

Chapter 16

Technology Scouting and Inventions Patenting With Impact on the Agrifood Future: INACO – Institutional Innovation for Competitiveness in Romania

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is the sketch of a possible pattern of the future world in which any kind of business will be developed in a completely new human, technological, agricultural, and commercial context, heavily and quickly changed from the one we live in now. The first objective of this chapter is to scout for the mega-technology trends that will reshape completely the future business and jobs, focusing on the agrifood industry. The second objective is to tackle the main challenges to patent inventions in terms of costs and timing in Romania, relative to other countries, and raise pragmatic recommendations. The third objective is to describe the institutional innovation called INACO (the Initiative for Competitiveness), a think-tank dedicated to tackle the challenges and opportunities of the future economy and how can a country such as Romania stay competitive in a more and more competitive world.

INTRODUCTION

The tomorrow's hyper-technological world has emerged and tempts us with its various scientific discoveries and economic strategies from today. In Romania, there are already signs of this very near future - in today's leading industries - such as IT - but also in traditional areas like agriculture. Few know that, in fact, strategically, agriculture is the area where innovative technologies apply for the first time - as proof of the fundamental importance of securing the food resources of the world's countries.

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For any economy, any public policy or even for every business to be profitable and competitive tomorrow, all need to know the global trends that today's world is facing. Information is in itself a certain value - more valuable than natural or financial resources - especially in the perspective of technological, social, agrifood or climatic evolutions etc. Exceptionally fast. That is why the developed nations - China, the United States, Japan, and not only¹- use supercomputers to pinpoint the potential of the near future economy as accurately as possible.

This chapter is the sketch of a possible pattern of the world over just a few years in which any kind of business will be conducted in a completely new human, technological, agricultural, commercial context. Completely changed from the one we live in now. The first objective of this chapter is to scout for the mega-technology trends that will reshape the future business and work places, focusing on the agrifood industry, and for the first time in the scientific literature focusing on Romania from this perspective. The second objective of this chapter is to tackle the main challenges to patent inventions as costs and timing in Romania, in relative terms to other countries, and raise pragmatic recommendations. The third and last objective of this chapter is to discuss a Romanian institutional innovation called INACO – the Initiative for Competitiveness, a think-tank dedicated to tackle the challenges and opportunities of the future economy and how a country such as Romania or a business or an individual can stay competitive in a more and more competitive world. We end up with solutions and recommendations.

MEGA-TECHNOLOGY TRENDS TO RESHAPE THE FUTURE ECONOMY

The future economy raises intricate issues related to the speed and goals of sustainable development, controversies in accepting the mega-technology trends in our lives, moral and ethical debates related to robots and humankind; thus, relevant problems for the digital and technological illiterate people, many solutions and opportunities in the meantime for people, businesses, regions and countries.

In the 1970s, researches have been conducted using the concept of technology forecasting, broadening it afterwards towards technology foresight. In the 1990s, concepts like technology intelligence, sharing economy, circular economy, green or bio economy, optimal climate policy and economic development, flexible working or gig economy have emerged and fuelled the scientific literature in the last two decades, shaping the future economy, public and private policy-making.

Our purpose is to focus on the technology scouting, researched very little by now, and defined as relevant core technology developments and trends, with disruptive potential and with high relevance on the competitiveness of public and private decision-makers and practitioners, by detecting advances in technology in their early stage and patents transferred into the real economy. The costs for patenting and administrative procedures are relevant issues from this perspective, that is why we will tackle it pragmatically and comparatively, as well as an institutional systemic approach that we describe in this chapter. Scouting globally and locally for technology early applied into the real economy enhances the motivation and facilitates the technological competitive advantage of private and public research, development, innovation, investments and macro- and micro-management strategy to cope with the future, but also of consumers as early buyers and changes in the markets, nevertheless legislation, attitudes and socio-cultural shifts. Our approach is thus larger than that proposed by Rohrbeck (2007) who defines technology scouting,

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