How to encourage innovativeness

Figures

Introduction

Research for entrepreneurs – an interview with Mariusz Wielec, director of the Department of European Funds in the Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Questions from the scientists

Support for the science sector – description of the OP IE measures

CIP - Competitiveness Innovation Framework Programme

Studying the future – National Programme Foresight „Poland 2020”

Wrocław fights for the EIT – works on establishing the European Institute of Technology (EIT) are moving forward

What is written about the innovations

The Solaris hybrid – an example of cooperation between the business and science sectors

How to encourage innovativeness – Academic Pre-incubator, established in the structures of Podkarpackie Scientific-Technical Park (PPNT)

News about the Operational Programme Innovative Economy (OP IE)
In this period of the programme the European regions strengthened pro-innovation activity within the Cohesion Policy. The European Commission published a report Regions Delivering Innovation through Cohesion Policy which contained information about the planned amount of funds to support pro-innovation activity within the EU cohesion policy in the individual EU regions. In its report, the European Commission found that between 2007 and 2013 the European regions plan to get involved in supporting pro-innovation activity financed from the structural funds. Expenditures on innovation will amount to 25% of all allocations to cohesion policy, i.e. over EUR 83 billion. This is a threefold increase compared to the years 2000-2006. EUR 35 billion of this amount (20% of allocations) will be invested in the 12 new EU Member States and EUR 48 billion (30% of allocations) will be invested in the old Member States.

The European Commission showed in its report some interesting data on member states, divided according to the three objectives of cohesion policy for the years 2007-2013.

Polish voivodships belong to the objective „convergence”. This objective includes voivodships in which the nominal GDP is lower than 75% of GDP per capita in the EU-25. In the years 2007-2013 those countries will receive almost EUR 283 billion from the structural funds and from the Cohesion Fund, which constitutes 82% of allocations to the common cohesion policy. Out of the expenditure categories that can be co-funded from the structural funds, four were singled out as those whose innovativeness is particularly highlighted. They include: research, technological development and innovativeness; enterprise; innovative information communications technologies and human capital.

**Expenditures on innovation within the cohesion policy**

**Source: The European Commission**

Polish voivodships belong to the objective „convergence”. This objective includes voivodships in which the nominal GDP is lower than 75% of GDP per capita in the EU-25. In the years 2007-2013 those countries will receive almost EUR 283 billion from the structural funds and from the Cohesion Fund, which constitutes 82% of allocations to the common cohesion policy. Out of the expenditure categories that can be co-funded from the structural funds, four were singled out as those whose innovativeness is particularly highlighted. They include: research, technological development and innovativeness; enterprise; innovative information communications technologies and human capital.

**Planned investments in innovative activity in the years 2007-2013**

**in the new EU Member States**

**Source: The European Commission**
Dear Readers,

In this issue of Innovativeness we describe ways of supporting activities of research institutions. Strengthening Polish science sector means strengthening the economy. What needs to be done, however, is easier knowledge transfer and popularization of cooperation between business and universities and research institutions.

Enterprises, using research results and commissioning specialized research in modernized laboratories, will increase their innovativeness and, along with it, their competitivity on the European and world markets.

It is time to think how our country will look like in a couple of years, and most of all – in what conditions we would like to work. We should support those disciplines which, in Polish conditions, have the biggest chances for international success. Countries like India or China are already able to produce the same products that we produce in Poland and, what is more, they can do it cheaper. The right response to this is national foresight – which will give answers to some of the most pressing questions, and above all, it will tell us which disciplines we should specialize in and what the priority scientific research directions are best for us.

This issue of Innovativeness also presents examples of good practices. A project deserving notice is the one connected with development and implementation of a city bus with a hybrid drive. This venture is a great example of positive cooperation between the science and private sectors. It is such projects – stimulating cooperation between the scientists and entrepreneurs for development of projects benefiting the Polish economy – that we most care about in the OP IE.

How to encourage students and graduates to setting up businesses based on innovative technologies, products and services? One good example is Academic Preincubator which was created in the structures of Podkarpackie Scientific-Technological Park. University graduates or employees can try out their business skills by using advice from the experts and taking advantage of innovative infrastructure. This project is described in this issue.

The OP IE is a great opportunity for everyone who wants to transform their ideas into tangible projects that can bring unhoped-for results.

Agnieszka Jankowska
Director of the Managing Department for Competitiveness and Innovation Programmes
Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW) was chosen to act as an Intermediate Body for a few priority axes of the Operational Programme Innovative Economy (OP IE). What tasks is the ministry involved in and how advanced they are?

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education functions as an Intermediate Body (IB) within the first and second priority axes of the OP IE: Research and development of modern technologies and R&D Infrastructure. The main tasks of IB were given based on an Agreement of May 8, 2001 between the minister of regional development and minister of science and higher education on the implementation system of OP IE for 2007-2013. The details of this agreement are included in a document "Description of management and control system of the OP IE".

The tasks performed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education depend on whether, within a specific measure, an Implementing Institution was created. The most important responsibilities of the Intermediate Institution include preparation of programme documentation, reporting to Managing Authority (MA), carrying out system controls of institutions in implementation system and finally, issues connected with expenditure authorization and application for periodic payments to MA. However, within those measures in which Implementing Institutions (IB II) were not created like Measures 2.1 and 2.2, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education will perform all duties connected with organising competitions, accepting applications, formal assessment, on-site project controls etc.

Within other measures, the Intermediate Body is bound by relevant agreements based on which some of the duties were delegated to IB II. The Ministry as the Intermediate Institution will, generally speaking, control task implementation on lower level and will be responsible for the correct implementation of priority axes. Department of European Funds in the Ministry of Science and Higher Education will be responsible for the so-called individual projects included in the indicative list of key projects which will be implemented only on the level of Intermediate Body, without delegating to subordinate body.

Intermediate Body and individual IB II are in the last stage of preparation of their internal procedures and adjustment of organisational structures so that when the next year begins, they will be ready to open competitions.

Who will be able to apply for support within this part of Innovative Economy programme and what type of undertakings will be granted support?

Within the two priority axes of the OP IE that are the responsibility of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, seven measures will be implemented. According to the Operational Programme, the purpose of the priority axis 1 is to emphasize the importance of science sector in the economy through R&D in directions considered to be the priority for the country. These include strategic research programmes, development projects and foresight projects.

The purpose of the priority axis 2 is to increase competitiveness of Polish science through consolidation and modernization of scientific research infrastructures as well as the infrastructures of the best research units.
In Poland. Within this axis, comprehensive investment projects of leading research units will be realised.

It’s impossible to name all beneficiaries without detailed description of individual projects. What can be said however, is that research units, scientists, young medical researchers will be the primary recipients of this aid. One measure (1.4) is aimed directly at entrepreneurs.

In accordance with the Operational Programme Innovative Economy, the support is directed mainly at entrepreneurs, for direct economic applications and such projects will be realised in the priority axis 1 as targeted projects. Entrepreneurs will also be able to use the results of scientific research as well as laboratories built by research units where they will commission specialized research.

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education cooperates with Intermediate Bodies II, also called Implementing Bodies, in the implementation of measures. Is it going to be Polish Federation of Engineering Association (NOT) or other institutions? What is this cooperation about?

As regards Polish Federation of Engineering Association (NOT), it must be stated that it is in fact one of the most important entities with a long tradition that acts for the benefit of integrating the technical circles and supporting innovativeness. It has a wide network of field organisational units and has so far closely cooperated with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in the organisation of competitions for funding of targeted projects of practical applications for small and medium-sized enterprises. It is planned that in the new financial perspective 2007-2013 targeted projects of the total value smaller than EUR 100 thousand will be processed by NOT. However, this issue is not yet resolved at this point. Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, as the Implementing Body, is responsible for the organisation of implementing system and processing targeted projects within Measure 1.4.

Another important institution in implementing the measures of MNiSW will be the Information Processing Centre (OPI) which is a unit subordinate to the Ministry and functions as an analytical and service unit within information science systems. OPI has gained its experience in processing applications as Operator of the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund. This institution will be responsible for implementing two Measures, 1.1 and 1.3, which include research projects using foresight method and development projects.

The institution which will support research projects prepared by students, young scholars and Ph.D students within Measure 1.2, will be the Foundation for Polish Science that grants awards for scientific achievements and scientific discoveries regarded as the highest scientific honours in Poland.

As for priority II, the Implementing Body was designated only for submeasure 2.3.

We still don’t know the final version of Detailed description of the priority axes of OP IE. What significant changes await the beneficiaries in the final draft of the document in comparison to the project?

Detailed description of the priority axes of OP IE is in its working version and the preparation of the subject matter of the document is the responsibility of the competent Intermediate Body. The content is subject to social consultation and we expect that it will be approved by the Managing Authority soon and announced by the Minister of Regional Development in due time.

The work on „detailed description“ of the document has begun some time ago and it seems that its current provisions have not changed substantially. One of the key appendices to this “description” will be the project selection criteria, approved recently by the Monitoring Committee of the OP IE. So, it must be said that the number of missing elements or fragments required for additional completion is already small and the final draft will be very similar to the current version. Detailed description of the priority axes of OP IE is available on the websites of the Intermediate Body and Managing Authority.

First competitions will start in the 1st quarter of the 2008.

In the case of investment projects from priority II of the OP IE application process will last about 4-6 months, the application will be filed directly to the Ministry.
When can we expect the first competitions? How much time ahead will the beneficiaries be notified about application processes and where can they find the necessary information?

The first competitions will start in the first quarter of 2008. For the investment projects within priority II of the OP IE the application period will last about 4-6 months and the applications will be filed directly to the Ministry.

As for research projects, that is sub-measures of priority II Research and development of new technologies, the duration of the competitions will be shorter – about 3 months. Intermediate Bodies II will process these projects and they will accept applications.

Announcement of the application process for individual sub-measures will appear in the Polish dailies, and will, of course, be available on-line, on the websites of the Intermediate Bodies II, the Ministry’s website: www.nauka.gov.pl and on the website of the Ministry of Regional Development www.funduszestrukturalne.gov.pl, and also on the thematically related portals.

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education organizes conferences promoting measures realised in the new financial perspective 2007-2013 under the OP IE. How many more of such conferences will be held and where? What initiatives will be taken to encourage potential beneficiaries to apply for financial aid?

Yes, we have finished the series of regional meetings directed to potential beneficiaries from the scientific circles. Their purpose was to popularize information about the measures coordinated by MNiSW, to educate the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries about the possibilities to obtain aid and benefits connected with it. There were 5 such meetings, in Rzeszow, Cracow, Poznan and two in Warsaw.

Second series of the meetings will start together with the competitions for individual sub-measures. It will be directed to proper groups interested in particular form of aid. We plan to train another 600 people during five meetings in the biggest cities of Poland.

In 2008 we will start a big information-promotional campaign which will use such marketing tools like: separate website with information about the implemented measures, possibilities to apply for aid from the funds, the procedures and links to interesting sites; publications and distributions of the bulletin on funds; contact point with infoline where all those interested in the matter will be able to get reliable information about the implemented measures; publication and distribution of information flyers, leaflets on individual projects in order to present good practices. We particularly want to cooperate with the media which will enable us to reach a wider audience. We plan to use different modes of communication: articles in the press, special extras in newspapers, reports from the places of project realisation, announcements, radio and TV shows. We plan to be in constant touch with the media by providing current information and by organising press conferences.

Interviewer: Joanna Godlewska
What is the starting date for eligible expenditures connected with project preparation?
The starting date is January 1, 200. In practice, it is the date of the first incurred eligible expenditure, the date of the first invoice, current price list etc.

How to show expenditures incurred for the payment to people employed in preparation of the application if the people in question work in the unit on a full-time basis?
We do not require any particular instruments, employment sheet should be enough plus description of the duties performed by the person involved in the project realisation.

There are also indirect expenditures during project realisation. Can they be refunded?
No. In the Operational Programme Innovative Economy these expenditures are not eligible for refunding so they cannot be calculated into the project realisation.

What will the application process look like?
In the case of research projects, the evaluation of the subject matter of the project will be done in blocs. This means that the schedule will be divided into stages, the so-called milestones (6-month periods) which will mark the realisation of particular measures. Fulfilling the planned objectives for a given period will be the basis for a positive processing the subject-matter of the application. This also calls for such preparation of documentation (application, feasibility study) as to enable the evaluation of individual aspects in the 6-month periods.

What percent of the granted aid can be allocated to infrastructure (purchase of equipment) in the case of research applications?
20% of the total amount of aid for a research project can be spent on the equipment. It is a fixed rate and it is non-negotiable.

Is the work of the project supervisory team can be classified as cost? Is it eligible cost?
Yes, this is also eligible expenditure. But you must act wisely and keep accounting records which directly indicate a specific job done for the project realisation.

Source: MNiSW
Thanks to the OP IE, the Polish economy will be provided with a strong incentive to modernize. Using the Programme, the science sector will carry out more research projects for the industry and improve the quality of its infrastructure. Priorities I and II, whose measures and submeasures are described here, serve this purpose. In spite of the fact that they are aimed at helping the science sector, they are also intended to stimulate innovation in the Polish economy. Entrepreneurs will have an opportunity to use the results of research projects and commission modernized laboratories to conduct specialist research.

**Scientific Research**

The Operational Programme Innovative Economy will help to direct research to such areas and disciplines which greatly influence rapid development of the country’s civilization and economy as well as stimulate the creation of knowledge-based economy. The main aim of Measure 1.1. Support for scientific research for establishment of a knowledge-based economy is to identify these areas of research and development projects which are priorities in the balanced economic development of Poland. Such areas of research and development projects should contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the Polish society. They will be on the top of the list when distributing budgetary funds. Their results may be more sensibly and effectively used in practice. An important tool which will be used to indicate Polish priorities is a foresight method (it involves assessing future needs, opportunities and threats associated with social and economic development and preparing advance measures in science and technology – see pages 14-15).

It is expected that the projects which are supported here will allow to work out a strategy for to advance R&D projects as well as individual regions and industries. The results of foresight projects will, in particular, provide a basis for updating current research priorities included in the National Scientific Research and Experimental Development Programme. The programme will provide a basis for announcing competitions to carry out large, multidisciplinary research projects of strategic importance to Poland.

Within such a measure the following types of projects are expected to be carried out:

- identifying areas of scientific research and development projects using a foresight method in order to support:
  - National Programme Foresight „Poland 2020” and subsequent programmes
  - preparing regional development strategies
  - preparing strategies for developing individual areas of science and industry (e.g. a Polish strategy for developing biotechnology) both at the national and regional levels
  - preparing strategies for technology platforms operating in Poland

- Supporting the country’s science, science and technology and innovation policies through financing ordered research projects or strategic research projects in the areas determined in the OP IE
- Managing scientific research and its results through carrying out system projects of both the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the National Centre for Research and Development.

The entities which may seek support are scientific units associated in research and industry consortiums as well as the National Centre for Research and Development, entities carrying out foresight projects, regional authorities, non-profit companies including the above-mentioned entities, a competent minister for science.

The funds which will be allocated for this purpose amount to EUR 465.5 million.

**Bringing in new blood into the scientific staff**

Support provided within the OP IE may be also sought by young scientists. An incentive to pursue a scientific career is included in Measure 1.2 Improvement of human potential of science, which aims, among other things, to stimulate both the quality development of scientific staff and international cooperation.

One of the problems of the Polish science is the unfavorable age structure among scientists. Probably, it is also a crucial factor in poor cooperation between the
R&D sector and the economy. Therefore, under Measure 1.2, support will be given to undertakings aimed at bringing new blood into scientific personnel.

This will involve encouraging undergraduates, graduates and PhD students to participate in research projects. The projects which will be provided with financial support will be those which are important to the economic development of the country, those relevant to completing MA and PhD theses and also projects involving initial stages of inventing or introducing new technologies, devices or services. Moreover, it is possible to receive support for conducting scientific research in the best research teams in the country. This instrument allows financing R&D projects carried out as part of cooperation of international research units during PhD studies in Poland.

Supporting international cooperation and research projects carried out by foreign scientists in Poland should result in introducing good practices in our country in terms of cooperation between the science and business. Foreign experts will be employed as contract employees by research units and in order to perform a research project they will be included as project managers in teams consisting of researchers from Poland and abroad. The favoured projects will be those which will bring advanced technologies from leading research and development centres in the world to Poland.

As part of this measure, financial support will be provided for programmes carried out by individual beneficiaries which can participate in the competitions:
- for application projects carried out by undergraduates, graduates and PhD students which can be applied in business
- for projects carried out by the best research teams in Poland which include undergraduates, PhD students and young doctors, according to the priorities of the OP IE
- for projects carried out during PhD studies in Poland and performed in cooperation with a foreign research unit
- for projects carried out by outstanding foreign scientists in Poland-based research units in accordance with the priorities determined in OP IE.

Applications for such support may be submitted by the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP). The target group which will take advantage of such aid will include research units, undergraduates, graduates and PhD students as well as scientists and scientific teams. Within a given project, financial support may be given (up to 50% of allocation for the measure).
to provide a scholarship for an undergraduate, or PhD student, a person being on post-doctoral placement or foreign scientist, to an extent necessary to complete the project. The budget of the measure is EUR 70 million.

**R & D Projects**

The most important aims of Measure 1.3. Support for R&D projects for entrepreneurs carried out by scientific entities are to increase the use of new solutions by the economy and to improve entrepreneurs’ competitiveness. The results of R&D projects carried out in Polish research units are used in the economy only to a small extent, therefore, it is necessary to apply such instruments which will extend a range of new and innovative solutions which are useful for entrepreneurs. It is also important to create demand among entrepreneurs for this type of projects.

Such instruments are development projects prepared by research units. They are applicable and are intended to be directly applied in practice for the needs of particular industries. They can also take on a new social dimension – application of their results should contribute to solving current social problems. Financing such projects should enable entrepreneurs to more effectively and quickly carry out targeted projects which allow developing new tools and products.

Maintaining closer cooperation between the science sector and companies requires measures helping to commercialize and promote results of R&D projects. Supporting the protection of industrial property produced as a result of R&D projects will serve this purpose. As part of this measure, financial support will be given in order to cover the costs of providing legal protection for research project results. The support will include obtaining protection in Poland as well as in foreign countries but it will not be provided in order to maintain the legal protection after such rights have been awarded (e.g. fees paid in order to maintain patent rights will not be funded).

The support may be granted to the following investments:

- development projects (sub-measure 1.3.1)
- ensuring legal protection of industrial property developed in Poland-based research units (sub-measure 1.3.2).

Of major importance is R&D activity in research centres and other activities aimed at encouraging research, innovation and entrepreneurship. The support may be sought by research units (excluding research and development centres), research and industry consortiums represented exclusively by a research unit and also non-profit companies including such entities. The measure budget amounts to EUR 373.9 million.

**Targeted projects**

The OP IE offers support to micro-, small-, medium-sized and large businesses, including those which make up research and industry consortiums, in order to increase innovation thanks to using the results of R&D projects carried out for their needs. The subsidies will be offered as part of measure 1.4 Support for goal-oriented projects. The targeted projects based on R&D projects are used to meet particular demands of a given entrepreneur. This instrument forms an integrated unity with measure 1.4, which provides support for implementing the project. In this way it will be possible to finance a targeted project both in its research phase, which includes applied research and development works (1.4), and its implementation phase (4.1). We wrote about it in the previous issue of our bulletin, however, let us examine the targeted projects, that is, the first stage.

Within Measure 1.4, it is possible to finance the first phase of industrial research and development works. The funding will be granted to projects including technical, technological and organisational undertakings carried out by entrepreneurs, groups of entrepreneurs (independently or in cooperation with research units) and also research units according to orders placed by entrepreneurs.

The industrial research is aimed at acquiring new knowledge and skills which can be used to develop new products, processes and services or bring considerable improvements in the existing products, processes or services, while the development works involve using available knowledge in order to plan the production, design new products or invent new services. Such works may include preparing any documentation necessary to introduce the research results into production, among others, preparing designs, plans, developing prototypes of devices, or performing necessary tests.

Having in mind the size of support which is earmarked for funding the research, it is essential to divide planned activities into industrial research and development works. In the case of industrial research the minimum beneficiary’s contribution accounts for 30%, and with development works it is 55%.

The part which is funded within Measure 4.1 includes preparing the results of the targeted project for implementation and their implementation. An appli-
Support for the science sector

The maximum amount which one can apply for cannot exceed the PLN equivalent of EUR 390.4 million (according to the exchange rate as of the date of receiving support). In the lódzkie and mazowieckie voivodships, which planned to provide support for targeted projects as part of regional operating programmes (RPO), the minimum costs of the project is PLN 400 thousand for the research part. In the case of projects carried out in other regions no minimal amount of the costs has been determined.

Scientific Centres

Thanks to the OP IE, research units (excluding research and development centres) included in the research and industry network and consortiums, the National Centre for Research and Development and non-profit companies including these entities, will have an opportunity to conduct high quality research. They may receive funding to develop their infrastructure as part of Measure 2.1 Development of high research potential centres. Its aim is to improve standards of the Polish infrastructure in the R&D sector which uses obsolete research equipment. Within this measure, financial support is provided in order to purchase or manufacture science and research equipment listed as fixed assets, carry out construction projects and purchase building facilities.

The funding may be provided for such projects as: developing the infrastructure of scientific centres with high potential, specialist research laboratories and projects carried out within the Polish Road Map in the area of Large Facilities of Research Infrastructure, including those which closely cooperate with businesses (laboratories rendering specialist research services, Centres for Advanced Technologies and others) and also those which are based on scientific networks (among others, Centres of Excellence). In the case of projects carried out as part of Measures 2.1, 2.3.1 and 2.3.3, a beneficiary submits one application for receiving the funding.

The budget for this measure amounts to EUR 691.4 million. Up to 10% of the expenses may be used to pay for training on using and managing a large research infrastructure. The minimum amount of the qualified expenses is PLN 4 million.
Joint laboratories

The purpose of Measure 2.2 Support for development of research infrastructure of scientific entities is the development of the units which contribute to building scientific cooperation between domestic research centres. The effect should be optimization of the use of funds and technical infrastructures through synergy of actions. It will facilitate consolidation of research units and their research infrastructure which is essential to raise the competition level of Polish research centres on the European scale.

The projects that are certain to obtain support are those connected with creating new common R&D infrastructure and its transfer. Potential beneficiaries include research units (except R&D centres) including those in the academic networks and scientific-industrial consortia, The National Centre for Research and Development, partnerships created with the share of the above-mentioned entities for non-profit purposes.

The budget of the measure is EUR 349.1 million. Up to 10% of the eligible expenditures might be allocated to trainings in the use and maintenance of a large research infrastructure. The minimum amount of eligible expenditures of the project is PLN 4 million.

Informatisation of science

Thanks to funds from Measure 2.3 Investments connected with the development of the information infrastructure for science the academic circles in Poland are supposed to gain a permanent and secured access to the advanced information infrastructure which will facilitate modern research applying information society technologies and ensuring contact with the international scientific teleinformation networks. Project realised within this measure will include investments in the maintaining and development of the network infrastructure and digital research resources. Access to a modern supercomputer and network infrastructure, broadband Internet and advanced applications and databases is the key condition for scientific research that meets the international and European standards. The use of modern information technologies is the basis for pilot projects in constructing and testing services, applications and systems that will be widely implemented in education, business and public administration.

Supra-regional projects can count of support within the following three sub-measures:

- 2.3.1 Projects on the development of Information Technology infrastructure of science (concerns investments connected with the development of advanced network infrastructure, i.e. purchase of advanced IT solutions including equipment using information technologies)
- 2.3.2 Project on the development of digital resources in scientific information (concerns creation and maintenance of databases with information on the results and conditions to access project results as well as creation and availability of the academic publication databases)
- 2.3.3 Projects in the area of development of advanced applications and communication services.

Such undertakings will consume as much as EUR 263.7 million. Potential applicants include research units (except for R&D centres), leading MAN units (city academic scientific networks), High-powered Computer Centres, research units within academic networks or scientific-industrial, The National Centre for Research and Development, partnerships created with the share of the above-mentioned entities for non-profit purposes. Up to 10% of the eligible expenditures might be allocated to trainings in the development, use and management of IT infrastructure.
What is CIP?

Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme – CIP was developed by the European Commission to implement the guidelines of the Lisbon Strategy.

CIP does not include “tough” measures like investment funds. It consists of many “soft” measures which indirectly support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Within its framework, companies from the SME sector can count on support in obtaining the capital and accessing services supporting business operation. The budget of Competitiveness Innovation Framework Programme for 2007-2013 is over EUR 3.6 billion. CIP is divided into three operational programmes: Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme, Information Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme and Intelligent Energy Europe.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme – EIP focuses on creating favourable conditions for entrepreneurs to run innovative businesses. This section of CIP does not include direct funds for entrepreneurs. It does, however, plan to create financial instruments amounting to EUR 1.13 billion which, through banks, lending and guarantee funds as well as investment funds, are to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The most important instruments offered by the EIP are:

• GIF – an instrument to support innovation in SME
• SMEG – guarantee system for SME
• CBS – system to reinforce the capacity of financial intermediaries

Information Communication Technologies – Policy Support Programme – ICT-PSP focuses on fast implementation of communications and information technologies into the economy and on boosting innovation in the economy. The budget of ICT-PSP is EUR 730 million. These funds will be primarily granted for ICT development, innovative SME and public administration informatization.

Intelligent Energy Europe Programme – IEE includes measures supporting energy efficiency and the rational use of energy sources, promotion of new and renewable energy sources and energy diversification. The IEE budget for 2007-2013 is EUR 727 million.

This money can be used for project connected with creating local and regional energy agencies. CIP beneficiaries include institutions from the business environment, school of higher education, financial institutions, administration, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Competitiveness Innovation Framework Programme is controlled by the Ministry of Economy. The coordinator is Polish Agency for Enterprise Development which finances three National Contact Points (KPK). KPK are responsible for implementing the CIP detailed programmes and include:

• Institute of Fundamental Technological Research, Polish Academy of Sciences (IPPT PAN)
• Polish Bank Association (ZBP)
• The Polish National Energy Conservation Agency S.A. (KAPE).

CIP indirectly supports Small and medium-sized enterprises.

Competitiveness Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) has initiated a guarantee system for SME (SMEG), which is one of the EIP components. SMEG can be used (in the form of aid) by banks, lending and guarantee funds as well as venture capital funds or business angels. The abovementioned financial institutions can obtain funds for a highly innovative companies in the early stages of development. SMEG offers direct guarantees, re-guarantees and EFI guarantees for credits, loans and leasing, for microcredits (financial institutions can also obtain funds for administrative costs of microcredits to SME), capital investments and for securatization credits.

Financial institutions can also use the instrument for high innovation growth in SME (GIF) and get support from the system to reinforce the capacity of financial intermediaries (CBS).

Application forms for the guarantee system SMEG are available on the European Investment Fund website (EFI). Polish translation of the most important information can be found on the Polish Bank Association website (www.zbp.pl).

Source: Ministry of Economy, National Contact Point, Polish Bank Association
Foresight

What might be the vision of Poland in 2020? Are we going to be an open, modern society which can combine the economic growth requirements and show respect for the environment and human dignity? The answers to these questions are to be obtained based on the study within the National Programme Foresight „Poland 2020“.

How can we foresee the future? National Programme Foresight „Poland 2020“ (NPF) is not about reading the leaves, but an expert research with a specified methodology. Here fortune-tellers are substituted by think-tanks, brainstorming and social dialogue. The foresight method was used for the first time in 1970 in Japan and is now popular in most EU Member States where it is part of rational foreseeing of possible developments in various spheres of life. It is mostly used in research and development. It is something more than foreseeing, planning or creating possible development scenarios. The traditional planning concerns the nearest future, up to couple of years ahead. Foresight, on the other hand, is applied when thinking about longer time ahead: ten-year or even thirty-year periods. In the long-term planning, the endeavors should focus on the planning of actions and not on evaluating the trends or different scenarios. It is impossible to foresee such distant future in every detail since there are surprises on the way but what can be done is good preparation for the future and shaping it, at least to some extent.

Research areas

The National Programme Foresight „Poland 2020“ (NPF) was developed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education which had already created a pilot project in the research area “health and living”. The programme was initiated at the end of 2006, and its official opening took place on March 1, 2007. It responds to the need to create a discussion and cooperation platform in Poland between the decision-makers, the scientific world, the industry and the public on research and technological projects as well as key social issues. The programme is realised by a Coordinating Consortium chosen through competition and including: Institute of Fundamental Technological Research, Polish Academy of Sciences (the coordinator of the Consortium), Institute of Economic Science, Polish Academy of Sciences and Pentor Research International.

The principal measures of NPF „Poland 2020“ are led by the so-called Central Panel with prof. Michał Kleiber, president of Polish Academy of Sciences, as the head. According to prof. Kleiber, it is in our own interest to focus on those fields which, in the Polish conditions, have the chance to be successful. Countries like India or China are already able to produce the same products we produce in Poland and, what is more, they can do it cheaper. We must, then, find a way to create such goods which “will reflect the specificity of our minds” – says prof. Kleiber. The important thing is that we are forced to look for the optimal application of our potential because status quo means lagging behind the rest of Europe in terms of innovativeness and competition. For investors, Poland was attractive mainly for its cheap workforce, but this is now changing – the western capital is rapidly moving its investments beyond the eastern border of Poland. We have the potential to create our own brands and innovative products.

National foresight might be very helpful in this matter. It includes three areas (research areas) – a balanced development of Poland, information communications technologies and security – for their analysis within the Programme relevant expert panels were set up. The key objectives are focused on the vision of Poland’s development in these areas till 2020 and on the rational application of research results in practice. Apart from creating relevant support instruments from the budgetary funds for the knowledge and technology transfer to the industry, it is important to initiate mechanisms though which the research results are adsorbed by the economy based on commercial rules. A good example is Finland, where R&D is financed in almost 80 % by the private sector.

The whole process aims at what prof. Michał Kleiber referred to, that it to directing the research and technology development to those fields that guarantee dynamic economic growth in the long and medium term. This must be accompanied by the rational use of public funds for this purpose and creation of the language of social discussion and the culture of thinking about the future which would lead to coordination of joint actions for the economic development and the improvement of quality of life in Poland.

In Poland, besides NPF „Poland 2020“ there are 19 detailed foresight projects realised that concerns the development of individual sectors and regions which had obtained funds from SOP-ICE.
National think tank

Such vast research calls for methodological approach. Apart from the Central Panel each research area has its own panel which analyses and synthesizes research development scenarios till 2020. Each of the main areas has developed detailed topics which are also dealt with by the expert panels.

In November 2007 during the session of the Central Panel in the Institute of Fundamental Technological Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, the implementation of the National Programme Foresight „Poland 2020” was analyzed. The main focus was on issues connected with the Delphi research, conducted by the individual research panels, including verification of macropriorities and thesis formulation and analysis of key factors (PEST).

What is the Delphi method? The social dimension of foresight requires the involvement of representatives from different circles: not only scientists, public officials or politicians but also entrepreneurs, managers, experts or journalists. This will make the forecasting process more precise. Foresight is a systematic dialogue with society and nowadays the best tool for communication is the Internet – says prof. Anna Rogut from University of Lodz, which leads one of the regional foresight projects. This is how the research within the National Programme Foresight „Poland 2020” will be conducted. During the first Delphic round, the social experts (on-going recruitment through the Programme website) will evaluate the thesis worked out in the previous thematic panel analyses. The experts remain anonymous and do not communicate among one another. Everyone must substantiate their evaluation.

Thanks to this method even most extreme opinions meet. It is a type of internet think tank (in the Western Europe and the USA think-tank organisation have great influence on creating new ideas and shaping development policies). Once the data analysis has been done, the project leaders prepare another version of the questionnaire, specifying the thematic range. Subsequent rounds help to work out better consistency between the experts, narrow down priorities and create a common picture of the development of a given area. Questionnaires are filled out online by means of a user-friendly internet tool.

Here are examples of worked out theses for expert Delphi research in the theme of „civic society”:

1. The greatest threat to the development of the civic society in Poland is civic non-involvement rather than non-civic involvement.
2. Over the next couple of years the civic involvement will gradually increase in Poland.
3. Whether or not state institutions strengthen the civic society depends on the current interests of the groups in power.

The synthesis of the results obtained in the whole foresight process is the responsibility of the thematic panels. The deadline for the completion of the National Programme Foresight „Poland 2020” was set for June 30, 2008. A report will be compiled which will present all the results. However, foresight should be an on-going process and that is why it was designated for funding within the OP IE.

Jerzy Gontarz

Research areas and specific topics of the National Programme Foresight “Poland 2020”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research area</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Information Communications Technologies</th>
<th>Balanced Development of Poland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic security (external and domestic)</td>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual security</td>
<td>ICT and society</td>
<td>Energy sources and their use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security</td>
<td>ICT and education</td>
<td>Key environmental problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical and technological security</td>
<td>e-businesses</td>
<td>Environmental technologies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic society development</td>
<td>New media</td>
<td>Natural resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific topics</td>
<td></td>
<td>New materials and technologies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT and society</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integration of environmental policy with sector policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT and education</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Product policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Balanced development of regions and areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poland 2020

Think tank - a research institute or organisation employed to solve complex problems or predict or plan future developments, as in political or social areas
Right now, everything is going according to the plan. During unofficial talks between the European Parliament, European Commission and the presidency of the Council of the EU (from June to December 2007 - Portugal) the draft of a regulation establishing European Institute of Technology was agreed upon. Till the end of this year the agreement on the final version of the regulation is to be reached. If the European Parliament and Council of the EU reach an agreement, EIT could start operating in 2008 with a budget as big as EUR 2.4 billion for the years 2008-2013.

**EIT – structure, function and the future**

The institute is a very ambitious project – a showcase of the innovative capacity of the European Union against the United States and Asian tigers. It is supposed to be an exemplary unit in terms of innovation, research and higher education. It will serve as a model of cooperation between the academia, researchers and private enterprise, thus facilitating more effective methods to face the challenges related to globalization and knowledge-based economy.

The structure of the European Institute of Technology will include a small managing unit and a network of Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The Managing body of the Institute will be the Governing Board which will include 15 prominent representatives from the academic and business world and four members representing employees and students. The Board will set the political priorities of the Institute and choose Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) as well as evaluate the progress made by the communities in realisation of the goals and coordinate the work of the communities in the strategic areas. Executive Committee will be selected from the makeup of the Governing Board and it will supervise the EIT activity and take decisions between the meetings of the Governing Board. The director of the EIT will be responsible for the administration and financial management.

Wrocław is fighting to become the seat of the Management and Governing Board. The European Commission estimates that the institute administration will require about 60 employees. Knowledge and Innovation Communities will be created by universities, research units and enterprises which, invited by the EIT to competitions, associate within an integrated partnership. The objectives of KICs are stipulated in the agreements signed with the EIT. They will enjoy a considerable independence in terms of internal organisation and realisation of the objectives. Till 2015 the plan is to create, within EIT, about 10 Knowledge and Innovation Communities, whose task would be to develop solutions for strategic and long-term challenges of economic and social importance for Europe. Wrocław is also seeking to take part in one of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities.

What will the European Institute of Technology look like in 2015? It is estimated that by that time it will have comprised 10 Knowledge and Innovation Communities which will employ about 5 thousand scientists, 6 thousand students in their last year of study and 4 thousand PhD students. The annual budget for the EIT should be about EUR 1.5 billion.

**EIT+**

The authorities in Wrocław have been working hard to make sure that the city takes all the advan-
tages of the plan to establish the European Institute of Technology.

On April 13, 2007 the president of Wrocław, marshal of the voivodship and rectors of the four schools of higher education signed a document that officially initiated the establishment of a modern research-innovative unit which will be located in the Pracze Odrzańskie campus in Wrocław.

EIT+ is a new initiative, still in progress. So far a Team for EIT+ has been appointed with its office in the City Hall. The team cooperates closely with Wrocław University of Technology, University of Wrocław and Wrocław Technology Park. Current information about the initiative can be found on http://eitplus.wm.pl.

It is clear that preparing a strong candidacy of Wrocław to host the seat of the EIT calls for huge financial outlays already in the preparatory stage. The benefits would be visible after the city is chosen as the host of the Institute and the organisation of individual Knowledge and Innovation Communities has taken place. The organisers are counting on the money from the structural funds for the years 2007-2013 and Framework Programme 7. Structural funds include most of all Regional Operational Programme for Lower Silesia Voivodship and Operational Program Innovative Economy. The list of individual project within the OP IE also includes four big projects belonging to the EIT+ portfolio: Lower Centre of Material and Biomaterials - Wrocław Research Centre, Community Scientific and Technical Library for the Innovative Economy, Biotechnologies and advanced medical technologies, Use of nanotechnology in the modern materials. Their total value is EUR 220 million.

The key to the success of the initiative is to attract the business circles. According to the EIT principles, business should be included at all organisational levels of the institute: from the working out of the strategy to management (representatives of companies will have seats in the Governing Board) and financing.

The business in the Lower Silesia is going to get involved in the venture only if it sees specific benefits for itself.

Decision in 2008.

The course of selection the seat for the European Institute of Technology is not mentioned in the draft of the regulation establishing this institution. In practice, this means that it will be, to a large extent, a political decision and the list of candidates will be long. It will include cities which have done more for the European science and which can present better technical facilities than Wrocław. What strategy to choose then? Firstly, Wrocław should represent Poland and not the initiative of the city authorities and local academic circles. The case of Expo is a good example that without a national consensus, strong political support and big money it is not possible to win the privilege to host a big event in Poland. But the European Institute of Technology is something more than a one-time event. It is a long-term project – a showcase of the EU development possibilities for the next few years. In this case the EU will not risk granting the seat of the EIT to an unreliable host. Secondly, we must show that we can cooperate, that we can promote cooperation within our country. It is optimistic that in this particular case there is a close cooperation between the authorities of the Lower Silesia region and the city of Wrocław. If Wrocław succeeds it will also be a chance for the nearest scientific centers like Poznań or Katowice. That is why other cities and regions should get involved in the project to host the EIT. They will get involved if they see specific benefits for themselves and willingness on the part of Wrocław to cooperate based on partnership.

The most important decisions about the organisation of the European Institute of Technology will be made by the end of next year. It is worth fighting for Poland to be part of such a prestigious project.

Andrzej Szoszkiewicz

How to boost Wrocław’s chances?

It should be Poland’s candidacy and not only the initiative of the local municipal and scientific circle.

The Knowledge Triangle

The EIT activity should focus on the three knowledge components:

**Education** – a unique educational model will attract students to pursue Master’s and PhD programmes and will ensure the best education.

**Research** - research activity will be conducted from the fundamental research to the applied research with the aim to apply the results in the industry. Research should focus on trans- or interdisciplinary areas with a big innovative potential.

**Innovations** – right from the start the EIT will develop and maintain close ties with business, which is a decisive factor for the EIT activities to be useful to the market.
The Competitiveness Council strengthens the research activity in the EU

On November 23, the EU Competitiveness Council has paved the way for the four common technological initiatives by agreeing to secure funds in the amount of EUR 7.6 billion for public-private partnerships. The Common initiatives which are scheduled for 10 years include embedded system technology (ARTEMIS), nonelectronics (ENI-AC), innovative medicines (IMI) and European aeronautics technology (CLEAN SKY). These are the first programmes using the instrument of public-private partnership stipulated in the Seventh Framework Programme (7. PR). Other topics that were of interest to the Council included: the European Institute of Technology (EIT), the need to facilitate mobility of scientists and to create stronger exchange of scientists between Europe and the USA, optimisation of using public funds for development of international cooperation and easier access to scientific research. All this should contribute to popularizing innovation in the 27 EU Member States.

Source: „CORDIS News”, no 28747, 26-11-2007

Science for sale

The Senate of the Jagiellonian University was the first to pass a law on protecting intellectual property, creating research partnerships and division of profits from research conducted at the university which is of interest to business. The Senate decided that one half of the money would go to the originator of the idea and the other to the university bank account. Just and innovative. Up till now the school did not have any profits from research and scientists were often secretive about their research when they used university laboratory or equipment. Jaggiellonian Centre of Innovation (JCI), a daughter company of the university in charge of technology park with focus on biomedical sciences, asked employees of the local schools of higher education about the barriers that keep them away from business. The results are not reassuring. Scientists have no idea how to gain profits from scientific research, how to set up a business and find an investor. But the situation is changing and now the prevalent opinion is that scientists should not dabble in business just like in the past the nobility did not get involved in trade.

Source: „Puls Biznesu”, no 220, 14-11-2007. Author: Eugeniusz Twaróg

How to find profits from the Polish science

„The content of the article 37 of the Public Finances Act should be changed” – claim the investors from Business Angel Seedfund, one of the seed capital funds which obtained funding from The Sectoral Operational Programme Improvement of the Competitiveness of Enterprises. Why do they want changes in the act? Because it hinders the development of technology business by prohibiting the institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences to underwrite capital in private companies. The act prohibits creation of the so-called spin-off companies to which the institute would bring in the technology or patents and the investor provided the capital.

Source: „Gazeta Wyborcza Daily”, no 266, 14-11-2007. Author: Zbigniew Domaszewicz

Science can be beautiful

Un unusual image of a common alga, mapping of the bat’s flight or of the content of human nose. These are only some of the themes of the surprising and beautiful images that won prizes in the competition organised by “Science” magazine and National Science Foundation in the USA. The organisers stress that the authors are true artists. “The impression that the images leave are much greater than words” – said Monica M. Bradford, representing “Science” magazine. The contest International Science and Engineering Visualization Challenge has been organised for the fifth time. Its purpose is to promote activities that contribute to better understanding of scientific research.

Source: „Rzeczpospolita Daily”, no 227, 28-09-2007. Author: peka
ATM as world companies

A Centre of Innovation will be created in Warsaw. Its construction might take as much as PLN 400 million. Over 1000 people are supposed to work there on telecommunications and biotechnological solutions. The government agreed to expand Łódz Special Economic Zone into a sub-zone Warszawa-Grochowska. The Centre of Innovation which is located there will spread on 3 ha. The centre is expected to employ 1.2 thousand engineers and scientists specializing in telecommunications, computer sciences and biotechnology. “The Government’s decision was the key condition for the centre project to start. The costs will be distributed over couple of years, we estimate that yearly expenditures on infrastructures will be around PLN 40 million” – said Marek Montoya, responsible for the project, marketing director of the ATM teleinformation company which is the principal investor of The Centre of Innovation.


The EU supports cooperation between companies and scientists

Entrepreneurs will be able to obtain money from the EU funds on projects implementing innovative technology or on starting up cooperation with R&D units. The main source of the funds is Operational Programme Innovative Economy under which Polish Agency for Enterprise Development will realise a few measures aimed at introducing innovation in the company. The support for new investments may be granted within Measure 4.4 of the OP IE. The basic criteria which would decide about eligibility for the funds will be the purchase of fixed assets, immovables and introduction of innovative technologies. Funding of projects connected with joint work of companies and research units and implementation of the research results is stipulated in Measures 1.4 and 4.1 which are an integral part. Acceptance of applications for the measures will be announced on the website of Polish Agency for Enterprise Development at the end of 2007 or the beginning of 2008.


European medals for innovation go to Technical University of Łódź

The Scientists from the Technical University of Łódź went to the capital of Belgium for the EU-REKA 2007 Competition in order to present 12 innovative solutions. These were inventions important for the industry and those applied in medicine – therapy and diagnosis. Even though our scientists were awarded for each of the inventions, it was the medical innovations that drew particular attention in Brussels. The gold medal with honors was awarded for IrisStation system which identifies humans based on their iris and additionally records sharp image of the iris. This innovation was created by the team from the Department of Microelectronics and Information Technologies of the Technical University of Łódź, under the supervision of prof. Andrzej Napieralski. It will enable ophthalmologists to examine the eye even more accurately. The other gold medal with honors was awarded for biomaterial from microbiological cellulose for external use (it can be used to prevent post-operation complications like for example infections or adhesion of organs in the abdominal cavity). This invention was created under the supervision of prof. Stanisław Bielecki from the Institute of Technical Biochemistry of the Łódź technical institution. The gold medal was awarded for dosimeter for two- and three-dimensional distribution measurements of ionizing radiation dosages in radiotherapy. This equipment is the work of doctor Marek Kozicki from the Institute of Textile Architecture.


More than PLN 50 million for research projects

Till December 28, 2007 research institution and teams like for example, organisational units of universities, institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research and development units and non-governmental organisations can apply for funds for Polish-Norwegian research projects. The project should concern environment and health protection. The eligible institutions can also apply for funds for workshops. EUR 14.5 million was already devoted to joint Polish-Norwegian research project, out of this amount EUR 1.4 million went in seminars and workshops. The amount of the granted funds from the Polish-Norwegian Scientific Research Fund can range from 60 to 90% of the total project costs. The institution responsible for accepting applications is The Information Processing Centre (OPI) in Warsaw. Details can be found on the Centre’s website: www opi.org.pl.

Source: „Gazeta Prawna Daily”, no 188, 27-09-2007. Author: Jolanta Góra
Over the last eleven years vehicles with a sign of a dachshund (the sign means that the Solaris bus is low-floor) has been a big hit on the domestic and European markets. But Solaris Bus & Coach SA is reaching beyond Europe as well. Recently the company has completed the order for Dubai, one of the largest cities in the United Arab Emirates. In the factory near Bolechowo 225 buses were produced and for cultural reasons the inside was divided into a compartment for women with children. The total value of the contract was EUR 112 million.

When Solaris began its business, the company employed 36 people and today there are more than 1300 employees.

The production facilities are still being expanded. Krzysztof Olszewski, president of Solaris Bus & Coach SA, has gathered a group of specialists to work with. In Bolechowo near Poznan, there are about 50 people working on bus projects, most of them are technical university graduates. The company regularly cooperates with German and American research institutions. But when working on its last gem – a bus with hybrid drive the company cooperated with Poznan University of Technology.

– We have cooperated with Poznan University of Technology in those areas where outsourcing of research is more profitable than conducting our own trials is impossible. As a company our aim is to produce a bus, while the University is interested in research – says Krzysztof Olszewski, the president. The enterprise and the scientific institutions complete each other perfectly in this case.

The newest product of the company is bus Solaris Urbino 18 Hybrid, whose drive is based on innovative technology. – The world oil resources are shrinking and more and more countries are looking for alternative energy sources. The conducted research has proven that hybrid drives are the future of the motor market – says Mr. Olszewski.

– If the market demands energy-saving and environmental solutions, then we must respond to it.
The project to produce a hybrid-driven bus involved many companies. The model Solaris Urbino 18 Hybrid uses hybrid system by Allison Transmission. It helps to combine the work of combustion engine and electrical drive. Thanks to advanced steering the engine is always working in the optimal range of its characteristics, and the power excess, when the vehicle is in motion, is changed into energy and finds it was to the batteries which do not have to be charged from external sources. A city bus often stops and starts again. – During a stop-and-go motion the idea of the hybrid works the best. Such technology allows for retrieval of the energy from the braking of the vehicle, it accumulation and reuse to accelerate the bus – Krzysztof Olszewski explains.

The test results were more that good. Apart from the reduction in oil use (from 20 to 30%) the fume emissions have reduced considerably: to 39% NO, to 97% solid molecules, do 90% CO and hydrocarbon compounds. The bus is working in a much quieter way. These results convince the clients. The new “hybrid” from Solaris is in series production and on sale. The first buses Solaris Urbino 18 Hybrid are already in operation in Germany and Switzerland.

For the development and tests of the hybrid-driven model the company spent PLN 10 million as part of the targeted project. Solaris Bus & Coach used the possibilities given by The Sectoral Operational Programme Improvement of the Competitiveness of Enterprises (Measure 1.4) – about 10% of the outlays came from the European Union funds. Soon, as part of the Operational Programme Innovative Economy, the companies (regardless of their size) will be able to apply for funds for targeted projects and implementation of research results (Measures 1.4, 4.1).

Jerzy Gontarz
One of the major projects is the Academic Pre-incubator, established in the structures of Podkarpackie Scientific-Technological Park (PPNT). Out of the couple parks that were created using the structural funds, only this one decided to cooperate closely with students and scientists by setting up the Academic Pre-incubator. PPNT cooperates with the biggest technical university in the south-east of Poland, i.e. Technical University of Rzeszów.

Pre-incubator has been working since March 2007 in a modern facility on the premises of Technical University of Rzeszów. It obtained funds under Measure 2.6 Regional innovation strategies and transfer of knowledge of the Integrated Regional Operational Programme (ZPORR). Academic Pre-incubator in Rzeszow offers comprehensive support to students, graduates and academic staff by preparing them to work in the free-market conditions. As part of the EU-cofinanced project, free financial, marketing and management guidance was initiated. Those university graduates or the staff wishing to try out their luck in business can obtain free expertise on how to run a business. In the building there are 14 rooms with all the necessary equipment, three production halls, 8 service-manufacture rooms and offices and conference room.

The lessees can count on preferential rent rates in the first two years. The rent includes the internet access, building security, use of the conference room and waste disposal. Location is another strong point – it is close to an Rzeszów-Jesionka airport whose standards are on the international level. Training of professional aviation staff one of the main specialties of the school in Rzeszów. Pre-incubator cooperates with “Aviation Valley” - an Association of Aviation Enterprise Groups.

In the current period of the programme 2007-2013 innovative start-ups can obtain funds within Measure 3.1 of Operational Programme Innovative Economy. Measure 3.1 Initiating of innovative activity was created to increase the number of companies based on innovative ideas (this instrument is described in the previous issue of the bulletin). Support for start-ups will include 3 elements: start-up guidance, infrastructure and services availability, financial funding of the new enterprise.

The implementation of Measure 3.1 is the responsibility of the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP). The support from PARP will not be granted to individual entrepreneurs, but rather to institutions that will support innovative start-ups. The already existing incubators and pre-incubators are also eligible for the support.

Andrzej Szoszkiewicz

What to do to encourage university graduates or even students to set up businesses and introduce their own ideas? Unfortunately, in the previous period of programming 2004-2006, due to limited funds and scope of the support not many projects were directed at newly established companies based on innovations.
Guidelines

The Ministry of Regional Development (MRR) presents on its website Guidelines concerning eligibility of expenditure within the Operational Programme Innovative Economy 2007-2013. The document stipulates the conditions for eligibility of the expenditures as well as detailed categories of eligible expenditures in the projects co-financed from the domestic and EU funds under priorities 1-5 and 7-8 of the Operational Programme Innovative Economy 2007-2013 (the rules pertaining to priority 6 are currently drafted while those for priority 9 Technical Assistance were stipulated in other documents). This document contains detailed rules on: flexibility if the OP IE (cross-financing), eligibility of expenditures in projects within public aid programmes, financial aids to a project in realisation in the form of a refund or an advance payment and common rules of eligibility of expenditures in relation to example categories of eligible expenditures.

One can learn from the document what conditions must be met when purchasing used fixed assets. For the costs to be eligible, the price of the used assets cannot exceed their market value, the seller must submit a statement in which the purchaser, the place and date of purchase are specified (within 7 years those assets could not be purchased using public funds). Purchasing used fixed assets is allowed if the purchased assets are directly related to the enterprise which was liquidated or would have been liquidated if the purchase had not taken place. If the aid constitutes regional investment support, such a purchase will be eligible only in the case of beneficiaries from the SME sector.

The interpretation of the guidelines can be done by the Intermediate Bodies listed in the OP IE in agreement with the Managing Body.

Monitoring Committee of the OP IE

On November 30, 2007 the first meeting of Monitoring Committee of the Operational Programme Innovative Economy, chaired by the undersecretary of state in MRR, Janusz Mikuła, took place. The result was the passing the Rules of the Committee’s operation and Selection Criteria of projects within Operational Programme Innovative Economy for Priorities 1-5 and 7-9. Because priority axis 6 Polish economy on the international market is still discussed, the criteria for this priority will be brought up at the future meetings.

Full list of criteria is available on the website of the Ministry of Regional Development.

Priorities of the MRR

The new minister of regional development, Elżbieta Bienkowska, wants her department to work under the motto: “Faster, fewer, better”. As she explained, “faster” means faster spending of funds from the current financial perspective as well as the future ones, “fewer” means fewer procedures and “better” means better use of the EU funds, to the very last cent but also effective use – to the projects which bring real economic growth and reduce differences between the regions.

Elżbieta Bienkowska explained during her first press conference on November 28, 2007, that the process of spending the EU funds cannot be centralised, as it was in the past.– The funds for 2007-2013 are already divided and there will not be changes between allocations for regional and central programmes. I would like to focus on a partner approach to the local governments, to the non-governmental organisations and important environmental organisations. I will try to implement this approach of dialog to the largest extent possible – ensured the minister.

Minister of Regional Development Elżbieta Bienkowska wants to spend the EU funds faster, to limit procedures and use the funds to the very last cent.

What is it?

Project eligibility

The evaluation of project eligibility within the OP IE is done at the level of selection and assessment of the application for financial aid. It is checked whether the presented project can be co-financed under the Programme (does it comply with the objectives of the OP IE, is the beneficiary entitled to apply for a given measure, does the project comply with the EU policies etc.). Decision that a given project is eligible for aid does not mean that all the expenditures incurred during project realisation will be deemed eligible. Project originators should specify in the application both expenditures eligible for aid and those not eligible for aid. The amount of eligible expenditures will be included in the agreement signed by the beneficiary.
Managing Authority of OP IE:
Ministry of Regional Development (MRR)

Intermediate Bodies of OP IE:
Ministry of Economy (MG)
Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW)
Ministry of Interior and Administration (MSWiA)