

# **GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

## **SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING INNOVATION**

# Expectations of the session

- a) Discuss appropriate definitions of innovation in the context of Africa
- b) Gain and share experiences on issues of innovation
- c) Understand what innovation is in the context of improving social economic development
- d) Learn from the current trends on innovation thinking – insights from the field that are applicable to Tanzania/ Africa.
- e) Understanding the importance of measuring innovation activities

# Themes and questions

## – Distinct features of innovation in Africa

- Can we assert that innovation activity is low in Africa?
- Is innovation different in Africa?
- What are the salient characteristics of innovation systems in poor developing countries?
- Which are the most important actors in African innovation systems?
- What sectors are more active in innovation activity in Tanzania/ Africa?
- Can innovation activities address and support inclusive development?

# Themes and questions...

## – **Appropriate types of innovation in Africa**

- What types of innovation are relevant for Tanzania considering level of development and productive structure of the economy?
- What types of innovation are relevant for long term competitiveness? (e.g. product, process, organisational, market innovations, radical, incremental). Are incremental innovations sufficient for long term competitiveness?
- Is replication and copying desirable in an African context or should Africa design its own pathway to innovation?

# Themes and questions...

## – Measuring innovation activities

- Do current existing indicators fully capture innovations taking place in Africa?
- What is the relationship between *Science & Technology* indicators, and *Innovation* indicators?

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## – Building capabilities for innovation

- Should focus be on research capacities or innovation capabilities?
- What inhibits the absorption and adaptation of technologies in Africa?
- What is the role of higher education and research in adoptive and incremental type of innovation?
- Can innovative thinking be integrated to school system?
- What is the right balance between theoretical education and vocational training in emerging economies
- How to analyze and stimulate the demand for knowledge in emerging economies?
- Should academic training include periods of professional activities outside the university?