Looking behind the metaphors: How to build stairways to excellence in EU regions?

University of Warsaw – with EU structural funds towards knowledge triangles

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University of Warsaw facts & figures

- comprehensive university in Humboldt university tradition
- excellent research records in natural sciences (78% of the research budget)
- teaching 120 educational programs (86% of students in humanistic and social sciences)
- 53 500 students, 3300 academic staff (out of total of 6200 employees)
University of Warsaw in money

- total annual budget ca. 240 M€ (unfinished investments from EU structural funds not included)
- Budget shares: 66% teaching, 29% research, 5% other

- EU structural funds: ca. 275 M€ in current perspective; ESF 21%, ERDF 79% (previously: 27 M€, ESF 33%, ERDF 67%)
Main projects - infrastructure

- Center for New Technologies and Department of Physics buildings (70 M€)
- Center for Biological and Chemical Sciences (70 M€)
- participation in project consortia (equipment) for Preclinical Research (25 M€) and Advanced Materials (25 M€)
- Building for Depts. of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics (17 M€)

(goal: a leap towards top-class university)
Main projects - functional

- "Modern University" (3 M€)
- international PhD studies programs (mathematics, natural sciences, ...) (8 M€)
- trainings, courses, postgraduate studies, new programs, ....

(goal: support for modernisation of educational programs)
Structural funding classified by aim

- support for regional cooperation: 13 projects, 4.4 M€ total (1.6% by budget, 12% by number) (previously 6 projects, 3.5 M€)

- capacity building: 72 projects, 218 M€ total (94% by budget, 65% by number) (previously 12 projects, 18 M€)
From "knowledge triangle" perspective

- strict separation of infrastructural ("hard") and "soft" projects:
  - infrastructure (ERDF), rigidly separated into:
    - educational infrastructure
    - scientific infrastructure
  - personnel and HR (ESF)
- no coordinated application can be made for funding from two sources
  ...each corner of the triangle is supported separately, one at a time
triangle perspective, cont.

- consequences:
  - you need two good corners to get the third one supported
  - fast improvement of entire triangle is hardly possible

- legal obstacles: eligibility of non-recoverable VAT
- risk of unlawful state aid when results commercialized
Conclusions

- currently, structural funding mainly used for capacity building, investments will be operational in 2012/2013
- growth predominantly in infrastructure, not enough growth in human capital, unclear perspectives, no instruments for coordination of growth in both areas
- so far, capacity growth results in the increase in awarded grants (7FP, ERC,...)
- a number of enterprises show interest in regional knowlegde triangles, but more support from regional authorities needed