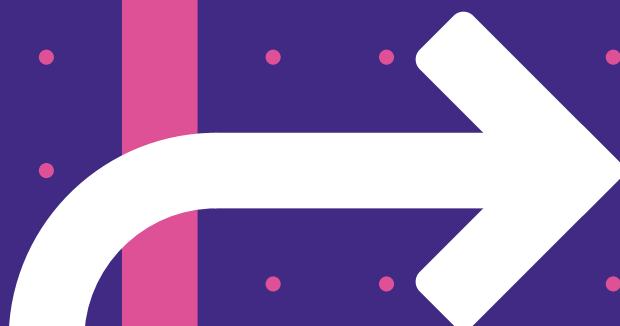
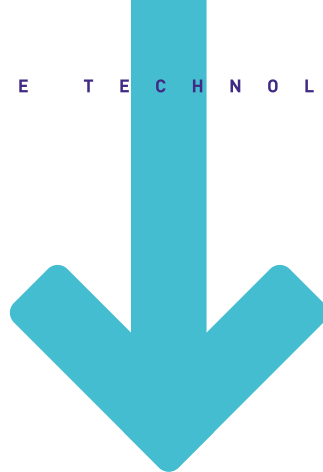


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PRZEDSIĘBIORCZOŚCI



setting
directions

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Year 2020 will, without a doubt, remain in our memory for a long time. We will remember this time as extremely difficult, full of surprises and uncertainty, but also new challenges, changing our habits and creative actions in new business areas.

COVID-19 pandemic and the recession that came along, affected business owners to a particularly large extent. Decrease in financial results, decrease in sales, fear of losing jobs, specter of bankruptcy is now everyday life for many companies. Getting back to the level from before the pandemic will take time and will not be easy. But we still try. We do our best to help our tenants survive this trying time in best possible condition. We manage mainly thanks to hard work, flexibility, creativity and, most importantly, solidarity with the companies operating under our wings.

What especially warms my heart is that many business owners, despite their difficult situation, help those in need with us. Many of them use this time to transform their business model. New ideas, innovative products and services are created. Also, our KTP community is growing. New companies, wanting to use the time of crisis as a chance to develop, are now located on Olszewskiego Street. The pandemic is also a time to reflect on, sort out our priorities, take a look at some issues which may have slipped our minds in the everyday rush. I believe that caring for others and for the relations will stay with us for good.

I hope that soon we will all go back to normal. Before that happens, let me present you with a newest issue of “Puls Przedsiębiorczości”. It is an excellent opportunity to look back at the past events but also look forward with optimism and hope. Stay healthy and enjoy the read!

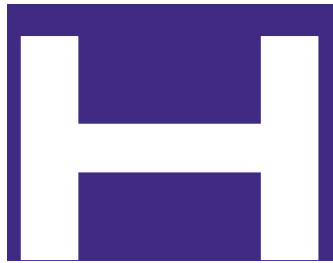
Justyna Lichosik

Director of the Kielce Technology Park



The city of Kielce believes in innovation

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing our lives and significantly influences the economy. We talk to the Mayor of Kielce, **Bogdan Wenta**, about the difficult times for business owners of Kielce and about the support that the city offers them.



How did the business owners handle the economy freeze in spring?

At the beginning, the pandemic did in fact affect the business owners in the first place. In spring the number of cases was not that high yet, but the government already introduced restrictions in many areas. Obviously, it negatively influenced the condition of businesses in Kielce. Long term effects of the pandemic are yet to be seen, especially because after a few months from the spring lockdown, the government has yet again restricted the possibilities of running business. In spring we averted massive layoffs, thanks to the funds from “anti-crisis shield”, but it is still possible that companies will need to look for savings and limit employment in upcoming months. What is important, we decided already in March to implement the aid package for the business owners. They have been able to apply for tax credit, lower waste collection fees, and commercial space rent and ground rent reduction. We have also provided support to the tenants of the Kielce Technology Park and restaurateurs.

How is today's economic health of the city?

It is no secret that city's condition is still below the country average. It has been shown by the economic indicators for years and despite the serious increase throughout last few years, there's still a lot to catch up on. I observed it when I was still working in the European Parliament, when the European Commission was carrying out a pilot program of support for less-developed regions, and Kielce and Rzeszów were subjects of their detailed analysis.

What are, in your opinion, some strong suits of Kielce economy?

In the city there are many businesses able to succeed not only on the regional level. The location of the city, access to qualified staff can be our advantages. The proof of that is the success of the first serious investment in Kielce in many years. An Italian company, Cromodora Wheels wants to invest in us 100 million euro. We need this factory not only for new workplaces and an opportunity for cooperation with existing companies, but also to attract more investors. It is also a chance to keep young people in the city.

How the restrictions implemented due to the second wave of COVID-19 affect the city budget?

The pandemic has affected us significantly. Data from the end of August shows that the income to the budget were lower by at least 29 million PLN (ca. 6.5 million EUR). We received some government funds for the investments, but we cannot spend them on just any chosen purpose. First of all, the income from which we cover the city's current expenses has been diminished. That is why we needed to implement some cuts. Thanks to these

cuts, we managed to save 11 million PLN (ca. 2.5 million EUR) before August. Another batch of support for businesses in Kielce will undoubtedly diminish city's revenues. We are thus facing an extremely difficult year, still with an expectation to accomplish more projects.

Are municipal companies, including Targi Kielce, fit to survive another lockdown?

The companies that provide city's efficient functioning in given areas, such as District Enterprise of Greenery and Municipal Services in Kielce, work with no major interruptions. The situation is much worse with the Kielce Trade Fairs, which in spring had to postpone or cancel most of the events. Only a few of them were hosted in autumn, including International Defense Industry Exhibition, which was critical, but then the restrictions came back. What is worse, the regulations of the newer versions of “anti-crisis shield” did not consider the exhibition industry. Now, a temporary hospital for coronavirus patients is being built in the Kielce Trade Fairs. The state will cover construction and use of space up until May next year. This should ensure company's functioning at least on a minimal level. This also means that even if the pandemic situation will improve in spring, the Kielce Trade Fairs will not quickly come back to their original role at least not in the part of space occupied by the hospital.

What kind of support can business owners expect today?

Considering city's difficult financial situation, we offered 50% property tax reduction to craftsmen, catering industry and owners of sport and recreational objects. The Council decided that in case of sport objects this reduction should be even bigger and amount to 70%. I hope that this will relieve the business owners at least to some extent, although I am aware that such support may not be enough for many of them.

How important is the activity of the Kielce Technology Park in context of city's further growth? How do you perceive the role of the KTP in these trying times?

The Kielce Technology Park is one of the most important institutions influencing city's economic growth. They support founding of new companies from the micro-, small – and medium-sized enterprises sector. It is also a kind of magnet which, by offering preferential conditions, attracts new investors to the city. The role of the Park is to increase competitiveness, stimulate the economic growth of Kielce and the entire region, especially in the area of advanced technologies.

Programs carried out by the KTP also help existing companies, support innovative ventures oriented towards new services and products. They create conditions for cooperation of business and world of science. The Park consists not only of space where you





can develop your business, but also modern services rendered by experienced staff. This combination constitutes a real value for the tenants.

The first experiences from the pandemic period show that such form of activity helps companies overcome difficult situation. With the support of the KTP employees, business owners selected new channels of distribution, modified their offer and applied for government aid.

And how to keep investors in Kielce and attract new ones?

We cannot control all of the factors which determine if the climate is favorable to the development of entrepreneurship. However, we do engage activities which contribute to dialogue with business owners and create conditions as beneficial as possible. This difficult work brings satisfactory effects. In KTP's close neighborhood there will be already mentioned Cromodora Wheels investment, worth 100 million euro. I hope that in a few months there will be a business where at least a couple hundred people will find employment.

Can you reveal city's plans on enlisting new investors? How do you intend to utilize the knowledge, experience and potential of the Park employees?

Appropriate arrangements and creating an atmosphere of good cooperation between the local government and entrepreneurs are essential. This role is played by the Business Council, which

——**Considering city's difficult financial situation, we offered 50% property tax reduction to craftsmen, catering industry and owners of sport and recreational objects. The Council decided that in case of sport objects this reduction should be even bigger and amount to 70%.**

is to give opinions, tips and hints on what we can do to develop entrepreneurship in our city and how to encourage other companies to invest in Kielce.

We have prepared a tax exemption program for new investments in office real estate because we know that the current offer is not sufficient to meet the requirements of large foreign concerns. We want to compete for new investments, also offering support to business owners. The KTP staff can operate here, together with the Investor Assistance Center or a new institution in the city – Vocational Training Center “CK Technik”.

New companies can emerge also thanks to supporting start-ups. The KTP already has some experience here – companies such as Marbach from Germany, Dutch Tegen, American Pega Systems, Swiss Schwarz Technologies and a couple of companies from Denmark and Belgium already operate on their grounds.

These are not the only successes of the KTP, are they?

That is correct, together with Investor Assistance Center, the Park has enlisted Transition Technologies. Its branch in Kielce is developing dynamically, and this is also thanks to our support. The successes of new companies founded by the Kielce citizens are most enjoyable. An example is PODOPHARM®, successfully competing with world leaders in the industry. Its owner emphasizes that this success would not have been possible had it not been for the excellent conditions for development she received at the KTP. A number of companies operating in the field of new technologies choose our city as their seat of business. For example, Didactix, a technological start-up that was taking its first steps on the market in Warsaw, is now located in the Park.

How do you see the KTP's future?

The KTP is a strong brand. They should precede the market trends. This is the only way to satisfy constantly changing companies' needs. We will support these activities, not only by making new properties available. Soon there will be also an offer of a warehouse and logistic service for smaller entities; the construction of California incubator will be a new quality as well. It will be a facility that will allow us, as a city, to compete for large investments, including from the business outsourcing industry. Park is waiting only for the project financing agreement.

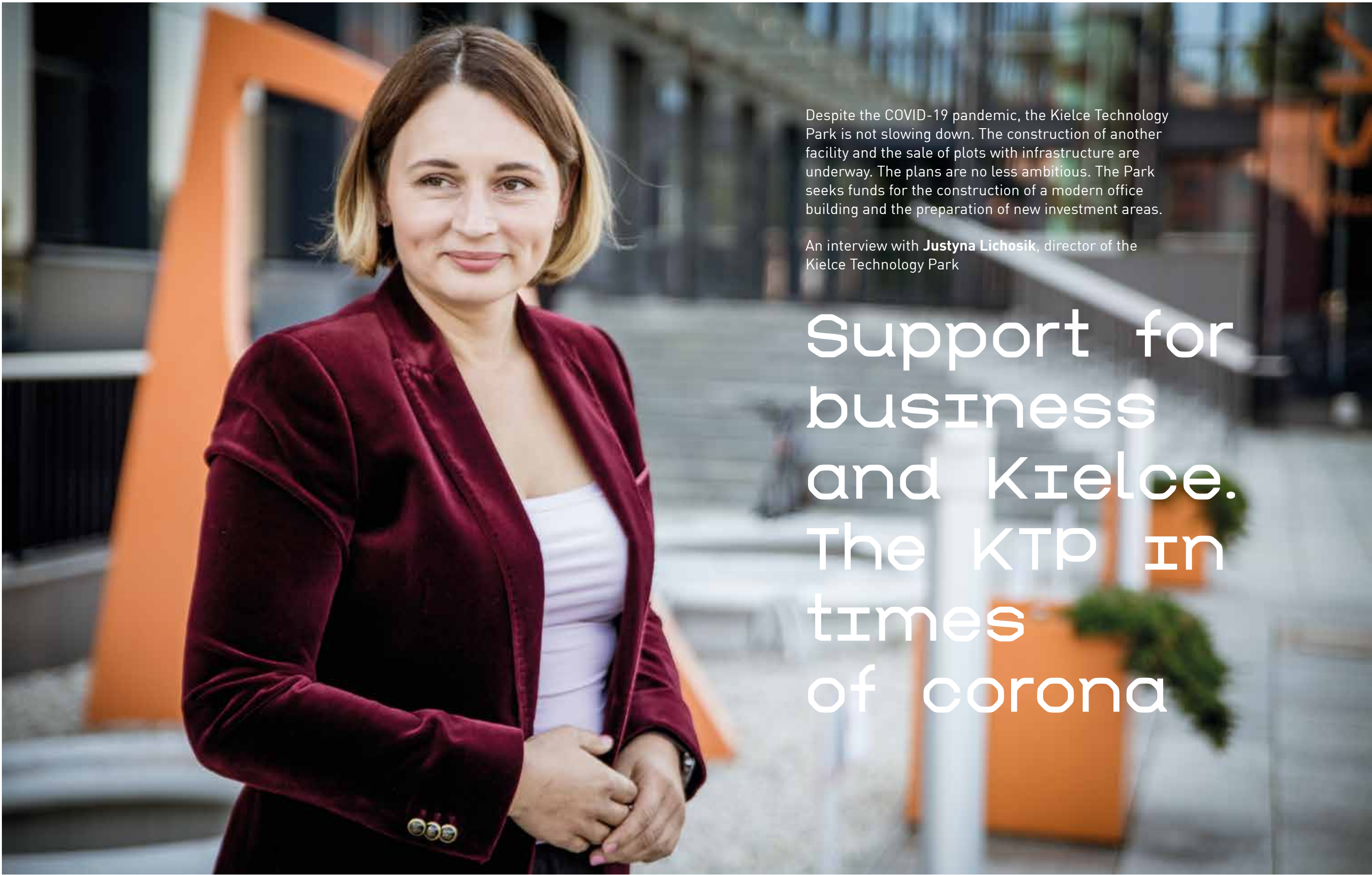
What challenges do you see for the KTP today?

They need to take changes into account, If they want to develop, they should overcome limitations resulting from e.g. availability of investment lands in their close neighborhood. I know that cooperation with managers of other office, production and warehouse properties has started. It is also worth cooperating with private property owners. Park employees, in cooperation with the manager of the Kielce Center, are also preparing a special program for companies wishing to locate themselves in the very center of the city. A Digital Innovation Hub was also launched at the KTP. It is a service of access to the latest knowledge, experience and technology, enabling testing and implementation of digital innovations.



——**New companies can emerge also thanks to supporting start-ups. The KTP already has some experience here – companies such as Marbach from Germany, Dutch Tegen, American Pega Systems, Swiss Schwarz Technologies and a couple of companies from Denmark and Belgium already operate on their grounds.**

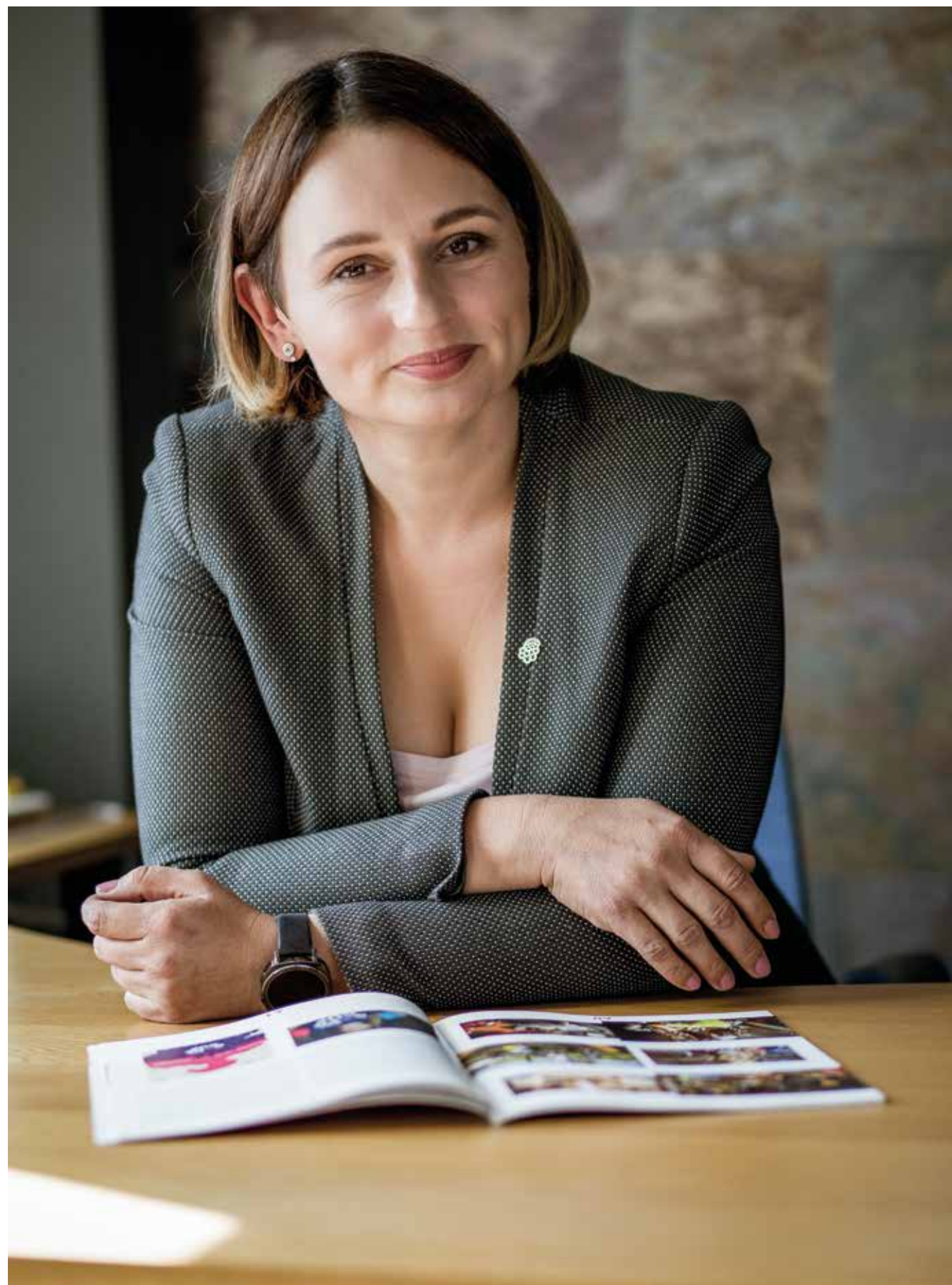
We would also like the KTP to be able to found new projects. That's why work by creating Technopark Venture started. First activities are possible thanks to project “Start Platforms”. If they develop, they will increase the attractiveness of the KTP and the whole city of Kielce. ■



Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kielce Technology Park is not slowing down. The construction of another facility and the sale of plots with infrastructure are underway. The plans are no less ambitious. The Park seeks funds for the construction of a modern office building and the preparation of new investment areas.

An interview with **Justyna Lichosik**, director of the Kielce Technology Park

Support for business and Kielce. The KTP in times of corona



he COVID-19 pandemic affected mainly entrepreneurs from the SME sector. How is the Kielce Technology Park supporting its tenants?

We offered companies a whole range of solutions, starting from ensuring a safe infrastructure. Every day we make sure that our tenants feel safe in the Park. We regularly disinfect the space they use and make sure that sanitary recommendations are followed. During the lockdown, we also reduced the rent. The amount of the tax credit depended on the decrease in revenues of individual companies. Almost 50 out of over 200 entrepreneurs used the aid. Companies also had the option of dividing the rent into installments. Those who wanted to reduce the rented space could count on our flexible approach.

Were you not afraid that the Park would be empty?

For a moment, there was indeed a concern that our buildings might become empty and we would not be able to fill the vacated space. But that was not the case. Ideas for new businesses emerged and filled the Park during the pandemic. Today there are more tenants than before the outbreak of the pandemic.

What about those businesses that could not function in a pandemic?

We have taken a number of activities related to consulting and retraining. In addition, we made it possible for interested parties to get in contact with various government institutions that offered support for business owners. We organized online meetings with representatives of the Tax Office, Labor Office, Social Insurance Institution and Polish Development Fund. Step by step, the experts explained all doubts. These meetings aroused considerable interest.

I think that the sense of community was as important at that time as real support.

Definitely. Hence, joint activities for the benefit of the city and its inhabitants. Shortly after the economy freeze, Regioszulki (Regio-shirts) appeared in the KTP – today the operator of the Fashion Design Center – and immediately started sewing masks. The company donated a large part of this production to social welfare centers, emergency rooms, the Provincial Complex Hospital, the single-name hospital in Starachowice and other units that asked for help.

Another tenant, CABIOMEDE, started making visors. Some of them went, among others to the Oncology Center. Parts for respirators and connectors for diving masks used by doctors were also manufactured in the Park.

We talked to Justyna Lichosik, the director of the KTP, in September, i.e. before the second wave of COVID-19 cases, predicted by the government. The Kielce Technology Park, following the safety rules, works without interruption in buildings at Olszewskiego 6.

The EkoEnergia company bought a huge batch of material for masks, and PODOPHARM® provided disinfectants to those in need. Business owners thought not only about how to survive this difficult time, but also how to help others.

Has everybody managed? What is the condition of companies today?

The coronavirus crisis has affected the activities of our tenants to a varying degree. There are those for whom the pandemic has opened up new activities or increased demand for products and services already offered. Everything that makes it possible to function in the online world sells well. We have tenants who create this type of solutions and today they make new customers. The situation is similar with ActivTek, which produces filters for ventilation and portable air purifying devices. This technology eliminates smog, destroys viruses, fungi, molds, and also the coronavirus. The company has been certified by the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and today equips hotels and hospitals on an even larger scale than before. There are also some entrepreneurs who – when the pandemic broke out – were in the initial phase of their operations. These companies are not growing as fast as expected. We do our best to help them.

What other challenges is the KTP facing today?

We intend to prepare well for the second wave of cases. I don't want it to sound too optimistic, but I think it will be a little easier for us. We already have some experience in this regard. It is what we don't know we fear the most, and today, contrary to the beginning of the pandemic, we know what to expect. We have developed and tested procedures, we know how to behave. We also constantly monitor government websites and consult local experts. We try to use their knowledge and experience to enable our tenants to function safely and – despite the still difficult conditions – to develop.

Economists encourage business owners to invest, and the government talks about the need to prepare investment areas. The Park has such areas in its resources. How is their availability?

We have fully developed areas with access to the media and access roads. So far, the Park has developed four investment zones. At the moment, eight plots of land in two zones B and D are waiting for new owners. A total of about 3 ha. Importantly, these areas are becoming more attractive. The city has recently opened the extension of Olszewskiego Street to the intersection with

Witosa and Zagnańska streets, which means excellent access to our area.

We are also applying for funds from the National Reconstruction Plan to build a California incubator. We are fully ready to invest here, we only lack funds. California will be the largest facility in the Park. There are no such high-class office buildings in Kielce. It will be a means to attract new investors from out of the city, thanks to which the city's offer for the BPO sector will be even more attractive.

The question now is whether and to what extent the companies will return to their offices.

If the office space is safe, there will always be a need for it. Not everything can be done online. Moreover, separating work from private life is very important. I observe the tenants of the Park and see that they willingly return to their offices, observing sanitary restrictions. Our employees also want to work safely from the office.

The number of active companies is growing throughout the country. According to the data of the Ministry of Development, Central Registration and Information on Business currently has 100,000 more registered entities than in March. As you have already mentioned, more companies also appear in the KTP. How does the Park attract business owners?

Indeed, the number of companies in the virtual incubator has significantly increased, and there are also more tenants in other incubators. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept more production companies. Before the pandemic, our resources were

already used in 100 percent. Today we are trying to act as investor service centers and reanimate our entire district. We work with the owners of nearby buildings and halls and we accommodate our companies in them. These enterprises can also use our development services, support in obtaining funds or consultations with our experts in the field of adapting business to market needs.

We also enter into cooperation contracts with property owners outside the area of Olszewskiego Street, thanks to which we will attract investors for Kielce. Also establishing a network of the KTP partner points; here the entrepreneurs located will be supported with development services by the KTP specialists. In addition, in cooperation with Rafał Zamojski, the Chief Specialist for the City Center and Cooperation with Entrepreneurs of the City Hall, we have prepared an offer addressed to entrepreneurs located in the heart of Kielce, that is along Sienkiewicza and the adjacent streets.

What attracts companies to the KTP is both the infrastructure and the staff of high-class specialists. Care, advice and consultation are appreciated; just like the neighborhood of various businesses. Our tenants are happy to cooperate with each other.

We also facilitate access to scientific staff for entrepreneurs. It happens that difficult issues are solved at the Kielce University of Technology or at the Jan Kochanowski University. Companies also implement ready-made solutions developed by scientists, which enable them to develop faster.

And what can the inhabitants of Kielce, including students or graduates benefit from?

From the beginning of our activity, we try to be present at universities, organizing, among others Kielce Academic Entrepreneurship Days, a competition for a dissertation or Design Thinking Week. For the wider audience, we have the offer of the Energy Science Center to a wide audience, not only from Kielce and the region. The youngest can play scientists, also in the Energy Garden of Experiences, and the older ones can take part in thematic meetings or summer cinema screenings.

You joined the project "Start in Podkarpackie". What does it mean for the citizens of the Świętokrzyskie region?

We managed to convince the European Commission, the Ministry of Development and the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development and obtain approval to extend the platform "Start in Podkarpackie". The previous edition of the Start-up Platforms, which was a success, was also carried out in cooperation with Rzeszów and their Regional Development Agency.

The program is addressed basically to anyone interested; unlike in the pilot program, there is no age limit. By coming to us with an innovative idea, future entrepreneurs can get our assistance in preparing the business, conducting market analysis, creating a prototype and a product launch strategy. In the second stage, they will be able to apply for non-returnable co-financing in the amount of up to 1 million PLN. It is a huge kick for development. There are various funds available on the market to start a busi-

ness, including from labor offices, but not to such an amount. For example, the company PROHACCP, which started with the Business Starter program and a subsidy of 40,000 PLN, operates today in a 2000 sqm hall and employs several dozen employees. Such endeavors grow organically, and it takes time. The possibility of financing an innovative project, and in such a high amount, is a much stronger impulse, enabling incomparably faster development.

—We want to support entrepreneurs in their early stages of development by providing them with small warehouse space.

The construction of the Rotterdam incubator pending. How will the new investment add to the KTP offer?

We have been waiting for years for a facility that will support e-commerce companies. The issue of warehouses is problematic in Kielce, because although two logistic centers have recently been established, they are often too large for companies that are just starting their operations. We want to support entrepreneurs in their early stages of development by providing them with small warehouse space. We hope that Rotterdam will thrive as soon as it opens.

What are your other plans for the nearest future?

We are currently working on an important research project with the Kielce University of Technology. We focus on inventions that are groundbreaking, but have not been successfully produced. We want to draw conclusions from the mistakes made and create a new model of functioning. In the Park, we combine the world of science and business, an entrepreneur and the Kielce University of Technology in this project. Unfortunately, this is all I can reveal at this stage.

We want to continuously expand our package of business and development services. We are in touch with tenants and we constantly adapt the offer to their needs. We will also keep on developing international cooperation. We want our tenants to gain even bigger opportunities for development.

We are also committed to activities that increase awareness of green entrepreneurship. We start at schools, universities and among young entrepreneurs. We want to test their level of knowledge and then implement a set of good practices developed together with our partners. It is a wide spectrum of activities, but this is the only way we can support business development in Kielce. ■



KTP – the best address in Poland

The KTP Investment Fund, Park's expansion, revitalization of this particular part of the city and the development of the team – these are the priorities of Dominik Kraska, deputy director of the Kielce Technology Park since October 1, 2020. All these activities will be implemented in order for the KTP to continue to be the leader among technology parks in Poland.

Dominik Kraska, who has returned to the Park after five years of absence, announces the continuation of the KTP Investment Fund project. The idea is simple. The Park will invest capital in business ideas of great market potential in return for shares.

– After the Company has achieved financial stability we will sell the aforementioned shares at a profit and the funds obtained in this way will be invested in further innovative projects, explains Dominik Kraska.

According to the deputy director, the Park should continue to develop in its current locations as it will contribute to the intensive revitalization of this part of the city.

– It is also worth considering establishing a branch of the Park in the future economic zone in Obice, near Kielce, suggests Dominik Kraska.

However, the Park's team of committed employees who create unique ideas remains the greatest strength of the KTP. Committed employees. According to the deputy director, it is their activity that will be crucial for the future development of the Park – the best business support initiative in the country.

For the last five years, Dominik Kraska has been the managing director of the CK Technik Training Centre, a place where highly qualified specialists are educated to benefit local economy. Today, he believes in the cooperation of both institutions, for instance in the field of stimulating entrepreneurship among young people. ■

—What attracts companies to the KTP is both the infrastructure and the staff of high-class specialists. Care, advice and consultation are appreciated.

Crossing the shadow barrier

They combine their experience in education and rehabilitation with modern technology. The experts from Didactix IT were one of the first in Europe to undertake the development of their own solutions in the field of digital education and rehabilitation. Their solution works well in nurseries, kindergartens and schools.

The most cutting edge product is their interactive floor FlySky. Outstanding experts, including educators, therapists and IT specialists worked on its creation. – We are the first company on the market of interactive floors and tables that crossed the so-called shadow barrier. We have created and implemented the innovative FlySky technology that allows to distinguish the shadow as an element needed or unwanted at a given moment in the operation of the application. This enables the implementation of new types of games and applications that have not been used in infrared devices so far – explains Aleksander Durlej, CEO of Didactix IT. The FlySky device was created for educational facilities, such as nurseries, kindergartens and schools. Its goal? The innovation of education. Importantly, the applications developed by Didactix support also specialistic therapies and rehabilitation processes. As emphasized by Aleksander Durlej, the company is planning on big and rapid growth, therefore it became necessary to create a stable, modern and well-connected office and production base. The space in the Kielce Technology Park turned out to be a perfect solution. At the beginning of November, the company will enter Roma Tech, one of the halls of the KTP Technology Center. – The resources and technological facilities already gave us the kick to creating and implementing new ideas. We approach this cooperation with great enthusiasm and we hope for successful partnership also with other tenants of the KTP, especially from the technology production, trade marketing and business consulting industries. Within the next 5 years we plan to introduce our solutions all over Europe. We have ideas for solving global problems for example related to the need to implement online classes, home-work or individual parent-child therapy – lists Aleksander Durlej. In the near future, the Didactix IT team will be working on introducing a new product – FlySky Flex. This is also the only solution on the European market that functions thanks to miniature short-focus LED projector, a computing unit and a vision sensor with



innovative software. The device, operated by touch and with the help of special pens, allows you to use a wide range of applications, resources and games. Flex is a hand-held 3-in-1 device that enables projection on any flat surface, and thus acts as a floor, bench or interactive whiteboard, depending on the user's needs. – It's an excellent solution for these days, perfectly adjusted for classes both at school and online, conducted either in groups or individually. It can be used for work and fun in home environment, it enables parents' inclusion in educational and therapeutic process, providing safe continuation of activities outside the therapist's office or educational institution, regardless of the degree of social isolation – explains the CEO. ■

More information can be accessed at www.didactix.pl

The start-up company Trans Assist, the new tenant of the Kielce Technology Park, has been developing its system for three years and undoubtedly it will soon significantly change the work of professional drivers, logisticians and forwarders for better.

How? The Trans Assist platform generates digital CMR documents, i.e. waybills necessary for international cargo transportation. There will be no need to print and store tons of paper forms anymore, because each CMR is issued in triplicate and must be stored for five years after shipment. E-CMR documents also increase the transparency of the supply chain and streamline procedures – from the moment of sending the cargo to its unloading. Moreover, they are signed with an electronic signature, which significantly reduces the time of document circulation.

– We also want to reduce the amount of paper used in companies. This will allow them to generate significant savings and also protect the environment. Today, digitization and automation are natural directions of development, also in the TSL industry, explains Karol Biela, marketing manager of Trans Assist.

According to the EU regulation on electronic road transport information (eFTI), carriers who wish to do so will be able to use elec-



Trans Assist puts in next gear

How to make transport handling fast and easy? Take advantage of Trans Assist. Designed for transport, logistics and forwarding companies, the solution saves time and money. It is also ecological – thanks to it you can forget about printing tons of documents.

tronic documents in any of the EU countries by the end of 2025. Trans Assist also allows companies to quickly and effectively exchange information between the driver and forwarders at the points of loading or unloading of the transported goods. Ready and precise content of messages is available in 24 European languages. Pictures can also be attached to the messages.

– I spent a lot of time in a toy warehouse run by my parents. I have seen the confusion caused by delays and I know what the costs are. Thanks to our platform, the driver can keep the company informed about any traffic problems. Just click on "I'm late" and specify the time so that the forwarder knows what is happening. In addition, our system eliminates language barriers in international transport, communication always takes place in the lan-

guage used by each party, explains Piotr Śliwiński, president of the company.

Trans Assist also offers professional navigation. It allows you to determine the best route, taking into account mass and height restrictions. It also enables vehicle tracking.

– It is enough to determine in advance the weight and load of the truck, the load on each axle of the vehicle and its height, and the system will calculate the best route. In this ways drivers will avoid situations in which they cannot, for example, drive a car onto a viaduct because it has too little load capacity or they have to look for a detour, claims Piotr Śliwiński. ■

More information on Trans Assist at www.transassist.eu

Kamila Solarzka's adventure with sewing outfits for photoshoots began 10 years ago in her own kitchen, where she had plenty of space to set up a sewing machine. At the time, she was a young mom, fascinated by the artistic photos of newborns. She started talking to photographers who specialize in this type of photoshoots and creating first headband designs for toddlers.

Today, her company Kamaprops, founded in 2016, specializes in designing and sewing maternity gowns for photoshoots. In the brand's portfolio we can find also clothes for little girls and accessories for the shoots: headbands, flower crowns and decorative belly bands.

– Maternity shoots are growing in popularity. Our customers are photographic studios, operating in Poland and abroad. Our consumers are mainly from Germany and France; we also ship our gowns to Great Britain, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Holland. We slowly enter more remote markets such as Australia, Canada and United States – reveals Kamila Solarzka.

Kamaprops currently has six employees. In the Kielce Technology Park they rent 350 m² of space in the OULU hall. – We are rapidly

growing and making new clients. We need more and more room and more people. We bring back a little forgotten, and replaced by Chinese production, job of a seamstress – admits Kamila Solarzka. The Kamaprops brand is valued among photographers. Artists, but also models praise the precision, quality and unique design. Even celebrities wear Kamaprops ensembles in the pictures.

– I come up with patterns and cuts myself. Nobody makes intricate garments for pregnant women. Our latest designs can be checked out in our online store – invites the founder of the company.

– This isn't everyday wear – in the first place these outfits are supposed to look stunning in the pictures. Sometimes it happens that customers, most often brides, ask us to sew a gown or fit one of the existing projects. We at Kamaprops are open to such requests. What's in nowadays? Everything depends on the time of the year. In spring, summer and autumn, shoots are done mostly outdoors; the boho style, airy, long dresses or tunics take over. In winter, the photographers usually move to their studios, and in the garments we often use tulle, which add a little bit of chic and look fabulous in Christmas shoots.

– I'm responsible for the project from the beginning to end: I design, create pattern, sew the prototype. I draw inspiration from websites and fashion magazines. I also follow fashion shows and trends in photography. My ideas emerge mostly at home, where I keep my sewing machine and table. Sometimes I just cannot resist – she laughs.

Future plans? Expanding the offer, new markets and more employees.

– We are competitive; what makes us unique is our price, good quality and passion with which we approach our work, which is why we are on the top. We also try to stay on our toes all the time, following the fashion and constantly adjusting the styles to the latest trends – explains the owner of Kamaprops. ■

Kamaprops dresses and dresses can be ordered at www.kamaprops.eu



Kamaprops gown photoshoot

A homebred factory of 21st century. Kamaprops, a Kielce-based company, has found its niche, designing and sewing unique garments in single items, mainly maternity gowns for photoshoots.

The brand has gained recognition on Polish and foreign markets.

Dance in 4K

Pictures and recordings right after the show and livestreams from dance competitions in pay per view service – the Pineapple Media knows what consumers need these days. When it comes to quality and turnaround time, they have no competition.

Pineapple Media, one of the newest tenants of the Kielce Technology Park, has been operating since 2018. It all started with an order from three Kielce dance clubs already known to Grzegorz Bandura, the owner of the company and a longtime dancer. Now the company, which apart from Grzegorz, also includes photographers Jan Bandura, Piotr Michalski and Julia Szewczyk, supports the biggest tournaments and championships of Polish and foreign dance federations.

Pineapple Media specializes in sport photography, videos in 2k or 4k and high quality live transmissions of events. The company is eager to face new challenges including in the field of product advertising. In Pineapple they know marketing and brand positioning. What distinguishes this company from many others is the speed of action. Pineapple Media has a sales stand at the events it serves, where you can view the recordings and photos on the iPad on an ongoing basis, just a few minutes after the performance, select the best shots and order them. High-quality photos can also be printed on site (up to A3 format).

– Everyone can also watch our live streams in pay per view system. Everything is fully automated. You just need to choose a specific day or dancefloor and gain access – ensures Grzegorz Bandura.

– Before we started, only two companies in Poland were handling such transmissions. We created an adequate tool and joined them – he adds.

These live transmissions are very popular in dancers and dance enthusiasts community. Especially now that due to the pandemic a lot of people decide to stay at home.

During the competition the usually three-person Pineapple Media team grows up to 10 people: photographers, video operators or graphic designers responsible for processing and uploading photos to the server.

– We travel all around the country, handing different tournaments and championships. We even did world championships. Nowadays customers want to receive the product or service right away and we can guarantee that. Our speed – the whole thing takes us no more than three hours – this is our greatest distinguishing feature – assures the company owner.

However, this isn't the easiest job. You have to wake up at the sunrise, drive to the tournament, work on site, up to 12 hours, with little or no breaks and the go back home. Sometimes you're required to be up whole 24 hours.

– Luckily, this is our passion so we see that differently – Bandura emphasizes.



The first lockdown caused the competitions and dance championships to be postponed to later dates. The company used this time to launch and develop an online store. Today, you can find photos and videos of all the events Pineapple Media supports.

– A lot of people buy photos right after the performance, taking them home with them, but some of our clients, mainly dance schools, prefer to pick photos carefully, after the tournament ends. Especially that during the competition they usually do not have time for it – explains Grzegorz Bandura.

Challenges? – We would like our calendar to fill up with events of international importance, organized both in Poland and in Europe. We are mobile, we speak foreign languages. We want to compete with other European companies with the quality of the services that we offer – announces the company's owner. ■

More information about the company at www.pineapplemedia.pl

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TIMES OF CORONA

Some switched industries quickly, at least for a while. Some opened new distribution channels, for which they had not yet had enough time. Some were helped by... the pandemic itself and the accompanying increase in knowledge about the harmfulness of viruses and bacteria. The KTP tenants courageously face the economic crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the spring lockdown hit primarily entrepreneurs, including tenants of the Park. How did they cope in these difficult times? What solutions turned out to be the most effective?



Tropem Przygody: hard times for tourism

For Tropem Przygody, and the entire tourism industry, the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are particularly painful. – We are talking about drops of 95 percent, compared to the same periods in previous years – points out Marcin Jedliński, co-founder and vice-president of the Social Cooperative Tropem Przygody. The company has operated on the market for 7 years. In 2019 they completed orders and projects worth over 4 million PLN. Meanwhile, in 2020, revenues will amount to a maximum of 350 thousand PLN. The cooperative employs five permanent employees, and in the season, even up to 50-60 people work on the projects.

Tropem przygody usually blooms in spring, because March puts the end to winter saving period. After a few months break the company starts to go full throttle, organizing e.g. picnics and family festivals, urban games, school trips, summer camps, quizzes, sport events, festivals and concerts.

When, in the middle of March 2020, the government announced the economy freeze, Tropem Przygody employed work from home mode, taking care mainly of handling the resignations from already contracted orders. The situation required

budget cuts including decreasing office and warehouse space.

– Our contractors were really helpful. The KTP lowered our rent, the company from which we lease the printer gave up the payment, and the accounting reduced its salary by 50%. We care about people and we do our best to avoid layoffs. It's not easy. From mid-March to the end of June, we earned virtually nothing – says Marcin Jedliński.

In the spring, which was the the most difficult time of the pandemic, Tropem Przygody became heavily involved in helping those in need. The team consists mainly of scout instructors, so the decision came naturally. Together with other scouts from Kielce, they supported the activities of the #AntyCovidTeam, and Marcin Jedliński became its coordinator. Over a hundred people helped senior citizens with shopping and sewed masks. The group actively cooperated with the Detention Center in Kielce and the Kielce group by sewing masks for medical workers.

The company returned to work, although on a smaller scale than before, in July.

– We have many clients who want to work with us, but today they are much more careful. We are fighting for survival – admits Marcin Jedliński. And he adds: – Tourism or recreation are industries which, in the moment of the economic crisis, are the first to get hit, and the last to get well.

Today, Tropem Przygody tries to operate online, coming up with new ideas for safe integration and organizing, among others, city games online. One of the examples is the City Game "Miasto moje a w nim...!", in which those interested could discover the secrets of Kielce. The action was carried out as part of the winning project in this year's Civic Budget.



— Marcin Jedliński, vice-president of the Social Cooperative Tropem Przygody



Domat Consulting: free consulting for the businesses

In the spring, specialists from Domat Consulting offered their help to other companies in the region, and in particular to the KTP tenants, by creating the "Anti-crisis Advisory Aid" package.

– It was free financial and business consulting. We wanted to help business owners, especially those who run a sole proprietorship and for whom changes in regulations may be problematic – explains Mikołaj Pasek, president of Domat Consulting.

The company has been a KTP tenant since 2017. They provide consulting services in the field of running a business, including obtaining external financing, recruiting employees and restructuring micro and small enterprises. The second pillar of its activity is consulting in the following industries: waste management, environmental protection, cement industry and energy.

Domat Consulting also runs its own R&D projects. In April 2019, the company launched a project financed by the Nation-



— Mikołaj Pasek, president of Domat Consulting

al Center for Research and Development. Objective? Development of an innovative fuel from municipal waste: biomass and sewage sludge. The company wants to use RDF burned in cement plants, improve its

composition (using additives) and produce pellets from it. The fuel could be used in local heat and power plants. And this would allow – as Mikołaj Pasek argues – to reduce the prices of waste collection and management, as well as bills for heat and electricity.

– Our activity is currently focused on this project, thanks to which the pandemic has not had a major impact on us. All this time we were working remotely, laboratory work was also underway at the Oil and Gas Institute – Polish Research Institute in Krakow – reveals Mikołaj Pasek.

There were only minor problems with the second phase of the project. The result of the development work is to create an innovative installation for fuel production. The limited possibility of meetings with manufacturers of machinery and equipment postponed some decisions. However, the project is not at risk – the National Centre for Research and Development decided to extend the previously adopted schedule by three months.



PODOPHARM® – new distribution channels

The coronavirus pandemic and the economic crisis have forced entrepreneurs to be more flexible and creative. Those who were able to react quickly and adapt to the new conditions came out unscathed from the crisis. Just like PODOPHARM®, a professional brand for podiatrists, specialists diagnosing and mitigating the effects of all foot diseases.

The company was established in 2014. They have two patents that protect their recipes and production technology, as well as numerous awards obtained in the country and abroad. Podiatry treatments are performed in the PODOPHARM® Healthy Foot clinics. The company also conducts training for podiatrists. PODOPHARM® products are intended mainly for diabetics and people with sensitive skin, they are available in podiatry



—The PODOPHARM® team – PodoEdukacja

offices all over Poland and in over 20 countries, including in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Russia, Portugal, Greece, Ireland, Sweden, Uzbekistan, Moldova and Ukraine. Their distribution takes place through authorized wholesalers. The company does not sell its preparations in drugstores or pharmacies. Before the outbreak of the coronavirus, their clients were exclusively podiatry clinics.

– When the pandemic broke out and clinics were closed, our employees began receiving calls from anxious patients who were running out of home care products. Hundreds of people undergoing therapy needed our products, and we did not sell to retail clients – admits Aneta Oleszek, the owner of PODOPHARM®.

Almost immediately, the company decided to set up an online store, which is also successfully operating today, after the opening of podiatry offices.

– We do not disrupt their activities in any way. Not all offices sell our home care products. So we filled a certain niche in the market – ensures Aneta Oleszek.

Throughout the lockdown, the company also took care of maintaining relationships with customers online. They also

didn't leave their employees hanging; PODOPHARM® has not stopped production even for a moment. There were also no layoffs or salary cuts; on the contrary, a new employee bonus system was created.

– People are the greatest capital of my company. It is thanks to them that I develop my brand – emphasizes Aneta Oleszek. The pandemic, however, thwarted the company's investment plans. In 2021, PODOPHARM® in the areas prepared and developed by the KTP – a total of over 3,000 sqm – intended to start the construction of a research and development laboratory and a training center for podiatrists. The investment has been postponed.



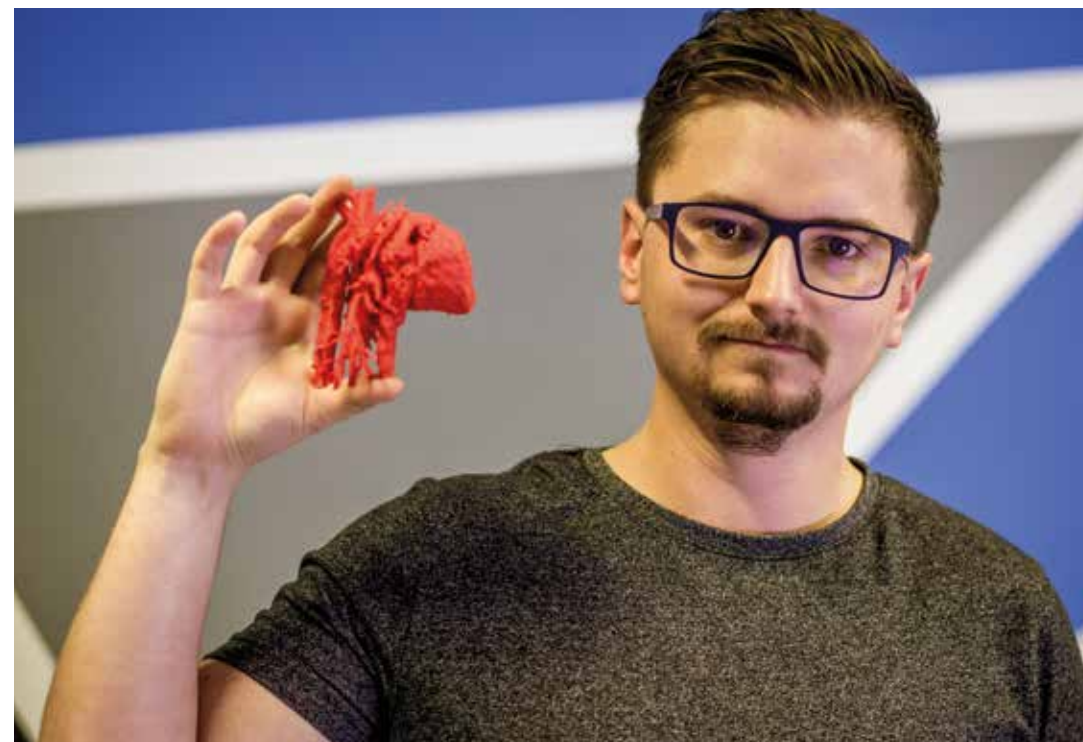
CABIOMEDE: new production line

CABIOMEDE is another company, which quickly adapted to the new circumstances. Having operated since 2016, they

offer advanced veterinary and sports engineering services. At the time of the pandemic outbreak, they were preparing for the market launch of individual shin and face protectors for footballers. CABIOMEDE intended to present the football clubs with a new offer. Unfortunately, the league matches have been suspended. In spring, the company also had to cancel trainings, e.g. in orthopedics for veterinarians, surgeons and veterinary orthopedic surgeons, including several cycles to be held in Norway.

– Only the research and development part functioned normally, i.e. advanced services for companies related to the medical industry, in particular veterinary medicine. However, this part of our activity, on which we strongly focused on development at the beginning of the year, has been suspended and postponed for better times – admits Mateusz Pawlik, director of CABIOMEDE.

However, the company was not going to sit on their hands. Within a few days, they launched a new production line – protective visors. All CABIOMEDE products are certified to European standards and are made of materials that can come into di-



rect contact with the skin. They are also resistant to disinfectants and comfortable because they are super light.

– The equipment and our knowledge in the field of medical devices allowed us to act. It was a quick decision and we hit the jackpot. We had a lot of work – says Mateusz Pawlik.

The visors were sent to hospitals, doctors' offices, offices and schools all the time.

– We returned to full-scale operation in June, focusing on the marketing and sale of veterinary implants and new products in the field of veterinary engineering. The first orders for our protectors have also started to appear – says Mateusz Pawlik.



ActivTek: no more dangerous microbiology

The ongoing pandemic made us realize that viruses and bacteria are a real threat.

—Mateusz Pawlik,
director of CABIOMEDE

—Marcin Malicki,
president of ActivTek



ActivTek, a producer of innovative air treatment systems, has been popularizing this knowledge for years.

– Some of the companies to which we talked about microbiological threats in the air, but also on door handles or furniture, did not take our words seriously. The dangers of the coronavirus made them aware of the risks associated with exposure to a minor pathogen. Today we no longer tell people what the threat is and where it occurs, but how to eliminate it – explains Marcin Malicki, president of ActivTek.

ActivTek treatment systems are the only ones in the world based on the innovative RCI ActivePure © technology. How does this technology work? First of all, it uses the process of photocatalysis, which occurs in nature. The air passing through the device is enriched with natural ingredients that neutralize microorganisms. RCI technology removes microorganisms even from hard-to-reach places. Importantly, it is eco-friendly and safe for people.

The confirmation of its effectiveness is the research of Polish and global scientific units. The use of technology allows to eliminate, among others, influenza viruses, drug-resistant New Delhi bacteria, staphylococcus aureus, molds and fungi. The ActivePure® RCI technology also has a proven effectiveness in fighting the coronavirus.

ActivTek devices are used in medical fa-

cilities around the world. The technology was used by the Arłamów hotel, the hospital of the Ministry of Interior and Administration in Warsaw and the Military Medical Institute. ActivTek devices are also successfully used in nurseries and kindergartens in Kielce.

– Our technology is very effective. In one of the kindergartens where it was applied, the sickness absence of children fell by 70% – points out Marcin Malicki. The pandemic also contributed to changes within the company. ActivTek has moved to a new space in the Oulu Tech building, where it has a separate entrance, and thus the possibility of safe delivery. ■

—The fight
against the
pandemic
continues, as is the
recovery from the
economic crisis. The
KTP tenants do not
give up and – what
is important – still
believe in a better
future.

Olszewskiego Street — the business center of Kielce

The area surrounding the Kielce Technology Park attracts companies from various industries and their investments immensely change this part of the town. A degraded post-industrial area within merely a few years has become a flourishing, modern business district.

Not so long ago not many people were brave enough to venture into Olszewskiego street. On both sides of it there were post-industrial, ruined and empty plots of land, roamed by partridges and deer. They were developed by the Kielce Technology Park, creating four investment zones, a total of 15 hectares of fully equipped areas with access to media and access roads.

Importantly, the investment areas of the KTP gain more and more significance. In September, the city opened the extension of Olszewskiego Street to the intersection with Witosza and Zagnańska streets, which guarantees even better access to this part of Kielce. The neighborhood is also attractive. Companies such as Tegen, Marbach, PROHACCP and EkoEnergia Polska operate along the Olszewskiego Street. PODOPHARM® and VitrinTec will join them soon.

PROHACCP focuses on innovative ideas

PROHACCP, a supplier of products for the food industry meeting the principles of HACCP (food safety management system). The company started in 2009 in a home garage and from PLN 40,000 in a subsidy obtained in the Biznes Starter competition organized by the Park. It was then that the first products detectable by a metal detector were created, including pens, caps, gloves and earplugs. Importantly, PROHACCP products can come into contact with food, which means that they can be safely used while working in the production hall.

The later years brought new ideas, such as so-called "shadow boards" – special board with imprints in shapes of specific tools used in production hall remind to put everything back to their place. Finally, the time has come for their own premises and a real seat. To the new, green building at Olszewskiego, PROHACCP moved in February 2020. The facility consists of a 1,200 sqm produc-

tion and warehouse hall and 600 sqm of office space. – When the city announced a tender for grounds at Olszewskiego Street, we knew that a hectare was more than we needed. But we still applied for purchasing three plots, knowing that we won't have to think about moving for a while. Today we can focus on carrying out new ideas and further growth – says Ewelina Kasprzyk, the vice-president of PROHACCP.

In 2009, PROHACCP was a pioneer on the Polish market. Today, its products are shipped to 50 countries around the world, even to China. And he is constantly working on new solutions, also pro-ecological. Care for the natural environment plays an important role in PROHACCP. For example – company employees receive a special bonus for traveling to work by bicycle.

– We also intend to reorganize the supply chain for customers in such a way that they can return the products purchased from us at the end of their life. We want to reuse what we can and recycle the rest. This is the only way we can be sure that none of our products will end up in garbage – says Sebastian Kasprzyk, president of PROHACCP.

Marbach: new hall, more power

Marbach, a family company with German capital, is developing its business in the vicinity of PROHACCP. Marbach has been operating in Kielce since 2002, initially locating its production on the premises of DS Smith Polska. When the two companies parted ways in 2014, Marbach bought 7,000 sqm at Olszewskiego Street. In 2016, a production plant with an area of over 1,600 sqm was built, and at the end of 2019, its expansion began. – We need more space to be able to increase production for the domestic and Baltic market, starting from 2021. We have expanded the warehouse and office space, gaining an additional 1,500 sqm. The new space should allow us to increase production by 30%, and it will also cover our needs for the next ten



Tomasz Rybka, co-owner and president of VitrinTec



Pavol Kunstar, director of Marbach Polska



Ewelina i Sebastian Kasprzyk, owners of PROHACCP



Łukasz Dziedzic, president of EkoEnergia Polska

years, announces Pavol Kunstar, director of Marbach Polska. The new hall houses a warehouse, where the shipment of goods is also prepared, and production takes place in the "old" part. The plant in Kielce specializes in the production of flatbed and rotary dies for corrugated cardboard for manufacturers of cardboard packaging and the printing industry, mainly from Poland. The Marbach plants are also located in Tarnowskie Góry. The company produces approx. 40 percent rotary dies available on the Polish market. Currently, Marbach employs ca. 80 people in Kielce and is planning further recruitment.

EkoEnergia Polska: time for capital group

In the investment areas provided by the Park at Olszewskiego street, with an area of 8,200 sqm, thanks to EU support, EkoEnergia Polska has built a modern center for renewable energy sources with research and development facilities. The building has 1,500 sqm. In local laboratories, scientists conduct research on the efficiency of renewable energy technologies, including photovoltaic panels, solar collectors and heat pumps. EkoEnergia Polska is looking for an answer to the question which of the solutions used in the RES sector are the most effective for individual us-

ing its business structure. – A photovoltaic boom has started in Poland, and we want to take advantage of it. Every year we record about 100% growth. In 2019, we even received a Business Gazelle for the fastest-growing company in the region. We have always set ourselves ambitious goals, today such a goal is to create a large capital group – says Łukasz Dziedzic.

VitrinTec: their own seat in just one year

VitrinTec, another company apart from 4DOffice and CreoConcept, co-owned by Tomasz Rybka, is preparing to build a modern production plant with an area of over 3,000 sqm. Tomasz Rybka's group of companies specializes in the production of aluminum profiles and glass for arranging modern interiors. These structures are characterized by high transparency and the highest acoustic insulation on the market (innovative Ultra Silence system). The companies also produce modern office furniture. They rented first space at the Kielce Technology Park 2010. Today, on another plot equipped by the Park, there will be a place like a concept factory, where all the elements necessary for arranging a modern office will be produced, i.e. glass partition

In September, the city opened the extension of Olszewskiego Street to the intersection with Witosza and Zagnańska streets, which guarantees even better access to this part of Kielce. The neighborhood is also attractive.

ers: entrepreneurs, local government units and natural persons. There are 49 research stations in the building. When EkoEnergia Polska started operating in 2013, the photovoltaic market in Poland was only beginning to grow. The first headquarters of the company was located in two small rooms in the Orange incubator. Today, the RES market is developing at a dizzying pace, and so is EkoEnergia Polska. The constant relocation to ever larger facilities, didn't work anymore. Therefore, the company invested in building its own headquarters. – As soon as EkoEnergia Polska was established, the first regulations appeared that allowed the development of the market for photovoltaic panels. That's when we started to grow. For as long as I can remember, I have had this idea of creating a renewable energy center, where we could conduct research and present our solutions to clients, reveals Łukasz Dziedzic, president of EkoEnergia Polska. EkoEnergia Polska is a leading producer of photovoltaic panels in Poland. The company is currently in the process of chang-

walls, office furniture and acoustic absorbers. Aluminum profiles will also be produced here, as well as a space for research and development works, a powder coating shop, a showroom with products of all companies, and offices. – We aim to start construction no later than March 2021. We hope that in December we will move into our own headquarters – reveals Tomasz Rybka, president of VitrinTec. The money for construction and equipment was obtained by the company from the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development. Among CreoConcept, 4DOffice and VitrinTec clients there are the largest international corporations such as Google, Coca Cola or Shell. Their solutions can also be found in the Warsaw Spire or Q22 office building, as well as in the Warsaw headquarters of Wirtualna Polska. ■

Recently, three more plots developed by the KTP have found new owners. There are only five left for sale, with a total area of over 2 hectares in the investment zones B and D.

PARK FOR A GOOD START

As much as 1 million PLN can be awarded to authors of the most innovative business ideas. Kielce has joined the project "Start in Podkarpackie" carried out by Regional Development Agency SA (Rzeszowska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego S.A.). Business owners from Świętokrzyskie region are supported by the Kielce Technology Park.

Interestingly, this is already a second time when Kielce and Rzeszów cooperate by the Start-Up Platforms, however during the first pilot edition, it was the KTP which was the leader. At that time, 890 start-ups from all over Poland applied to the "TechnoBiznesHub" Start-Up Platform, 60 were incubated, and 34 received a non-returnable subsidy of 800,000 PLN for further development of their idea.

The projects include natural cosmetics containing the mineral Shungite from space or a special key cover that reminded the forgetful of the need to close the door. CABIOMEDE, a company from the medical, sports and rehabilitation industry, also developed its idea for a business in Starter Platforms.

Opportunity for the creative

Today the Park expects new innovative projects. First ones already appeared and they started incubation. The submitted ideas use the potential of artificial intelligence and machine learning, IoT (Internet of Things) and bots, replacing people in customer service or repetitive activities.

– Submitted solutions are supposed to support the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, but also the veterinary, furniture and ICT industries. This includes a configurator facilitating the production of furniture, an application supporting therapy or a platform for conducting confidential meetings – reveals Dominik Kraska, deputy director of the Kielce Technology Park Incubation at the KTP was started, among others, by Pets Analytics. The start-up wants to introduce an innovative animal health monitoring device to the market.

– Thanks to Pets Analytics, we will be able to monitor our furry friends' wellbeing. Some diseases do not show symptoms at first, which results in pet owners reaching out to veterinarian too late – says Mateusz Pawlik, one of the start-up founders.

Such device will certainly appeal to owners who want to take care of their pet in the best possible way. It will also be useful for breeders, zoos and veterinary clinics.

From an idea to a product

Created by innovation centers, universities, large and medium-sized enterprises, unit funds and business environment institutions, Start-Up Platforms provide comprehensive support for innovative entrepreneurship in Eastern Poland. They operate in nine cities.

Start-ups which are eligible for the program can test their ideas in the incubation process, which takes, on average, six months

(at least three months; maximum eight months). This allows to minimize the risk of failure, which is important, because, as the statistic shows, 70% companies fails during first three years. This percentage is even higher when it comes to start-ups. Throughout the time of incubation, business owners can rely on experts' assistance. The program is adjusted to fit the type of the activity. It results in MVP (minimum viable product), a prototype, which can be presented to potential clients and or investors. A market-verified business model is also created under the supervision of experts.

Start-Up Platforms are aimed at natural persons who have an idea for a business related to the aviation, automotive, construction and IT/ICT industries. There are no age limits, although entrepreneurs who are under 35 years of age can count on preferential treatment.

Three, two, one go! Incubate!

Applications for the fifth, last recruitment will be open until January 31, 2021. All you have to do is go to the website platformys-tartowe.gov.pl, select the platform "Start in Podkarpackie" and fill out the online form. Ideas are evaluated by experts who check

—The KTP's participation in the project is the implementation of our mission: supporting the entrepreneurs from the stage of idea up until full market expansion. There is no better form of support than financial. Starting an innovative business is associated with high risk and costs.

the innovativeness of the concept at least at the national level, assess the competitive advantage, business potential as well as the experience and qualifications of the team that is to develop the product.

The next step is registering the company. After positive assessment of the application one the grounds of submitted idea, you need to create and register the company on the area of Eastern

Poland – for example in Kielce – and develop your idea for product or service.

Start-ups beginning their incubation in the KTP receive a virtual address by 6 Olszewskiego Street or an office space in the Kielce Technology Park, accounting and legal services, tax consultancy, mentoring, help in creating visual identification, as well as access to workshops and training in public speaking and preparation of project presentations for pitching sessions.

In addition, they can use specialistic services: technical and technological support, engineering, IT and design support, including the necessary software and licenses. This also includes experts' assistance with product market assessment, market research, client's needs analysis, obtaining industrial property rights and help from marketing specialists and graphic designers with name and trademark creation and creating the brand.

– In the process of incubation, the companies receive invaluable support. They gain access to experienced experts from different areas, and labs where they can test their solutions, In addition, they work closely together with an incubation manager – it is a supervisor, who helps throughout the whole process. The final result is a complete business model, MVP and a clear path for further growth. Only a few companies can count on such support from the very beginning – points out Dorota Kamińska, manager of the Incubation and Acceleration Department in the KTP.

After the incubation is done, the MVP is presented during the Demo Day. Having a positive recommendation from experts is a ticket to apply for a non-returnable subsidy of up to 1 million PLN from the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (in the competition "Start-Up Development in Eastern Poland" from the Operational Program Eastern Poland).

Start in Świętokrzyskie

– We are glad that partnerships made by Start-Up Platform in Eastern Poland have such dynamic and expansive character. Joining the Park to the project significantly increases its potential and provides an even more interesting incubation offer for start-ups – says with confidence Marcin Seniuk, director of the Start-Up Development Department at Polish Agency for Enterprise Development – supporting young tech companies who are still looking for their business model must be adequate, complex and flexible – he adds. Cooperation of Regional Development Agency and the KTP shows that both of these institutions are perfectly aware of these needs. We are looking forward to seeing the effects of this cooperation and groundbreaking solutions worth of continuous support.

As Jolanta Wiśniowska, vice president of Regional Development Agency and coordinator of the "Start in Podkarpackie" project, points out, participation of the KTP is an additional substantive support and a guarantee of the quality of the submitted business ideas from the Świętokrzyskie region.

– This is confirmed by our experiences and successes in the implementation of the pilot edition of the "TechnoparkBiznesHub" Start-Up Platform – she assures. Park joining to "Start in Podkarpackie" is not only a support for young companies from Kielce

and the region, but also a chance to attract many innovative business ideas and thriving entrepreneurs from all over the country to the city. This was also the case in the pilot edition, when Trans Assist joined the KTP community after the incubation period in Lublin. Today, they are developing their product in Kielce.

– The KTP's participation in the project is the implementation of our mission: supporting the entrepreneurs from the stage of idea up until full market expansion. There is no better form of support than financial. Starting an innovative business is associated with high risk and costs. The key condition for success is gathering enough capital, which on this stage of activity, without any external help is very unlikely – claims Dominik Kraska. The Start-Up Platforms are, according to director Kraska, first step towards strong financial instrument supporting innovative ideas in the KTP. ■

The Start in Podkarpackie Start-Up Platform project is carried out by the KPT together with the Rzeszów Regional Development Agency, the MARR Regional Development Agency in Mielec and the HugeTECH Ekosystem company from Rzeszów, which helps start-ups attract investors and clients.

All information and necessary documents can be found on www.startinpodkarpackie.pl

HOW DOES THE PARK HELP STUDENTS

The cooperation with universities and supporting young people in their choice of career path are yet another tasks undertaken by the Park. The flagship projects: Kielce IT Days, Work on IT or the Competition for the best dissertation are becoming more and more popular every year.

Solve the problem and Work on IT

We just finished the third edition of Work on IT, a competition organized by the KTP in collaboration with the Kielce University of Technology and Transition Technologies PSC, a provider of programming services and specialist software. Each year, IT students work on solving a specific problem that Transition Technologies face in their everyday work.

– Students, together with mentors, employees of the company and the Park, choose the issues that interest them, and during the spring semester, using the Design Thinking methodology, look for the best solution to the problems. In addition, they take part in training in intellectual property law and public speaking, and during a study visit, they learn the details of working in an IT company – explains Patrycja Dulęba from the Kielce Technology Park. 20 students take part in the competition. In the last edition, due to the pandemic, the number of participants was reduced to 11. The competition is so popular that the recruitment is completed already on its first day. Students work in teams to learn to manage and work in an interdisciplinary environment, effective communication, creativity and thinking outside the box.

– Apart from the standard classes, which are part of the curriculum, these practical tasks are extremely valuable. The experiences gained by students will pay off in their future professional life – says with Dr. Eng. Andrzej Stobiecki, Vice-Dean for Education and Student Affairs of the Kielce University of Technology.

The challenges faced by students include managing the booking of desks, conference rooms and company cars or efficiently extracting key information from received CVs. Transition Technologies consults with students and implements the best solutions. – During the last edition, we were afraid of the limitations of remote work, Design Thinking requires intensive cooperation,

commitment and brainstorming. However, everything went smoothly, and the effects of the work were really good – says Patrycja Dulęba.

The formula of the competition is evolving. Already in the third edition, the organizers wanted to expand the activities and encourage students from other faculties and a larger number of companies to cooperate. Unfortunately, the pandemic spoiled these plans, but there is a chance that the idea will be revisited next year.

How good are you at IT?

Another interesting initiative is the Kielce IT Days organized since 2018 by Park and Kielce University of Technology and in cooperation with companies from the IT industry.

– This is an event with which we want to support young people in choosing their career path and encourage them to become interested in the IT industry, which is developing at an unbelievably quick pace and is present in almost every aspect of our lives. The demand for experts in this field is still great, and the number of IT companies in Kielce is constantly growing – points out Anna Pabian-Lipska from KTP.

Nearly 200 pupils and students took part in the 2019 edition. The organizers had to postpone another, scheduled for April 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

– We will return with KDI as soon as the situation allows it, of course with all the sanitary restrictions and safety rules – announces Anna Pabian-Lipska.

KDI means meetings, lectures and discussions on the most current problems of the IT industry, as well as a series of workshops open to all interested in, among others programming languages, the latest technological achievements or IT in business. It is also

the Świętokrzyski IT Test, in which secondary school students and students take part. Each group has a separate set of topics. In the last edition, students answered to questions about Java or databases and about the operation of personal computers, management of local computer networks or creating websites. Additionally, the Świętokrzyski Test for Juniors is held at the Electrical School Complex, in which eighth grade students take part. – Schools from all over the region come to the Test. Applications are coming by the dozen. This is a good moment for students to get to know the offer of the Kielce University of Technology and students to talk to company representatives, says Anna Pabian-Lipska. The winners receive computer and electronic equipment. In addition, students are granted extra points in recruitment for the Kielce University of Technology.

Dissertations in the eyes of practitioners

The Park remembers about graduates as well. Authors of theses who want to verify their knowledge with experienced practitioners can try their hand at the Competition for the best thesis. The KTP project is organized together with the Academic Career Center at Kielce University of Technology.

– The competition is a response to the needs of the market. En-



trepreneurs can gain innovative solutions that will improve the functioning of their companies and help face industry challenges. We would like to improve the transfer of academic knowledge to the business world and raise the professional competences of graduates – reveals Karolina Bubicz from KPT.

Students submit work in all areas in which the Kielce University of Science and Technology educates.

The last edition concerned engineering, bachelor's and master's theses defended in the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years. They were assessed by representatives of: Tera Group Pracownia Architektoniczna, ITcontrol, Strabag Polska, Mostostal, Warszawskie Przedsiębiorstwo Geodezyjne, Dürr Poland, Infover, Transition Technologies S.A., ZIO – MAX, WOST, MAN Bus Starachowice, KH Kipper and Bank Pekao. The companies took into account the method of solving the problem or the suitability of the job. The authors of the best diplomas – one in each area – receive financial awards.

– We want students to be evaluated by people the KTP they can work with in the future and their work to be analyzed from a practical point of view and that it is taken care of by professionals who have extensive experience in a given field – points out Karolina Bubicz.

The companies have a lot of work cut out for them – 89 graduates applied for the last edition. Most to the areas: general construction, economics, data engineering, IT, as well as transport and logistics.

– The competition gives all students the opportunity to test their knowledge, and entrepreneurs appreciate their skills and competences. It is noteworthy that the winners receive not only cash prizes, but very often also cooperation proposals – sums up Emilia Ćwikła, head of the Academic Career Center at Kielce University of Technology. ■



THE POWER OF BUSINESS RELATIONS



A chance to present your idea and have it reliably verified, to meet potential clients and vendors – these are undisputable pros of networking. On how important it to build a network of business contact we talked with **Marcin Januchta**, Kielce Technology Park PR and Promotion Department Manager.

Linking, as in connecting potential business partners?

To be even more precise, initiating their first contact. How does that work? For instance, there is a company “A”, offering some product or service and a company “B”, which we know needs exactly this type of product or service. We create a space for both of those companies to talk. Linking is a recurring event; we organize them in the Park quarterly.

How do these meetings look like?

Linking consists of two parts; first is a business speed dating which is attended by about 20 company representatives each time. We arrange participants in pairs. Each of them presents their activities to the other entrepreneur within two minutes, and after that time they listen to what their interlocutor has to offer. Then they go to the next table, where they meet a representative of another company. It is a great testing ground for a quick, attractive presentation of your business and encouraging the other party to cooperate. Importantly, all these entrepre-

neurs would need much more time if they wanted to meet under normal circumstances.

As for the second part, we invite representatives of companies from various industries and ask them to present a specific topic that is interesting for our tenants, e.g. in the field of marketing, advertising or law. This part takes the form of a lecture, sometimes a project presentation, and ends with a Q&A session.

—The Park was established mainly to support companies on every level of their development. From an idea up to mature business in need of for example new space.

How do you manage to organize that in times where direct contact is limited?

As we cannot change the conditions, we need to adjust to them. Especially because the companies still need such meetings. We moved Linking, along with other events online, and we replaced the speed dating part with elevator pitch. It's a popular business mechanism. Imagine that a person with an idea enters the elevator with another person who has the means to carry it out. They have as much time to present arguments and convince a potential partner as it takes to get to their floor. It is assumed that this type of conversation should last two or three minutes. This is how it is done during online Linking. Each company has three minutes to present their activities, and other participants can ask questions. The second part, i.e. the lecture, takes place as is, with the only difference that the participants ask questions in a chat. Linking is one of the options of connecting the companies together. Every KTP tenant is also aware that they have our support in various kinds of promotion.

What kind of support is that exactly?

The information that a new company has joined the KTP community is published on the Park's website as well as on social media. If the idea is particularly interesting, we try to reach out to the local media. We also send information to all our tenants – over 600 people receive the KTP newsletter. We are trying to get the KTP community interested in the new companies' offers, as well as in new products or services offered by long-term tenants of the Park. We are open to such activities and we are always happy to help, also sending relevant information to business environment institutions operating in the city or region. In my opinion, networking is all events and activities that bring business representatives together (both online and offline).

Like the KTP Academy?

Yes! The idea that emerged in the KTP Development Projects Department is a series of professional training courses and business workshops tailored to the specific needs of companies. We organize the KTP Academy depending on our abilities and number of interested participants, but we try to host several editions a year. Previous meetings concerned, among others marketing, branding in the media, law and management. We invite trainers and practitioners who have succeeded in a given industry. On the other end there are not only KTP tenants, but all interested companies from Kielce and the whole region. Today, when workshops can be organized online, we have a chance to reach an even larger audience.

What is the role of the KTP coworking space?

This is also a type of networking, although today, due to the pandemic, it is impossible to fully utilize its potential. People who work in such a space and develop their ideas can at any time establish valuable business relationships, exchange knowledge and experience, consult a solution. A coworking space can be the source of many amazing ideas. I believe that we will manage to create such place in the California incubator as well.



Are these activities popular?

When it comes to the KTP Academy, a lot depends on the subject of a given training or workshop. However, in general they spark quite big interest. Maybe not yet as we would like it to be, but we still have a lot ahead of us. The pandemic often verifies the approach to business, many companies in times of crisis are looking for new opportunities to act, and this also means acquiring new knowledge and skills. Importantly, the interest in training increases from event to event, which makes us very happy. It is similar with Linking, new companies appear all the time, also from outside the KPT. These meetings often end with joint projects. Even the most creative and widespread advertising cannot replace direct contact, even today when talk business online. ■

IN A WORLD OF GOOD ENERGY

THE KIELCE TECHNOLOGY PARK ENERGY SCIENCE CENTRE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS. IT IS A PLACE THAT IS EAGERLY VISITED BY THE CITY AND REGION RESIDENTS AS WELL AS TOURISTS FROM POLAND AND ABROAD. DESPITE THE CURRENT PANDEMIC IT IS CONSTANTLY DEVELOPING ITS ACTIVITIES, ALSO ONLINE.

Although crossing the submarine's manhole, which is the main entrance to the exhibition, is difficult today due to sanitary restrictions, the Energy Science Centre is still attracting visitors.

– When we opened our exhibition after the spring break regular visitors appeared immediately. They had been waiting to return here. They talked about their longing for normal times and asked about our plans for future, says Iwona Mendyk from the Energy Science Centre.

Energy Science Centre online

The Energy Science Centre is a space with 28 interactive experiment stations located on the second floor of Skye Inc. incubator. Here, you can learn about coal mining and processing, how to make car fuel, a wind whirl or how to change the course of rivers. You can also build your own electric circuit, produce electricity and relax listening to the sounds of nature or watching a movie in a 3D cinema.

– Since the beginning of the pandemic we have developed our online activities, presenting experiments and scientific information in the virtual space. Importantly, we are trying to use materials for experiments that children can easily find at home, such as vinegar, oil or food colourings for cakes. There are easy tasks, which are supposed to make the time of isolation pleasant, explains Magdalena Długosz from the Energy Science Centre. Each experiment is accompanied with a commentary. For example, when sodium and vinegar are combined, a reaction takes

place in which carbon dioxide is released that can spontaneously inflate a balloon. There is also interesting “ECN online” section on the Centre's website, which includes more experiments and facts related to the world of science. The Centre also offers the so-called evenings with experiments, of course available online. A time of the pandemic is a completely new experience for the employees of the centre, who are used to direct contact with visitors, exchange of kind gestures and smiles.

– So far, school children have been the largest group of visitors to the Centre. Today, the situation has changed dramatically and we are thinking how to organize our work when everything returns to normal. In addition to regular groups of visitors we could organize interesting activities at schools and meet children there, says Iwona Mendyk.

There are plenty of ideas for workshops. During the Mars rover competition, organized by the Kielce University of Technology, key rings made of polymer that shrink under the influence of temperature turned out to be extremely popular.

For young and old

The exhibition at the Centre attracts not only school children but also individual visitors. Additionally, on Saturdays there are family workshops organized in “Power Generator” laboratory, of course observing sanitary restrictions.

The scientific birthdays organized at the Centre are also very popular. During a two-hour meeting, children experiment with foodstuffs and safe chemical solutions as well as robots. They also visit the Centre's exhibition.

– Children like coming to the Centre, even when they return here to see what they have already seen before. It is great fun to be invited by a classmate, especially for slightly older participants who have already grown out of playrooms, explains Magdalena Długosz.

The Centre provides space not only for children. There are also workshops organized under the program “Women with Energy” (currently online) during which women discuss topics of interest, such as how to take care of their appearance and health or how to choose colours of clothes to match their type of body. They also make cosmetics, including face creams and perfumes. There are also interesting meetings entitled “Journeys with Energy”, during which travellers and enthusiasts of other cultures invite others to unknown corners of the world.

A lot is going on in the Energy Garden of Experiences, where learning and fun take place in the open air. There is a colourful optical zone, a balance bench or a carousel powered in an unusual way. There is a 30-meter zip-line and a relaxation area with gazebos and a barbecue spot. In addition, during the summer holidays, there is also an open-air cinema which has been prepared in cooperation with the Moskwa cinema for the past three years. ■

Annually, the Centre is visited by approximately 20 thousand visitors.



A time of the pandemic is a completely new experience for the employees of the centre, who are used to direct contact with visitors, exchange of kind gestures and smiles.





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