

Abstract

Undeniable geopolitical significance of the Russian Far East renders development of the region a matter of national priority for the entire 21st century.

Enormous untapped potential of the region is not limited to the range of possibilities offered by export of its natural resources. Developing a non-resource export potential of the Russian Far East offers a way of ensuring sustainable economic growth – a key component of regional, and national, competitive capabilities.

At the core of Michael E. Porter's book "The Competitive Advantage of Nations" is a model of national competitive advantage that introduces the concept of business clusters as drivers of economy. Applying Porter's analytical framework and building on recent experience of government-driven innovative cluster development in Russia, the thesis seeks to propose an economically sound model of International Medical Education Cluster for the Russian Far Eastern Federal District.

The cluster will support Russia's engagement with Asia and complement one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries – that of healthcare - by addressing one of its most acute needs, namely the growing worldwide shortage of healthcare personnel. The proposed model capitalizes on federal policy of internationalisation of Russian higher education, unprecedented federal commitment to the accelerated socio-economic development of the Far Eastern Federal District as well as on long tradition of medical education and relevant infrastructure in the region.

As a model of a medical education cluster to be potentially emulated, a case study of the Caribbean offshore medical schools cluster is analyzed.

Along with a model of International Medical Education Cluster, the thesis includes analysis of diverse factors that are likely to impact its practical implementation, such as domestic and international political, organizational and cultural forces, as well as forecast of cluster's profitability and sustainability. Brief discussion of ideational aspects behind Far Eastern development in the context of Russian turn to Asia concludes the thesis.