

CREATION OF CLUSTERS IN THE ECONOMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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In the Republic of Belarus the development of regional innovative clusters in different sectors of national economy began in 2004, but to date, the term cluster has been used conditionally with the prefix «potential» [4]. The reason is the fact that clustering is a difficult and long-term process. The complexities in the implementation of ideas for the development of clusters arise as the interests of different parties involved into this process are deeply correlated. As a result, there are also difficulties in the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and technologies. Competition also leads to head hunting, as well as to the difficulties in legal recognition of rights and responsibilities [2]. Another problem on the way to clusters includes underdevelopment and low innovation activity of small businesses; a lot of them are characterized by noncompetitive production management (according to the modern

standards of technology and methods), high costs and significant depreciation of fixed assets [5].

The development of clusters in Belarus is hindered by the imperfect structure of the economy. On one side it has been argued that the clusters couldn't be organized without administrative influence and the state should give impetus to an alliance, but in the legislation the law on state-private partnership doesn't exist and the concept of «cluster» is still not defined in the register of legal terms.

On the other side there is a suggestion that the clusters should be formed on grassroots initiative, and the state shouldn't take part in the formation of clusters at all.

The supporters of this approach consider that the main factor defining such activity is the initiative of businessmen themselves. However, considering that Belarus isn't a country with a market system, the development of clusters according to this principle is impossible. What is more the Belarusian businessmen are distinguished by individualism what is an obvious barrier to the formation of any businessmen alliance [1].

Evaluation of the international experience shows that encouraging businesses to create alliances can be fulfilled with the help of a management model that involves the creation of legal framework followed by the formation of infrastructure and then by the encouragement of clusters' initiatives.

In spite of high importance of innovative clusters for the nation's economy and the state's utmost interest in innovative development of regional economies, nowadays we haven't got any direct state mechanisms aimed at creating innovative clusters.

Taking into consideration the specific character of the Belarusian development model where the role of the state in the management of the economy and in the formation of economic growth priorities is rather high, it makes economic sense to create the instrument which will help to put into practice the mechanism of the state economic policy making in the sphere of regional innovative clusters formation.

Under the Program of Innovative Development of the Republic Belarus for 2011-2015 the Ministry of Economic Affairs has developed the guidelines to encourage and support clusters. The amendments to the Decree № 1 about the subjects of innovative infrastructure and to the Decree № 255 controlling the support of small business were also introduced.[3] The centers of cluster development will likely be created on the platforms of non-government business organizations and technological parks.

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