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Involvement of SMEs in technology-based innovation clusters in Europe – Wielkopolska Automotive Cluster

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„Eco-cars” it is a company that recycles vehicles in Poznan, coordinates vehicle`s recycling network in Poland, sells second-hand car parts, picks up, transports and neutralises industrial and post-industrial wastes and also dismantles, transports and neutralises asbestos.

„Eco-cars”, which front-line management is well oriented in the subject of clusters, in 2009 actively engaged in realisation of project: „Development of international co-operation between automotive cluster of Wielkopolska province and RheinMainNeckar automotive cluster for Polish and German enterprises` advantages”. The project was financed from the national budget by Polish Agency for Enterprise Development within the framework of „Innovation Express” (6 Framework Programme) and implemented from March to November 2009.

Actions that were carried out within the framework of the project in which „Eco-cars” representatives took part included:

1. Short meetings in German enterprises (March, April)

(+) travel cost financed from the project budget

(+) good opportunities for establishing interesting business connections (450 companies in German cluster)

(-) necessity of delegating an employee for a couple of days

2. International business meetings (March, September)

(+) travel cost financed from the project budget

(+) starting co-operation among enterprises from automotive cluster of Wielkopolska province
(+) good opportunities for establishing interesting business connections (450 companies in German cluster)

(-) necessity of delegating an employee for a couple of days

(-) unsuccessful searching for German business partner

3. Trips to foreign automotive fairs (May, September)

(+) travel cost financed from the project budget

(+) great opportunity for tightening of business contacts and for building confidence inside the cluster

(-) necessity of delegating an employee for a couple of days

(-) unsuccessful searching for business partner with regard to trade fairs` profile

4. Workshops for entrepreneurs concerning management of clients relations (June)

(+) workshop cost financed from the project budget

(+) knowledgeable and experienced German lecturers

(-) necessity of delegating an employee for the whole working day



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5. Dissemination of information and cluster's promotion (March - November)

(+) advertising materials' cost financed from the project budget

(+) possibility to use the folder to promote the company

(-) lack of results of promotion and trade fairs' meetings

6. Conferences popularizing co-operation between clusters (May, October)

(+) speaker's knowledge and experience

(-) necessity of delegating an employee for the whole working day

(-) low cluster's influence on enterprises from automotive branch- lack of new members

7. Preparation of common research and development projects and training projects (March - November)

(+) introductory audit in a scope of enterprise's innovativeness and possibilities of technology transfer

(-) cluster's support only in the form of consulting

(-) difficulty in defining common benefits for different enterprises in cluster.

This presentation is a summary of automotive cluster's membership effects and project's implementation in a scope of innovativeness from a perspective of an enterprise that monitors business activity of automotive cluster of Wielkopolska province from the moment its set up.

Biographical information

Kamil Kulesza – graduate of the Poznan School of Logistics and University of Economics in Poznan; shareholder of ECO – cars Ltd. since 2003; awarded as a Highest Quality Manager 2006 by the Wielkopolskie Quality Research Association and the Wielkopolska Business Magazine; granted a certificate for the Highest Quality in Environment Protection; for the last two years he has been a coordinator of the car recycling network in Poland.