

ICT Cluster Meeting
Monterrey, Mexico, May 3-4, 2005

The first meeting of the ICT Cluster was convened on 4-5 May, 2005 at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), in Monterrey, Mexico.

The main objective of the meeting was to strengthen the role of the MIF's ICT Cluster as a collaborative space to share best practices and lessons learned on the usage of ICT as a means to improve the competitiveness and efficiency of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME) in the Latin American and the Caribbean Region.

The meeting, organized by the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) and the ICT for Development Division (SDS/ICT), brought together over 40 participants including representatives from Executing Agencies, OEA, ICA, MIF, SDS/ICT, academic institutions and other organizations related to the use of ICT for Development. It was officially opened by Mr. Lawrence Harrington, BID Representative, COF/CME and Mr. Noriaki Kishimoto, MIF Deputy Manager. Mr. Michael Woscoboinik, MIF Principal Coordinator, chaired the closing ceremony.

During the two days of the conference panelists and participants from different sectors including tourism, manufacture, retail, and software, exchanged experiences and analyzed trends in the use of ICT in benefit of SME. Themes as "Application of ICT in Clusters (Opportunities and Risks)", "Use of Open Source by SME", "Role of Governments fostering the use of ICT in SME", and "Application of ICT in SME: Experiences in China and Italy" were included in the agenda. The results of the investigation "ICT4BUS - Case Studies" were presented and the workshop "Working in Network" formalized the launch of the ICT Cluster and highlighted the need for collaboration and cooperation as means to succeed in this initiative.

As a result, it is important to highlight the significant progress of the ICT Cluster projects and their positive impact on SME's competitiveness, specifically in the areas of process improvement, efficiency, productivity, market penetration, value chain integration and customer service. We must also mention the level of professionalism and capacity of the twenty Executing Agencies that currently are successfully carrying out the cluster projects and their commitment to make the ICT Cluster a collaborative network to share and promote their experiences.

The ICT Cluster Website will be launched in August, 2005 and the next meeting of the cluster's members will take place during the first semester of year 2006.