

## GOOD PRACTICE

### Support for the development of enterprises' international cooperation by Wielkopolska chambers

**ORGANISATION:** Polish Chamber of Commerce for Importers, Exporters and Co-operation; Wielkopolska Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Wielkopolska Chamber of Crafts in Poznan

**TOPIC:** Penetration of territories, attraction of investments, creating and sustain of cross regional/international partnerships

#### TOPIC OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

Support for the development of enterprises' international cooperation by Wielkopolska chambers: in areas of penetration of territories, attraction of investment and creating and sustaining of cross regional/international partnerships

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

Activities related to the promotion of Polish companies on foreign markets are undertaken in the Polish Chamber of Commerce for Importers, Exporters and Co-operation, based on two cooperation models.

The first is related to having a local partner on a given market. For example, in Kurdistan (Iraq) the Chamber has partners in the form of an economic organization that helps in establishing cooperation contacts. In other countries, such partners may be representatives of local or central authority, eg. government / government agencies responsible for economic cooperation and internationalization,. As example in Nigeria the Chamber cooperates with the Nigerian Investment Promotion Agency, in Belarus with the Free Economic Zone "Brest". In addition, in each case a Polish partner is also involved - a private company owned or co-owned by a person from a particular country (eg. Kurdistan, Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia).

Based on these contacts, the Chamber creates a list of products and services for which there is a need in the given country, which is then transferred to Polish companies. In many countries, for example, African companies are taking the opposite approach - the Chamber collects the offers of Polish companies that have the appropriate export potential and prepares an initial product offer or product and price offer, to generate demand on a given market and search through potential partners and contractors.

During the course of the activities incoming business missions are usually organized, during which meetings with Polish entrepreneurs are arranged, offering an opportunity to get acquainted with the basic information about the country, conditions of economic cooperation and trade. An important part of such meetings is the presentation of company and product offer. In the next part of the meeting, B2B meetings are most often held.

An important part of the incoming missions is the organization of meetings by the Chamber in the premises of Polish entrepreneurs - companies associated in the Chamber. It is a great opportunity to present the potential of the Polish company and to conduct preliminary talks and negotiations on the terms of cooperation. The most common result of such meetings is the presentation of the initial price offer and sending of samples or the first batch of goods. One of the tools that can be used in this practice is the creation of the so-called "show-rooms" - places where Polish products are presented on a given market.

The second model of cooperation is cooperation with chambers of commerce: local chambers in the given country, foreign Chambers - Chamber of Commerce in Adana (Turkey), Lviv Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Ukraine), Chambers of Commerce in China, Polish Chambers of Commerce abroad (eg. Argentina-Poland Chamber of Commerce, Japan-Poland Chamber of Commerce, Australia- Poland Chamber of Commerce, Polish Chamber of Commerce in China, China-Polish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong), and bilateral chambers located in Poland (eg. Dutch-Polish Chamber of Commerce, Portuguese-Polish Chamber

of Commerce). The activities undertaken with these chambers are based on signed cooperation agreements, which aim at mutual exchange of information, a common organization of economic initiatives such as economic missions, fairs, conferences, symposia and the development of mutual business contacts.

The role of the individual partners involved in the action taken by the Chamber is very important. It is important to choose the right partners to help establish business relationships between companies in each country. The most important partners are business organizations, economic self-government organizations such as Economic Chambers, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, government agencies. The role of self-government authorities is also significant for building a climate conducive to economic exchange and business in the country and region.

Wielkopolska Chamber of Industry and Commerce is running a Local Business Worldwide Students Platform and building partnership with Chernihiv Region in Ukraine.

Chamber pro-export support covers making analyzes of foreign markets and export potential of enterprises, export development plans, organization of study visits (business meetings, fairs, exhibitions), matching partners.

Local Business Worldwide Students Platform is aimed at exchanging contacts and establish cooperation between foreign students studying in Poznan and Wielkopolska enterprises.

Partners in the undertaking are: Poznan University of Economics, Poznań University of Technology and Private Employers' Organization of Poland, Section Wielkopolska.

Wielkopolska Chamber of Industry and Commerce is also actively building partnership with Chernihiv Region in Ukraine. This cooperation has the historic background: "forming the cooperative ties with Ukrainian companies will not only bring about tangible, bilateral benefits related to the functioning of the labor market, but also to the dynamics of economic growth in Wielkopolska and Chernihiv Region.

When Poland underwent systemic transformation and entered the European Union, Germany was our intermediary. From them the entrepreneurs learned capitalism. Thanks to that, there are almost 5,000 Polish-German companies in Wielkopolska today. Now we want to be such a broker for Ukraine."

Contacts with local Ukrainian authorities and over 70 manufacturing companies willing to cooperate with Polish entrepreneurs were made thanks to several outgoing and incoming economic missions

in 2016, including participation of policymakers on both sides.

The cooperation now takes the form of:

- hosting a website with a current list of Ukrainian companies interested in cooperation with Polish companies;
- to minimize the risk of cooperation the Chamber organizes business trips to Ukraine, provides accommodation and transport in Ukraine, translation of documents, etc. The support also covers the legal aspects of cooperation and restructuring of Ukrainian partners to ensure the desired quality and timely delivery.

The Chamber is currently opening its office in Chernihiv to better provide its services.

Wielkopolska Chamber of Crafts in Poznan has been involved in international programs, previously Leonardo da Vinci Program and now Erasmus +, in cooperation with vocational schools in Wielkopolska and the German Craft Chambers, providing three-week internships for students.

Internships are held in Germany in Training Centers located at craft halls i.a. in Frankfurt/Oder, Hennickensdorf, Potsdam, Gotz and Wiesbaden. Up to now, 271 students from Wielkopolska vocational schools have benefited from the opportunity to improve their skills and gain new qualifications abroad. They represented the following professions: mechanic, electro mechanic, hairdresser, carpenter and sanitary installer.

In addition to the ability to practice the profession and deepen their knowledge of German language, foreign students gain new knowledge and skills that go beyond the curriculum and, for example, car mechanics and installers acquire certified sheet metal welding skills, very useful for future work.

Internships have a positive impact on personal development and a growing sense of the value of young people. They provide a great incentive to develop and improve professional skills in the future. They increase intercultural awareness, learn tolerance and accept cultural and social differences. Teachers who are tutors on internships also improve their professional skills, acquire new experiences, learn new teaching methods that can be successfully used upon return and thus affect the effectiveness of the learning process. For vocational schools participating in projects, internships are an important promotional element and a way to increase the attractiveness of a school in the local market.

WIR in Poznań, through the implementation of further traineeships, strengthens cooperation with German craft chambers. WIR also organizes 2-week internships for foreigners. In recent years, 68 students from Germany and 26 from France have perfected their skills in Poznan craft enterprises. They were students of confectionery, bakery, installation, locksmithing, carpentry and hairdressing.

Wielkopolska Chamber of Crafts in Poznan implemented the international "Learning e-Mobility Plus," project from September 2014 to August 2016 together with partners from Germany, Poland and Italy. It was aimed at:

- dissemination of the topic of electromobility;
- exchanges of experience and knowledge transfer between vocational schools, research institutes and entrepreneurs in the automotive industry;
- strengthening international co-operation between vocational schools, higher education institutions and entrepreneurs' associations.

The result of the project was the development of training materials and the building of models which will enable the students to attend vocational training courses with the current technological achievements in the field of electromobility.

The project also included the development of teaching tips and examples of good practice for teachers, lecturers and masters of practical training.

## ROLE OF ACTORS

The Polish Chamber of Commerce for Importers, Exporters and Cooperation is an organization of economic self-government, which was initiated by the most active companies in Wielkopolska, bringing together Polish and foreign companies from different industries.

It provides services related to i.a.:

- assistance in developing business contacts at home and abroad,
- introduction of products and services offered by its members to different foreign markets,
- end to end organization of group tours to international fairs and exhibitions,

- organization of business tours, within business missions, to all countries with which the Chamber carries out business cooperation or arranges such cooperation,
- supporting business initiatives of the Chamber members,
- information about the possibility of obtaining external funds and grants for business development,
- industry presentation of member companies at meetings with foreign partners,
- organization of business meetings for foreign companies participating in trade fairs.

Wielkopolska Chamber of Industry and Commerce is a regional, voluntary, independent organization of economic self-government, representing the interests of the member companies both in Poland and abroad.

It provides services related to i.a.:

- undertaking any economic initiatives in Wielkopolska,
- promotion of Wielkopolska enterprises,
- matching partners
- conducting trade negotiations,
- complex organization of promotional missions abroad, participation in exhibitions,
- information and business advice for domestic and foreign entities,
- preparing reports on Polish and foreign companies - business intelligence,
- organization of trainings and seminars,
- legalization of foreign trade documents.

Wielkopolska Chamber of Crafts in Poznan is an organization of economic self-government of craftsmanship, craft cooperatives and other organizational units, if their purpose is to support the economic development of the crafts. It is the oldest Chamber in Poland founded in 1919. The Chamber, whose activity is mainly concentrated in the Wielkopolska region, comprises 44 guilds and 9 craft cooperatives. The main task of the Chamber is to help represent organizations and craftsmen in the public administration and other organizations and institutions, to provide their members with instructional and advisory assistance, and to conduct apprenticeship and master's examinations.

The basic activity of the Wielkopolska Chamber of Craft in Poznań is in particular:

- providing assistance to affiliated organizations and their craftsmen, especially in the area of legal, economic, taxation,
- supervision over the organization and course of the vocational training process in the crafts,
- representing the interests of the craft community towards public administration bodies,
- organizing courses, seminars and training courses aimed at improving the professional qualifications of craftsmen,
- participation in the implementation of education and training tasks in order to provide qualified staff for the national economy,

- promotion and maintaining attitudes consistent with the principles of professional ethics and fair craftsmanship,
- undertaking activities aimed at modernizing the craft in the context of meeting the competitiveness of the market economy.

## BENEFICIARIES

The beneficiaries of the actions are SMEs entrepreneurs who acquire new markets and customers for their products and services. In addition, thanks to undertaken actions the region of Wielkopolska and the Polish brand are gaining as a country from which innovative, competitive, high quality products and services come from. Building the brand of the region and country has a positive impact on the success of individual businesses supported by the actions taken by the Chamber.

## CULTURAL ASPECTS: POSSIBLE KEY LEVERAGES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION PROCESSES

As part of the activities undertaken, Polish companies have the opportunity to learn about intercultural differences and how to best prepare themselves for cooperation with a given market with often different business culture and traditions.

The actions taken by the Chamber help breaking many barriers encountered by Polish entrepreneurs commencing cooperation with a given market, especially with far-away non-EU countries. It is primarily about regulatory barriers, but also cultural ones. In this context, an important part of the Chamber's support is running the magazine called "Business habits" developed jointly with scientists from Poznan University of Economics and prepared for many different countries (for each separately) , containing information on cultural differences. This extensive study includes information on how to perform meetings, negotiations, business preparation, how to greet each other, how to interpret gestures, how to use titles. In addition, they include information on gifts and business clothing.

## INNOVATION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE, POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT AND REPLICABILITY

Innovation involves inclusion of various entities that are credible and can assist in verifying potential contractors. This is particularly important in non-EU markets. The result of the actions taken is sale of goods of individual companies, which in this model started cooperation with a given country.

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