addressed:

Current focus of the debate

Would the creation of an agro-industrial “knowledge network” to facilitate exchange of “good practice” in innovation effectively serve the needs of SMEs?

If so, what would be the first step in creating such a network and who could be more suitable members to be integrated?