



PRO INNO EUROPE

**INNO
LEARNING PLATFORM**

**Good practice Identification –
Advice for transferability
Innovation Awareness
Polish Product of the Future**

February 2008



**PRO INNO
EUROPE**

Table of Contents

- CHAPTER I: Good practice identification..... 2**
- 1 General description of the good practice..... 2**
- 2 Please describe the selected good practice in terms of: 2**
 - 2.1 Uniqueness: 2
 - 2.2 Relevance: 3
 - 2.3 Effectiveness:..... 4
 - 2.4 User satisfaction: 4
 - 2.5 Recognition:..... 5
 - 2.6 Context dependency: 6
 - 2.7 Replication:..... 7
- 3 Additional information sources..... 7**

- CHAPTER II: Advice for transferability..... 9**
- 4 Introduction to the proposed action..... 9**
 - 4.1 What are the main actions to be promoted to meet the objective? 9
 - 4.2 What is the problem for which the cited measure is trying to provide an answer?..... 9
 - 4.3 What is the general status of the recognition in the market of the necessity to invest in the proposed policy theme? 9
 - 4.4 How is the main policy theme communicated in the market/which guidance material is already available?..... 10
 - 4.5 What is the expected outcome of the proposed actions?..... 10
- 5 The innovation policy measure and its context 10**
 - 5.1 National and regional governance: please provide a description of the modalities of implementation of the proposed actions. Examples of elements to be taken into account are the role of the institute, the nature and characteristics of that institute that are important for a successful implementation of the good practice. 10
 - 5.2 National and regional economic structure of the region where the practice has been developed. We are looking for the main factors for success for implementing the suggested measure. 11
 - 5.3 The policy measure itself: what was it all about? Who were the actors involved, what actions have been undertaken and which result and impact has been achieved? 11
- 6 The adaptability and transferability of the proposal 12**
 - 6.1 Why is it worthwhile to invest in the proposed action/tool? Did the feasibility study and good practice identification demonstrate substantial added value?..... 12
 - 6.2 If there is to be decided to invest in the proposed action/tool, what are the main factors to pay specific attention to?..... 12
 - 6.3 What is the expected impact of implementing the proposed action/tool?..... 13
 - 6.4 Based on the insights gained in the feasibility studies and good practice identification, what is the judgement/advice on the support that already has been created by stakeholders? 13
 - 6.5 What is the advice on how to disseminate the action/tool?..... 13

CHAPTER I: Good practice identification

1 General description of the good practice

The “**Polish Product of the Future**” Competition, held under the patronage of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland is organised on an annual basis. The first edition of the competition took place in 1997. Since 2002, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PAED) has taken up the role of the competition’s organiser.

The objective of the Competition is promoting and disseminating the achievements of originators of innovative techniques and technologies, which have a chance to become popular on the Polish market. Indirectly, the aim is also - on the one hand to promote the pro-innovative attitude of people/companies as well as the R&D units that are creators of the innovative ideas - and on the other hand to encourage people to be innovative.

The competition is carried out in two categories: “Product of the Future” and “Technology of the Future”, whereas natural and legal persons from the European Union can participate. An award and distinctions are granted in each Competition category. The award and distinctions are granted in both categories for the proposal of a new, innovative product which is brought to the stage of implementation work. In particular submitted projects are evaluated according to competitiveness, environmental friendliness and energy-saving. They are also assessed according to their advanced stage, preparation for production and technical parameters compared with world equivalents.

In the ten-year history of the Competition, several hundreds of innovative products and technologies in various technical fields have been submitted. The projects come from research and development units, production plants and private persons. The majority of awarded projects achieved economic success. Final products created on the basis of the submitted applications became popular on the Polish market, whereas some of them became export products. During this period the Jury of the Competition, basing on the opinions of independent experts evaluating the applications, has awarded 20 projects and granted 40 distinctions.

2 Please describe the selected good practice¹ in terms of:

2.1 Uniqueness:

Measure Name:	The Polish Product of the Future Competition		
General description/rationale:			
The competition has been held annually since 1997. It mainly aims at promoting and disseminating attainments of the inventors of innovative techniques and technologies. In the ten-year history of the Competition, several hundreds of innovative products and technologies in various technical fields have been submitted – 60 of them were awarded (distinctions). The awards and distinctions are granted in two categories for the proposal of a new, innovative product which is brought to the stage of implementation work.			
Innovative characteristics as regards:			
Methodology	Organization	Function	Results
The Competition is organised under the honorary patronage of the Prime Minister and is	Since 2002, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PAED)	What characterizes this competition is that the innovative	Over the ten-year long history of the competition

¹A technique or methodology that has proven to reliably lead to the result that has been aimed for; An activity or procedure that has produced outstanding results in another situation and could be adapted to improve effectiveness, efficiency, ecology, and/or innovativeness in another situation.

<p>open to natural and legal persons, e.g. research institutions, scientific institutes, enterprises, testing laboratories, individuals, etc. from the EU Member States. To participate in the competition, the entity is required to submit a project presenting a new innovative product or technology (software development projects may also be submitted provided that the software is used to control engineering processes). The President of the PAED appoints the jury of the competition. Submitted projects are evaluated by external experts in a two-stage procedure according to competitiveness, environmental friendliness and energy-saving. They are also assessed according to their advanced stage, preparation for production and technical parameters compared with world equivalents.</p> <p>The winners of the „Polish Product of the Future” award receive a statuette, a diploma and the possibility of using the seal and the logo of the “Polish Product of the Future”, in addition to the assistance for the promotion of the product for three years.</p>	<p>has taken up the role of the competition organiser. The competition is organised on an annual basis. The competition is launched at the beginning of each year. Deadline for application submission is usually in July. In the meantime the competition gets promoted nation and Europe wide. PAED is also responsible for the project evaluation process.</p> <p>The winners are announced during an annual award gala. Then the activities concerning promotion of awarded projects and authors are carried out (publications, multi-language catalogues, folders, CD, multimedia presentations, films, press, media, conferences, fair shows, exhibitions etc.) Movers (those who have to travel to participate) do not pay any fees.</p>	<p>products are brought at a very advanced stage of development and industrial implementation.</p> <p>The competition helps the creators to promote their work, to find potential investors and to establish business contacts. In case of individual creators they have a great opportunity to present their innovative solutions.</p> <p>The promotion of the awarded products makes citizens and the business community more aware of where innovative solutions come from.</p>	<p>(currently the 11th edition is launched) more than 400 projects were submitted and 60 awarded (2006). The majority of the awarded projects achieved economic success. Final products, which have been created on the basis of the submitted applications, became popular on the national polish market, whereas some of them became export products. Hundreds of awarded creators have been promoted.</p>
--	---	--	--

2.2 Relevance:

Problem	Solution that was provided
Negative opinion about innovation and innovation’s creators	Development of a positive image of innovation in Poland by showing success stories
Lack of information about achievements in the area of innovation	Promotion activities as a result of competition
Weak cooperation among creators and industry, as well as potential investors	Promotion activities help to match these different actors
Lack of competition dedicated to the projects at their stage of pre-industrialisation.	Launching competition in this field.

Creators very often are not well prepared for the promotion of their innovative products.	Promotion of products and their creators.
Creators stay unknown.	Promotion of products and their creators.

2.3 Effectiveness:

To be a winner of the “Polish Product of the Future” is prestigious. Juries in many competitions appreciate and confirm the high quality of the awarded products from this competition. There have been ten editions of this competition (11th is ongoing) so far. Over 400 innovative solutions were considered, and 60 were awarded. Hundreds of creators and their projects have been promoted. The awarded projects chosen by the competition jury have in some cases also become economically successful, and some of them have become export products.

Overall, the initiative has the following impact and effect:

- The participants are motivated to innovate.
- The government of Poland has the possibility to have a snapshot about the creativity and innovation capacity of the country.
- The entire country and Europe benefits of it, since the initiative is increasing the innovative trend of the scientific and entrepreneurial world, boosting economy and raising society’s awareness.

2.4 User satisfaction:

User group	Primary target group (yes/no)	Feedback provided	Explanation for feedback
Creators (natural or legal persons) of innovative products	Yes	Interest about the competition; some of them are submitting applications in following editions.	Participation in the competition is free of charge. Promotion activities delivered by PAED seem to be of great interest. The competition is perceived as prestigious. Independent experts evaluate the projects.
Winners	Yes	In accordance with the information received from the authors of the projects, their market successes are partly the merit of the promotional activities performed by PAED. They are satisfied with the promotion of the results and they also send many official letters of appreciation.	Especially small companies or R&D units have not enough money for the promotion activities of their innovative products and the fact that public administration is interested in their work can have an important effect. Awards increases creators’ self-confidence. In case the creators can prove that their projects have already been awarded with some grants this may get them extra points during the evaluation procedure.
Policy makers at central and regional level	No	They are provided with information about innovative products and successful creators.	Some programmes are dedicated to the high innovative companies. Awarded creators are in some cases also asked for consultation, opinion etc.
PAED – the	No	PAED is appreciated	Good contact with innovative

organizer		in the area of innovation development	creators is used to arrange other activities for innovation support. The competition is only one of many other measures provided by PAED.
Stakeholders of innovative products (investors, business partners, industry etc.)	Yes	They are interested in innovative solutions	Awarded products are not in production yet, they are before their industrial implementation phase – (it is a good moment to find potential investors).
Citizens	No	They are interested in innovative solutions	Especially students and academics are very interested in the competition results. They are motivated to be creative. Some awarded products are very important for citizens ²

2.5 Recognition:

Other institutions responsible for the organisation of diverse contests/competitions have asked PAED to subscribe winners of the Polish Product of the Future in their own competition. The competition is highly appreciated by many national organisations/ institutions and awarded products achieve outstanding successes also in other competitions. For instance, until year 2005, awarded projects in the competition were nominated every year, on behalf of the PAED, for the Economic prize of the President of Republic of Poland.

Since 2004 awarded products have been presented in international showroom events abroad, for example: on The World Exhibition of Innovation, Research and New Technology in Brussels Eureka, as well as on The International Exhibition of Inventions, New Techniques and Products of Geneva. Even there, the presented products gained prizes and honour. Additionally the Departments of Trade and Investment Promotion in Polish embassies all over the world, as well as embassies in Poland, are very interested in awarded products and creators and promotional materials are distributed to them every year.

In 2004, before Poland's access to EU, the European Commission reviewed different national contests, including the Polish Product of the Future competition. The evaluation brought to some changes in the rules and regulations of the competition. Following negotiations with the European Commission, the goal of the Competition was redefined – "to promote and spread the achievements of creators developing innovative products and technologies which stand a chance of succeeding in the Polish market". Moreover, contrary to the previous seven editions of the Competition, "both natural persons and legal entities from EU member states" were allowed to participate.

² For example: 1) VIOFOR JPS System Clinic, the equipment for magnetic field and light energy therapy, is only intended for professional use, even though some elements of the system may be applied in home prophylaxis and treatment. 2) The modern and compact *anti-terrorist neutralizing and assisting* robot EXPERT may be used in emergency situations, including terrorist bomb threats and events involving other dangerous materials. 3) "Kuba mikro AS" is portable device for hearing testing dedicated primarily to hearing screening applications. It allows the audiologist to formulate a comprehensive diagnosis already at a very initial stage, in the conditions of hearing screening.

2.6 Context dependency:

Many attempts were made in the 1990's to promote the Polish technical thought and to encourage industry to implement the latest scientific and technological achievements. Local/national awareness raising actions, in combination with EU initiatives, have increased the market recognition of the necessity to invest in raising awareness on creativity and innovation for more than a decade. The Polish Product of the Future is an example of the national initiatives, while several European initiatives as the e-ten programme and other training and support actions of and about the European Commission Research and Innovation programmes have brought Poland in a European dimension.

The Polish Product of the Future Competition is organized in two categories: Product of the Future and Technology of the Future. The Competition was initiated by the Technology Agency (ATT) created on the basis of an Act of Parliament dated 12 April 1996. In 1997, detailed procedures, regulations and application forms were defined and prepared, and the first project recruitment was announced. The goal of the Competition was to promote and spread knowledge of the achievements of Polish creators and their innovative technologies. The acting Polish Prime Minister became the honorary patron of the Polish Product of the Future Competition.

On 1 April 2002, according to the Act on the amended organisation and functioning of central administrative organs and ancillary units dated 1 March 2002, the Technology Agency was merged with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PAED). Thus, PAED became the organisation responsible for the Polish Product of the Future Competition. But the most important factor was that employees responsible for the competition continued working in the new Agency and therefore could continue working on the competition. Another important factor is that the project budget has been increasing. Promotion activities are very expensive and in line to the competition rules, PAED is responsible for providing such promotion. The competition is so far financed from the state budget.

Finally, the competition is free of charge and it means it is open for everybody.

Budget / Financing authorities:

- Activities concerning the competition organisation: about 50 000 EUR per year (one edition, without operational costs – employees, administration etc.)
- Activities concerning the promotion of awarded products: above 100 000 EUR per year

In both cases the financing authority is the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (governmental agency subordinated to the Minister of Economy), source: state budget.

Specific characteristic /circumstance at hand	Solution that has been offered from within the action/tool	Explanation of the effectiveness of the provided solution
Promotion of the competition	Press advertisement	Every R&D unit, universities, many companies and individual persons have the opportunity to get information about the ongoing competition. The mass media try to explain “innovation” by case studies/ good practices based in occasion of competition launching. The number of applied projects is stable.
	Direct mailing	
	Presentations provided during events (seminars, conferences, fair shows etc)	
	leaflets	
	Cooperation with the mass media	
Promotion of the awarded products	Catalogues, folders, publications	Information about innovative products is spread at national
	Multimedia presentation on CD	

	Website, database	level as well as abroad. Awarded projects earn numerous prizes and honours at home and abroad. Winners have facilitations making business contacts and entering cooperations.
	Film	
	Cooperation with the mass media	
	Cooperation with the Polish Embassies abroad and with the foreign embassies in Poland	
	Solemn gala with distinguished guests, Prime Minister etc.	
	National and international fair shows and exhibitions	

2.7 Replication:

The major quantitative outcomes achieved are the following:

- 10 years since its first edition (1996)
- Over 400 innovative solutions have been presented and evaluated
- 60 solutions awarded.

Qualitatively, there are two principal factors, which are critical to the success of the initiative:

- **Setting the objectives of the competition:** rules and objectives of the competition have to be well defined and clearly set. The objective should describe which level of novelty and innovation is expected from the product and technology participating to the contest and which are the evaluation criteria. The rules of such competition contribute setting innovation standards in the country.
- **Award and recognition:** awards and recognitions are at the base of every competition. It provides motivation to participants and it can be an instrument to disseminate the results by funding their further development or, as it is in the case of the Polish Product of the Future, by supporting directly dissemination activities. Award and recognition mechanisms however can vary drastically from country to country, which can depend from the economy and business environment.

In any case, it may be necessary to introduce different categories for different products and technologies, since it can be very hard or sometimes even impossible, to compare products from different sectors/industries (Health, Automotive, Telecommunication, etc...) and different technologies (Biotech, Nanotech, ICT, Environment, etc...).

This competition can be adapted in countries/ regions where a similar action does not exist. Rules are simple. Scale and type of awards can be changed (or widened), this depends on the project budget and the law (e.g. state aid rules).

It is possible that such a competition organised also on the local/ regional level (e.g. like a first stage of national contest) could give very interesting results and could lead to an increase of the participants (natural persons / individual creators).

At the very first stage of the competition, in line with the Competition Regulations the organizer had to provide winners with assistance in product implementation on the market, e.g. a loan, matching services. All participants, also those who did not win, have a great benefit of participating to the competition, which is that of comparing themselves with the other participants and appraise their own level of innovation with competitors at national and European level.

3 Additional information sources

Name:	Mrs Joanna Podgórska
Organisation:	Polish Agency for Enterprise Development
Position:	Deputy Director
Role experience within the good practice:	General management
Telephone:	+48 22 432 83 11
Email:	joanna_podgorska@parp.gov.pl
Address:	Panska 81/83, 00-834 Warsaw, Poland
Web address:	www.pi.gov.pl

Name:	Mr Wojciech Sadowiec
Organisation:	Polish Agency for Enterprise Development
Position:	Senior Specialist
Role experience within the good practice:	Project Coordinator
Telephone:	+48 22 432 83 12
Email:	wojciech_sadowiec@parp.gov.pl
Address:	Panska 81/83, 00-834 Warsaw, Poland
Web address:	www.pi.gov.pl

CHAPTER II: Advice for transferability

4 Introduction to the proposed action

4.1 What are the main actions to be promoted to meet the objective?

Without education as a core policy, innovation will remain unsupported. It must promote talent and creativity from an early stage. Improving education (particularly to create interest and excitement in science and technology) and high level of training is essential to keep Europe's human capital (researchers, engineers and other employees) up to date with the skills and knowledge necessary for innovation. Thus, the aim is to facilitate exploration of experiences and attitudes towards creativity, promote new constellations of collaboration and enhance innovation within and across education, scientific fields, business sectors, public sectors and virtual communities.

Three complementary approaches are proposed to exploit maximum potential from Europe's innovation potential. In broad outline these approaches are:

- the creation of a European wide electronic portal which will capture and stimulate innovation among the different groups illustrated before;
- the creation of synergies between existing initiatives (awards and contests);
- the promotion of real life events already existing or under development.

4.2 What is the problem for which the cited measure is trying to provide an answer?

In general:

- Low level of awareness and involvement of EU citizens in creativity and innovation;
- Innovation is a complex and multidimensional matter in raising awareness;
- Failure to recognise the importance of social innovation;
- Failure to recognise the importance of capturing all innovative activity, especially from non-traditional sources;
- Innovation requires more examples of approachable mentors and support for innovation;
- EU citizens do not debate the innovation;

The Polish product of the future:

- Negative opinion about innovation and creators of innovation;
- Lack of information about achievements in the area of innovation;
- Weak cooperation among creators and industry, as well as potential investors;
- Lack of competition dedicated to the projects at the stage before implementation work;
- Creators very often are not well prepared for promotion of their innovative products;
- Creators stay unknown;

4.3 What is the general status of the recognition in the market of the necessity to invest in the proposed policy theme?

We can't find what the general status of the recognition of raising the awareness and the fully exploitation of Europe's potential to innovate is. The feasibility study shows us that there are already some initiatives around this policy theme.

4.4 How is the main policy theme communicated in the market/which guidance material is already available?

The existing material, suitable for further developments and customizations, can be grouped in two main categories:

1) Existing guidance materials and methodologies developed over time that could provide a framework, i.e. a model or template, to prepare tools such as guidelines, training materials.

Nonetheless, a better approach for innovation is to focus on individuals and how they can transfer their expertise from one domain to another to achieve innovation. Combined with the concept of 'learning by practice' - that is people learning about innovation via the practice of others - (on-line) networking is more likely to be effective than the best guidance materials.

2) The existing initiatives can be grouped in the context of the potential innovation communities in four major strands:

- School Students and Youth;
- Higher and Further Education;
- Small and Medium Sized Enterprises;
- Social and Community Innovation activities - Research and Development sector.

4.5 What is the expected outcome of the proposed actions?

The following points could come out:

- Information about ongoing activities: Our proposal gives a structure to diverse parallel activities and provides them concrete information about the activities that exist in their region. Additionally, with the events they have the possibility to participate and thus learn the practicalities of innovation and creativity in action.
- Increase participation in the innovation activities: It is more than evident that the new generations are investing their time even more in social collaboration tools and in creative activities like for example preparing videos with their mobiles or with their PCs which they then share with their friends via collaborative tools, or by uploading them in the web e.g. in YouTube. Yet this does not mean that we should not enforce events and physical activities.
- Promotion of creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit: The innovation portal could lead together with the real-life physical events that creativity and entrepreneurship are promoted even more and in collaboration with competitions and awards that the entrepreneurial spirit (especially if some sort of incentives e.g. prizes are provided for this) is fostered.
- Synergies: As many of the existing initiatives are comparable, synergies could be achieved by networking these activities via the online platform and to generate an incentive to engage in innovative projects via the creation of a related pan-European innovation initiative.

5 The innovation policy measure and its context

5.1 National and regional governance: please provide a description of the modalities of implementation of the proposed actions. Examples of elements to be taken into account are the role of the institute, the nature and characteristics of that institute that are important for a successful implementation of the good practice.

Many attempts were made in the 1990's to promote the Polish technical thought and encourage the industry to implement the latest scientific and technological achievements.

One of the initiatives aiming to promote Polish product innovations was organising the Polish Product of the Future Competition in two categories: Product of the Future and Technology of the Future. It was initiated by the Technology Agency (ATT) created on the basis of an Act of Parliament dated 12 April 1996. The Agency being in operation, preparations for launching the Competition began. In 1997, detailed procedures, regulations and application forms were set out and the first project recruitment was announced. The goal of the Competition was to promote and spread knowledge of the achievements of Polish creators and their innovative technologies. The acting Polish Prime Minister became the honorary patron of the Polish Product of the Future Competition. There is no information available about the modalities of implementation.

5.2 National and regional economic structure of the region where the practice has been developed. We are looking for the main factors for success for implementing the suggested measure.

Poland is a country with a strong economic growth in the last few years. Before the transformation to free market economy, Poland had a lot of (heavy) industry and little services. There were almost no products that could compete internationally and there was little use of innovative technology. So the Poland economy needed some incentives to be innovative and creative.

There are two principal factors, which are critical to the success of the initiative:

- **Setting the objectives of the competition:** rules and objectives of the competition have to be well defined and clearly set. The objective should describe which level of novelty and innovation is expected from the product and technology participating to the contest and which are the evaluation criteria. The rules of such competition contribute setting innovation standards in the country.
- **Award and recognition:** awards and recognitions are at the base of every competition. It provides motivation to participants and it can be an instrument to disseminate the results by funding their further development or, as it is in the case of the Polish Product of the Future, by supporting directly dissemination activities. Award and recognition mechanisms however can vary drastically from country to country, which can depend from the economy and business environment.

This competition can be adapted in countries/ regions where a similar action does not exist. Rules are simple. Scale and type of awards can be changed (or widened) – it depends on the project budget and the law (e.g. state aid rules).

It is possible that such competition organised also on the local/ regional level (e.g. like a first stage of national contest) could give very interesting results and could lead to an increase of the participants (natural persons / individual creators).

At the very first stage of the competition, in line with the Competition Regulations the organizer had to provide winners with assistance in product implementation on the market, e.g. a loan, matching services.

5.3 The policy measure itself: what was it all about? Who were the actors involved, what actions have been undertaken and which result and impact has been achieved?

The “**Polish Product of the Future**” Competition, held under the auspices of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland is organised on an annual basis. The first edition of the competition took place in 1997. Since 2002, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PAED) has taken up the role of the competition organiser.

The **objective** of the Competition is promoting and disseminating the achievements of originators of innovative techniques and technologies, which have a chance to become popular on the Polish market.

The indirect aims are also - on the one hand to promote the pro-innovative attitude of people/companies as well as the R&D units that are creators of the innovative ideas - and on the other hand to encourage people to be innovative.

It was initiated by the Technology Agency (ATT) created on the basis of an Act of Parliament dated 12 April 1996. On 1 April 2002, the Technology Agency was merged with the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PAED). Thus, PAED became the organisation responsible for the Polish Product of the Future Competition.

In the ten-year history of the Competition, several hundreds of innovative products and technologies in various technical fields have been submitted. The projects come from research and development units, production plants and natural persons. The majority of awarded projects achieved economic success. Final products created on the basis of the submitted applications became popular on the Polish market, whereas some of them became export products. During this period the Jury of the Competition, basing on the independent experts opinions evaluating the applications, has awarded 20 projects and granted 40 distinctions.

6 The adaptability and transferability of the proposal

6.1 Why is it worthwhile to invest in the proposed action/tool? Did the feasibility study and good practice identification demonstrate substantial added value?

Without education as a core policy, innovation will remain unsupported. It must promote talent and creativity from an early stage. Improving education (particularly to create interest and excitement in science and technology) and high level of training is essential to keep Europe's human capital (researchers, engineers and other employees) up to date with the skills and knowledge necessary for innovation.

The competition Polish product of the future encourages people to be innovative. Due to this competition, several hundreds of innovative products and technologies in various technical fields have been submitted and the majority of awarded projects achieved economic success. Final products created on the basis of the submitted applications became popular on the Polish market, whereas some of them became successful export products. Thus, competition helps the creators to promote their work, to find the potential investors and to establish business contacts.

6.2 If there is to be decided to invest in the proposed action/tool, what are the main factors to pay specific attention to?

- The rules and objectives of the competition have to be well defined and clearly set. The objective should describe which level of novelty and innovation is expected from the product and technology participating to the contest and which are the evaluation criteria. The rules of such competition contribute setting innovation standards in the country.
- Awards and recognitions are at the base of every competition. It provides motivation to participants and it can be an instrument to disseminate the results by funding their further development or, as it is in the case of the Polish Product of the Future, by supporting directly dissemination activities. Award and recognition mechanisms however can vary drastically from country to country, which can depend from the economy and business environment.

6.3 What is the expected impact of implementing the proposed action/tool?

There will be more innovative initiatives and projects. Because of the competition between the inventors, the inventors must already in the beginning pay more attention to some details, like potential investors, business contacts, promotion. This aspect makes the projects better, more founded and less likely to fail.

The major quantitative outcomes achieved are the following:

- 10 years since its first edition (1996);
- Over 400 innovative solutions have been presented and evaluated;
- 60 solutions awarded.

Overall, the initiative has the following outcome:

- The participants are motivated to innovate;
- The government of Poland has the possibility to have a snapshot about the creativity and innovation capacity of the country;
- The entire country and Europe benefits of it, since the initiative is increasing the innovative trend of the scientific and entrepreneurial world, boosting economy and raising society's awareness.

6.4 Based on the insights gained in the feasibility studies and good practice identification, what is the judgement/advice on the support that already has been created by stakeholders?

The "Polish Product of the Future" is a successful competition, since it has gained recognition from other innovation promotion initiatives and from several institutions nationally and Europe wide. An advice could be that of introducing different categories for different products and technologies, since it can be very hard or sometimes even impossible, to compare products from different sectors/industries (Health, Automotive, Telecommunication, etc...) and different technologies (Biotech, Nanotech, ICT, Environment, etc...).

6.5 What is the advice on how to disseminate the action/tool?

The Polish product of the future seems an interesting initiative. It could be especially useful for regions with the same characteristics as the Polish situation. In broad lines the main goal of the Polish initiative is to 'spread the word' on innovation to different target groups. The problems for which the proposed initiative tries to provide answers are rather fundamental (see 4.2) in kind. As such it is wise to choose for very direct manners of communication instead of more innovative methods such as for instance virtual networks etc. The proposed action is not that interesting for regions in which these methods already have been implemented and have been interchanged with other tools.

The report on the good practice claims that the initiative has an effect for companies. The majority of awarded projects achieved economic success, some of them also internationally. Also for projects that don't win the contest, there is an added value. They see their idea confronted with other innovative solutions from which they can learn.