

The main scientific objective of the project is to develop an integrated and dynamic conceptual model of key meta-rules, determinants and effects of opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as its operationalization and empirical verification based on expert research and quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted on a sample of SMEs from selected countries of the European Union. Following specific objectives have been set:

C7: Identification of the key meta-rules of opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises and the direction and strength of the relationships towards the pro-innovative orientation of the company.

C8: Identification and evaluation of key external factors which determine the development of opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises.

C9: Identification and evaluation of key internal factors which determine the development of opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises.

C10: Determining the direction and strength of the effect of opportunity-based approach on the process of innovation management in small and medium-sized companies.

C11: Identification and evaluation of key benefits (positive effects - pro-innovation) resulting from the development of opportunity-based approach for innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises.

C12: Identification and assessment of key threats (negative effects - disinnovation) resulting from the development of opportunity-based approach for innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises.

On the basis of the review of published literature and assessment of the reality in SMEs based on the results of empirical studies forming part of earlier projects, the following preliminary **research hypotheses** directly corresponding to the adopted specific objectives were formulated:

H1: Development of the opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises, expressed by a dynamic configuration of interrelated meta-rules at the different stages of exploration and exploitation of opportunities: imagination, amplification, creation, filtration, integration, operation, evaluation and accumulation, is significantly and positively associated with the level of pro-innovation orientation of the company.

H2: The key external factors, in a significant and positive way determining development of the opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises are: variability, complexity and potential of the environment.

H3: The key internal factors in a significant and positive way determining development of the opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises are: focus on the search for positive environment potential and level of development of entrepreneurial and dynamic skills of the organization.

H4: Development of the opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises significantly and negatively affects the level of barriers existing in the innovation management process in small and medium size companies.

H5: Development of the opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises significantly and positively affects the level of resources and pro-innovation competences, the scope of the implementation of initiatives under the open innovation model and increase in the efficiency of innovation management in the company.

H6: Development of the opportunity-based approach to innovation management in small and medium-sized enterprises significantly and positively affects the limitation of linearity of the course and the level of autonomy of innovation management in these entities.

Work objectives and verification of hypotheses will be devoted to the **following basic empirical work**:

1. Qualitative research in the form of 10 case studies of innovation leaders from SME sector, using the narrative and numbers approach. The objective is to identify patterns for opportunity based approach to innovation management.
2. Expert research using Delphi method to verify the underlying theoretical assumptions and operationalization of the conceptual model.
3. Quantitative research based on the questionnaire surveys on a sample of about 900 SMEs from 6 selected EU Member States representing various level of innovativeness potential. The objective is to verify the proposed theoretical model in quantitative terms.

Results of the project include significant impact on the development of the discipline of management sciences, what is related mainly to the development and empirically verified of a theoretical, comprehensive and dynamic model of opportunity based approach to innovation management in SMEs. A number of conclusions will be formulated based on the outcome of the research, which will contribute to the development of the theory and research in the discipline of management sciences (part of economics science). The project will therefore generate new knowledge relating mainly to:

1. Description of dynamic mechanism and meta-rules of exploration and exploitation of opportunities for innovation management in SMEs.
2. Identification and assessment of the key, internal and external factors which determine the development of opportunity-based approach to innovation management in SMEs.
3. Identification and evaluation of key effects resulting from the development of opportunity-based approach for innovation management in SMEs.

Results also include series of research articles in world-class journals of the Web of Science database (included in the JCR list), preparation of a number of national and international publications and participation in conferences and research fellowships.

The results of the project will also contribute to the economic and social sphere on the micro- (benefits for SMEs), mezo- (benefits for the regions) and macroeconomic level (development of the European economy based on knowledge and creativity). The proposed project is consistent with the European Union Strategy 2020 and Long-Term Polish Development Strategy until 2030. Impact of the project on the social sphere concerns different groups, which success and quality of life is associated with the operation of SMEs. Additional results will include: two PhD dissertations, development of the achievements necessary to obtain

two habilitation degrees, a film discussing the methods, conditions, and effects of the search and exploitation of opportunities for innovation activity development in SMEs and three to five SMEs case studies to be used by academic teachers.