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... how are they supported?

Paradoxically, the current global situation related to the coronavirus epidemic is contributing to increased interest in startups, especially those operating in the medical industry.

It should be remembered that start up is an organization or a young innovative enterprise using modern technologies.

It is these types of companies that can play a key role in creating and introducing innovative solutions to ensure the safety of medical services but also patients.

The purpose of this article is to emphasize the importance of innovation in young enterprises, as well as to present examples of uniting start-ups with public organizations in the fight against the epidemic. Assistance and support programs for start-ups will be of great importance here.

Organizers of Techstars Startup Weekend organized the event **Global Startup Weekend Poland Covid-19**, as part of which startups could obtain support related to the process of implementing technologies on the market to facilitate work and functioning in a pandemic era.

As part of the Łódź Special Economic Zone, in cooperation with Ericsson Polska, the **Star Spark 2.0** accelerator for technologies related to combating the effects of COVID-19 has been launched. Start-ups interested in participating in this accelerator can count on mentoring and financial support as well as assistance in reaching clients. On the other hand The National Center for Research and Development has also launched its own grant program. The institution plans to select innovative projects related to diagnostics, prevention and treatment of COVID-19 as part of the Fast Path "Coronavirus". PLN 200 million has been earmarked for this purpose from European funds, which you can apply for from 6 May 2020.



Although the prevailing situation surprised everyone, it was necessary to implement the measures as soon as possible, and therefore the first effects of close cooperation between start-ups and the medical industry can already be observed. The BrainScan.ai team developed artificial intelligence specialized in computed tomography images for the diagnosis of COVID-19. Mudita, in turn, established cooperation with the Foundation for Research and Development of Science, under which a fan was designed for patients infected with the virus. The device is to enable the patient to supply oxygen in a crisis situation when the medical facility does not have a free respirator.

According to the head of the Crisis Information Center of the Space Research Center of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the goal of Covid Challenge is to generate innovations that can help health care in the fight against pandemics. It is primarily about protective equipment for paramedics, repeating based on 3D printing, elements of a simple improvement of ambulance equipment, but also solutions that remotely scan human temperature.

As you can see, openness to new solutions is not indifferent to public organizations, especially if the proposals offered are related to the most valuable good which is human life.

However, is the innovation of Polish startups based on financing development?

An extremely important indicator of the level of innovation in the economy a country's percentage of GDP is allocated to research and development. From the analysis of data on total expenditure on research and development (GERD) published by Eurostat shows that developed and prosperous countries allocate the largest share of its research and development GDP. Poland is in this list unfortunately at the bottom of the rate.

Also research and development expenses per capita are the largest in developed countries. Expenditure on research and development per capita in Poland is 5 times smaller than the average for 28 EU countries.

Considerations regarding the growth of this indicator are comforting. Over the past decade expenditure in Poland increased almost fourfold, while the EU average recorded an increase of only one third.

(based on reports ExMetrix Sp. z o.o. *Przedsięwzięcia w fazie Start-UP oraz nakłady na badania i rozwój (R&D) – sytuacja w Polsce oraz na świecie*)



It remains to be hoped that the intensive involvement of the startup industry will not be forgotten, but will translate into further assistance programs for young entrepreneurs, also in the context of legal conditions, although in this aspect some actions have already been taken - from March 2021 Prosta Spółka Akcyjna will be established, whose minimum capital needed to set up is only PLN 1.