

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Free Entrepreneurship Association – Business Support Centre in Swidnica is a long-term, trustworthy and reliable partner of Danish Technological Institute, and deliver services under our joint projects in a very effective and efficient way.

Danish Technological Institute was founded in 1906, by the Danish SME Federation as a resource centre for the emerging small industries sector in the country. The Institute is focused on HRD and vocational training of enterprise owners, artisans and skilled workers, but gradually services within strategic and operational management, product development, productivity and R&D were added. The Institute, which now has a staff of app. 850 specialists, is Denmark's largest provider of management and technological services for SMEs. DTI comprises very strong technology development sections with energy oriented units considered as leading Danish technology centres of the kind. Among the DTI's priority services is reducing the adverse impact from environmentally harmful production technologies by introducing Cleaner Technologies at strategically well-placed production sites to maximise the demonstration and social multiplier effects or by equipping national producer associations, institutions of higher education and local authorities with the required skills to install and employ these processes. The Institute is also very active in the field of HRD and handles more than 13,000 mostly smaller assignments for SMEs every year, and 20,000 persons participate in HRD courses and conferences on enterprise strategy, management, production and technology.

We are proud of the long term cooperation with Free Entrepreneurship Association – Business Support Centre in Swidnica, our major partner in Poland. In fact BSC was established as a result of an EU funded technical assistance measure run by DTI in the early 1990s with the goal to set up the network of business support organisations throughout Poland. The BSC of Swidnica was among the few selected ones to receive an extra assistance from DTI (coaching scheme plus secondment programme) to strengthen its capacity and transfer best Danish practices within the field of business development organisations. Over the next years DTI continued to use the valuable resources and expertise of FEA-BSO on numerous ventures.

Within the last 3 years FEA-BSC was involved as a leading partner in two major SME development projects run by DTI in Poland:

1. Human Resources Development – Training for employees of SMEs Slaskie Voivodship
PL0008.05.01.002
2. Enterprise Poland: Regional Support Programme for SMEs – Technical Assistance Project
PL2002/000-580.06.05.05.02

The budget of the first project exceeded 3 million euro. Its target group were SMEs. As a result 1500 SMEs were selected to benefit from the programme (3 times as many as planned in the ToR). From the above SMEs, total of 4.800 employees and managers were be trained (as compared to 3.000 specified in the ToR), during 400 training courses. The training catalogue comprised 64 training topics which was followed by development of complete sets of materials. Additionally 350 advisory services were delivered to more than 300 SMEs resulting in development plans and applications addressing the essential challenges of the business. 2100 training and 3400 advisory man-days were employed to deliver the outcomes.

The project remains the largest training and advisory scheme to support SMEs ever realised in Poland.

Services provided by FEA-BSC were delivered in most essential parts of the project and comprised:

- management through 2 key experts of the very fundamental areas of the Project: training and advisory services. This included developing planning and monitoring procedures, defining goals and targets, selection and evaluation of short term experts (trainers and advisors)
- Conceiving and establishing an organisational system capable to deliver ca. 60% of the volume of all training and advisory services (meant as an exclusive input from FEA)

The whole project was evaluated by an independent auditor's firm and recognized as a model one by the contracting party – Polish Agency for Entrepreneurship Development. Not only did the project surpassed the targets set in the contract but also utilized all man-days provided. The project was successfully closed within the period specified and settled in financial terms. Services delivered by FEA-BSC contributed significantly to the overall success of the project.

The second project, an SMEs technical assistance one, was conceived as a capacity building scheme to support Marshall Offices, local governments and NGOs in several selected regions of Poland. This was done through a series of diversified actions run across 4 Polish voivodeships: dolnoslaskie, lubuskie, malopolskie, zachodniopomorskie. The measures taken included training programme for the four Marshall Offices, Business Support Organisations (BSOs) and local governments seeking to enhance their capacities to build their SMEs oriented policies and carry out specific projects involving SMEs (targeted at most sensitive areas like low energy building). Other project's actions focused on regional network based partnerships development, business plan development for BSOs, innovation related assessments of SME and BSO needs, as well as designing ICT model solutions to cater for NGOs, SMEs and local governments (portal designs and CMS based networking tools). Among the actions completed by FEA-BSC were also feasibility studies for two innovation centres focusing on regional energy policies, as well as organisation of the workshops involving regional stake-holders.

All the activities planned under the project have been successfully finished, well before the contractual time framework. The budget of the project was over 0,7 million euro.

It is worth to underline the crucial input of FEA-BSC which set up an effective base to manage the project from the office in Wroclaw, but, even more importantly, provided its experts in all most sensitive fields of expertise under the project. Thus the resources of FEA-BSC has proved to be a foundation for the successful provision of the project.

FEA-BSC makes an unprecedented case of a successful Polish non-government organisation with the impressive expert capacity developed over the last 15 years through multiple projects with diversified target beneficiaries (SMEs, local and regional authorities, consulting and training organisations, universities). We deeply believe, the next stage of economic growth in Poland has gained a considerable support through the emergence of such advanced expert organisations like FEA-BSC, no doubt a national leader of local and regional development.

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