

# PULS

PRZEDSIĘBIORCZOŚCI



**WE CONNECT BUSINESS,  
WE SHARE KNOWLEDGE**

#JOINT DEVELOPMENT

## THE BEST CARE FOR YOUR HANDS AND FEET



Ladies and gentlemen,

**C**ities with a strong position in the region, a good economic situation, and high rates of economic activity are the driving forces behind the development of local markets. They are distinguished by the number of entrepreneurs and the dynamic growth of newly established companies.

Kielce is certainly an investor-friendly city. Those who decide to locate their business here can count on, for example, real estate tax exemption for newly built production or office buildings. In turn, the Park, an important representative of the city in contact with entrepreneurs, makes every effort to support them in every field.

Today I can proudly say that in the last 10 years we have managed to build a new quality in Kielce. Only a decade ago, few entered Olszewskiego Street. There was no reason to do so. Today, degraded post-industrial areas have turned into a bustling business district with modern office, production, warehouse, and training infrastructure. Currently, over 200 companies, including start-ups, operate under the Park's wings. On the investment areas, they have built or will build their headquarters, among others EkoEnergia, PODOPHARM, 4D Office, PROHACCP, Tegen, or Air Fresh.

What makes me especially happy, is at Olszewskiego Street, a strong community was created whose members can count on each other by sharing their knowledge and experience. We also have excellent contact with our neighbors – companies that are not tenants of the Park, but their headquarters are nearby. Established and maintained relationships influence the development of all parties.

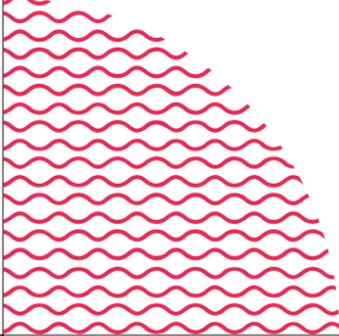
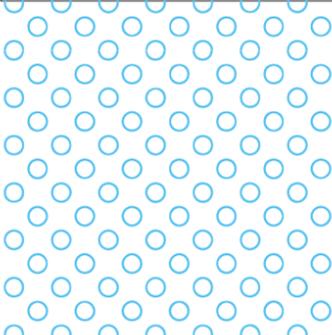
I hope that by presenting you with the next issue of 'Puls Przedsiębiorczości', in which we both summarize what has happened in the KTP in recent months and share our plans for the future, we will inspire you to take up new interesting and creative challenges. As we have been doing together with our tenants for years!

**Justyna Lichosik,**  
Director of the Kielce Technology Park



*True patriotism consists not only in loving some ideal homeland but also in loving, exploring, and working for the real components of this homeland, which are the land, society, people, and all their riches.*

Bolesław Prus

<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Smart Kielce. City of sustainable development</b></p> <p>An interview with Bożena Szczypiór, Deputy Mayor of Kielce</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>Successful businesses</b></p> <p>An interview with Justyna Lichosik, director of the Kielce Technology Park</p>	
<p><b>16</b></p> <p><b>Logistic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century</b></p> <p>Rotterdam Inc. Logistics Incubator</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p><b>Space take-off and soft landing</b></p> <p>The park supports innovative companies from Poland and abroad</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p><b>KTP attracts investors</b></p> <p>Investment areas as an incentive for investors</p>
	<p><b>26</b></p> <p><b>In the web of inspirations</b></p> <p>Joint actions lead to development</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p><b>Trust the professionals. KTP is expanding the range of services</b></p> <p>Training and consulting services – the pillars of the KTP</p>
<p><b>30</b></p> <p><b>Together into a responsible future</b></p> <p>The Park supports business and non-governmental cooperation</p>	<p><b>32</b></p> <p><b>Business transformation</b></p> <p>Potential of the post – industrial district</p>	<p><b>34</b></p> <p><b>After hours</b></p> <p>The Park is not just a business</p>



The 21<sup>st</sup> century presents us with new tasks. It brings some that we did not expect. We face unimaginable challenges almost every day, we have to face them regardless of what our plans were and whether we took into account the dynamically changing reality in them. Management theorists were right to argue that the only constant in the world is changing. Let's change, therefore, for the better.

Our city, our little homeland, deserves to develop, to live well for the residents, to feel safe here and to want to come back for entrepreneurs, and to let entrepreneurs have their own space for development. It has been known for a long time that it is precisely entrepreneurship that is the essence of economic prosperity. Therefore, I want entrepreneurs to feel how important they are in the social fabric of the city so that they receive the support they deserve. There is nothing like the real help we give to another person. Nevertheless, as important as the help itself is its direction. When designating it, one must take into account the real needs of both residents and business people, the more so as they are often synonymous terms. We carefully observe the market and its needs, we observe trends in Europe and the world. We change education to meet the challenges of today. We want entrepreneurs to receive everything they need so that the Kielce labor market responds to their needs.

For entrepreneurs, Kielce is not only about many aid programs, it is a way of thinking about the market economy embedded in the realities of our small homeland. Such thinking brings real results. Many young companies that have built their businesses here proved that this is a good and future-oriented prospect. Of course, there is still room for more. Kielce is not limited to entrepreneurs, people who want to change our city, who are up-to-date and looking for solutions. The world is changing and we are changing. We do not close ourselves to the known paradigm but look for a way to adapt to expectations and meet them. The voice of the inhabitants is important because it speaks of both needs and opportunities, and is sensitive to both cities.

**Bogdan Wenta,**  
Mayor of Kielce



An interview with **Bożena Szczypiór**, Deputy Mayor of Kielce

# Smart Kielce.

City of sustainable development

An increase in the number of requests for new investments and zoning permits, as well as a higher interest in investment areas, have been noted in Kielce lately.

Undoubtedly the pandemic has not stopped the economic development of Kielce. Two important projects for the future of the city are also underway: the construction of Central Office of Measures laboratories and, starting any day now – the construction of the Cromodora Wheels factory.



have the impression that both in the economic and social sphere we are beginning to get used to the pandemic, in a sense we have learned to live with the virus, it has become a bit more predictable for us, also thanks to vaccinations. What is more, it has changed the priorities of many of us. And this is affecting the city life and economy, points out Bożena Szczypiór.

In an interview with 'Puls Przedsiębiorczości', deputy mayor of Kielce talks about the challenges that the city faces and the opportunities which will determine its further development. The development should be measured not only by the number of new investments but first of all, by the improvement of the life quality of Kielce inhabitants.

#### **What – two years after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic – is the economic situation of Kielce?**

In most cases, Kielce entrepreneurs have coped really well with the crisis, adapting their businesses, including production, to the new economic conditions and needs. The coronavirus has not stopped their plans, on the contrary – many have used this time to prepare and launch new investments. The City Hall currently receives a large number of requests for new investments and zoning permits. There are many discussions behind us, about which I cannot talk publicly for now. We have also noticed an increased interest in investment areas. The prices we obtained in recent tenders were much higher than we expected.

Our aim is to provide optimal conditions for companies to do business and recover lost profits, including minimizing the costs they incur. Moreover, as one of the few local governments in Poland, we have not frozen our investments even for a moment. Already in spring 2020, we started with the planned tasks, e.g. in the area of wastewater management. We were aware that mainly local entrepreneurs are engaging in such procedures. We implemented a number of such initiatives and in this way, we could also support local businesses.

What is essential, new companies are being established in Kielce all the time. In 2020, more than 29.4 thousand entities were registered in the REGON register; almost a thousand more than in 2018. The condition of these companies largely depends on the current economic situation in the country, and this – as we know – is not the best. Rising inflation and credit costs or the stagnation in dialogue with the EU do not inspire optimism.

#### **What economic challenges is the city facing today?**

We are developing by using the existing economic and social potential. The city is well evaluated, among others, in the report 'Investment attractiveness of regions', prepared by the Warsaw School of Economics. Much better than the whole region.

A serious constraint on the further development of Kielce is certainly its transport isolation. No motorway runs through the region, and modernization of the S7 beyond the borders of the region is still underway. Meanwhile, which is important but also understandable, we are seeing growing interest from companies in areas where this road has already taken on another dimension.

It should also be outlined that 66% of Kielce is covered by various forms of nature reserves, which on the one hand improves the quality of life in the city, but on the other hand, limits the availability of land for manufacturing companies development.

#### **What about the land in Obice where the airport was to be built? The total area is about 300 hectares.**

Here the matter is more complex. In the zoning plans of Morawica and Chmielnik communes, these areas are earmarked for an airport. It must be remembered that the plots were acquired in various ways. Some – unfortunately, a small percentage – were bought directly from the owners, others were merged as a result of expropriations. According to the law, if the municipality does not realize the purpose behind the expropriation, it is obliged to pay compensation to the owners. Currently, we are making efforts to create a special purpose act and change the zoning plan, in order to be able to pay compensations to the landowners and – what's extremely important for us – to be able to keep this land entirety. The area has huge business potential.

There is also a lot of interest in properties located in neighbouring communes, mainly due to their lower prices in comparison to Kielce land prices. This is a natural situation and is typical for medium and large cities. Nevertheless, it does not threaten Kielce's position as the most important social, academic and – above all – economic center in the region.

#### **We have two significant investments ahead of us, with high potential to strengthen this position.**

We managed to lead to the realization of projects for which other cities and regions also strived intensively. The first is the construction of the Central Office of Measures laboratories complex. What is crucial is that there is a lot of talk about EU co-financing of this investment and the fact that Kielce donated the land worth over PLN 36 million. We feel to be co-creators of a project that will stimulate the city economically. The laboratories complex, which is to inaugurate its operations in 2023, will be able to host smaller entities dealing with various types of expertise or measurements.

The second investment, crucial from the perspective of the city, is the construction of a Cromodora Wheels factory, an Italian

producer of car rims, which should start operating any day now. The plant will employ 400 people. A new, large company with foreign capital will also contribute to the increase in demand for products and services in the metal-machine industry.

Some companies from Kielce are also planning to expand and come to us with their projects, but at this stage, due to the interests of the entrepreneurs, we cannot disclose details.

#### **And why is it worth investing in Kielce?**

I see at least five reasons. Great location – the distance from Kraków, Warsaw, Łódź, Lublin and Katowice is no more than 180 km and the average drive time to the nearest airports – Pyrzyce, Balice, Okęcie – is about two hours. What is more, the construction of an expressway to Kraków is to be completed within two years, which will shorten the travel time to the airport in Balice.

Two – high human resources potential. Salary expectations of Kielce universities graduates are lower than those from the largest Polish cities, and it should be noted, that 60 percent of all the costs of a given enterprise are labour costs. Life is also cheaper in Kielce.

Another argument – is the constantly improving quality of life in the city. Not without significance is also the presence of Kielce Trade Fairs and Kielce Technology Park, which is an example of excellent use of opportunities for the development of business infrastructure, available to both local and external investors. Companies investing in Kielce can count on the goodwill of the city authorities and support from the Investor Assistance Centre.

—Our aim is to provide optimal conditions for companies to do business and recover lost profits, including minimizing the costs they incur.

#### **What kind of support are we talking about?**

The team of Investor Assistance Centre is engaged in seeking locations for investors, helps to establish business contacts, runs an online database of investment offers. The Centre has been repeatedly appreciated by investors for its business approach, openness, and knowledge of the realities of the local market. Other departments of the City Hall are also involved in services dedicated to investors. Additionally, in 2021 we launched two key instruments supporting the development of enterprises in Kielce: exemption from property tax on newly built objects or

their parts related to production and exemption from property tax on new buildings with high-standard offices. These are two sectors that we want to develop very strongly.

We also support craftsmen, often one-person businesses or small family businesses, by reducing their property tax. We have also created a Map of Craftsmen, encouraging residents to use the services of professionals.

#### **What does the city need today for further development?**

We should remember that development is not only about investment. We need nurseries, kindergartens and new housing, as well as pavements, lighting, roads and a sewage system – as indicated by the inhabitants during the public consultations organized as part of the 'Periphery' program.

We are on the eve of launching the next EU financial perspective. At the moment we are getting familiar with regional guidelines for that and we already know that this will not be 'easy' money. We have to adjust our development needs to the possibilities of the city budget, in which we should secure our own contribution to the planned investments.



In a moment we will adopt a new Kielce City Strategy 2030+ towards Smart City, i.e. a smart city with a focus on sustainable development. In consultation with the inhabitants, we have defined our objectives and subordinated investment needs to them, with an amount a total of PLN 1.5 billion. We sent the list of needs to the regional authorities at the stage of consultation of the Development Strategy of Świętokrzyskie Region 2030+. We are waiting for its adoption and implementation.

**Thank you for the interview. ■**

AN INTERVIEW WITH **JUSTYNA LICHOSIK**,  
DIRECTOR OF THE KIELCE TECHNOLOGY PARK

# SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES

## KTP IS FOCUSING ON SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Modern infrastructure is the base of the Park's operation. But what would even the most attractive walls be without being filled with content? Today, KTP is intensifying activities and offering services that can be used not only by its tenants but all entrepreneurs.



The year 2021 marked the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the first Orange Inc. incubator and KTP Technology Centre. Today the Park is above all a professionally equipped and attractively located infrastructure – office, production, warehouse and training facilities, as well as the seat of over 200 tenants, professional support for start-ups and 15 ha of investment areas, where several investors are planning to build or have already built their headquarters. The future of KTP is the implementation of another investment – a modern incubator – California Inc., the creation of a digital hub (centre), the acquisition of additional investment areas, and the further development of business support services.

**Another pandemic year is behind us. How did the tenants of KTP survive that time, what is their condition today?**

Justyna Lichosik, Director of Kielce Technology Park: It should be acknowledged that thanks to their determination, diligence and good organization of work, our tenants have coped well in these unusual conditions. Depending on their specifics, companies organized their work in such a way as to ensure the safety of their employees on the one hand, and to maximize the effects of their activities on the other. The pandemic has undoubtedly changed the face of business and there are companies that have been able to take advan-

tage of this. Some of them, such as OptiBuy, which opened a branch in Dubai, have entered new markets, others – like ActivTek – have found a wider application for their products and services, and others – like Vitrintec – are investing by setting up a modern production plant on the plot we have developed in all necessary media.

Other investors also appeared in KTP: KT INOX, AirFresh, Lumen Complex or INS Group. What's more, PODOPHARM, which has been with us from the very beginning of its activity, is planning to build a podological clinic on the plot at Olszewskiego Street. Utech Technics is also going to start a new investment soon. There are new auctions for investment areas in front of us. Plots are even better-communicated today thanks to the extension of Olszewskiego Street to the intersection with Zagnańska Street and further to Witosa Street, and thus the exit road to Warsaw, as well as full infrastructure, make these plots very popular.

**All this sounds very optimistic.**

Of course, there are also companies that have not succeeded. Some of them, in order to reduce operating costs, vacated the rented space and used the services of the Virtual Incubator. However, we still have many new tenants. Without expanding the infrastructure of the Park, we have significantly increased the number of companies operating here. At the end of last year, we had 186 tenants and today we are already talking about 204 businesses.

**It seems that the pandemic has not reduced entrepreneurship among Poles.**

On the contrary, it has stimulated it. A steadily increasing number of tenants, development of innovative solutions that can be used e.g. in remote work, new work systems – all this shows that the pandemic has become an impulse for action and broadening of horizons. Poles are an exceptionally resourceful nation. Many have organized their business according to the new rules and with very good results.

What is more, one of our projects – the Business Academy for the Young – has shown us that there are many business-

We're keen to build synergies. Our infrastructure helps to connect businesses, and the openness of their owners is only conducive to this. Over 200 companies operate on a dozen hectares.

conscious people among those under 30. These people know very well what they want to do in their professional lives and are determined to achieve success. I believe that thanks to this Project, we will repeat the experience from years ago when we invested 40 thousand zlotys in the start-up company PROHACCP. Today, this thriving company has a modern and environmentally friendly production plant and supplies its goods to dozens of countries around the world.

**Since the beginning of its existence, Park is supporting start-ups. Today is doing that thanks to the project 'Start in Podkarpackie startup platforms' implemented together with the Rzeszów Regional Development Agency. What can young businesses offer to the market today?**

Start-ups are technological, innovative, but also high-risk businesses. However, it is difficult to imagine what the world would look like without start-ups from Silicon Valley. The organic development of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg would not bring such spectacular effects.

The task of the Park is to support, above all, entrepreneurial innovators and technology businesses. We wanted the Start-up Platforms program to be implemented at KTP again because it creates a real chance that new, innovative entities will appear in Kielce. It is worth emphasizing both incubation managers and start-ups that have already gone through this process. The effectiveness in reaching for funds from the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development for business development (PLN 1 million – editor's note) is 60%. And this is the best result in Poland!

**KTP is also one of the 9 entities of the Acceleration Program – Poland Prize. What does attracting 60 foreign start-ups mean for Park and Kielce? What kind of help can they count on?**

The assumptions of the program are such as to bring the most interesting solutions from abroad to Poland, and we hope that it will not be temporary cooperation. We believe that Kielce will be so attractive to these companies that they will want to stay here much longer. For our part, we

offer full support in terms of their functioning here on the spot.

We are seeking to the point where everyone benefits from it. I am thinking of start-ups that will commercialize their technologies and recipients of these solutions who will be able to face the challenges their organizations face. Kielce will receive an additional impulse to function, thanks to this cooperation the City has a chance to develop.

We invited technology recipients mainly from the city and the region to participate in the project, but we are expanding the range of companies. Negotiations are in progress, among others – with the automotive industry. We aim to attract large market players.

**Not only entrepreneurs but also non-governmental organizations gain support from KTP. How does the Park understand and implement socially responsible business?**

Indeed, with the implementation of the international CE Responsible project, we are now addressing another target group – NGOs. On the one hand, we would like to change the perception of the third sector, which as a rule does not only reach out for support but is also willing to share its knowledge and resources. On the other hand, we would like to give NGOs a new impulse, to show that their activities can be linked to companies. Here, too, we are facing a win-win situation. The entrepreneur can not only stand out by CSR strategy implementation but also get a new, experienced partner in action.

When running a socially responsible business, it is important to care for the immediate environment, bring people together – in the case of Park, first of all, representatives of business, but also representatives of science or the third sector – and change what is around us for the better. CSR cannot be an empty slogan and I hope that our actions will also help to believe in it.

**Pandemic is a difficult time for the Park too. Nevertheless, you have not slowed down even for a moment. Behind us are the preparation of new investment areas and the opening of the logistic incubator Rotterdam Inc.**



The infrastructure we offer to tenants is only a base. What distinguishes us are the professional services: business, development, but also mentoring, and coaching. We support entrepreneurial people, both start-ups and less technological companies. Entrepreneurs who come to the Park are often at the beginning of their business path, they only have an idea for activity and potential. With us, they develop their vision. The core of our activity is to inspire, create good conditions for development, and, in a sense, spread a protective umbrella over them. All this so that the entrepreneur can build a strong, stable position in the market. Today, we are expanding the Park's offer, among others, through the Development Services Base, a platform administered by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, thanks to which companies can take advantage of a wide range of training

courses provided by us. Moreover, if an entrepreneur needs to create a specific and individually tailored service, we are ready to do it. We believe that thanks to this, companies will be able to adapt faster to dynamically changing market realities, but also will become more competitive and effective in their daily operations. There will be many more services that we are about to start. Another area of our focus is Industry 4.0. We want to support companies in their digital transformation. We are talking about helping them to change their production line, which may be partially or fully automated. I am particularly thinking of production areas where such work involves a risk to health or even human life and is therefore dangerous or extremely tedious and low-paid. The EU will strongly support this kind of initiative and we intend to take advantage of it.

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**One thing is undoubtable: we cannot standstill. The biggest challenge is therefore the continuous development of the Park.**

If we obtain the necessary funds, we will provide this kind of service free of charge.

**In addition to fulfilling its mission, the Park is constantly coming up with new initiatives and forming new partnerships. What needs are you addressing today?**

We're keen to build synergies. Our infrastructure helps to connect businesses, and the openness of their owners is only conducive to this. As I already mentioned, over 200 companies operate on a dozen hectares. The possibility of meeting and proximity to various specialists, contractors, or subcontractors creates an ecosystem in which cooperation is a natural phenomenon.

An excellent example of such cooperation is ALTAR's project on artificial intelligence carried out jointly with Kielce University of Technology or the cooperation of Cromodora Wheels and Schwarz Technology Poland. What's more, we hope that the close proximity to Cromodora Wheels (producer of aluminum rims – editor's note) will translate into the possibility of cooperation with the Park's tenants, which can be suppliers of goods or subcontractors in the production process of the company.

We also bring entrepreneurs closer to the world of science. We have a lot of experience in this field. We have completed projects promoting entrepreneurship at universities, and today, together with ALTAR and the Electric Schools Complex, we are working on the creation of an innovative Patronage Class in the profession of software engineer technician.

**What challenges does the Park face today?**

One thing is undoubtable: we cannot standstill. The biggest challenge is therefore the continuous development of the Park. One issue is adapting the services we provide to the needs of entrepreneurs, and another is the continuous development of our staff, so they can stay ahead of market trends and help entrepreneurs keep up with changes.

Europe and Polish entrepreneurs are facing an extremely important challenge which is the aforementioned automation and digitalization. We are on the eve of

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submitting an application to the European Commission to create a digital innovation hub. Our challenge is certainly to obtain those funds and then, their active distribution.

In front of us, there is also further development of the Park in the real estate field. The construction project of a California Inc. Incubator with an area of over 14 thousand square meters is completed. This investment responds both to the needs of Kielce entrepreneurs, who want to develop and are expecting modern infrastructure, and the city, which is gaining an offer for investors from outside Kielce. The challenge is to raise funds for the construction and to develop a concept that will not distort competition on the market. We are analyzing various factors and I hope that together with the city we will work out the best solution. Especially as we have already invested a lot in this project.

Thinking about the future, we are also constantly looking for investment areas and funds to develop them. There are still some possibilities within the city limits, but a bigger challenge is to get the money to prepare these plots for investment.

**What does the Park need today for further development?**

The answer to this question is not simple. In terms of human resources, I'd like to make sure that the people with whom we create the Park feel professionally fulfilled and appreciated in our space. We must also take care of and constantly maintain good relations with entrepreneurs.

The main aim of the Park is to connect, and to be able to do this effectively we need to know what the needs and expectations of business are. In this respect, we cooperate with the Staropolska Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Świętokrzyskie Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer, the Świętokrzyskie Association of Private Employers Lewiatan, and other entities.

As prosaic as it sounds, we also need funds to function. Because if we are not strong enough, we will not be able to help others.

**I wish the Park this strength. Thank you for the interview. ■**



## LOGISTIC OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Are you drowning in documents that you should have archived a long time ago or advertising materials that are waiting for distribution? Are you getting ready for a renovation in your company and you don't know what to do with dozens of boxes and bags? Or maybe you are a seller and you need to store the goods before sending them out to the world? Check the offer of the logistics incubator Rotterdam Inc.

A new space in the Kielce Technology Park, dedicated to companies from the SME sector, including the e-commerce industry, is now available. Entrepreneurs not only can use a modern facility but also have access to a package of professional development services.

– Rotterdam Inc. is a building with many possibilities. A universal space complementing the KTP offer for dynamically developing enterprises. This is a response to the demand not only from companies that are located in the Park or intend to build their plants here. It is also a proposition for entrepreneurs from other parts of the city and those who consider Kielce as a place where they could develop their business – suggests Justyna Lichosik, director of the KTP.

Rotterdam Inc. fills the gap on the map of the city and the region in terms of comprehensive services for companies and investors. – We needed this investment – says the director of the Park.

### From 16 to 200 sq m

Rotterdam Inc. Incubator (the name refers to the city, which is a modern transshipment port and a symbol of the logistics industry) is located next to the extension of Olszewskiego Str. to Zagnańska and Witosza Str. and further – towards the S7 road, as well as exit roads to Kraków, Łódź, Lublin and Rzeszów. This building has 2200 sq m of total surface area.

Inside Rotterdam, there are 33 warehouses ranging in size from 16 to over 200 sq m (rooms can be joined), between which is possible to move freely with forklifts and electric trucks. The warehouses are very spacious. On 16 sq m can be fitted, for example, 14 Euro-pallets with a size of 80x120 m, the contents of a 125 sq m office, or 640 medium-sized boxes.

Each warehouse is equipped with an automatic, individually controlled sectional door. The facility has a lift with a lifting capacity of 5 tons, a 24 h reception desk, also the office, a conference room and rest and refreshments rooms. What's more, 9 parking spaces in front of the building and a loading ramp.

– This incubator is open 24/7. Access to the rooms is possible through an individual QR code. It is a constantly monitored area – cameras are located in the corridors and in every room. There is also security on-site – lists Marta Murawska from Kielce Technology Park, Department for Investment Preparation and Implementation.

Additionally, entrepreneurs can use a modern management system – WMS (Warehouse Management System) – specialized software for managing the flow of goods in the warehouse. WMS registers and tracks: receipt of goods, their storage (facilitates stocktaking), completing and distribution.

# 1,568.75 SQ M OF RENTAL SPACE

### Not only a warehouse

The interest in this offer is growing. At the end of 2021, 10 companies were already renting the spaces in the incubator. – Actually, there is rarely a day when I do not show clients this specific area. Both KTP tenants and external companies express interest in those warehouses – reveals Marta Murawska.

The incubator recruitment procedure is pretty simple. All you need to do is download and complete the application form available on the Park's website, and then send a scan with a signature at: rotterdam@technopark.kielce.pl. The rental price is affordable and the terms of the contract are flexible.

Companies that will use the new KTP offer can also count on additional profits. By joining the Park's community, new tenants can establish business relations with over 200 companies already operating in the buildings at Olszewskiego Str. They also receive professional support and business counselling at every stage of their development.

The value of the project 'Development of the KTP logistics services package for SMEs' is nearly PLN 12 million. The facility was built due to the EU funding from Operation no 2.1 'Support for business environment institutions to increase the level of entrepreneurship in the region' of the Regional Operational Program of the Świętokrzyskie Region for 2012-2020. ■



# Space take-off and soft landing



The park supports innovative companies from Poland and abroad. Start-ups developing their ideas in EU-funded projects: 'Start in Podkarpackie' and 'Poland Prize powered by Kielce Technology Park', receive not only access to knowledge and experience of experts in various fields but also a big chance for funding.

KTP, we are looking for breakthrough solutions that, once implemented in the industry, can strengthen it, modernize, or open to new opportunities. Start-ups provide non-standard ideas, generating the greatest change in their environment. And although they are burdened with a high degree of risk, they can achieve a lot – highlights Dorota Kamińska, head of the Incubation and Acceleration Department of the Kielce Technology Park.

## Platforms – the last one to start

Start in Podkarpackie is a program dedicated to people, who have an idea for a business related to the aviation, automotive, construction, and IT/ICT industries. Five selection rounds are behind us, currently, the sixth and final round for 12 start-ups is in progress. 32 capital companies registered in the region will be incubated in the KTP.

What happens during the incubation? Park's experts support start-ups for product or service development. Throughout this time, until the MVP (minimum viable product) is created, for example, a prototype and a market-verified business model, they

can count on consultancy services in market research, analyzing customer needs, or obtaining industrial property rights, as well as supporting marketers and graphic designers in creating trademarks and brand logotypes.

Start-ups also have access to accounting, legal, tax, and mentoring services, as well as to workshops and training, e.g. from public speaking and presentation. Additionally, they can use the following specialist services: technical, technological, engineering, IT, and design support, including the purchase of necessary software and licenses.

– The strength of start-ups is the possibility of rapid design and prototyping. The verification of a given idea is just as fast. During incubation, we refine a product or service, check the level of interest of potential users, and create a business model, specifying where the company will derive its revenues from – lists Dorota Kamińska.

After the incubation, the MVP is presented during Demo Day. Obtaining a positive recommendation from experts is a ticket to apply for a non-returnable subsidy of up to PLN 1 million from the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development.

– Additionally, we can boast of quite high effectiveness. Over 50 percent of ideas developed with the support of the Park receive funding in the second round of the project, and thus gains up to PLN 1 million for further development of its products and services – points out Dominik Kraska, deputy director of the Kielce Technology Park.

## Customized furniture

Co-financing from Polish Agency for Enterprise Development has so far been awarded to Digital Robots – a system for automating processes in accounting offices; Wooden Holds – a platform that allows ordering personalized climbing holds and Design Form Studio – a configurator for personalizing furniture, on which Patrycja and Karol Biernacny and Tomasz Garecki are working.

– By joining the Platform, we believed that our product could be successfully introduced to the market. What's more, our service would not have had a chance for such a dynamic development if it were not for the support we received from KTP. Together, we built the facilities and quickly turned the idea into a business – says Patrycja Biernacka, the originator of Design Form Studio. Patrycja Biernacka is a graduate of art by education. For years, she has been working on interior design, she also created innovative furniture forms.

– Currently, the market is saturated with modular solutions with a very similar appearance and shape, uniform in perception. Taking into account the growing interest in designer forms, the limited amount of free time and less and less adjustable living spaces, people need original furniture tailored to the interiors in which they live – says Patrycja Biernacka.

Design Form Studio is an innovative service that allows you to quickly and efficiently create an original, functional, and at the same time aesthetic and unusual product, tailored to individual needs. The technologically advanced configurator available on the webpage, based on original furniture forms, allows you to design an item that meets the expectations of users.

– In this way, a product will be created that will suit the cus-



— Dominik Kraska, deputy director of the KTP



— Dorota Kamińska, head of the Incubation and Acceleration Department of the KTP

tomer in terms of size, materials from which it will be made, or the finishing standard. It will be an intriguing spatial form in itself. The user will become a co-creator of his furniture – says Patrycja Biernacka.

## Local action, global thinking

Among the start-ups that are still developing their idea is Billi, a modern online platform for concluding contracts and settlements with mass services customers. The project is being developed by Łukasz Kobic, Izabela and Dariusz Walkiewicz.



Design Form Studio



Billi



Fitness Fighters

– Billi, as a project that is in the early stages of development, is great for incubation. The platform is exactly what he needs. We have gained access to specialists to whom we can commission part of the work or consult the correctness of the assumptions made. An additional advantage is a fact can apply for a grant that will help us carry out work on the final product – admits Łukasz Kobic.

Billi is a platform that will integrate all the functionalities necessary to support the key processes of local Internet Service Providers. Moreover, this service is to be as simple as possible and not involve ISP customers.

– The innovation consists in providing the system in the form of a platform as a service. This allows for the removal of the basic barrier to the development of PSI, i.e. the lack of capital for investments. Thanks to shared resources, preconfigured processes, and the security of processing and data separation, each operator will be able to use digitization and the most modern tools, including machine learning, says Łukasz Kobic.

ISP is a large but fragmented market with approximately 3,000 entities. These companies are well-versed in the realities of the local market, but it is difficult for them to compete with the largest operators on their own, mainly due to the lack of capital and, consequently, investment. These entities are afraid of takeovers and want to defend themselves against them. Therefore, their greatest need and challenge at the same time is the professionalization of activities. And this requires modern tools – integrated IT systems that are used today by the largest market players.

– Billi will support ISPs in their digital transformation as a first step by meeting the needs of each key area: customer service, contracting, or, billing while helping to increase revenues by organizing an automatic and fully remote renewal and contracting process. Another added value is the support of key customer service processes, such as self-care (online customer service of-

fice), customer relationship service and management, financial management, and debt collection – lists Dariusz Walkiewicz. Billi is currently being implemented in one of the companies. Ultimately, the originators hope to create a community in which individual entities will draw on their knowledge and experience, as well as provide data that will allow for further development of the services offered.

### Life is (not) just a game

Games dominate the everyday life of modern youth. The initiators of the Fitness Fighters start-up know it perfectly well: Karol Gutowski, Fabian Grudzień, and Piotr Kołodziejczyk, personal trainers and owners of the Dream Team studio. Fitness Fighters is an application that uses the rules of gamification to motivate users to work on improving their physical condition.

The coronavirus pandemic has only highlighted some worrying situations. Long hours spent by children and adolescents in

front of the computer, first learning and then playing, result in problems with obesity or diabetes – Fabian Grudzień points out. Kids who go to personal trainers from the Dream Team studio are most often forced by their parents. Training distracts them from more interesting activities, i.e. games. Importantly, they struggle primarily with overweight and linked health problems. – We have already considered how to motivate children to exercise regularly. The conversation with those who come to our studio revolves primarily around games. YouTube, Twitch – that's what interests them the most. When we heard about 'Start in Podkarpackie', we decided to develop an idea for a game in which you build a 'fit' avatar in a virtual world. How strong or fast it will be, however, will depend on the actual physical activity of the user, reveals Fabian Grudzień.

—Start-ups also have access to accounting, legal, tax, and mentoring services, as well as to workshops and training, e.g. from public speaking and presentation. Additionally, they can use the following specialist services: technical, technological, engineering, IT, and design support, including the purchase of necessary software and licenses.

The originators want to share training plans for free and reward every physical activity. The more training the app users do, the stronger their character in the game will be which will be of great importance when it comes to confrontation with other avatars. Prizes await the best and the most persistent. In this way, players, while distracted from the computer and phone, will continue to work on the position and power of their avatars. The idea for Fitness Fighters was created with children and adolescents in mind, but it soon turned out that adults are also interested in the application. – To build unity in a team, many companies introduce an element of gamification between individual employees or entire groups. Racing with colleagues to determine who is more consistent, and therefore has more

points and a stronger character in the game, is an interesting integration element – argues Karol Gutowski. At the next stage of development, the originators want to interest partners in the game: Kielce gyms, dance schools, swimming pools, and football schools. Fitness Fighters are already receiving a positive response. – We would like to see, for example, QR codes in these places in the future, after scanning which users will receive additional points. Importantly, more than if they were working alone at home. Knowing that a child trains under the supervision of a professional, we can be sure that it is looked after, which is why we want to reward them additionally – explains Karol Gutowski. Fitness Fighters, like other start-ups, want to apply for funding from PARP.

### Start-ups from all over the world

The Starting Platforms are nearing the end, but the Park is not slowing down, this time working on attracting start-ups from abroad to Kielce.

– "Poland Prize powered by Kielce Technology Park" is a unique program in which we participate as one of ten organizations in the country. Extremely prestigious, the crème de la crème when it comes to acceleration programs. The five are looking for foreign entities for the first time than connecting with large companies. As for the Park, this is a completely new opening. We go out to large companies and together with them we define technological challenges, which we will already implement in stages for these entities – explains Dominik Kraska.

The first recruitment round is behind us. 63 ideas from 23 countries were submitted. Among them are Bahrain, the USA, Spain, India, Romania, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Estonia, Germany, Azerbaijan, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Hungary, Turkey, and Canada.

– Our role comes down to searching for the most interesting ideas abroad and then transferring them to Poland. Challenges in specific areas are defined by our partners, large and medium-sized companies operating in various industries – emphasizes Dorota Kamińska.

In the first place, the Park focuses on business ideas in the field of broadly understood Industry 4.0. The park wants to acquire at least 60 start-ups in three acceleration rounds. Then the 36 best, selected by potential business partners and investors, will go to the first stage of the program, the so-called soft-landing and development. This is the time to register a company in Poland, build a team, establish contact with the recipient of the technology and work on product development. Initially, start-ups receive a grant of up to PLN 50,000. PLN, as well as support for lawyers, business mentors, and mentors. Selected teams that will work on a pilot implementation of the solution at the stage of acceleration, directly with the recipient of the technology or with the Venture Capital fund, will receive up to 200,000. zloty. They will work with start-ups, on innovations that are to improve the operation of enterprises, among others EkoEnergia Polska, "KH – KIPPER", Zakłady Urządzeń Chemicznych i Przemysłowej "CHEMAR", ZPUE, TRAKT, ITM Code.

The projects will be implemented by the end of October 2023. More information about the project can be found at [www.technopark.kielce.pl/polandprize](http://www.technopark.kielce.pl/polandprize). ■

# KTP attracts investors

Fully developed investment areas are an attractive space for business. The companies that grew out of incubators and the KTP Technology Center know about it. Purchase of plots at Olszewskiego Str. and building their plants is a natural stage of development for many of them.



— Visualization of the new seat of PODOPHARM®

The Kielce Technology Park has been helping entrepreneurs to take their first steps in business for several years. Some entrepreneurs started their adventure on the free market in the incubator, others at the KTP Technology Center, where production companies have ideal working conditions. For many, a natural step in further development is the purchase of investment areas developed by the Park (the plots have access to all the necessary utilities: water, sanitary and rain sewage systems, electricity, optical fibers, and access roads), and then construction at ul. Olszewski's seat.

### The heart of the industry beats here

For the needs of entrepreneurs, the city has allocated a total of 15 ha of investment areas, divided into four zones. Most have already found new owners.

A 1 ha plot of land will be put up for sale soon. The question of the last free space remains open. The park is waiting for the decision of the Municipal Road Administration regarding the leading access road to the Cromodora Wheels factory through this area. Then it will be known what will be the size of the last plot of land offered to investors.

– The areas at Olszewskiego are very attractive. This is both due to its location, good communication with other parts of the city and exit roads, as well as the vicinity of over 200 companies and the Rotterdam logistics incubator. In the last few years, a modern business district has been established around the Park. The heart of the industry beats here. Companies gain not only fully developed areas, but also the care of our experts – points out Justyna Lichosik, director of the KTP.

### The interest of entrepreneurs located at Olszewski's plots is not decreasing.

– We are constantly receiving inquiries from potential investors who want to build their production plants in the vicinity of the Park. And this even though almost everything has already been sold, notes Emilia Siwek, coordinator of the Infrastructure Management Department. And she adds: – I remember how along Olszewskiego, there were just virgin fields. Within a few years, offices and warehouses of a dozen companies were built in the place of degraded post-industrial areas. Today, we are also trying to green them by planting native species of trees and shrubs.

### A modern RES center

Companies that took their first steps in the KTP, including PRO-HACCP, Tegno, or EkoEnergia Polska.

– EkoEnergia started to operate in the Orange Incubator, then moved to the Technology Center, to finally buy investment areas and for its facility. It was similar to the Tegno company, which started from a few hundred meters in the Technology Center, and when it turned out that Kielce and the Park were a good place to run a business, it bought a plot, built a beautiful facility, and invested in a modern production line – lists the director of the KTP. EkoEnergia Polska, operating since 2013, has built a modern center of renewable energy sources on a plot of land with an area of 8,200 sq m, together with a research and development facility with an area of 1,500 sq m. solar and heat pumps. Thus,



— Emilia Siwek, coordinator of the Infrastructure Management Department of the KTP

they check which of the solutions used in the RES sector are the most effective for individual users: entrepreneurs, local government units, and natural persons. There are 49 research stations in the building.

– As long as I can remember, I was followed by the idea of creating a renewable energy center, where we could conduct research and present our solutions to clients, reveals Łukasz Dziejczak, president of EkoEnergia. – Throughout all these years, our business has grown along with the dynamic development of the RES market. So at some point building, your facility became a necessity – he reveals.

At Olszewskiego Marbach and AirFresh Kielce facilities were also erected. On a plot of 7,000 sq m, Marbach built and then expanded a production plant with an area of over 3,000 sq m. The company specializes in the production of flat and rotary dies for corrugated cardboard for producers of cardboard packaging and the printing industry, mainly from Poland. The AirFresh hall, a manufacturer of car air fresheners, has over 1,100 sq m. The company sells its products not only in Poland but also in most European countries and Azerbaijan, the United Arab Emirates, Nigeria, the USA, and Georgia.

While this text is being written, the construction of the modern VitrinTec production plant is also nearing completion. It is here that all the elements needed to arrange a modern office will be created, i.e. partition walls, furniture, and noise absorbers. Here, too, the employees of the research and development department will work on new solutions.

### The first podology clinic in Kielce

Utech Technics, Lumen Complex, KT INOX, MaxiPizza, INS Group, and PODOPHARM® are preparing to start investment at Olszewskiego – the construction of the podology clinic about to start

in the middle of this year.

– For a start-up that eight years ago started with 14 sq m in the basement, the Park is an extremely comfortable place to develop. With companies from such different industries as neighbors, we can exchange experiences, products, and services. Where the climate is right, entrepreneurship flourishes. Therefore, as soon as I heard that the Park was preparing investment areas, I knew that my company would be here – assures Aneta Oleszek, the owner of PODOPHARM®.

A dynamically developing manufacturer of pharmaceuticals at ul. Olszewski on the area of 3 thousand. sq m will soon begin the construction of podiatry offices, implementation and prototyping laboratories, office and administrative facilities, and a logistics hall. Their total area is 800 square meters.

– This is the most important investment in the history of PODOPHARM®. The construction of a new headquarters will allow the company to increase employment and further develop. In the place where we operate today, we have already grown so much that – if not for this investment – we would have stagnated. And we cannot afford it. We have extensive plans, currently, we are preparing, among others to introduce medical devices to our offer – announces Aneta Oleszek.

The new seat is also an opportunity to tighten cooperation with universities and post-secondary schools. Their pupils and students could undergo apprenticeships not only in podiatry but also in physiotherapy, foot surgery, dermatology, and diabetes. PODOPHARM® also wants to invite organizations responsible for international student exchange to cooperate.

Companies from Kielce and the region are working on the construction of the new seat of PODOPHARM®. The ARCAD design office is responsible for architectural design.

– I was glad to be able to design a multifunctional building in my hometown for a young and dynamically developing company. The challenge was to connect the logistic center, offices, and podiatry clinic in one, compact block and the unusual layout of the terrain. As a result, a sculpted body was created, operating with light and a deep play of shadows on the tectonics of the facade. The function in the building has been solved at different levels of the building, using the natural difference of terrain – reveals architect Grzegorz Rybak.

The building meets modern requirements in terms of ecology and energy efficiency. It has been equipped with a micro photovoltaic power plant and an advanced installation system that enables heat recovery. The building will also feature innovative air treatment systems provided by ActivTek, which is also a tenant of the Park.

The general contractor of the investment is UNI-PARK.

– The PODOPHARM® facility is an implementation challenge for us related to the adopted material, technical, and technological solutions. I hope that with the owners' great awareness of striving to create a modern and user-friendly facility, we will meet these challenges – says Andrzej Witkowski, president of UNI-PARK.

According to the schedule, the construction of the new seat of PODOPHARM® is to take about a year. The company wants to celebrate its 10th birthday in January 2024 in the new building.

### More space, more companies

There is one more important investment ahead of us. A plot at Olszewskiego also has a Park. It is here that the California incubator is to be built, a modern office building intended, among others, for start-ups, the largest in Central and Eastern Europe. The building will have over 14,000 sq m of space, six floors, and an underground car park for over 200 cars. In addition to modern offices, there will also be spaces for establishing business relations – conference, co-working and mentoring, as well as laboratory and social facilities as well as a recreation and sports zone.

The city lacks A-class facilities. KTP is prepared for investment – the park has full documentation and a building permit. There is a shortage of funds that the city wants to look for in the EU budget. At the beginning of the year, the construction of California Inc. was entered into the Program Contract for the Świętokrzyskie region for the years 2021-2027 as one of 38 tasks of key importance for the development of the region, implemented with the participation of EU funds.

– Kielce is an attractive city for entrepreneurs – the director of the KTP has no doubts. – In cooperation with the Investor Assistance Center, we will do everything to attract every investor here and to help him develop further. Construction California Inc. is an additional advantage in the hands of the city.



— Fully developed investment areas of the KTP

Information about the last tenders for sale at Olszewskiego investment areas can be found on the website of the Public Information Bulletin of the City of Kielce ([www.bip.kielce.eu](http://www.bip.kielce.eu)). ■

# In the web of inspirations

Testing of innovative solutions, subletting space, offering discounts on products and services, and creating a patronage class – KTP does a lot to connect entrepreneurs and two seemingly distant worlds: business and science. Importantly, it is quite successful in this field.



upporting companies at every stage of their development, also when it comes to establishing contacts with potential business partners, is the Park's mission, strengthen from the very beginning of its activity.

– Our aim here is simple: if one entrepreneur has a specific good or service, and the other needs them, it is worth making such a business connection. We often look for recipients of these linking activities among the tenants of the Park, although we are also happy to go beyond its borders – assures Marcin Januchta, head of the Promotion and PR Department of the KTP.

## Monitoring gives you security

Digital Engineering Solutions is the author of a revolutionary solution – digital video monitoring, which allows for a thorough inspection of the building structure, industrial hall, overbridge,



— Marcin Januchta, head of the Promotion and PR Department of the KTP

or bridge. Currently, by establishing the DES VISION start-up and using the support of the Start in Podkarpackie Start-up Platform, the company is developing a platform that allows monitoring the structure condition through advanced image analysis.

– Photos and videos can come from various sources: digital cameras or CCTV industrial cameras. When they reach our servers, they are analyzed by special algorithms. In this way, we monitor deflections, rotations, and displacements of structural elements. We provide the results of the monitoring via the Internet. Importantly, the use of, for example, CCTV cameras that the owner of the structure already has, significantly reduces the cost of the service – explains Grzegorz Bednarski, CEO of DES VISION.

DES VISION checks the parameters that determine the durability and stability of the building, and thus the de facto safety of people staying in it. Currently, the start-up is testing its solution

in the hall belonging to the PROPLASTICA company. Those two companies were connected by the Park.

– More specifically, they were linked by director Justyna Lichosik and her deputy Dominik Kraska, who perfectly knows our needs and possibilities of a start-up. DES VISION produces systems for monitoring buildings, and our halls require monitoring, which can be used with existing CCTV cameras – points out Artur Piotrowski, President of PROPLASTICA Polska.

## A springboard to business success

The cooperation between DES VISION and PROPLASTICA is just one of the examples of cooperation between KTP tenants and entrepreneurs from outside the park's community. Cromodora Wheels, a leading manufacturer of aluminum rims in the world, sublets the space in the Recife hall from Schwarz Technology Poland during the construction of its factory in Kielce (at the intersection of Olszewskiego and Hubalczyki streets). Renting space at the KTP allows the company to track the progress of the investment on an ongoing basis and establish business relations with the tenants of the Park.

– Kielce was one of the first places we considered for this investment. The decisive factor was the professional infrastructure and enormous help from the city authorities and the Kielce Technology Park – reveals Krzysztof Skowroński, CEO of Cromodora Wheels.

Arkadiusz Bolek, managing director of Schwarz Technology Polska, also outlines good relations with KTP. – Park supports entrepreneurs and it's what we have experienced more than once. We have potential that we want to use, and our presence at the KTP is a 'springboard' to success. We would like to build our own production plant here – emphasizes Arkadiusz Bolek.

## Synergy effect

The park supports companies in searching for space to run a business, also outside its infrastructure, most often in the closest neighborhood.

KTP tenants also acquire clients much easier, as the WN Legal law office found out. Due to the quick business dates organized by the Park – the so-called Linking in KTP, at least a few companies have used the law services, of course, on attractive price terms. Attorneys from WN Legal also host webinars during which they raise important issues, e.g. related to the Anti-Crisis Shield or the Polish Order.

Another form of linking is the so-called KTP vouchers – a package of discounts on specific products or services offered by the Park and its partners. In this way, you can, among others rent a conference room or a business meeting room and use the offer of the Energy Science Center. In addition, before the pandemic, companies belonging to the park community could also count on a 50 % discount on renting exhibition space during the events taking place at Targi Kielce Exhibition and Congress Centre.

KTP unites business and science. The park cooperates with the Kielce University of Technology (including organization of the Competition for the best diploma thesis, the competition 'Work on IT', or the Kielce IT Days) and the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce. From September '22, thanks to the commitment of

ALTAR company and Electric School complex, Innovative Patronage Class will start to function. It will focus on training programming technicians as a response to the market deficit for IT specialists.

– In order to stop the outflow of entrepreneurs and attract new ones, we need specialized staff who will demonstrate both broad knowledge and practical skills. The creation of the Innovative Patronage Class is an important step in achieving these goals. The leading role of KTP in this project is highly appreciated from the point of view of the presence of the local government in the development of an entrepreneurial, creative, modern, and open society, convinces Bogdan Wenta, Mayor of Kielce.

Another example of 'matching' entrepreneurs is the project 'Poland Prize powered by Kielce Technology Park'. KTP is in the prestigious group of nine entities responsible for attracting foreign start-ups to Poland ready to implement their innovative solutions at the corporates.

— From September '22, thanks to the commitment of ALTAR company and Electric School complex, Innovative Patronage Class will start to function. It will focus on training programming technicians as a response to the market deficit for IT specialists.

– By this type of project, we are looking for recipients of specific technologies. We are talking about companies or institutions that do not have their own research and development departments or simply need a fresh look at a given problem, and on the other hand about start-ups that are able to meet these challenges – notes Marcin Januchta.

An example of a start-up that successfully offers its services to others is Cabiomed. The Park tenant and the operator of the KTP 3D Printing Center provide advanced R&D services for companies related to the medical industry, in particular veterinary medicine.

– Supporting entrepreneurs, not only through incubation in the Kielce Technology Park and a wide range of services but also 'matching' them with each other, looking for fields for cooperation is our goal and our mission. We aim to have such a strong synergy effect – concludes Justyna Lichosik, director of the KTP. ■

# Trust the professionals

## KTP is expanding the range of services

Training and consulting services are one of KTP's pillars. Recently, it has been heavily strengthened. Park joined the Base of Development Services of the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, started cooperation with patent attorneys, supporting companies in protecting their intellectual property, and helped 30 young people to set up their first businesses.

– Training and consulting services, both basic and specialized, are a must-have for every technology park. We have been providing them from the very beginning of our activity, and today we are expanding services and we're setting even more ambitious goals for ourselves – assures Justyna Lichosik, director of the KTP.

### Training with 80% co-financing

The base of Development Services of the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development makes it possible to organize training and consultancy services on preferential terms for entrepreneurs. Getting an entry to that Base is not easy, and the application procedure requires considerable effort and commitment from the potential candidates.

– In our case, it took us about 6 months. We had to prove, among others a high standard of services we provide on a daily basis, our professional experience, appropriate infrastructure, as well as good relations and efficient communication with our customers and the business environment. Today, we are one of just a few public institutions in the base – points out Joanna Rudawska, head of the Development Projects Department of the Kielce Technology Park.

The self-employed as well as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises can use the offers available in the database. Importantly, companies can apply for a refund of up to 80 percent of participation costs in training. How to use those services? It is enough to go to the website

[www.uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl](http://www.uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl) and check what the Kielce Technology Park offers. At this moment we offer the following trainings: 'Building the company's image', 'Effective company management', 'Managing a remote team in the pandemic era', 'Communication as a tool for success' and 'Sales techniques, building customer relationships, communication in sales'. The catalog of topics was created based on the KTP experience and surveys conducted among the Park tenants.

After selecting an interesting topic and generating the so-called Service cards entrepreneurs should report to the Base – Regional Operator: Świętokrzyskie Center for Innovation and Technology Transfer or the Staropolska Chamber of Industry and Commerce and sign a contract for co-financing. One participant can count on the reimbursement of expenses for PLN 6,000. PLN net, and a company that wants to train more employees – even up to 60 thousand PLN net (the project will last until June 30, 2023).

– Human capital is the most important value of the company. Meanwhile, professional knowledge becomes out of date every two years. Today, everything is changing at an incredible pace, new trends constantly appear on the market that require a change of qualifications – says Joanna Rudawska.

After signing the contract, all you need to do is create an account in the Development Services Base, sign up for the training and pay for it. The entrepreneur will receive the reimbursement of costs after the training.



—Joanna Rudawska, head of the Development Projects Department of the Kielce Technology Park.



—Diana Szważyk from the Incubation and Acceleration Department of the Kielce Technology Park



—Karolina Bubicz from the Incubation and Acceleration Department of the Kielce Technology Park.

– Joining the Development Services Base is extremely important to us. We can raise qualifications in the implementation of specific tasks within the company. We are entering this area a lot, the first trainings are behind us – reveals Dominik Kraska, deputy director of the KTP.

### Protect intellectual property

Something new in the Park's offer are services related to the protection of intellectual property. KTP provides them in cooperation with the Patent Office of the Republic of Poland, responsible for the project titled 'Intellectual property in your company'. The support may be used by entrepreneurs from the SME sector operating in the field of National Smart Specializations and in the Świętokrzyskie, Mazowieckie, and Zachodniopomorskie regions.

– The knowledge of what and how to protect is still small among entrepreneurs. The first intellectual property courts are

just emerging in the country. Many business owners do not realize that it is worth securing their resources, such as a logo, company secrets, inventions, or projects design. They need information and advice, explains Diana Szważyk from the Incubation and Acceleration Department of the Kielce Technology Park.

– We observe start-ups that work on complex technologies and do not care about patenting their ideas and solutions. Therefore, we want to help companies by identifying their intellectual property resources, and then indicating what and how should be secured and what benefits they can derive from this protection – adds director Kraska.

KTP provides the service together with patent attorneys who advise companies on how to protect intellectual property rights, including industrial property rights, and how to safely use them in business transactions. They will also be advised on how to obtain a patent, how to use copyrights, and how to construct contracts with employees with regard to accounting intellectual property. Due to EU funding, interested entities can count on up to 95 percent coverage of service cost. The recruitment process is carried out by the Patent Office. Applications can be submitted by the end of August. Detailed information can be found at [www.msp.uprp.gov.pl](http://www.msp.uprp.gov.pl).

### How to set up your first company?

KTP also supports entrepreneurs who are just taking their first steps in business. Thanks to the project titled 'Business Academy for Young People', 30 new companies were established in the region. Their founders are the unemployed who – at the time of establishing the company – were under 29.

– Our goal is to help those who lost their jobs after March 1st, 2020, and as a result

of the COVID-19 pandemic have taken matters into their own hands by setting up a company – explains Karolina Bubicz from the Incubation and Acceleration Department of the Kielce Technology Park. Before registering the company, the young people met with a career advisor who assessed their predispositions to run a business and underwent a series of training, including the basics of accounting, tax regulations, and the rules of contributions to the Social Insurance Institution, customer acquisition and service or preparation of a business plan. Based on a created business plan, participants applied for a subsidy for the development of the company in the amount of max PLN 23,050 and additional financial support – an average of PLN 2,000. PLN per month for 6 month period. That money can be used to pay social security contributions, to cover the costs of renting company premises, utility bills, or leasing. Thanks to the project, participants set up companies in among others the following occupations/areas: barber, kitesurfing instructor, masseur, music instructor, and healthy cuisine.

– The project prepared us for a lot of bureaucracy related to running a company. Thanks to financial support, it was much easier for us to started. If we didn't receive funding we wouldn't be here on a market for the next few years – says Karolina Dobrowolska, project participant and co-owner of FERMENT NeoBistro.

– All participants are determined full of positive energy and innovative ideas. We support them on every stage – admits Karolina Bubicz.

The project was implemented jointly with the Association Integration and Development and is co-financed by the Operational Program – Knowledge Education & Development for 2014-2020. ■

# TOGETHER INTO A RESPONSIBLE FUTURE

**T**his is the result of the research and activities carried out so far by KTP in the international CE Responsible project (Interreg Central Europe program). Park is working together with organizations and institutions from Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, and Slovakia on a platform for establishing contacts, building partnerships, and achieving goals in line with the idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

## Online and real partner

The project activities were preceded by a series of tests and analyses. Socially responsible companies and local non-governmental organizations were taken into the focus of the project team. – We asked what values guided them, what are their goals in the next few years, what resources do they have, where they see shortcomings, and what form of cooperation is crucial for them – explains Ph.D. Joanna Rudawska, head of the KTP Development Projects Department.

In total, 367 NGOs and 306 companies were surveyed. Tangent points have been found. Both commercial entities and non-governmental organizations indicated the following areas: good work and economic growth, good health and well-being, industry, innovation and infrastructure, and gender equality, quality of education, and climate change. These are powerful foundations thanks to which, after meeting a few more detailed conditions, implementation of joint projects seems pretty possible.

The online platform – net4socialimpact.eu will help in this and enable companies and non-governmental organizations to find a partner for joint projects.

– There are nine tools available on the platform, including a large volunteer or sponsorship base. There is also a possibility to post

a description of the project and search for a partner for its implementation, all over the world – explains Joanna Rudawska. Regardless of the platform, KTP also organizes local networking meetings. We already had a few speed dating sessions – quick business dates linking associations with companies, and round tables. One of them was attended by representatives of the local government and Kielce universities.

Moreover, Kielce authorities – open to the activities of non-governmental organizations – are planning to create a special social strategy. The Kielce Public Benefit Council is also very active at the City Hall, and the NGO Forum has recently been operating in the city.

## Against stereotypes

The field for business and non-governmental cooperation requires a lot of support. Over 200 non-governmental organizations from all over Poland participated in 12 coaching sessions organized by the Park with the main topic of ‘How to cooperate with companies’.

– NGOs are perceived as those, above all – who reach for money. And that’s not entirely true, as can be seen from volunteering. Often they are not able to talk to their partners in business language, they do not know how to present an offer or how to report the results to the company after a specific action – explains Joanna Rudawska.

During online meetings, KTP employees explained what’s behind the philosophy of management based on business responsibility and what are the expectations of companies towards NGOs. Park also organized four meetings for companies to explain the perspective of local government organizations.

– CSR ideas are often associated with ecology. What is more, when building a strategy, small companies have a problem with defining goals and actions falling within the concept of social responsibility, although they already do a lot in this respect. For many of them, cooperation with the third sector also means only sponsorship, donating gadgets for the auction, and it does not have to be that way – explains Joanna Rudawska.

## Incubator for NGOs

One of the elements of the project is a contest for NGOs from the Świętokrzyskie region. Ten best ideas for activities that will improve the quality of life, in fields of sport, tourism, culture, health, and care, were sent to the NGO social incubator for four months. Foundations, associations, and social cooperatives together with experts, specialists from Kielce Technology Park and its tenants, develop their ideas and turn them into professional projects, attractive to business partners.

Members of NGO teams were trained in the field of promotion, presentation, partner acquisition, or working with the Design Thinking method. After the incubation period, they presented their ideas during ‘Pitch days’. The authors of the top three projects are MUKS Marisport, which wants to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, Stefan Artwiński Foundation, which wants to create the Artwiński Center, a friendly place for NGOs, and the Local Action Group – Association the ‘Flint Circle’ and its Local Community Center. All those ideas received an award – videos presenting the projects and their activities, prepared by

a professional company. In addition, throughout the incubation period, all organizations could count on a professional promotional campaign, including on social media.

Competitors were, among others: The City Transport Lovers’ Club in Kielce, which wants to create a website; ASUMPT Association, developing a project to support volunteering in the Chęciny commune or AIESEC Poland – Kielce Local Committee – planning to network youth organizations so that future students will primarily choose Kielce universities.

—The field for business and non-governmental cooperation requires a lot of support. Over 200 non-governmental organizations from all over Poland participated in 12 coaching sessions about ‘How to cooperate with companies’.

## Sponsorship is not enough

The international partnership of the CE Responsible project is not accidental. It is true – as Joanna Rudawska explains – meetings of partners from different countries did not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the results of the activity were early specified.

The project aims to develop political recommendations, which at the European level – but with the awareness of local legal regulations and their diversity – would give space for the development of business and social cooperation and promotion of management in line with the idea of CSR. The partners will create an international association and develop a model for the effectiveness of business and social cooperation to be able to measurably assess the effects of joint responsible action.

NGO implement projects that improve the quality of life of various social and professional groups in many fields. Although companies often build their brand and prestige on sponsorship, in their business activities they cannot see the space and possibilities of implementing socially responsible projects. Thanks to the international CE Responsible project, there is a chance not only to create a cooperation and networking platform but also a reliable and up-to-date database of non-governmental organizations. Thanks to the project, KTP creates a climate for changes that will allow us to find lasting and stable connections between what is social and what is business, which will improve the living conditions of the local and European community. ■

# Business transformation

Before the Orange Incubator and Technology Center were built, few people ventured into Olszewskiego Str. There was no such need. In the place of the bustling business district today, there was only the DEK furniture store and Chemar, which was already past its heyday.

## F

or the new headquarters, the KTP team together with the first companies moved in on November 2nd, 2011, Friday. Before the establishment of the Park in 2008, it has been operating in the cramped, damp and, cold rooms of the tenement house at Piotrkowska Str.

– Who does these things? – you might think. It was the middle of a long weekend. Nevertheless, it was this time that seemed the most appropriate to do it efficiently and without harming the cooperation with the partners at that time – recalls Justyna Lichosik, director of the Kielce Technology Park. However, before the move took place, a lot had to be changed on Olszewskiego Str.

### Facility with potential

For several years in the building of the Orange Incubator was a seat of the management of the Chemical Equipment and Industrial Fittings Plant 'Chemar'.

– At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, my mother worked here, so I knew this facility. It was a mysterious and unusual place for a child. Chemar was an impressive company, they realized contracts all over the world. I remember modern directors' offices and palm trees. There was a cinema in the building next door (today the Energy Science Center – editor's note). Years later, I could remember it all. Unfortunately, the condition of the facility was terrible, nothing happened here for a long time – admits Mirosław Buczkowski, then investment director at Construction and Service Enterprise 'Dorbud'.

This company performed the reconstruction and renovation of



— Former Chemar Building, now Orange Inc.

today's incubator and was also responsible for the construction of the KTP Technology Center.

– I remember my first visit to this building, probably in 2009. The impression was quite depressing, as was the whole road entrance to Olszewskiego Str. In the beginning, there were only a Mercedes showroom and a DEK furniture store. The street ended with a bus loop next to Chemar, which at that time was undergoing restructuring – points out Justyna Lichosik.

Another visit, with a meeting with experts from the Polish Business and Innovation Centers Association, did not fill me with optimism either.

– It was impossible to enter the basement without waders. The entire building was in poor technical condition. Nevertheless, we decided that it has potential, says the director of the KTP.

The functional and operational program prepared in agreement with the PBICA assumed the addition of a new building wing and raising the building by one floor. In this way, it was possible to almost double the area of the facility (from 2,600 sq m to 4,600 sq m). According to the plans, an elevator was to be installed in the interior, and this required changing the existing layout of the staircase.

### Portraits of dignitaries and red fishes

The modernization of the building took 1.5 years. In total, sever-

al hundred people, representatives of various industries, worked with it. KTP employees also appeared on a spot regularly. A visit to the construction site was a good excuse to escape from the office when the furnace failed again in the temporary headquarters at Piotrkowska Street.

– At one point, only the walls were left of the building. The existing staircase was demolished, and the roof and windows were removed. The construction was supported by huge pillars. Someone then told me to put on a helmet when entering the construction site. The situation was bizarre because if anything went wrong, the helmet wouldn't protect me that much – recalls Justyna Lichosik.

– It was an interesting challenge. The building was constructed in the late 1950s using the materials and technology available at that time. While chipping off the plaster, pieces of hollow bricks also fell off – adds Mirosław Buczkowski.

There were also interesting discoveries. In the basement, the builders found, among others ebonite telephones, and in the attic portraits of communist dignitaries, incl. Marian Spychalski. It was with these portraits that the employees of Chemar marched in the May Day parades. The fire pool at the rear of the building also hid its secrets.

– As a boy, I used to come here to admire the beautiful red fishes. How big was my surprise when it turned out that some fishes in this water are still alive. And this despite the fact even though abandoned. Someone had to feed them – add Mirosław Buczkowski.

The builders consulted every detail of the facade or interior design with the investor. Even the density of dots in the screen printing that originally adorned the facade.

– The investor was demanding, but we were well aware of how high the stake was. There were also new inspirations all the time. The idea of installing glass doors instead of wooden ones was brought from Spain by the then-director. Fortunately, we have not yet managed to order the models that we had previously agreed on – laughs Mirosław Buczkowski.

Dorbud also delivered all the interior fittings, including cups, which are served coffee to guests in the director's offices to this day, and flowers, which the construction manager cared for so well until the handover of the building, that despite the passage of years they still please the eye.

### The beginning of the revolution

At the same time, at Olszewskiego, the KTP Technology Center was built, including a service, laboratory, and production building with an area of over 4.2 thousand sq. m (Oulu Tech.) and a production hall with office facilities with a total area of over 8.3 thousand sq. m (Roma Tech.).

With this investment, there were no major surprises. The builders only had to eliminate the water ditch running through the center of one of the designed buildings, or rather an underground watercourse (each of the interlocutors remembered it differently).

– One thing is certain, we managed to retain water on an unprecedented scale. There are a lot of boxes in the ground that collect their excess – assures the director of the KTP.

Construction of the Orange Incubator and the Technology Center



— The first seat of the KTP at Piotrkowska Str.



— Construction of the KTP Technology Center

initiated investments that changed post-industrial and forgotten areas into a bustling business district in just a few years. Today, KTP is a modern infrastructure – Skye and Orange incubators, a Technology Center with production halls: Singapore, Yuyao, and Recife, as well as Roma and Oulu office and laboratory facilities, and the Rotterdam Logistics Incubator. In addition, 15 hectares of investment areas, most of them already developed, parking lots, and the Energy Garden of Experiences. Today, Olszewskiego Street is the best address in the city. ■



— The KTP infrastructure nowadays

Park doesn't exist just by the business. The Energy Science Center and the Energy Garden of Experiences tempt not only the youngest. It is a perfect space for company's meetings and outdoor events supported also from the City Participatory Budget.

During the week, the Energy Science Center is visited mainly by organized groups whereas on weekends by individual visitors from Poland and abroad. So far, about 25 thousand people came to this world of empirically known science, which is entered through ... the hatch of a submarine. Restrictions related to the pandemic and lockdown decreased the number of visitors in 2021, although more than 14,000 people discovered the center that year, it is a pretty good result.

– Everyone needs normality nowadays and it can be found in places like ESC. Last year was exceptional in this respect. Many people were traveling across Poland during the holidays. The fall was dominated by the school groups. As if everyone wanted to make up for the time lost in lockdown or – unsure of tomorrow – plan a visit. We often have 100% occupancy – says Monika Winecka-Drogosz, the Energy Science Center coordinator.

#### For small and bigger scientists

The exhibition with 28 interactive experiment stations is very popular. In this place, visitors discover what is coal mining and coal processing, how car fuel is produced, how to create a maelstrom, or how to change the river flow.

Workshops are also very popular. Pre-schoolers enjoy the 'Young chemist's laboratory', children from grades 1-3 get to know 'Optics with a grain of salt', slightly older kids (grades 4-6) experiment during the classes 'Glowing in the dark – luminescence', and youth (grades 7-8) learn how is it possible that the plane flies ('Flight to destination').

ESC offers family workshops organized at weekends in the 'Power Generator' laboratory, and occasional workshops, including Science Birthday, during which children experiment with food ('Experimentology') and robots ('Programology').

It is also worth taking a look at the Centre's website, wherein in the 'ESC online' tab you will find a lot of experiments that you can do yourself, as well as interesting facts from the world of science.

Importantly, the ESC is a space where adults also feel comfortable and entertained. Meetings in the series 'Women with energy' or 'Travels with energy' take place here. It is additionally a place to meet interesting people, incl. the author of crime novels set in Kielce and the region – Jacek Łukawski.

#### Like an event agency

Kielce citizens also admire the space of the Energy Garden of Experiences. The youngest combine learning with

fun in a colourful optical zone, on a bench-balance beam, a 30-meter zip-line, or a carousel powered in an unusual way. Adults can take their time and rest in relaxation zones with gazebos and barbecues.

What is more, in the summer the garden turns into a cinema room. The sessions on deckchairs are organized by the Park in cooperation with the Moskwa cinema. In addition, this coming summer, thanks to the support from the Participatory Budget, KTP will invite Kielce residents not only to further film shows combined with meetings with filmmakers, but also to special events devoted to physical activity, music, and dance.

Energy Garden of Experiences is also a perfect place for business and team-building events. Using the available infrastructure, experienced staff, and an extensive network of partnerships, Park can organize various types of events for employees or business partners for any company.

– Working in a friendly atmosphere, created by the various types of integration events, strengthens relationships in the team, and also translates into greater effectiveness and work efficiency. We come to such a workplace with great pleasure – outlines Justyna Lichosik, director of the Kielce Technology Park.

Park's event offer was used, by The VIVE Women Association, which entrusted KTP and organized the inauguration of its association.

– We are very pleased with this cooperation. During the inauguration of the association, the employees of the Park not only supported us in terms of organization but also communication, using their extensive base of contacts – lists Dorota Ciołak, president of the entity.

In the Energy Garden, VIVE Women also organize yoga classes and cyclical self-development workshops for ladies. – We are also thinking about the summer cinema and further workshops. We have extensive plans for this year and we believe that, together with the KTP, we will manage to do them – announces Dorota Ciołak.

The potential of the Energy Garden of Experiences, but also the entire Park, is big. – KTP is distinguished by the high quality of services, not only the typical business ones. In cooperation with our partners, incl. Tropem Przygody, ChemLab, or the Moscow cinema, we can make an event that meets all kinds of needs. In addition, we provide support in the promotion of the event and share valuable tips. We want those, who use our offer to come back to us and recommend our services to others – Magdalena Werens-Pokrzepa from the Promotion and PR Department of the Kielce Technology Park is inviting to cooperate. ■

# After hours



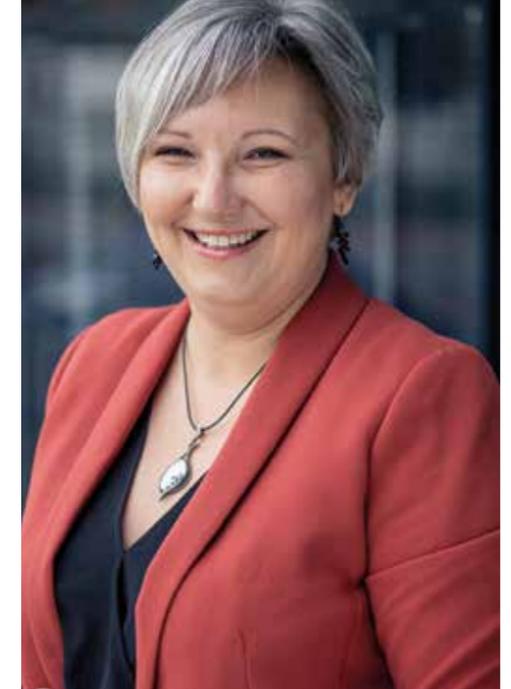
Creative workshops at the Energy Science Center



Energy Science Center



Energy Garden of Experiences



Monika Winecka-Drogosz, the Energy Science Center coordinator



Magdalena Werens-Pokrzepa from the Promotion and PR Department of the Kielce Technology Park

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