

PARTNERSHIP FOSTERING COUNTRY COMPETITIVENESS

Today business as well as government faces different challenges and problems because of globalization and growing competitiveness at business environment. Quite often, management of innovations and intellectual property (IP) becomes the main core competence which helps to cope with challenges of global environment. On 21–22 of September speakers from 11 countries (Japan, USA, UK, Germany, Greece, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and others) shared their experience and visions about partnership during the conference “Business—Science—Government Partnership: Fostering Country Competitiveness” which was organized by International Business School at Vilnius University.

Business society was represented by Global Hitachi, Ltd. Group Chairman for Europe Sir Stephen Gomersall, General Director of Lithuanian Business Confederation Algimantas Akstinas and representatives of Sauletekio Valley and Nothtown. Former member of European Parliament Margarita Starkevičiūtė discussed the country’s growth and competitiveness problems. Steinbeis (Germany) international network representative Uwe Haug, Centre of Innovations and Entrepreneurship at University of Göteborg representative Thomas Hedner (Sweden) and President of Vaasa University of Applied Sciences Tauno Kekäle (Finland) brought good practice examples of their institutions and countries.

Hitachi Ltd.—the strategic investor to Visaginas Nuclear power plant—General Manager for Europe Sir Stephen Gomersall believes that business and the country’s progress is inconceivable without new knowledge, ideas and abilities to exploit them in practice. Governmental support is essential for successful business and science partnership. World-class Japanese established and managed company activities include information systems and telecommunications, energy, social infrastructure and industry, constructions, high-tech industry. Hitachi Ltd. from the very beginning gives the priority to a strong knowledge base creation, research and social innovations. This company has strong partnership relations with world-class universities such as Cambridge University, Technical University of Delft, The University of Melbourne and others. Sir Stephen Gomersall is disposed to share Hitachi Ltd. experience and to gain local Lithuanian knowledge.

Internal and external relations in Steinbeis enterprises concerning knowledge and technology transfer were detailed in the report by Mr. **Uwe Haug**, Managing Director R & D, Steinbeis-Foundation, international network (Germany) (cf. the scheme below).

Decentralized companies are dependent on a parent company and led by an entrepreneur with expertise in day-to-day operations and overall responsibilities, especially for:

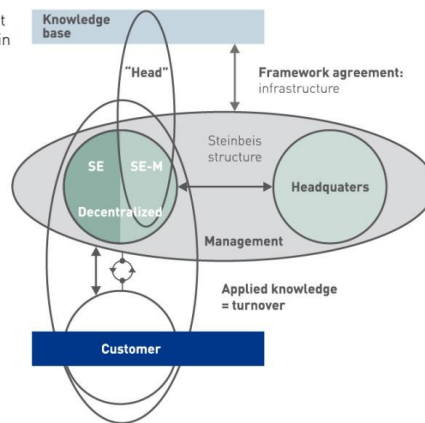
- marketing (acquisition, execution etc)
- quotes (range, calculation, pricing, etc)
- contracts (project management, performance etc)
- revenues
- costs
- investments
- HR (acquisition, development, management etc)

External relationship (transfer):

- Legal responsibility: Customer ↔ Steinbeis
- Tangible transfer: Customer → SE

Internal relationship:

- Legal responsibility: Manager [SE-M] ↔ Steinbeis (governed by managers' contracts)



Central unit:

- Formal framework
- Services:
 - > Founding
 - > SE accounting
 - > SE profit & loss, balance sheets
 - > SE staff contracts
 - > SE payroll
 - > Service and support
 - > Legal
 - > Insurance
 - > PR
 - > Coaching, open-door policy
 - > and many more

Uwe Haug don't doubt that among the leaders can be not just big companies that employ thousands of workers, but also medium and small businesses. Innovation in business should be based on new technologies and human expertise; researchers have to be able to combine theoretical and practical experience. Representative of international network which helps to business and science to find a common language tells that in Germany leading companies are established not only in big cities, but in regions and smaller towns. Such activities give to people opportunities to work, to improve the career and the new knowledge.

Thomas Hedner (Göteborg University, Sweden) is convinced that science, business and government partnership can be fostered with a new and more practical approach to the study programs. He presented the innovation and entrepreneurship program model which was developed and implemented at Göteborg University. The innovation and entrepreneurship model highlights several key issues that contribute to science and business partnership. Study programs have to be oriented not to the content but to development of specific competences. Especially strong focus is on interdisciplinary, non-formal education when students are encouraged to work more independently, in the teams and in partnership with others. Teacher's role is also changing - it is no longer a traditional teacher but instead a consultant.

The foreign experts suggested, after the presentations of representatives of Sauletekio Valley and Northtown, that the science commercialization implementation and country's competitiveness fostering in Lithuania would be more realizable under preconditions:

- The creation of an innovation system based on fare bases when is clear "who is who...?" and "who do what...?";
- Change the mindset from "exploring" to "exploiting";
- Take a risk adoption model which would encourage Lithuanian researchers to commercialize their ideas;
- Understand that science commercialization will happen only when Lithuania will change its mindset from separating between "researchers" and "business persons" to "two in one";

- Rethink Intellectual Property (IP) management system and to create clear IP management mechanisms, as current system can do nothing else than create uncertainties and chaos, and will certainly be problem for Lithuania in the future;
- Starting from simple entrepreneurship and new ideas competitions to implement the whole technology transfer/value transfer system;
- Create the strategy which would be attractive local researchers and to the researchers from EU. It would help to stop a brain drain and to attract researchers from abroad.

The conference was a strategic step to set up and organize the vital and essential elements for the business, science and government partnership system. Materials of the conference were published electronically and distributed.

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