The main difficulties of Russian (Tomsk) companies in cooperation within EU programmes

Maxim Volkov, Administration of Tomsk Region, Head of Committee on relations with Russian Regions and CIS Countries
The main Tomsk actors of interaction with EU are universities:

- **Tomsk Polytechnic University**. It’s the most active in 7FP, in technical area (theoretical physics, new materials, chemistry, environment, training etc.)

- **Tomsk State University** succeed in TEMPUS, as a grant coordinator among Siberian universities.

- **Siberian State Medical University** – 7FP,

- Institutes of Siberian Branch of Russian academy of Medical Science (Institute of medical Genetics) – 7FP (genetics)

- Just one private company “**Elecard Devices**” which have tried to support its startups with help of 7FP (digital video, video transportation, ITC).
The main problems which have been mentioned by these actors of cooperation with EU:

1. *It is often too difficult for Russian academy or inno business people to prepare a grant application suitable to EU demands.*

   - There are still many academic people do not know English well enough to prepare an application form. But this situation is getting better last years.

   - It is often difficult to understand the essence, the task of the grant – Russians are preparing one application task but the grant demands quite different. As a result - an applicant could not win the grant, wasted his time and money and loose the trust to the EU grants.

   We need seminars or consultations of EU experts to clarify all the EU programs peculiarities and financing mechanisms for all interested Russian applicants. It would be highly recommended to open the EU consultation centers not only in Moscow or S. Petersburg but also behind the Ural mountains.
• It’s difficult to know all the features to fulfill the grant form properly, because there are a lot of documents, forms which demand from an applicant lots of time for understanding.

In Europe it’s common to hire special companies to prepare application form and there are a lot of them. In Russia there are not so many such companies and their services are quite expensive.

So may be to work out a short instructions (user guide, FAQ) for all who just start to cooperate with EU programs.

2. It is difficult to administer and fulfill a program.

• Russian applicants still have not enough experience of administration and financial control of EU projects.

• Different mentality of EU and Russian partners: Europeans wait more initiative and self-independence from Russians, and Russians often leave the initiative to European colleagues.
• After the project is accomplished, emerged the problem of intellectual property division, which usually wonder Russian researchers.

• There is a problem of working with Russian banks (during the finance transfer). Banks demand the legislative basis of such transfers (but there is no such established reporting form) and every time ask for different reports, references etc.

• Different forms of accounting reports in Russia and EU.

• Often the mechanisms of the project guidance (ties between the leading project organization or a customer and other project participants) are not very transparent. The leading organization usually are so independent from the other participants that make problems to the others to accomplish the project. Often the real goal of the project is known just by the leading organization not the others participators or contractors.
3. Trust deficit among the European and Russian partners (especially in Russian regions).

- EU institutes, companies do not work directly to Russian regions, their knowledge about academic and university science, knowledge based business are usually very poor. The major part of EU-Russian scientific and inno business ties are in Moscow and S.Petersburg (sometimes Kaliningrad or Nizhnii Novgorod).

- EU should pay more attention to intensification the interaction not only with Russian academic institutes and universities, but also with the knowledge-based or innovation business. Russian inno business should be included into the European demand on innovative products. It should more interact with European colleagues. **It would be recommended to discuss a joint venture fund for joint European and Russian startup projects or special fund which would pay the businessmen mobility between EU and Russia (quite topical for small inno companies).**
4. Russia does not initiate joint projects yet. Tomsk inno actors can not initiate their own projects for joining European partners.

- there is no mechanism for that (Russia has no such instruments to initiate joint programs with EU like 7FP for example).

- There is quite poor knowledge about the science and technology development level in Europe and in Russia. The problem that can be solved by joint projects and more often meetings (conferences, seminars, lectures in universities, etc).
Thank you for your attention and Welcome to Tomsk!