INCAE, September 20, 2012. Costa Rica achieved in a decade to build a cluster of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and become the largest producer of this sector per capita in Latin America.

This case study is used by INCAE visiting professor, Dr. Luciano Ciravegna, in his book Promoting Silicon Valleys in Latin America, to analyze the efforts of Latin American countries in order to develop new clusters as an effort to create more sophisticated drivers and environmentally sustainable for the growth in their economies.

"The case of Costa Rica illustrates very well that, for building ICT clusters in Latin America, it is important to help professionals working in the sector to acquire contacts that link different business communities and the global ICT industry. That can facilitate access to new business ideas and opportunities, and encourage them to build networks," said the author.

"ICT professionals who lack these relationships tend to focus more on the national level, and are reluctant to collaborate with other local actors," he added.

The book was launched last September 19 at the Walter Kissling Gam campus of INCAE in Costa Rica, in an activity where also participated students and guests of several national organizations and companies.

The publication seeks to answer three questions. Firstly, how do Costa Rica built his ICT cluster? And secondly, what are the obstacles that have so far prevented the country from becoming a world power of ICT?
Third, how can we overcome these obstacles and what are the lessons that can be learned by other countries in Latin America who want to emulate the policies of Costa Rica?

The Board President and Vice President of INCAE CINDE, Roberto Artavia, and Lawrence Pratt, director of the Center for Competitiveness and Sustainable Development (CLACDS) also participated in the activity.

Silicon Valleys in Latin America

According to Dr. Ciravegna, there are several studies that show how Latin America has failed to compete with China and East Asia, in the high-tech manufacturing.

However, he added, has been slowly reaching competitiveness as a place for outsourcing services, a cleaner business than manufacturing.

"The Costa Rican case study provides a solid starting point for understanding the challenges of creating clusters of ICT in Latin America. For example, unlike Mexico, Costa Rica's success in fostering knowledge-intensive industry has not hurt his reputation as a country that respects the environment or endangered policies of environmental protection. Rather, the success went hand in hand with efforts to reduce emissions and conserve biodiversity," explained the author.

Dr. Ciravegna, an Italian national, is associate professor at the Royal Holloway School of Management, University of London, England.

The book was published in February 2012 by Routledge, in his series Regions and Cities, in conjunction with the Regional Studies Association.

Its development required four years of research, 150 interviews with all stakeholders both in...
Costa Rica and other countries, including Argentina, Brazil and Colombia.

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