

17–18 January 2008 in Ljubljana,
Cankarjev dom – Cultural and
Congress Centre

The 2nd Slovenian Innovation Forum

The Slovenian Ministry of the Economy and Public Agency for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments – JAPTI organised the 2nd Slovenian Innovation Forum to showcase the best innovative ideas, approaches and products on the national scale in 2007. From 175 innovations submitted for evaluation, 40 were selected by the national committee and showcased as an exhibition of top Slovenian achievements called “Innovative Potential of Slovenia!”

regional scale. In fact, 150 business meetings were registered in two days, as a consequence of carefully pre-planned matchmaking.

Apart from the exhibition, organised matchmaking and the programme on the open stage, the event also introduced the common thread concept of presenting the innovation process by means of “The Route of an Entrepreneurial Idea” – five stages in the growth of an idea into successful marketing of the innovation. This received wide attention from innovators who welcomed the advisory support of technology networks, parks, clusters, associations and other organisations.

The programme, with 40 parallel events, attended by more than 1500 participants, gained a good response overall from students, innovators, and the public at large, as well as from businessmen and investors, which suggests that the objectives were fully achieved. In short, these were:

- to provide the opportunity for innovators to receive free advice, instruction and material support by bringing together all development actors, governmental and non-governmental;
- to raise the awareness of decision-makers to the potential of innovation and entrepreneurship in the national economy.

The programme of the 2nd Slovenian Innovation Forum also focused on specific events for the young, aiming to motivate them towards invention and creative approaches, and encouraging entrepreneurship in their activities by including them, together with innovators, businessmen and advisers, in round tables, discussions and match-making.

At the opening of the 2nd Slovenian Innovation Forum, a catalogue: The Innovative Potential of Slovenia was issued, comprising an overview of the selected innovations for 2007 and several topics on the state of innovation in Slovenia, including a survey of opinion-makers’ views on Slovenia as an environment for innovators.

Opinion-makers gave interesting views when comparing the innovation environment in Slovenia to that of the EU: Minister Dr Žiga Turk of the Government Office for Growth noted:

“The share of technologically high-intensive products within total Slovenian exports is hardly grounds for pride as it is not reaching 5% (4.5% in 2006), compared to the three times higher share in EU countries (EU-27: 16.7% in 2006).

The role of Slovenian government

The best three in the small/ medium enterprises category were:

1. Gama System d.o.o. with the innovative Gama System E-Archive; contact Mr. Marko Šobota.
2. Izoelektro d.o.o. with composite surge arresters for outdoor fitting with protection against excess voltage.
3. Intera d.o.o. with the Intrix Project – an innovative web tool for managing projects and project teams; contact Ms. Alenka Simonič.

The best three in the large enterprises category were:

1. Domel d.d. with a new compact lightweight high-speed motor for wet and dry applications; contact Mr. Martin Pintar.
2. Acroni, d.o.o. with new stainless austenitic steel stabilised with titanium; contact Mr. Avguštin Novšak.
3. Lama Avtomatizacija d.o.o. with Speed-caster – a machine for combined casting.

- XLAB d.o.o.

Each innovation was presented at the event by a poster describing the idea and showing an image of the innovation as well as by a 15-minute live presentation on the open stage by the developers. During the presentation, a range of questions was raised by the audience, demonstrating pleasure

In the individual innovators category, the national committee selected the following:

1. Tomaž Rotovnik for a voice-operated telephone.
2. Davorin Kralj for recycling post-construction waste from light concrete and polyurethane chips.
3. Marko Valič for his USWR device using the USWR measuring method.

A chance for self-promotion at the event was offered to the best innovative enterprises, also selected by the national committee.

- Acroni, d.o.o.
- ATech elektronika d.o.o.
- Domel d.d.
- Elaphe d.o.o.
- Gama System d.o.o.
- Intera d.o.o.
- Lama Avtomatizacija d.o.o.
- SAOP d.o.o.
- Špica International d.o.o.

and curiosity at the new invention on the one hand, and business interests of investors and company representatives on the other. The 2nd Slovenian Innovation Forum also brought about numerous connections between inventors and innovators, and representatives of programmes and policies to support innovation on the national or



From left to right: Mojca Kucler Dolinar, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology; Peter Ješovnik, MSc, director of the Public Agency for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments (JAPTI); Prof. Dr Matjaž B. Jurič, Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, University of Maribor, and chairman of the national committee of the Slovenian Innovation Forum; and Matej Rus, MSc, head of programme.

agencies and departments is to improve the efficiency of the national innovation system regarding the selection of those spheres of activity where innovative potentials, competition and the synergies among them are at their best."

Jean-Noel Durvy, Director for Innovation Policy at the European Commission, only confirmed this statement:

"As frequently noted in Europe, governance issues play a particular role in the case of innovation. Therefore, from the Commission point of view, one of the main innovation policy challenges for Slovenia is also to improve the coordination of the different government departments and agencies responsible for the promotion of research, entrepreneurship and innovation."

However, Andrej Vizjak MSc, Minister of the Economy, reassuringly stated that "the measures in the programme of measures to support entrepreneurship and competition are priority issues focused on innovation policies and practice in the period between 2007 and 2013."

The Forum launched a number of activities which met innovators' expectations. The event was, briefly, focused on selection and presentation of innovations and their inventors, matchmaking, and advice and support. In the future, every effort should be made to prolong these activities throughout the year and to develop a special permanent space (physical and virtual) for matchmaking, for keeping in contact, and for generating interactive events.

