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**The Importance of Support of Enterprise in Poland.
Case Study of High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation
Centre of the University of Łódź**

Abstract

The institution of accelerator and incubator is generally perceived as an effective and efficient way of supporting all innovative ideas within many sectors. The subject of this paper is the attempt to identify the methods and tools of business enterprise support offered within the framework of High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź. The basis for factual material was the questionnaire addressed to the management of Accelerator. The article focuses also on the potential and existing problems which are serious obstacles in building and development of innovative and enterprising attitudes among academic environment in Poland.

1. Introduction

Science and technology parks, high-tech accelerators and centres for technology transfer play a significant role in shaping processes of conditions for development of enterprise in a broad meaning. The common denominator in activity of those units are hi-tech sector oriented products and services. The lines of businesses which are part of this sector decides modern economy of a given country, region and city, determinating innovativeness and competitiveness of the global market economy. The key factors of a new type economy and the development of society are knowledge, information and technology constituting goods of a real class in the production, exchange, distribution and consumption processes. Momentous role of these elements express itself in the development

of human and social capital, which is deciding factor in governing process and consequently in the quality of life. Today not only is the effectiveness of economy processes determined by mechanism and rules but first and foremost by institutional frames within which economic activity is run (institutional approach). The building process of the institutions mentioned above requires great conceptual, organizational and financial effort. Their essence is creating specific coalition and alliance of public, private and social entities, which express an interest in undertaking the cooperation in aid of common developmental enterprise¹. The research of processes which shape those institutions and mechanisms is an important field of economic analysis.

The subject of this paper is the attempt to identify the methods and tools of business enterprise support offered within the framework of high-tech accelerator. High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź adopts such form as the leading institution operating in Poland. The way it is organised, how it works and the system of management within its structure should be the subject of scientific interest, because the conclusions may be remarkably useful as far as practical solutions and technological policy (in the countries which decide to rebuild their economy and which enter the path of dynamic economical development) is concerned. The aim of this paper is to outline the place and the role of such innovative units in creating enterprise support process. The basis for factual material was the questionnaire addressed to the management of Accelerator. The attention was also drawn to important thread of academic enterprise development in Poland.

2. Scientific and research image of analysed unit

High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź (AT UŁ²) was established in 2003 and its actions are concentrated on the support process of all undertakings within high-tech sector. To achieve this, a modern consultancy system, knowledge database and assistance in gaining capital was elaborated. The spatial range of actions of the

¹ The formula of action which is described as joint management and partnership in network structure of various units (stakeholders) is defined as public governance, good governance and networked governance. This is an alternative model of action towards new public management against traditional model known as administrative management.

² The profile of examined unit was presented on the basis of internet source <http://www.at.uni.lodz.pl>

unit includes the whole country but the special emphasis is put on undertakings which benefit the Łódź region.

The institution of accelerator and incubator is generally perceived as an effective and efficient way of supporting high-tech sector. The undisputed leader as far as putting this economic instrument into practice is concerned is United States, where currently 800 similar units exist. One of them is Austin Texas Incubator (ATI) which is a strategic partner of high-tech accelerators in Łódź and Warsaw. ATI is operating within the framework of IC2 Institute³, which was established at the University of Texas at Austin. The institute bases its activity on clear vision whose main point concentrates on searching for constructive forms of modern market economy, which in consequence lead to sustainable development and high standard of living for societies and nations. The Institute is an international and interdisciplinary centre of “thought and work”. As a research unit within Texas University structures it concentrates on the broadening developing and popularising the knowledge and what is more putting it into economic practise.

From the beginning of its activity High-Tech Accelerator in Łódź is realising a number of important tasks which are aiming at stimulating the development of high-tech sector. Its activity can be characterised as follows:

- reaching innovative ideas, undertakings within high-tech sector;
- assessment and transfer processes of technology including winning innovative ideas from abroad;
- assistance in developing innovative technological enterprises;
- building of international undertakings;
- Incubation process of new innovative companies by building individual development programmes within stationary incubator and within virtual incubator.

Together with high-tech Accelerator University of Łódź leads another programme- Innovation Centre of University of Łódź. This unit was created to secure better coordination of activities concerning innovative ideas within scientific, business environment and public and international sphere. Innovation Centre of University of Łódź offers among others: postgraduate College of Science and Technology Commercialization (licence of IC2 Institute), variety of workshops, and a chain of established contacts with accelerators and academic environment in Poland, panels, researches and seminars concerning new technologies and innovative undertakings.

³ Abbreviation for innovation, creativity, capital

The High-Tech Accelerator of the University of Łódź in its activities concentrates on enterprises within high-tech sector, whose main participants (architects) represent:

- individual investors (scientists and entrepreneurs),
- centres and research-development institutes, academic environment,
- new companies *start-up*, *spin-off*,
- companies which develop and modernise their technologies, products and services,
- companies searching for new technologies and innovations.

AT UŁ supports companies within high-tech in many of its fields. Among others the main trades are: computer science, telecommunications, chemistry, biology, biochemistry, biomedicine, food production and conversion, pharmacy, nanotechnology, electronics, optoelectronics, environmental protection (also ecological ways of gaining energy), new materials (material engineering), transport, fuels, robotics, and also all undertakings incorporating these fields. Such wide range of activities requires working out specific methods and tools of support which are essential for satisfying the needs of accelerator's clients.

The positive influence on development of effective forms of supporting innovative enterprises was exerted undoubtedly by the American-Polish Offset Agreement which was signed on the 24th of July 2003 between University of Łódź and State University of Texas at Austin. It covers the realisation of specific support undertakings (within high-tech sector in Poland) by University of Łódź. In return during three years Polish unit will receive essential support in form of programmes, chain of contacts and financial support (financing various programmes by Lockheed Martin Company) from strategic partner – Texas University and IC2 Institute.

The incubation process of all undertakings and support for technology and projects takes place according to specifically formulated way. The pattern allows isolating three important stages and each of them fulfils different role:

- first stage constitutes the identification and reaching sources where innovative ideas come into existence and then selection process done by competent teams which consist of experts. This stage may also proceed in different way. First there is an identification and selection of companies which develop high technologies (products or services), which at the same time are searching for Polish or international partners or the most advanced solutions essential for its development,
- second stage concentrates on the company setting up process, which is based on promising commercial idea. This process is supported by legal help (e.g. patent protection) which is guaranteed by Incubator. In other case

(when the company already exists) this stage means the qualification process, which is designed to find a proper support programme which assumes for example commercialisation of technology or searching for business partner,

- at fourth stage a company should be transparent and recognizable by potential investors. The company is also assumed to receive both financial and management support. Efforts are also concentrated on finding a proper development formula. At this stage a strong pressure may be exerted on finding business or financial partner for a company, which can assure further development (also product or technology development). This is the last stage of support, which ends three years of company's incubation period (in stationary and virtual incubator).

Each project reported by potential accelerator's client is evaluated according to specific criteria. This process is conducted and coordinated by the unit team and also by panel of experts which represents such fields as management and finance and who know the specific character of high-tech sector⁴. Each project which passed earlier by so called "laboratory phase" and in addition have a good technical and scientific quality stands a chance of realisation.

The procedure of project's acceptance starts with application and registration process. The application forms differ depending on the needs of customer who chooses the most beneficial type of program. The next step is an assessment of project's compatibility (formal assessment). Mainly it concerns the compatibility of application form, the presentation of all required project's descriptions and also all essential signatures. The next step represents the initial assessment of projects. It is advised that applicant puts forward their own business plan, but this is not a *sine quo non* condition. This document can be attached within three months and when there is a need the accelerator offers its assistance. When all the mentioned stages proceed successfully, the project can become an object of expert's assessment. It is conducted on the basis of special templates designed by AT UŁ and it must be justified in writing. Making the assessment, the experts, first of all takes into consideration the project's level of innovativeness and its likelihood to achieve success on the market. The whole procedure is closed with final project assessment made by Accelerator's board. It is an advisory body which consists of scientific environment representatives (currently representatives of University of Łódź, Medical University of Łódź and Technical University of Łódź), high class of experts dealing with high-tech

⁴ According to AT UŁ standards the project is defined as a economic undertaking which result as a innovative product or technology

sectors, director of AT UŁ and representatives of business institutions and organisations. High-Tech Accelerator during the assessment and acceptance process follow confidential rule concerning all the sent files. This process depends mainly on applicant's preparation level, but generally it lasts no longer than eight weeks.

The forms of company's support (clients of the unit) concern mainly business support, research and development activity, access to global network of knowledge, and to the offices and organisational support. In Accelerator's offer there is also a very important form of support, which is capital support⁵. This kind of service can be provided thanks to a unit's cooperation with capital institutions all around the world. In this way financing within venture capital, bank's loans or within private capital becomes reality. Business support within AT UŁ means (among others) such services as: strategic planning, assessment of possibilities for technology commercialisation, sectoral (market) analyses of companies and formulation of plans for various undertakings (business plans). The research and scientific activity include mainly cooperation with scientists and students, which in consequence allows benefiting from the latest technological and scientific achievements. It also allows assessing reliably the chances of putting a given product into market practice.

The access to a global network of knowledge constitutes a very important element of services which are provided by AT UŁ. The cooperation of this unit with international chain of companies within high-tech sector, government agencies and with scientific and academic centres facilitates the actions of Polish companies which benefit from experience of foreign firms. Access to office infrastructure and organisational support complements the services, which are provided by AT UŁ. The clients of the unit can rent a modern, furnished and equipped with computer facilities. By standard there is also a telephone with complimentary voice mail and access to high standard Internet services. Within the rent fee AT offers the access to media such as air conditioning, heating or electricity. An Undoubted asset is the fact that AT UŁ makes conference rooms (with audio/video equipment) available to its customers. In this way it is possible to organise teleconference or multimedia presentations. The whole offer is complete sum up with organisational and technical facilities, reception and possibility to use office equipment such as: xerox, printer, scanner and fax.

It is possible to make a certain services systematization according to Incubator's division into stationary and virtual unit. Within the first one client can obtain support in form of consultations, seminars, development programmes

⁵ In author's opinion the support concerns mainly the financial matters, while help concentrates more on conceptual and organizational issues

or they can use Accelerator's office spaces. Virtual Incubator is designed for firms which already have their headquarters and offices but at the same time need substantial support without necessity to remain in structure of stationary Incubator. For demanding clients who have specific needs AT UŁ prepared support programmes which include realisation of a specific project. It means for example obtaining a certain technology or finding the concrete financial source. Within the Accelerator there are several programmes which are the function of evolving needs of clients. One of them, Individual Support Programme-Incubator, represents actions which facilitate new high-tech companies to enter competitive market. This programme covers among others: support in commencing economic activity through adjusting the proper legal and organisational form, defining company's main development goal, substantial support in company's management process and searching for sources of finance (also consultancy and intervention in this field).

Another example is Technology and Projects Commercialisation Programme. This is a Polish-American initiative whose priority objective is to support commercialisation of Polish innovative solutions. It is addressed to individual investors, teams, scientific and knowledge centres and to innovative companies which look for support in development and commercialisation process of technology, high-tech products or services.

The Partners-Matching Programme represents a perfect possibility to establish relations and develop business contacts by Polish firms with American companies. It also considers the transfer process of new solutions from USA. The programme creates many areas of cooperation. These are: technology and knowledge transfer, distribution and marketing, joint venture, new technology development cooperation process, products and services development, shared creation of product's brand, collective activation of production process, common conduction of research projects and sharing know-how as a support for products and services as well as standardisation of products for foreign markets. The areas mentioned above considers the process of establishing and developing relations with foreign companies but The Partner-Matching Programme enables also to find foreign (especially from USA) technologies, products and solutions which are very valuable for Polish entrepreneurs. Its other function is to support sale and promotion processes of Polish high-tech solutions on American and other foreign markets and also the transfer of these technologies.

Another interesting programme which is run by AT UŁ is Accelerated Assessment and Commercialisation Programme which is the initiative of University of Texas. The base of all activities within this project is a quick assessment of new technology from the real innovativeness and commercialisation possibilities point of view. In Poland the technology

assessment process (which was slightly modified in relation to the analogous one in USA) brings many benefits for potential entrepreneurs by giving them many valuable conclusions and suggestions by experts from IC2 Institute. These are given mostly in form of written report. It allows to verify the correctness of adopted business model and also to assess properly the innovativeness of technology. It is especially important to potential entrepreneurs because the results of the mentioned report will be introduced to a potential partners and foreign investors. This can be a decisive factor as far as a success of the project is concerned.

High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź despite having a rich support offer addressed to entrepreneurs did not stop in efforts to build even more effective instruments which help to create innovative and entrepreneurial attitudes in academic environment. BioBoot workshops can be shown as an example of such activities. This event took place in Łódź between 26 and was 28 of March and were organised by AT UŁ in collaboration with French company Eurobiobiz. The main aim of this workshop was to help young scientists to prepare correct business plan which was created to find financial sources for projects and companies from “life science” biological sector. This programme perfectly combines the knowledge with broadly understood business by showing how to commercialise researches or how to set up a company within this sector. Another example of effective initiative in promotion of entrepreneurial attitudes within academic environment is international competition for the best web 2.0 applications, also organised by AT UŁ with cooperation with University of Texas at Austin and New Europe Ventures Inc. fund.

The summary of all services provided by High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź is presented in Table 1. Yet, it should be emphasized that this extended offer evolves and develops all the time.

Table 1 Services provided by High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź

Consultancy, information, courses, trainings	Technical and service infrastructure	Financial support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enterprise, setting up the company • business plan formulation • technology, patent • corporate mediation • finance, taxes • accountancy • law • market analysis and marketing • computer science • human resources management • access to European grants and funds • international trade and cooperation • implementation of new products and services • business management • quality management • other forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reception, secretarial office service • telephone exchange • xerox, fax • workshops and laboratories • access to databases • seminar office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service of vouching and loan funds • credits and credit mediation • cooperation with business angels • subsidies, grants • venture capital

Source: Author's own compilation on the basis of: Ośrodki innowacji w Polsce. P. Głodek, PARP, Poznań/Warszwa 2005.

3. The results of empirical researches

When analysing the activity of High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź, it should be taken into consideration that the unit does not function as general-business accelerator but as a technological and innovative undertakings incubator. This implicates a certain specificity of innovation and technology assessment and a certain approach to the problem of knowledge and technology commercialisation (including intellectual property protection). At the same time AT UŁ in its activity created a clear specialisation, which includes consultancy and training

activity and also partner-matching. It all concerns innovative and technological undertakings which base on American know-how. A special role in knowledge transfer can be attributed to University of Texas at Austin which operates within IC2 Institute and to ATI (Austin Technology Incubator).

The participants (customers) of the incubator in 60% come from academic environment. It is represented mainly by students and graduates University of Łódź: Faculty of Economics and Sociology (econometrics, computer Science), Faculty of Management and Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science (Technical University of Łódź). Graduates of Faculty of Management (University of Łódź) and Faculty Philological Faculty (Polish Studies) also benefit from AT UŁ services. Academic environment outside University is represented by Electrical Faculty at one of Technical Universities in Poland (research worker with PhD degree) and also by research worker of one of Medical University in Poland.

The quantity of projects, which concern the stage which proceeding the company's setting up or the early stage of its existence (which were reported by authors with request of support) is 75. After analysis and substantial assessment (including technology assessment, author's involvement in project assessment and market analysis) projects were sent to Board of Accelerator. It is worth emphasizing that positive assessment and possibility to participate in second stage of assessment process received only 25 projects. The Board accepted 21 of them, but the decision to sign incubation contract was made by 15 persons/teams. The choice and professional assessment of the best projects is possible thanks to comprehensive and detailed analysis made by experts of scientific, business world and also thanks to the experience of Accelerator's employees. The Table 2 presents individual participation of companies that function within structure of Incubator (within a specific high-tech sector):

Table 2 Companies operating within High-Tech Accelerator of the University of Łódź

Sector	Number of companies
1.Computer Science, Telecommunications, E-learning, M-learning, Multimedia	9
2.Medical Technologies, Medical Devices, Pharmaceutical Devices	2
3.Material Engineering	1
4.Nanotechnology in Electronics and Health Care	1
5.Architecture, Building, Power Industry	1
6.Environment Protection, Recycling	1

Source: Own compilation.

Large number of telecommunications companies operating within Accelerator can be explained by a recent, dynamic development of this sector in Poland. It is visible not only in huge infrastructural investments but also in growing number of telecommunication companies' clients. In Poland we can observe a growing popularity of alternative forms of education which use modern equipment and computer technologies (Internet) such as laptops, palmtops or smart phones.

The development of innovative undertakings within the Accelerator adopts various organisational and legal forms. At preoccupation stage, six projects are developed by teams, and three of them operate in the phase which precedes company setting up. Single business activity is also very popular form, but it concerns later stages of incubation process. Five companies are developed in this way. Three of them operate on the basis of limited company form and only one project is developed on the basis of unlimited company. The popularity of single business activity is probably connected with the fact that this is the simplest organisational form which can be chosen by entrepreneur in order to arise on competitive market economy. This form does not require huge financial expenditures (which are very important at the beginning of business activity) and administrative and legal procedure which is connected with company setting up is relatively easy. Single business activity is chosen by people which are owners of the company but at the same time performer and provider of his own services or goods.

Companies which operate within High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź were able to benefit effectively from incubation period and operate successfully within difficult conditions of market economy. Eight companies sell already its products and services and three of them export its goods on foreign markets. Five firms have prototype of devices which go through complicated phase of tests and market research process. Two teams are at closing stage of their products or services. Companies which sell their products or services within AT UŁ unit have very good financial results. A company from telecommunication sector reached average annual turnover of 100 000 zloty (registration took place in September 2005). What is more, the same company managed the project worth of 1 000 000 zloty which was addressed to the City Hall of Lodz. Another company from the same sector, whose team worked on its product for one year (firm started its activity in May 2006) reached at the end of 2006 turnover of 150 000 zloty. Another example which illustrates a good financial condition of companies within Incubator is a firm dealing with medical equipment. In the second year of its activity (the team worked on technology for 5 years) the company reached the turnover of

150 000 zloty. The technology is systematically improving and the unit creates new groups of products with success.

The companies operating within AT UŁ structures employ from two to fifteen people. On average the team counts around four or six employees. Yet, in order to help firms to enlarge their human resources, Accelerator had employed also around sixty trainees. Within Incubator they run certain projects such as: market research, computer system, or computer system-marketing projects, which later are used by entrepreneurs in later economic activity. Trainees come mainly from: faculty of Management, Faculty of Economics and Sociology, Philological Faculty. AT UŁ cooperates also with students organisations such as: Strategic Management, Marketing or Computer science.

The owners of incubated companies have (in majority) business plans or development plan. It is important that such document came into beginning thanks to trainings and advisory programmes which were offered to the companies (within AT UŁ). Entrepreneurs during the formulation of business plan used benefited also from individual advisory of managers within Incubator and also mentors invited by the unit. Properly constructed document contributed positively to finance possibilities at the early stages of company existence. At this field successful were (among others):

- two companies which have signed the contract of cooperation with foreign companies from USA and Canada;
- two companies which have found trade investors (investitions estimated at few dozen thousands of zloty), which contributed afterwards to increased employment, helped in finishing the work on product and finally enabled to finish work on full-scaled marketing activities;
- four companies obtained subsidies on building and development of the company;
 - two companies within programme for university graduates “My first business”-11 500 zloty
 - one company which have one the first award of 6 000 dollars in competition “From idea to innovative company”, organised by AT UŁ.

After gaining “financial injection”, at the initial stage of activity (including also the development of products) majority of companies developed itself on the basis of own funds but in the same time encountered huge financial barrier, which in consequence resulted in (after previous preparing of commercialisation plan) making investment offer to 2 investment funds (Seed Capital/Venture Capital type) by 7 companies of AT UŁ in November 2006. The required size of investitions totalled from 200 000 to 4 000 000 zloty:

- one company gained considerable sponsoring for its project;

- four companies were promised an investments within AT UŁ. These companies represent such sectors:
 - computer science and telecommunication-600 000 zloty,
 - medical equipment-2 800 000 zloty,
 - material Engineering-3 800 000 zloty,
 - nanotechnology-2 000 000 zloty.

AT UŁ helped in preparation of implementation plan, business plan, and presentation for potential investor and in strategy preparation. Different forms of support of incubated companies were among others: training, consultancy (individual or for groups of firms if there were common issues) and work on documents and presentations.

The companies which enter AT UŁ structure expect from the unit first of all the information about possibilities of gaining financial support. The High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator helps to find such information by presenting to a companies not only propositions concerning funds coming from job centres, UE funds, but also by preparing firms for gaining capital from commercial sources, represented by Seed Capital, Venture Capital or business angels. Unfortunately, companies which are AT UŁ clients very often overestimate such advantages like infrastructure and do not realise how important and valuable is consultancy according to company development strategy building and creating commercialisation plans. For company's good address (headquarters), computer or office equipment are the most important things, at the early stage of its activity. This is of course fully understandable- using these devices within AT UŁ for free- is a big advantage. The access to seminar rooms, meeting rooms or good equipped offices helps the companies to create and improve image. Trainings offered by AT UŁ are perceived as important but not all companies can benefit from them.

Analysing the examples of projects and technological undertakings which benefit from AT UŁ services, it is visible that majority of them benefit from help within investments gaining. One of Polish companies from Katowice started the cooperation with USA partner. Another company gained the possibility to enter foreign markets including strategic American and Mexican markets. Thanks to cooperation with Accelerator, another start-up company producing devices for laptops, computers, smart phones, palmtops and medical devices, gained considerable investments and help in building commercialisation plan. Similar support was given to 2 polish start-up companies. The examined Accelerator obtains very good support results for companies which operate within its structure. These results include:

- working out business plans and commercialisation plans;

- increasing human resources through cooperation with trainees and students organisations;
- assessment of market potential
- establish business relations both in Poland and in foreign countries, partners matching and gaining experts and consultants;
- preparing investments plans and contacts with investment funds (seed capital and venture capital);
- access to infrastructure and beneficial offer concerning renting fully equipped offices;
- knowledge gaining in the field of intellectual property issue through training and consultancy;
- knowledge gaining in the field of possible forms of financing.

It is worth to emphasize that the cooperation with High-Tech Accelerator benefit also the whole academic environment in Łódź. The example of such situation is a company whose managing director comes from Technical University of Łódź environment. The company specializes itself in solutions concerning the usage of nanotechnology for microelectronics and health care. When joining the AT UŁ unit it benefit from a certain, special measurement-research devices. AT UŁ not only gained the needed equipment but also assured specialists within University of Łódź whose abilities allowed conducting a research. It resulted in successful researches within company but also it allowed promoting three master theses (and one PhD thesis). What is more two more are on their way. What is more the cooperation with AT UŁ can result in nanotechnology specialization for students of University of Łódź (Physics Faculty), further research at this faculty and in consequence cooperation by research on new products of this company.

In its activity AT UŁ indicates on few important obstacles, which obstruct the cooperation with science environment in Poland. First of all the University did not work out motivational system for researchers who have the opportunity to commercialize their ideas through setting up companies. The reason for this kind of situation can be not transparent system of division of benefits between researchers and university unit. Another important issue is mental barriers and in consequence distaste and embarrassment when discussing the possibility of setting up company managed by researcher or with his participation. This problem is a consequence of improper understanding of role of academic innovativeness development and Incubator activity as an institution which has a huge influence on promotion process of University (for example within potential student's environment).

The important problem is also the so called “administrative approach” of University to institution of incubator and as a consequence desire to earn on this unit “here and now”. It is incomprehensible, especially when we consider a specify of incubator’s activity which aims at supporting the process of setting up a company and its incubation for some time. Though, it can not be expected that that a company which needs huge capital investments, at the early stage will pay for: high rent (even if we compare it to market prices), which are imposed by university.

Another obstacle is a lack of system (or its failure) of decision making as far as intellectual property is concerned and the choice of commercialization way, which would be effective from author’s and university’s point of view. It considers a system of decision making, assessment or the way the consensus in this field is working out. The attention should also be drawn on small state funds on development and support of enterprise (including academic innovativeness and enterprise).

4. Summary and conclusions

High-Tech Accelerator & Incubator and Innovation Centre of the University of Łódź is one of the best operating units in Poland. The range and quality of services should be appreciated. It is shown in information charter of Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, which shows that AT UŁ offers a wide range of services for potential customers. The key role in system of employment plays American partner (Austin University) which allows a know-how transfer, exchange of information and funds which are at his disposal.

Unfortunately, university workers are in minority as far as AT UŁ offer is concerned. It is typical for situation in Poland and shows that academic enterprise is not fully recognised in this country. It should be remembered that this type of enterprise includes the activity of whole academic environment (doctoral student, academic personnel, and administration personnel) and should not be limited to activity of students or university graduates.

It is hard to explain concrete reasons for “half-development” of academic enterprise. The situation is impeded by a lack of law regulations in this field, but the situation has improved little thanks to act which regulates university education (for example the matter of academic incubators activity as a tools of support and promotion of enterprise idea at universities).

Another negative tendency which obstructs the development of this special kind of enterprise is a lack of acceptance and so called “climate” for

promoting enterprising attitudes among academic environment. Very often a person with enterprising characteristics is not perceived among co-workers and prosaic reason for that is envy connected with someone's success in business field.

The attempts to gain funds for researches cause mixed feelings among academic environment. This attempts in order to be successful demands from academic employees *stricte* enterprising attitudes and activities. In situation where funds for knowledge and researches are decreasing and the competition between research teams is growing, the secure of rational management of funds for research must be supported by active and enterprising philosophy of action among academic environment (Matusiak 2004, p. 410).

It has to be emphasised that the University of 21 century facing the new civilisation challenges will operate on the basis of market rules, so it will develop and preserve enterprising and innovative attitudes. It is essential not only for gaining funds for its functions but also to become attractive for students, which can be compared to clients who require more and more from this institution.

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