



FORMATION OF RELATIONS AND THEIR VALUES FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS BY THE RESEARCH-SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION

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Summary

The article presents issues associated with forming the relations of a scientific-research institution with the stakeholders and creating the added value of these relations. The basic groups of stakeholders and forms of cooperation with a scientific-research institution and their practical solutions are presented. The discussion concerning these issues is illustrated with the example of a training project carried out with funds from the National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR).

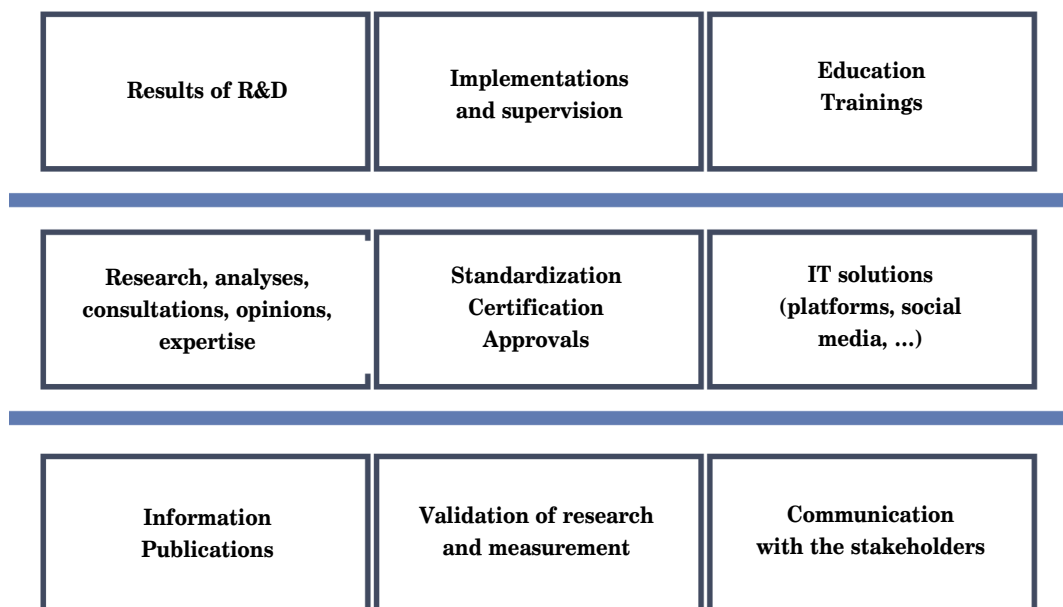
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Introduction

What is of vital importance for the functioning, competitiveness, market position and achieved results of every institution, or company are the relations with other participants of the market and the economic, marketing, or social values they generate. Particularly important are relations created with the stakeholders, that is, entities which have direct and indirect ties to a company and are of strategic importance for its future¹. In case of a scientific-research institution the formation of these relations and as a result, the emergence of the expected values is a necessity due to the fact that the basic goal for this kind of institutions is creating values and cooperation with the environment in course of the process, the implementation of joint market projects, achieving the desired effects associated with the development of the offered portfolio of products and achieving positive assessments in the area of conducted tasks.

Generally, looking at the problem of forming relations and their kinds, we should conclude that it is a derivative of the offer of scientific-research institutions for the market. Comprehensive provision of this offer requires cooperation with broadly understood environment, as well as building appropriate relations within an institution and their undisturbed functioning. In the scientific-research space a major part of relations is determined by the binding legal system, which defines their scope, subject range, rules for creating them, as well as the rules of assessment. Moreover, to a large extent it determines the generated values. The remaining formed relations are very diversified and multidimensional in character and to a decisive degree they depend on the mentioned dimensions of the portfolio and its specific character resulting from the conducted scientific-research activity, defined groups of current and potential stakeholders, as well as changing forms of cooperation.

Picture 1. Product portfolio of a scientific-research institution



Source: own materials prepared on the basis of: Slotorsz, A. Cichoń, W. (2014). Marketing instytutów naukowo-badawczych w świetle obecnych uwarunkowań organizacyjno-prawnych.

Marketing instytucji naukowych i badawczych. Warszawa: Instytut Lotnictwa;

Act on research institutes from April 30, 2010;

Act on higher education from September 27, 2005 with amendments.

The process of forming relations and their kinds

While the concept of "relations" is usually associated with a uniform character of the association between entities, or a group of entities (one relation), in reality this relation is a complex phenomenon and can be analysed from the perspective of multiple criteria. Table 1 presents in a synthetic way an overview of criteria and the kind of relations of scientific-research institutions with the stakeholders².

What may constitute one of the most important aspects in this context is the significance of relations for the entities participating in them.

Naturally, the most favourable situation is when cooperation is equally important for both sides. However, we should notice that relations of entities can be characterized by an asymmetry of the significance of relations, which means that one of the sides can be more involved in building relations than the other side. Another case is the one where a relation is not very significant for both cooperating sides. In such case we can predict that the relation will be occasional, or short-lived. Another important criterion for the assessment of a relation of a scientific-research institution is the place where it is built. Very often the way a scientific-research institution builds relations with internal entities is determined by the way it forms them inside, that is, for example, with employees. What is important here is the system of motivating, building the trust of employees and using their potential.

Taking into consideration the fact that relations between institutions have a formal dimension, the quality of relations often depends not just on the provisions of contracts between the two sides, but also on the competences of people engaged in the implementation of a project, mutual understanding of goals and needs, or the efficiency of the employees of both entities in solving problems. In this sense the relations of a scientific-research institution and its stakeholders have both an institutional and interpersonal dimension.

Scientific-research institution as the initiator of relations with external entities can build them with one entity (individual stakeholder), or a mass stakeholder. The character of these relations may have an impact on the way a scientific-research institution will be investigating needs and building added value for external entities cooperating with it. Against the background of numerous experiences of scientific-research institutions it is worth pointing out that relations may be characterized by low, or high level of formalization, which may mean the necessity to work out numerous procedures, instructions, rules, document templates, decision-making systems, or conducting reporting works. Further, this means that the sides carrying out a project need to spend time, assets and work not just on research-focused, or creative projects, but also works associated with administration. In case of highly formalized relations the latter kind of work often consumes a half of all time and funds allocated to the whole project conducted by a scientific-research institution.

Among numerous projects and initiatives taken up by scientific-research institutions we can distinguish those in which one, or many entities are involved. In this aspect relations can be defined as bilateral, or multilateral. This undoubtedly has an impact on the complexity of relations and thus on the risks for the scientific-research institution and its numerous stakeholders in association with achieving their goals. Additionally, it is worth pointing out that the higher the level of relations between the stakeholders, the greater the impact of behaviours of one of the participants of the relations on the success, or failure of the remaining participants. That's why in case of projects conducted by a scientific-research institution in cooperation with numerous entities, coordination and monitoring of the progress of works of all involved entities, as well as the ability to manage risk, which may arise from numerous sources and be diversified in character, are required.

A scientific-research institution carried out projects it initiated itself, or in response to the orders of external entities — in such case the initiator is the ordering entity. This in many cases affected the way a project is financed, that is, by a scientific-research institution, or by its partners. Currently, numerous joint projects of scientific-research institutions and external entities financed with external sources, for example, funds from the European Union, are being carried out. Regardless of the possibility of obtaining financial resources, along with projects receiving financial support, scientific-research institutions are also carrying out projects without capital involvement.

We can distinguish projects not just according to allocation of assets such as capital, but also according to the level of engagement needed for their implementation, that is, high, or low level of engagement, repeatability (one-off, or repeatable), according to duration (short-term and long-term projects), according to effects (immediate, or delayed), beneficiaries (numerous, not numerous) and eventually the benefits that can be achieved by only the participants of a relation and/or third parties.

As the presented analysis shows, the relations of a scientific-research institution with the stakeholders are multidimensional in character and are formed by various criteria. Knowing them to a large extent facilitates managing them efficiently, which makes it possible to form and create added value as benefit for the stakeholders.

Table 1. Kinds of relations between a scientific-research institution and stakeholders

Criterion	Kind of relation
Significance for stakeholders	High level of significance Low level of significance
Place of building relations	Relations with internal entities Relations with external entities
Stakeholders	Institutional Interpersonal
Recipient	Mass recipient Individual recipient
Degree of formalization	Formal Informal
Participants	Bilateral Multilateral
Initiative	Own initiative Initiative of other entities
Subject	Material (content-related, subject-related) Emotional
Financial support	With financial support Without financial support
Goal orientation	Focus on achieving a goal Focus on the process
Engagement	High level of engagement of the sides Low level of engagement of the sides
Repeatability	Repeatable One-off
Duration	Long-term Short-term
Effects	Immediate Delayed
Beneficiaries	Numerous Not numerous
Social benefits	Benefits only for the participants of a relation Benefits for third persons/entities

Source: own materials.

The specific character of conducted scientific-research activity and the diversification of goals and tasks of market policy mean that the collection of internal and external stakeholders is very unstable and diversified in

terms of the subject of conducted activity, the level of adaptation/suitability for the research tasks handled by an institution, or the level of interest and engagement in cooperation. Generalizing, we can assume that this collection in case of a scientific-research institution is formed by the following groups of stakeholders³:

- Other national scientific-research institutions as participants, partners and clients;
- foreign scientific-research institutions as consultants, partners, participants of dialogue/discussion, or exchange;
- managers of R&D programmes targeted at the scientific-research market of the EU as controllers and auditors;
- national and foreign institutions managing funds for science and research as creators of research directions and trends;
- institutions such as: technology parks, technology incubators, business incubators and pre-incubators, technology development centres, seed capital funds, business angel networks, local lending funds, loan guarantee funds, technology platforms, training-consulting centres and clusters as support for the implementation of tasks and programmes;
- social-economic community interested in research results;
- government and local government authorities as strategic partners and potential beneficiaries;
- non-governmental organizations as supporters and beneficiaries;
- investors, banks, investment and lending funds as financial support institutions and beneficiaries;
- media as creators of the image of a scientific-research institution and building market support;
- employees, shareholders, managers of institutions as direct handlers of tasks resulting from relations.

In the dynamic market reality the above-mentioned groups certainly don't include all potential groups of stakeholders, which may appear in case of the emergence of new directions, trends, or challenges associated with the implementation of social-economic policy, innovative technological and non-technological solutions, business programmes, or needs reported by business practice.

Table 2. Stakeholders and kinds of relations of a scientific-research institution

Group participants	Form of cooperation	Practical solutions
Other national scientific-research institutions	communication, consultations, dialogue, partnership	joint ventures, building a network of relations
Foreign scientific-research institutions	communication, consultations, partnership, dialogue, exchange of experiences	joint ventures, networks of relations, exchange of experiences
Managers of R&D programmes targeted at the participants of the scientific-research market in the EU	communication, control, audit	education in the area of programme management
National and foreign institutions managing funds for science and research	communication, control, audit	creating research directions and trends, platforms of cooperation
Supporting institutions such as: technology parks, technology incubators, business incubators and pre-incubators, technology development centres, seed capital funds, business angel networks, technology platforms, training-consulting centres and clusters	communication, consultations; dialogue, coordination, partnership, research, commercialization, exchange/implementation of experiences and achievements	Support for conducted programmes, participation in research processes and commercialization
Social-economic community	communication, dialogue, partnership, commercialization	interest in research results
Local government and central government authorities	communication, consultations, dialogue, partnership	creating conditions for building relations
Non-governmental organizations	communication, dialogue, consultations	joint ventures
Investors, banks, investment and loan funds	communication, consultations, partnership, commercialization, control, audit	financial support, participation in implementation
Traditional and electronic media	communication, dialogue, partnership	creation of the image of an institution, market support for activities, building networks of relations
Employees, shareholders, institution managers	communication, consultations, dialogue, implementing achievements	education, individual development programmes, talent management

Source: own materials.

Generally, speaking about shaping the relations of a scientific-research institution we should understand them as various forms of its involvement in cooperation with the stakeholders. Cooperation may take the following forms⁴: communication, consultations; dialogue, coordination, partnership, research, commercialization, control, audit and exchange/implementation of experiences and achievements. In practice of market cooperation each form can adopt different procedures of implementation determined by the formulated goals, foreseen scope of cooperation and defined rules of conducted actions. It also depends on the stage of formed relations (beginning, development, maturity and conclusion). Moreover, in literature on the subject it is emphasized that the stage of implementation, structure of relations and form of cooperation determine the value of a relation⁵. We should also remember that often regulations defining the dimension and character of cooperation are contained in earlier concluded agreements, or business contracts. Nevertheless, as a result of experiences, change of conditions, or verification by a practical approach to the implementation of cooperation processes they can assume a modified form, or change its character bringing benefits to the values achieved by the participants of a relation.

Added value as a goal and result of forming the relations of a scientific-research institution with the stakeholders

The concept of added value can be understood as the difference between the cost and effect that a research-scientific institution can get as a result of cooperation with the stakeholders, or as the benefit which it delivers to its stakeholders. The same economic value generated by entities cooperating with each other may be assessed by them differently, as apart from the material dimension we need to take into consideration the marketing dimension (for example, the prestige resulting from this cooperation for one, or both sides, image, know-how), or future social benefits which both sides deliver to the third parties (for example, improving the quality of life, raising competitiveness, effect of learning, or the possibility of using the obtained experience in future projects).

For this reason the assessment of the effects of cooperation of a scientific-research institution with stakeholders cannot be limited to assuming the perspective of one of the participants of a relation, but should be multidimensional. Not every additional hour of work, product, or service generates added value, that's why the first perspective that has to be taken into consideration is the perspective of each of the stakeholders and (optionally) their beneficiaries — third parties, who may be concerned by the effect of added value. Moreover, to be able to assess, whether the relations of these entities have led to the creation of added value, it is necessary to define the basic value which the participants of the relations expect and the value they would recognize as an additional benefit. For this purpose it is necessary to investigate the needs of the sides of the relation and reaching an agreement on the scope of engagement and contribution to cooperation expected by the two sides (time, work, know-how), as well as the expected final result.

The sides of a relation should inform each other about added value. This is extremely important in the process of creating added value, as practice shows many examples in which the lack of communication, lack of meetings of project participants, or care about creating space for the exchange of experiences, or opinions on the achieved results lead to the lack of satisfaction of the sides of a relation, despite the fact that all assumed objective goals of a project have been achieved.

A necessary action in the area of building added value for the stakeholders by a research-scientific institution is learning the opinions of the participants of a relation concerning the achieved effects and investigating the level of satisfaction with both the added value delivered to the stakeholders on the basic level and on the additional level called added value. What may enrich the knowledge of the participants of a relation concerning the generated added value are additional surveys conducted on the beneficiaries of relations who indirectly took advantage of the effects of cooperation of a scientific-research institution with the external stakeholders.

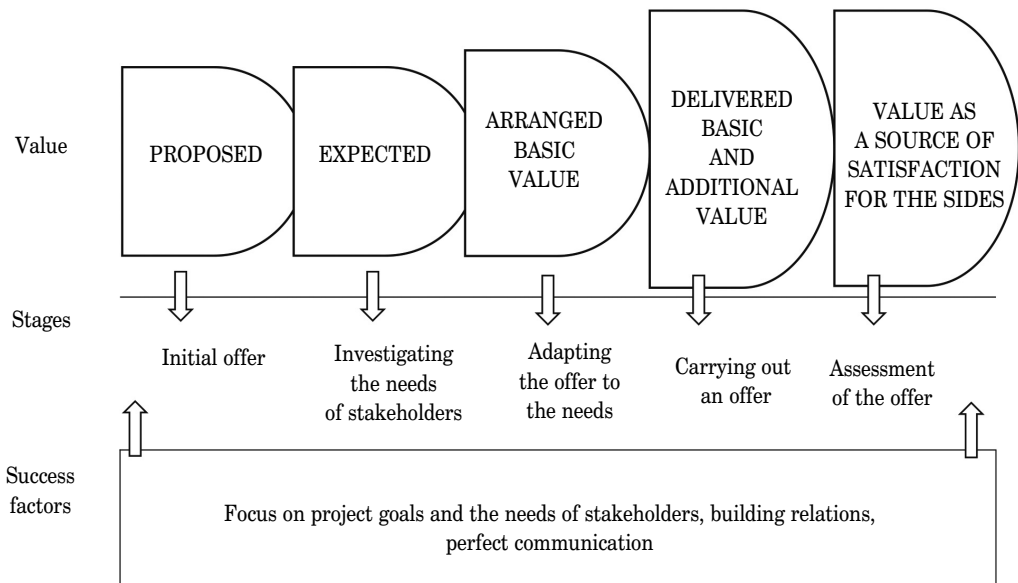
Numerous analyses of projects carried out by research-scientific institutions for the economy and the experiences of the authors of this article show that added value can take various forms. The most common among them are the following:

- added value as the effect of synergy,

- added value as a source of competitiveness of a research-scientific institution and its stakeholders,
- added value as a source for building long-term relations with the environment,
- added value as a source for building social capital,
- added value as an effect of learning (including value resulting from positive and negative experiences),
- added value as a source of experience in risk management.

Numerous theoretical works and practical examples of projects conducted by scientific-research institutions in cooperation with market entities show that the source of their success is process perfection and care about the success of each stage of the process. In the context of above deliberations it is worth presenting the process of creating added value in the model perspective (Picture 2).

Picture 2. The process of creating added value for the stakeholders



Source: Own materials.

Summing up the above deliberations, it is worth pointing out that building added value in relations of the participants of the sides of cooperation can have not just the intended character, but the additional benefits may be recognized

by the sides also during implementation, or only after the conclusion of projects, grants, or other joint ventures. For this reason, it is even more important to include the assessment of effects, discussion concerning the effects and looking for further ways of using the generated potential in the practice of the whole process of delivering added value to the stakeholders.

Training project for students financed with funds from the European Union, conducted by the Poznań University of Economics and Business as a source for creating added value for the stakeholders

An interesting illustration of building added value for the stakeholders may be the implementation of a training project financed with funds from the European Union, conducted by Poznań University of Economics and Business, titled *Staże dla studentów i współpraca z pracodawcami w ramach kierunku Towaroznawstwo UEP*⁶ (Trainings for students and cooperation with employers within the Faculty of Commodity Sciences of the Poznań University of Economics and Business.).

The purpose of the project was improving the labour market competitiveness of 30 third-year students from full-time first-cycle degree programmes and 50 second-year students from full-time second cycle degree programmes of the Faculty of Commodity Sciences at Poznań University of Economics and Business by strengthening the practical elements of education and support for the Career Office of Poznań University of Economics and Business. In course of the Project Poznań University of Economics and Business and employers together organized and conducted a total of 80 3-month-long student trainings in Poland and abroad and organized a total of 24 trainings aimed at improving "soft skills" of the students of full-time third-year first cycle programme and the students of the second year of the second cycle programme at the Faculty of Commodity Sciences and supported their path of career with career counselling⁷.

As the characteristics of the project show, the main participants of relations with the university in the project were:

- at the internal level: university authorities, project management

team, content specialists, coaches conducting soft skills trainings, career counsellor, university administration employees (preparing the application for financing of the project, negotiating funds, legal supervision and clearing of the project, reporting);

- at the external level: National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR) as an intermediary, employers, students, providers of external services.

Taking into consideration the goals of the project and the process of its implementation, we should point out that the degree of interdependence of the stakeholders participating in the project was very high, that is, the lack of availability of one of them (for example, employers, appropriate number of training courses matching the direction of education at the university, or completion of a training by a student), or the lack of efficient operation of one of the participants (e.g. preparing all necessary documents on time) affected the final effect for all participants of the project. It is because the financing of the project with EU funds depended on whether the university achieved all goals and carried out all tasks assumed in the project. That's why the key success factor in the creation of added value for the stakeholders was monitoring and coordination of all strategic processes.

Taking into consideration the above conditions, we should remember that the added value for the sides of the relations with the university and the university itself was the higher, the higher the capacity of the university to create value at every stage of building a relation with a stakeholder. From the perspective of the experiences of the authors of the article carrying out the project, it is worth naming the key factors for the formation of added value:

- ability to clearly define and communicate about the main goal of the project and about the detailed goals for all stakeholders of the project: university, students and employers;
- identifying and delivering basic and additional benefits (values) for the stakeholders of the project;
- the ability of a scientific-research institution to plan and manage processes in strategic areas of the project e.g.:
 - securing own resources (human resources — team managing the project, material resources and non-material resources) as well as external resources (financing),

- preparing the profiles of the stakeholders of the project fitting in the goals of the scientific-research institution carrying out the project, who have the needs complying with the assumptions of the project (students and employers offering trainings complying with the profile of education of a student in the area of study which the project concerns),
- acquiring participants of the project (selection of the participants — choosing the participants matching the profile),
- communication with the participants qualified and not qualified for the project,
- project administration and reporting,
- ability to identify and manage risk in the project.

Table 3 identifies the basic relations between Poznań University of Economics and Business and the stakeholders of the project and enumerates added value created as a result of the implementation of the project.

Analysing information presented in table 3 we can name as one of the most important added values achieved as a result of the relations of a university with the National Centre for Research and Development, as an institution mediating in the financing of the project, the fact that the university achieves certain indicators (such as: the number of students who have completed trainings and apprenticeships, participated in consultations with career counsellors and in trainings improving their soft skills) as a source of future opportunities for applying for funds from EU contest projects. What is also important is the fact that the university learns and gains experience in the area of EU project management, in the legal area, or in cooperation with business entities.

In the area of building relations and added value for companies by a university we should emphasize such benefits as: even better recognition of the needs of the labour market not only on the macroeconomic scale, but on the scale of an individual company, the possibility of improving the didactic offer responding to the needs of the labour market, continuing the cooperation of the university with companies in course of further projects, the possibility of continuing the cooperation of employers and students (work, scientific and research projects), after conclusion of the project, which boosts the competitiveness of a student on the labour market and builds the attractiveness of the university as a scientific-research institution among student candidates and builds the position of the university as a partner in future recruitment processes.

Table 3. Added value in relations between UEP and the stakeholders of the project

Participants of a relation	Added value
University — NCBiR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indicators achieved in the project (As a basis for the settlement of EU funds by the entity carrying out the project and the intermediary between the institution and the European Union, as well as the basis for a country in the process of applying for future funds for the implementation of projects co-financed by the EU) 2. Experience in carrying out EU projects raising the competitiveness of a scientific-research institute in the process of applying for funds in the future contest projects 3. The knowledge of legal regulations making it easier to plan activities in other projects and managing them
University — Employers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The university learns what the labour market currently expects from students and university graduates 2. Creating an educational offer of the university responding to the needs of the labour market 3. Scientific-research institution and a company continue cooperation on future projects conducted by the institution in various areas (including scientific and research projects, co-creating an educational offer reflecting the needs of the labour market, promotional projects) 4. The work of students for the benefit of a company during the project; ideas and know-how as a contribution of students participating in the project to the development of the company 5. The possibility of checking in professional practice and choosing the best participants of the project and continuing cooperation with them after the conclusion of the project 6. Support for employers in other processes of recruiting students to companies after the conclusion of the project 7. Financing of student's and his mentor's remuneration in a company with funds from the European Union
University — Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The university learns the training and professional needs of students applying for participation in training projects and participating in the project 2. The university shapes an educational offer building the competitiveness of students on the labour market 3. Raising the attractiveness of studying 4. Improving soft skills necessary in the professional environment (getting work, future promotions) 5. Support of a career counsellor in the choice of the path of career during studies and after graduation 6. Competitiveness of the project participant on the labour market 7. Remuneration
Students — Employers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. References from employers supporting the competitiveness of students participating in the project on the labour market 2. Practical experience gained by the students in Poland, or abroad, raising the competitiveness of students on the labour market 3. Students carry out innovative projects in companies 4. Students' work is financed with external resources
University — External entities cooperating with the Project Management Team (Coaches conducting trainings)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The cooperation of Coaches conducting soft skills trainings with the university as a source of building the coach's competitiveness on the trainings market 2. University's references for the coach, following the conclusion of the project 3. Remuneration
Relations with internal units in course of implementation of the project	The experience of a learning organization

Source: own materials.

Added value generated in the university — student (or students) relation constitutes an opportunity for the university to better learn the training needs of students applying for participation in projects, to raise the attractiveness of studying by adding to the educational offer practical elements obtained in a workplace, it also constitutes an opportunity for the student to improve his hard and soft competences in the professional environment, which can affect the student's future professional career, the choice of professional career path with the support of career counselling, or remuneration.

Among important relations we can name also those which are established thanks to the university, but are formed between the student and the employer. As a result of it students get not just employment, but also content-related support of the training supervisor in a company. After the completion of the training they get references which can support their future professional career in numerous companies. During the apprenticeship students got the chance to manage projects, whose results were appreciated by employers and implemented in company practice, or enriched the company's market offer. In case of apprenticeships abroad what can be recognized as a priceless added value is improving your knowledge of foreign languages and learning to use foreign language fluently in the professional environment.

The relations of universities with external entities very often support the process of building the competitiveness of these entities, for example, by enriching the professional profiles of external soft skill coaches. Cooperating with them also universities get the opportunity to learn and establish precious contacts useful for the implementation of future projects.

Concluding the analysis of numerous added values, which emerged in course of the implementation of the project by Poznań University of Economics and Business and relations of the university with external entities, it is necessary to emphasize that it is impossible to overestimate all added values that the university as a scientific-research institution achieves in relation with internal entities and this is the experience of a learning organization.

Conclusions

The presented problems of forming relations and their value for the stakeholders show how broad the spectrum of diversified issues covered by

them actually is. Starting from groups of stakeholders, through forms of cooperation, ending with the values they generate. If we take into consideration the specific character of the activity of a scientific-research institution (offer/portfolio of products) and groups of stakeholders with very diversified expectations with regard to the forms of cooperation, we face a very challenging task of identifying and determining your own values and the values/benefits offered to the stakeholders. An appropriate illustration of this analytical process is the presented example of the training project conducted at the university which covered a broad group of stakeholders with very diversified expectations with regard to forms of cooperation and obtained values.

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- ¹ See: A. Paliwoda-Matiolańska, *Odpowiedzialność społeczna w procesie zarządzania przedsiębiorstwem*, Wydawnictwo H.C. Beck, Warszawa, 2009.
- ² M. Smolska, Zarządzanie relacjami w przedsiębiorstwie z interesariuszami, czyli jak kreować kapitał relacyjny w przedsiębiorstwie, *Zeszyty Naukowe WSH 2016* (3), p. 308–309.
- ³ See: A. Piotrowska-Piątek, Analiza interesariuszy zewnętrznych szkół wyższych — identyfikacja i ocena ich znaczenia przez szkoły wyższe, *Zarządzanie publiczne*, 2/2016.
- ⁴ See: B. Grucz (red), *Podręcznik Angażowania Interesariuszy*, Bizarre, Warszawa 2012, vol. 1, p. 9.
- ⁵ K. Storbacka, J.R. Lehtinen, *Sztuka budowania trwałych związków z klientami*, Oficyna wydawnicza Dom Wydawniczy ABC, Kraków 2001, p. 33.
- ⁶ The project was carried out at the Faculty of Commodity Sciences and was co-financed with funds from the European Union under the European Social Fund implemented within the framework of the sub-measure 4.1.1 Operational Programme Human Capital Wzmocnienie potencjału dydaktycznego uczelni (Strengthening the didactic potential of universities), according to the co-financing agreement WND-POKL 04.01.01.-00-235/13 under the sub-measure 4.1.1 PO KL. The authors of this article served the roles of Project Manager and Project Coordinator.
- ⁷ See: <http://ue.poznan.pl/pl/universytet,c13/projekty,c2098/projekt-staze-dla-wydzialu-towaroznawstwa,c2421/informacje-o-projekcie,a18989.html> (viewed on 11.11.2017).

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8. Ustawa z dnia 30 kwietnia 2010 roku o instytutach badawczych with amendments.
9. Ustawa z dnia 27 września 2005 roku prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym with amendments.

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