

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES' EXPERIENCE IN SUPPORTING INNOVATIVE ACTIVITY

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In every country, creating favorable conditions for the effective functioning of market mechanisms, supporting a competitive environment, developing, mastering, and disseminating new products and technologies, as well as supporting large-scale innovative activity that ensures these processes, are among the most important and priority areas. Changes that have occurred in recent years demonstrate that the scope and pace of measures and actions aimed at supporting innovative processes in the economy of Uzbekistan are so extensive and rapid that it is extremely difficult to express these transformations using any single criterion or measurement.

In recent years, a number of measures have been implemented in the Republic to finance innovative activity and to strengthen linkages between science, education, and production. In this regard, a strategy for supporting innovation has been developed and is being implemented in Uzbekistan. The adoption of the Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Innovative Activity,” “On Technology Transfer,” “On Commercial Secrets,” and “On Intellectual Property,” as well as the Presidential Decrees “On the Management and Coordination of the Development of Science and Technology,” “On Additional Measures to Stimulate the Modernization of Production and Technical and Technological Re-equipment,” and “On Additional Measures to Stimulate the Introduction of Innovative Projects and Technologies into Production,” along with resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers such as “On the Procedure for the Transfer of Dual-Use (Military and Civil) Technologies,” “On the Procedure for Allocating Foreign Currency Funds for the Foreign Patenting of Export-Oriented Developments,” and a number of other decisions, serve as clear evidence of this.

Alongside the achievements attained in supporting innovation, there remain many unresolved problems, issues awaiting solutions, and untapped opportunities. In our view, the advanced experience of innovation-oriented economies in supporting innovative activity may be useful and significant for the economy of Uzbekistan.

First, let us consider examples of innovation support services in Spain. The EU Startup Accelerator has been operating since January 23, 2014. Under this project, young Spaniards under the age of 35 are provided with the opportunity to prepare their own high-tech startups in the fields of information and communication technologies, tourism, renewable energy, water, healthcare, and environmental protection for launch, with financial support of up to one million euros under the Horizon 2020 program. In addition, they gain access to microcrediting or other forms of refinancing, including preferential financing from private investors such as the European Business Angels Network (EBAN). The EU Startup Accelerator is the first Spanish accelerator based in the European Union, in Brussels. The main objective of the accelerator is to train high-tech startups to be successfully formalized at the level of EU grants, and to help them implement and accelerate their startup projects.

The experience of the system known as the PIDI Network is also of significant importance. PIDI operates as an instrument of the CDTI – the Centre for the Development of Technology and Industry (Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico e Industrial), a governmental body under the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness of Spain. Its main goal is to provide information and advisory services to companies and entrepreneurs on accessing public funds for research and development, experimental design, and innovation at all levels of public administration—local, regional, national, and European. This project is simultaneously supported by 10 large and medium-sized companies from the private sector, the University of Alicante from the education sector, 51 institutions from the research sector, 79 institutions from the innovation infrastructure, and 7 representatives of government authorities.

In Poland, the project called Invention II (IHTIRO II), aimed at training highly qualified personnel for small and medium-sized enterprises, is implemented in the Świętokrzyskie region. The Kielce Technology Park (KTP), located in the Świętokrzyskie region, provides advisory services to small and medium-sized entrepreneurs in response to their needs, as there is a shortage of funds to attract highly qualified specialists. Through the task “Temporary Employment of Highly Qualified Personnel in Enterprises,” micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises cooperate with highly qualified specialists who develop innovative solutions for companies in the Świętokrzyskie region.

In Poland, the project aimed at improving integrated instruments for supporting innovation in regions with growth potential, known as Innovative Circles, also deserves attention. The main initiator of this project is Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce. Within the framework of the project, consultations are held with research and development centers, researchers, and faculty members, and initiatives for cooperation in implementing international activities and supporting projects with European Union countries are considered. The overall objective of the project is to develop sustainable forms of cooperation in the Świętokrzyskie region, and within the framework of the region’s intellectual specialization, to create integrated tools for applying new knowledge in practice and transferring technologies between the research and development sector and enterprises.

In Bulgaria, certain experiences in supporting innovation are also noteworthy. For example, the system known as the “Scientific and Technical Union of Mechanical Engineering – URAK Research Center.” The project aims to study the need for engineering and technical services and to specialize their types for small and medium-sized enterprises operating in sectors such as metal processing, engineering and machine-building, chemical industry, electrical equipment manufacturing, textile production, and the food industry in Bulgaria. This project involves 105 small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from regions such as Ruse, Razgrad, Silistra, Shumen, Dobrich, Montana, Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Lovech, Plovdiv, and Kardzhali, as well as representatives of the scientific community, including Angel Kanchev University of Ruse, the Research Center of Angel Kanchev University of Ruse, and the Scientific and Technical Union of Mechanical Engineering.

In conclusion, it should be noted that although the experience of supporting innovations in Uzbekistan has its own national characteristics, adopting the achievements of the countries discussed above in the field of innovation support and adapting them to domestic conditions will, in our opinion, help us reach our intended goals more quickly and with fewer shortcomings.