

ICE Strategy Paper 2008

Note for discussion

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1. Background

The International Consortium on Entrepreneurship (ICE)

The International Consortium on Entrepreneurship (ICE) is a consortium of policymakers and researchers from leading entrepreneurship countries working to improve the analytical foundation for entrepreneurship policies.

The consortium was established in 2005 with four-six paying ICE members and a varying number of countries involved as partners such as research institutes, government representatives and universities.

Today the consortium has six members including Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Netherlands and the USA (the Kauffmann Foundation). The OECD also participates in the work of the group as an observer. And the Max Planck Institute participates as partner in the group. The Danish FORA created ICE and FORA has acted as Secretariat for the group since.

Box 1: The ICE Mission

ICE provides a foundation for fact-based entrepreneurship policies.

The International Consortium on Entrepreneurship (ICE) is a consortium of leading entrepreneurship countries working to improve the analytical foundation for entrepreneurship policies.

The members decide biannually on new entrepreneurship projects.

ICE projects are not aimed at producing new data, but rather to critically demand and buy accurate entrepreneurship data from other respectable sources designed to meet the specific needs of the member countries.

The consortium also initiates comparative policy analyses in order to improve our understanding of the functioning of entrepreneurship policies.

See more on: <http://ice.foranet.dk/>

ICE members meet twice a year and decided annually on funding new data or policy development projects. The aim has not been to necessarily produce new data, but critically demand and buy accurate entrepreneurship data from other respectable sources designed to meet the specific needs of the member countries. Efforts have also been directed towards initiatives

aiming at developing the existing entrepreneurship data such as the Entrepreneurship Indicator Programme (EIP).

The consortium has also initiated a number of comparative policy analyses in order to improve our understanding of the functioning of entrepreneurship policies.

ICE has provided members with a yearly collection and evaluation of available entrepreneurship indicators. Moreover, through its projects and in joint forces with others such as the EIP, ICE work has led to start-up rates being international comparable. ICE has also supported work with defining indicators for growth firms, and for certain indicators international comparable data is available today.

Discussing the ICE Strategy

Three years down the road and much wiser on entrepreneurship data and policies, the ICE Secretariat suggests that the ICE group engages in a discussion concerning the ICE strategy and future of ICE.

The reasons for this are three folded. First, as the consortium has achieved one of its goals, which is to provide policymakers with international comparable data on entry and growth of new firms, it seems an appropriate time to evaluate the consortium. Second, it is important to ensure that the work of the group is adapted to and continuously developed according to the policy challenges faced by ICE countries. Third, it is also important that the single ICE member finds the work of the consortium relevant in the daily work with entrepreneurship.

The objective of this strategy paper is therefore to provide a basis for discussion regarding the future work of the ICE at the next ICE Meeting in the Hague on 11-12 November 2008.

Outline

First, the paper provides a brief overview of the various ICE projects and recaps on the knowledge derived from these projects. Then, the paper outlines various scenarios for how the consortium could develop over the next couple of years. Some issues that will be addressed in the below are:

- What shall the future consortium look like?
- Which policy areas shall we focus on in our ICE work?
- How can we ensure all ICE members are involved in the ICE projects?
- How can we disseminate ICE knowledge, work, reports and publications better?
- Shall we collaborate with more organisations?

There are several possible ways in which the consortium can decide to organise itself in the future, and some of these possibilities are discussed in this paper. It should be noted that the Secretariat does not necessarily prefer one strategy option over another, but sees possibilities in the various scenarios.

2. State-of-the-Art and our achievements

Since the beginning of ICE, making internationally comparable data on entry rates and growth has been at the core of the attention. This work is not fully implemented yet, but is well on its way. Some new policy insights into other entrepreneurship areas have also been achieved for instance areas such as entrepreneur financing, regional entrepreneurial infrastructure, bankruptcy have been examined by the ICE. In 2008, we have started new projects with the aim to investigate entrepreneurship education, growth programmes, high-growth firms and small and large firm linkages.

3. The ICE Strategy Options

In the following, some possible future scenarios for the development of ICE are listed.

- **Strategy Option 1: Continue with entrepreneurship perspective**

The first option is to keep the consortium organised and focused as it is today. This means that the focus of the group will remain on entrepreneurship data and policies, and that new projects will continue exploring areas within the framework of entrepreneurship.

If this option is chosen we need to consider how member countries could become more engaged in the ICE projects. For instance, 1-2 member countries should be project leader on the projects. We should also think about which areas within entrepreneurship that we would like to address in the future ICE work.

- **Strategy Option 2: Include new perspectives**

Over the years, we have examined the area of entrepreneurship data and policies. In this process, we have come to realise that the entrepreneurship area certainly has spill-over effects on other areas, which are becoming more and more important on the political agenda such as cluster policies and innovation policy.

We could start to explore these new areas by linking them to entrepreneurship, and that way prepare ourselves and our countries to become proactive in the areas.

Areas such as the importance of entrepreneurship for cluster building and the relationship between innovation and entrepreneurship could be addressed within the consortium.

The second strategy option therefore suggests the consortium to include new perspectives into ICE. We could either radically or gradually change the focus of the group and the current ICE project portfolio would remain unchanged. New projects would be suggested in 2009 and then decided on according to normal ICE procedures. But the intention would be to allow for new ICE projects to address new perspectives.

- **Strategy Option 3: Loosely organised network organisation with rotating ICE meetings**

The third option suggests a looser organisation. We could organise ourselves as a loose network organisation based on only in-kind contributions in terms of shared research activities without membership fees. Most likely an ICE network organisation would have less focus on conducting actual ICE projects, and more on discussing policy and analysis conducted nationally in member countries. Members could meet 1-2 a year and the member countries would host the meetings in turn.

- **Option 4: Dissolving the ICE**

The last option is to dissolve the ICE consortium. This option is not a suggested way forward, but we should consider the option and consequences.

4. Dissemination of ICE work and collaboration with others

If strategy options one or two are preferred by members, we should consider if our current efforts to disseminate ICE work are sufficient. The Secretariat suggests that we discuss ways to improve the dissemination of ICE work including also collaboration with other organisations.

Over the years, ICE has initiated projects which have been useful for the member governments in designing new or re-thinking existing entrepreneurship policies. When presenting the projects and the results to other organisations and countries outside the ICE, it becomes clear that the quality of the ICE projects is high and the topics and methods are often cutting-edge.

It is therefore our belief that others could benefit from or be inspired by our work and ICE could possibly also benefit from engaging in more knowledge sharing activities with others.

We therefore suggest to two action points:

- Action point 1: ICE should seek to disseminate our work much more than what we do today
- Action point 2: ICE should seek collaboration with other countries and organisations

Issues to be discussed related to action point 1:

- Shall ICE aim for producing more publications with other lead researchers, research institute, governments and organisations?
- Shall ICE engage in organising Policy Forums in collaboration with members and others? For instance, we are currently organising a Policy Seminar on Risk Capital taking place in Helsinki in November.

- Should we use our website more? For the time being the ICE website is meant as an internal work tool and mostly used to update meeting documents etc.

Issues to be discussed related to action point 2:

- Shall ICE collaborate with more countries? It might be useful to invite other countries to join the ICE, although it is clearly beneficial with a small non-bureaucratic group facing fairly similar challenges. If new countries should join, it is important that they somehow complement the existing group.
- Shall ICE collaborate with organisations in order to disseminate our work, knowledge, models, types of analysis etc? ICE could collaborate with organisations such as the World Economic Forum, UN organisations, World Bank, EC and other parts of the OECD.

In order to achieve a better communication of the ICE work and more collaboration with other countries/organisations, it is necessary to work deliberately on that.

It is therefore suggested that Dissemination and Collaboration activities are added to the yearly ICE budget, with costs around €15.000. Moreover, the ICE Secretariat could present a project proposal next year with suggested activities to help achieve better dissemination and collaboration.