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INTER-SECTORAL COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION – GOOD PRACTICES IN ANIMATING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: This article aims to show the role of inter-sectoral cooperation and the possibility of financing the implementation of innovation in non-repayable funding mechanisms within the operational programmes for the period 2014 - 2020. The content indicates that the concentration of pro-innovation policy only on the mechanisms of non-repayable aid may have, unfortunately, a small impact on the change in behaviour of the research units. Furthermore, it shows how to use good practices, for example in the context of animating actions in the field of social policy.

Key words: *intersectoral collaboration, innovation, international cooperation.*

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Introduction

The contemporary development of the economy requires working towards efficient mechanisms which will encourage scientific units and cooperating with them entities to take initiatives in implementing the innovations. Numerous stakeholders such as central institutions, local authorities, business environment institutions, universities, scientific units and entrepreneurs are responsible for developing these mechanisms, and their effective assumptions should be reflected by the innovation-oriented policy in the economy. In many fields some actions in the partnership lead to implementation of innovative solutions, for instance in different areas of the social policy. These partnership actions enable us, among other things, to fund the implementation of innovation projects and to take advantage of the public subsidies.

1. The sources of collaboration ideas

The idea of collaboration or so-called partnership is based on different interconnected traditions. First of all, it refers to the idea of the social dialogue. Pacts for employment and competitiveness, specific and very popular in Europe, originate from this idea. The idea of public-private partnership tends to be another component of that tradition (which at first in its specific form was developed in the USA and later implemented in Europe). The idea of community development appears to be unusually essential (in particular for the non-governmental sector). It is an indication of later and more fashionable ideas such as the civil society or the social capital, which constitute extremely important elements of partnerships.

It is worth emphasising that different forms of modernisation turned out to be important factors that contributed to opening the doors to cooperation including, as illustrated by Polish experience, for instance, changes in the model of governance and the evolution of its different paradigms, so-called New Managerialism, New Public Management or Enabling State. Breaking the mental barrier concerning the monopoly of administration on delivering public services should be attributed to the above mentioned factors. However, partnership principles demonopolised the role of civil service in defining them. The idea of a partnership in European Union countries is also closely associated with the collapse of traditional models of the social policy. The older European, classical (clean) models (e.g. Nordic, continental, southern, Anglo-Saxon) more and more frequently turn out to be inefficient and EU countries are forced to seek better solutions. As a result, the traditional model of welfare state is moving towards something what is referred to as welfare society.

Such a shift is characterised by specifically understood socialisation and by an increase in the scope of shared responsibility of individuals, their families and communities they live in for providing good living conditions and social cohesion.

It should also be stressed that the term “partnership” has become extremely popular in Poland recently. It obviously means the partnership between institutions, and even more specifically between sector institutions, including public sector institutions (particularly local authorities).

2. Evaluation of inter-sectoral collaboration and innovations – Polish reality in animating activities

Based on various documents, for example European Commission reports (Quarterly Trzeci sector [The third sector], special issue 2011/2012, „W stronę partnerskiej współpracy” [Towards collaborative partnership], Instytut Spraw Publicznych [The Institute of Public Affairs], p. 60), scientific units more and more frequently carry out their tasks in close cooperation with other institutions, stakeholders and also groups or individuals which are directly or indirectly influenced by these scientific units. The activities of scientific units, on the other hand, are affected by other institutions. They comprise representatives of various sectors including public administration and civic sector. Nowadays in Poland a great demand for collaboration between science and business is clearly visible. Based on different studies and research findings, the transfer of funds is the most frequent form of cooperation. Along with a desire for gaining profits and managing capital as well as carrying out a common mission, it is possible to develop social goals and objectives. So combining forces and doing something together appears to be obvious. Here, a transfer of knowledge is essential. In Polish reality, through knowledge transfer, scientific units may apply for funds to cover a range of activities. These activities can involve:

- promoting the portal "Choose the University" [Polish: Wybierz Studia] that is supporting responsible educational choices in higher education;
- developing cooperation of academic environment with business sector, with particular focus on bringing closer and defining the notion of "innovation" and promoting innovative approach among students, including PhD students, who are getting ready to enter labour market;
- obeying law in the area of research and higher education, including watchdog initiatives and increasing the legal awareness of students;
- information and promotion measures as well as training on possibilities of receiving research grants in the field of humanities.

3. Support in EU programmes

To meet the needs of research units and cooperating with them entities, European Union funds constitute an interesting possibility of financing development or integration actions and processes. Involving EU funds in promoting innovations and transferring knowledge is strongly connected to the European Commission structural policy and to operational programmes which, consequently implemented in Polish economy tend to be an important supplement to the already existing financial offer. First of all, the companies which intend to carry out research or development projects will receive financial support from European Union Funds 2014 - 2020 allocated to Poland. Financial assets for this purpose are provided through the programme Intelligent Development, in the framework of action 1.1 Research + Development Projects of enterprises. The National Centre for Research and Development is the implementing agency responsible for supporting Polish research units and enterprises. According to the data and statistics, research units are allowed to carry out their projects based on the research and development activities exclusively for their own benefits or in order to disseminate solutions. Their projects will receive more financial support if they are oriented to disseminate the solutions. In this case the institutions need to prove in documentation of the project, that within three years of the project completion, its results:

- will be presented in at least three scientific and technical conferences, one of them at least of national level;
- will be published in at least two scientific journals included in the list of journals provided by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education or will be published in commonly accessible data bases which ensure free access to the research results (raw data);

- will be entirely disseminated through free of charge software or licensed software with open access. These above mentioned innovative factors are taken into account when an entity applies for financial support.

Summary

Working out sustainable links between business and research sectors which will bring an increase in their potential to generate and to implement innovative solutions is an important goal of the Polish economy. Non-repayable funding mechanisms, such as financial support or grants offered among others from structural funds, encourage different institutions to undertake this type of activities. In each of these financial prospects, including the one of 2014 - 2020, a variety of possibilities appear to provide financial support to the process of innovations ranging from scientific and research projects to protection of intellectual property which has been created during the project as well as financial support for investments which enable institutions to develop production infrastructure.

The effectiveness of this collaboration is significantly important for innovations in the country. Therefore, pro-innovative policy on national level cannot be entirely focused on non-repayable funding mechanisms. To conclude, it is important to complement partnership with coherent scheme supporting the implementation of innovative solutions which will definitely enhance innovations.

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