

ECOPLUS - Technopol Program Wiener Neustadt Center for Modern Industrial Technologies

Technopol Wiener Neustadt, with focus on “Modern Industrial Technologies”, represents an innovative approach to support regional development in the frame of the Lower Austria’s Technopol Program.

With the objective of bridging the gap between higher education, industry and research and development (R&D) the so called “Technopol-program” of Lower Austria was founded in 2004. In order to enable a coordinated technology-oriented regional development for each of the three Technopol locations at lower Austria, one local expert per Technopol was hired. The duty of the Technopol manager was to act as a hub between the stakeholders.

The Technopol location Wiener Neustadt focuses on five technology fields such as a) materials, b) surfaces, c) medical technology, d) processes and e) sensors-actors, which are summarized as “Modern Industrial Technologies”. In each of these areas at least three independent facilities with overall staff of at least 30 scientists ensure the necessary critical mass.

The aim of the Technopol manager is to double the amount of scientists from 300 to 600 at the Technopol till 2013 and to build a strong network between the thematic-linked companies, higher education and R&D facilities.

<http://www.ecoplus.at/>

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- This case of the Technopol-Program (founded in 2004) is a successful paradigm (an innovative approach) for the productive “connection” of the areas of research, academia, and high-tech industry to support regional development (through innovation) in the frame of the Lower Austria’s Technopol Program;
- Broad area of activity in 5 technological segments of development: Materials; sensors-actors; surfaces; medical-technology; processes and engineering;
- The regional industry gets continuously information about the R&D offer and funding possibilities for R&D projects. Also, it Industry gets support during identification problems, elaboration project proposals, to find the proper partner;
- R&D team is established by a lot of participants from academy institutions, R&D structures and Industry;
- New, additional, jobs are created (till now 315 employees);
- Proper financial mechanism: The Technopol-Program is partly financed by the province of Lower Austria and the European Union – ERDF. R&D facilities finance themselves by different funding schemes.

Weakness:

- The R&D facilities depend on time-limited funding schemes which last for 3 to 10 Years, depending on the individual funding program, the R&D Offer and the thematic fields of specialization are in a continuous modification. Also the R&D Know-how and the service offer changes every Year. On the other side, also the requirements from industry have changed e.g. due to the financial crisis.
- The estimation of the potential benefits is not mentioned.
- The evaluation criterion of the program benefits is unclear and difficult to be metered.
- These facts require a permanent Technopol-Management on site, to keep all involved parties permanently up-to-date and to support all in every phase of development.

Opportunities:

- The project is in accordance with the Strategy of EU, the country Austria as well as with the strategy of the province of Lower Austria;
- The players at the TP Wiener Neustadt engage actively in the fields of technological progress, while the Country of Lower Austria supports these efforts in a very efficient way through funding, consultancy and support services;
- The extension of the program to other countries is possible;
- The Technopol-Program was developed on basis of a detailed analysis of the region, the innovation support system, funding programs and individually set up per Technopol location. Basically, the idea of establishing a Technopol-Program and – Management is transferable to comparable provinces if infrastructure, funding, and will are given.

Threats:

- There is not given information about vision of how the Technopol will operate in conditions of prolonged financial crisis.
- The partner competition diminishes the openness for cooperation.
- The changing of partner requirements and expectations is difficult to be monitored continuously.