

# Clusters – priorities of efficient innovation promotion

In the time of increasing world economic problems and intensifying intercontinental and international competition, companies as well as governments are searching for solutions to improve their competitiveness. This is the reason why countries create and develop cluster-based policies in their economies.

THE PURPOSE OF those policies is to help establish and stimulate cluster development, their coordination and revival of the economic environment. They can be applied at the local and regional, as well as the national and international level. Fundamentally, it is a horizontal and broad policy. It is worth mentioning that the policy of cluster creation and development is now considered in the economy as one of the best forms in supporting local as well as regional growth.

We now observe the establishment of clusters all over the world. This phenomenon does not include advanced technologies sectors alone, but in the same measure, it applies to traditional, processing, and service branches. At the same time, on different levels (local, regional, national and even international – for example EU, OECD) the economic government bodies engage in cluster establishment. On the one hand, it is affecting the popularity and acceleration of their creative process, on the other hand, often at the same time, it deprives them of the community and its “from bottom up” character. It is worth mentioning that in 2006, the European Union introduced a widely designed innovation strategy in which clusters were presented as one of nine strategic priorities of efficient innovation promotion. In our country during the last few years about 250 cluster initiatives were established, 47 of which were formalized clusters.

Innovative clusters have their particular place among cooperative systems. They differ from the traditional cluster systems (historic – local production systems) in that the main partnership relationships are not only between production and service companies, but into the cooperation net are included the subjects connected directly with the sphere of research and development. The

most important contribution to the concentration of innovative companies' activities in a particular geographic area is that the knowledge disclosed in clusters (introduced from the sphere of research and development or produced by the very companies) is subject to diffusion within it more efficiently than among the companies outside the cluster. Companies participating in the innovative cluster systems are mostly characterized by specialization and complementarity of products/services. Generated is the dynamic process of knowledge creation and its transfer. At the same time, within clusters are collective processes of learning that initiate innovations, which also increases competitiveness in high-tech sectors. It is often said these clusters constitute local innovative systems.

Currently there are a few government initiatives, the purpose of which is animation and coordination of new cluster initiatives' operations. Poland is also preparing to use structural funds and national public means during 2014–2020. So the discussion continues over new strategy and ways of stimulation and development of the above mentioned initiatives, describing their role in the economy, the means of their financing and stimulation to broader expansion. The basic value of the cluster initiatives development should be the growth of the innovative, competitive and economic potential of the Polish economy.

The “Polish Cluster” Employers Association was established from the bottom up at the moment of a lively discussion over the strategy of cluster policies in Poland in the coming years, based on already functioning clusters, and subjects coordinating their activities. And its basic purposes of activities are among others:

Creating the representation of clusters in Poland, whose task is to represent the

interests of cluster coordinators and cluster initiatives as well as subjects associated with the cluster initiative before the representatives of the central and regional levels of administration.

Cluster subjects belonging to the “Polish Cluster” Employers Association as economic initiatives are relatively new business creations, and they are not universally recognizable, neither by central nor regional levels of administration. That is why our basic purpose is to represent our members before the administration representatives and to inform them of the role and weight of our work for the development of companies' competitiveness in Poland.

We are, unquestionably, a representation of the most innovative part of Polish enterprises, and we certainly assemble those in our ranks. We also want to represent Polish cluster initiatives at the international forum. In many countries of the European Union, such organizations already exist and they are looking for contact in order to establish business and technological cooperation among cluster subjects, but also to build communication with the Union's institutions. Certainly our highest value is the very fact of creating ties among our members in order to exchange interesting ideas and initiatives, or simply for the purpose of mutual help.

The board of “Polish Cluster” Federation comprises persons connected with business as well as government administration; animators and creators of functioning cluster and business organizations. The President of the Board Association is Krzysztof Krysztofowski, Vice-Minister of Economy during the Prime Ministry of Professor Marek Belka, now President of Bumar Group Board and President of Bielsko Airline Companies Federation, one of the larger and recognizable cluster initiatives in Poland and Europe. ::

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