

## ABSTRACT

### **The Kielce Trade Fair cluster as an example of the impact of networking on entrepreneurship and innovation in Świętokrzyskie region**

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The aim of the present paper was to show the networking relationship in the context of its meaning for the development of entrepreneurship and innovation in Świętokrzyskie region. It was based on a case study, i.e. on the Kielce Trade Fair (KTF) cluster. The scope of the research was related to the reach of business activity of the cluster members. The time scope covered the years 2005-2015.

The most important findings of the analysis were as follows:

- The KTF cluster creates an innovative network in Świętokrzyskie region, aiming at the development of fairs and congress sector. It is a unique cluster of this kind in Poland, concentrated around a dynamic fair centre playing an important role in the region.
- The cooperation within the cluster brings measurable and non-measurable benefits for its members. This cooperation matters while implementing common projects financed from the EU funds. In the cluster, there are very strong companies with consulting and financial as well as training capacities whose economic condition has considerably improved. They also support actively the cooperation within the cluster. On its turn, an increase of the mutual trust which is translated into a need to intensify informal business contacts constitutes an important non-measurable result.
- The cluster is a place where both formal and informal bonds are created. A group of members having a very high indicator of both inner and outer relationships with the entities co-responsible for innovation has been identified.
- The EU funds acquired by the cluster boost entrepreneurship, innovation and competitiveness in Świętokrzyskie region. The beneficiaries belonging to the cluster have finalised an important majority of their projects. The numerical structure favoured the region, especially in terms of the funds absorbed. The aims of the implemented projects fall into three directions of the development. Among them the largest group in terms of costs and size concerned a broadly understood improvement of competitiveness in the region. It encompassed the three most valuable regional projects, i.e. related to the improvement of congress and fair infrastructure, economic and touristic promotion, and support to the SME sector. Projects aiming at entrepreneurship development were on the



second position. The KTF cluster itself focused on supporting didactic capacities of the academic centre directed at job market needs and economic and investment promotion of the region.

- The KTF cluster is an example of implementing a concept of intelligent specialisation of the regions. It concentrates the entities connected to fair and congress horizontal specialisation. Its aim is to support vertical specialisations of Świętokrzyskie region. It develops specialisations related to education (professional, academic and technical activity), modern technologies (information and communication) and tourism. These activities are precious for activating socio-economic local and regional spaces. In the region and in the sub-regions, apart from Kielce, concentration of high level services is definitely insufficient.

The KTF cluster is an example of a very relevant way of using the advantages of Kielce and Świętokrzyskie region by local government authorities and business entities. It boosts socio-economic benefits and competitiveness.

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