

From research to **profit**: improving Croatia's innovation climate

Economic growth in Croatia and, indeed, in any country, depends to a large degree on the successful translation of research results and knowledge to commercially viable products and technologies. To achieve such growth, the European Union has actively supported Croatia's innovation climate by promoting the commercialisation of these research results via various IPA-funded projects.

In the field of innovation and technology transfer, a financial instrument known as the Science and Innovation Investment Fund has helped improve Croatia's competitiveness and growth prospects.

ACCELERATING DEVELOPMENT

The grant-scheme was an instrument used to accelerate development in areas where private instruments have not been used or are unable to achieve the desired results. Covering activities such as genomics in the area of technology transfer, the scheme was open to higher educational institutions and public research organisations.

In total, some 20 projects were funded with grants ranging from €50,000 to €750,000. Special priority was given for projects in the ten Croatian counties deemed as "lagging behind", in order to encourage a more balanced development across the country.

Specifically, the scheme increased the know-how to commercialise research results. Cooperation between the beneficiaries has been a positive experience and one that will continue. Beneficiaries have also learned how to manage and implement projects more effectively. And finally, the project also saw the capacities in science, technology and knowledge transfer greatly improving.



"Accessing the fund has meant we were able to acquire state of the art equipment which was the first of its kind in Croatia and indeed South Eastern Europe," said Oliver Vugrek of the Ruđer Bošković Institute. "Early detection of cancer and targeted treatment options was simply not possible in Croatia. Now we are able to fully engage in the field of microarrays and biosensors which are vital tools for diagnosis and undertaking basic cancer research."



European
Commission

Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)

Croatia

IPA – AN INVESTMENT IN EUROPE. AN INVESTMENT IN SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY.

A HELPING HAND

A technical assistance initiative was launched in January 2010 to assist grant-scheme projects. The beneficiaries learned how to implement their projects at specially organised workshops. They could also benefit from on-going assistance through a help desk that was open for the entire project. Face-to-face meetings and advisory sessions were also a key feature. The project team invited the media to various events that raised awareness of the fund to a wider audience. And in order to meet industry partners for potential future collaboration, the beneficiaries had the opportunity to attend networking and matchmaking events.

One such networking event has resulted in the Ruđer Bošković Institute collaborating with the German Cancer Research Centre in order to advance protein microchip technology for diagnostic means.

The success of the fund should also pave the way for future large scale innovation and technology transfer projects in Croatia.

PROJECT DETAILS - Science and Innovation Investment Fund

Partners:

Human Dynamics, Austria (Coordinator)
Exemplas, United Kingdom
Lithuanian Innovation Centre, Lithuania
DGA, Poland
Ministry of Labour, Croatia

Total cost in €: 11.47 million

EU Contribution in €: 9.35 million (81,51%)

Start date: May 2009

End date: July 2012

Results: Commercialisation of research results, partnering, increased capacities

Techniques: Workshops, study tours, networking events, media visits, ongoing assistance

Website: <http://www.siif-croatia.com/en/>

