

**REGIONAL ACTIVITY OF THE HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR INNOVATION**

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The Hungarian Association for Innovation was established in 1990 by 30 innovation-related research and development institutions under the name Hungarian Chamber of Innovation. The founders' intention with the Hungarian Chamber of Innovation was that the Chamber would assist in preserving Hungary's position in base and applied research and in promoting research and development at research institutions and universities; and it would also play a catalyst role in the application of research results, thus achieving a tangible economical outcome. The goal of the new association was to bring together and promote innovative firms and to speed up innovation, this way assisting in preparing the foundation of economical growth.

During the first three years of its existence, the importance and weight of the Chamber has significantly increased; its professional and representative work has been supplemented with high level managerial and consultation assistance. In 1992, together with other organizations, the Chamber has established the Hungarian Innovation Fund, and in 1993, National Business Innovation Fund and the connecting National Business and Innovation Center. With this, the Chamber has played an active role in promoting innovation on the national level.

According to the Hungarian Chamber Law, the Hungarian Chamber of Innovation has changed its name in 1995. Today the number of its members is nearly 300, but if we include the 7 indirectly related associations, the number of members exceeds 500.

The focus of the activities of the Hungarian Association for Innovation is the economic growth-promoting role of innovation. The Association's professional activities tightly relate to that of other chambers' and associations.

The relation among the members and the Association as well as the Association's activities is realized in four distinct but connected systems:

1. The association protects the innovational and employment interests of its members towards the members' employees, the government and the current owner. The protection of interest is realized either at the sector level or through the members' specific affairs.

2. It plays a macro-national economical interest protection role to improve the operational conditions of the national innovation sphere and its members. Recently, the association published several studies and opinions. The purpose of the Hungarian Association for Innovation is to become the ultimate driving resource of the Hungarian economy through research, technical innovation and design. To achieve this, the Association:
  - Helps to increase the number and value of intellectual products created and utilized in Hungary;
  - Helps to make sure that the national innovational results are utilized more in production;
  - Helps to make sure that technology transfer promotes the improvement of economical results, and that the financing available for innovation is stimulating;
  - Makes sure that the legal system adequately supports and protects the creators and users of innovative results;
  - Promotes the recognition of prominent innovative accomplishments;
  - And makes sure that the professional and economical protection of interest of its members is adequate and effective.
3. The association provides services to its members and it organizes programs to popularize and promote innovation. It participates in allowing the members to gain access to the specific economic, professional, and business information and studies that help the realization of their intellectual achievements.

In its bi-weekly, the “NEWSLETTER”, the Association informs its members about:

- Economical and political concepts and decisions affecting or defining innovation
- The passing of laws on economical regulation and foreign trade
- Preferential participation opportunities at innovation trade shows and exhibitions and field trips, as well as opportunities in building the members’ domestic and foreign trade relations.
- International relations, potential domestic and foreign innovation partners, their activities and services.
- Infrastructural and financial possibilities of innovation.
- Industrial law and its applications.
- Other, innovation-promoting professional services.

The Association operates an Innovation Agency, which among others, provides the following free services:

- Filing of and utilization of studies
- Business partnership promotion
- Forming of business relationships

- Venture financing and investment
  - Business, marketing, financial, technological and legal counseling
  - Every two weeks, the publication of a newsletter in cooperation with Innostart National Business and Innovation Center and the editor of “MTV Felkinalom”
  - Professional conferences, seminars, and focus groups
  - Organizing of trade shows and innovation management courses
  - Organizing trips to trade shows and field trips
  - Promoting young innovators and innovative business people
  - Organizing and executing the annual National Youth Scientific and Innovation Competition
  - Publishing and executing the annual “Innovacios Nagydij” competition
  - Organizing the “Innoforum” intellectual trade shows.
4. To increase its effectiveness, the Association works through a network of departments, committees, and regional agencies. In order for the information flow to be bidirectional and for the member opinions to be known, the Association created its national regional network. Within its framework, it established offices in six of the most prominent college towns in the nation. Among these offices began its operation in the North-Hungarian region the office in Miskolc, in 1993. In 2002, the offices – fusing with the Middle-Hungarian agencies - transformed into representative offices. The author of this article is the director of the North-Hungarian Regional Representative Office, and through the demonstration of that office he will describe the activities of the Association’s regional function.

The goals of the North Hungarian Regional Representative Office mesh with those of the Association on the one hand; on the other hand, its goal is also to help persons, enterprises, and institutions involved in innovation to get involved in innovation on the local and national level. Within this framework, the Office:

- Represents the Hungarian Association for Innovation within the region;
- Represents the interests of the Associations regional members;
- Builds and maintains an information system for those involved in innovation (universities, and other research institutions, development institutions, design firms, innovative enterprises, organizer, counseling, marketing, and other innovation-related firms.)
- Participates in the editing, writing, and distribution of the Association’s bi-weekly newsletter, the “Hirlevel”.
- It plays an intermediary role among the regional members of the Association, persons and institutions involved in innovation so that there is adequate counseling and guidance to solve the members’ organizational and financial questions in the fields of industrial law, economy and other interest protection.

- Participates in the organization and execution of the Association's action-programs (National Youth Scientific and Innovation Competition, Innovation Grand Price Competition, Intellectual Product Fair).
- Participates in the preparation and execution of projects aimed at the economical transformation of the region (Miskolci Egyetem Innovacios es Technologia Transzfer Centrum, Miskolci Ipari Park (Miskolc Industrial Park), Katalizator Park, BOTECH and BoSzaDa Databases, North Hungarian Regional Innovation Strategy).
- Participates in seminars, conferences, and focus groups aimed at the development of the region, and represents and sponsors the innovational aspirations of the region.
- Maintains connection among the region's organizations involved in innovation (Miskolci Egyetem, Észak-Magyarországi Universitas, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén megyei Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara, Észak-magyarországi Gazdasági és Munkaadói Közösség, MTESZ BAZ megyei Szervezete, MTA Miskolci Bizottsága, GTE BAZ megyei Szervezete, Polgármesteri Hivatal, BAZ megyei Önkormányzat, Észak-magyarországi Regionális Munkaerő-fejlesztési és Átképző Központ, Regionális Vállalkozásfejlesztési Központ, Miskolc és Térsége Vállalkozásfejlesztési Alapítvány, Regionális Fejlesztési Ügynökség).

To summarize, the activities of the North Hungarian Regional Representative Office can be described by three distinct characteristics:

1. Acts as a bridge between the region and the Association while representing the Association, relays its goals, organizes its services (for example, organizing action-programs, newsletters, etc.)
2. It carries on tender operations during which it:
  - a. Mobilizes for the tenders published by the Association (*Innovációs Nagydíj, Országos Tudományos és Ifjúsági Innovációs Verseny, Lépés a Jövőbe, Országos Design Pályázat*)
  - b. As co-applicant, it assists member institutions in the organization and execution of regional development projects;
  - c. Publishes a tender for the graduates of the Department of Machine Elements of the University of Miskolc who create the most innovational dissertation;
  - d. Provides consultation to applicants of the region in preparing national and international tenders.
3. For the social recognition of innovation:
  - a. Popularizes the significance of innovation and the work of the Association;
  - b. Represents the interests of the members and the Association at forums and focus groups;
  - c. Maintains relationships among the member institutions, local governments, trade associations, and chambers.