



*The **CRE**ation of the Department of Physical Chemistry of Biological Sys**TE**ms [CREATE]*

666295 — CREATE — H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014-2015/H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014-2

The 4th Advisory Board meeting report

Summary

Warsaw, November 2019



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AN OVERVIEW:

The 4th meeting of the ERA Chair Advisory Board (AB) for the CREATE project was held in the conference hall of the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IPC) November, 14 - 15, 2019. The following persons participated in the meeting :

ERA Chair holder:

- **Professor Maciej Wojtkowski** – the ERA Chair holder, head of Department of Physical Chemistry of Biological Systems, IPC, PL

Authorities representative:

- **Mateusz Gaczynski** – Deputy Director, Department of Innovation and Development, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, PL

ERC grant holder:

- **Professor Wilhelm Huck** – ERC Advanced grant holder, head of Physical-Organic Chemistry Group, Institute for Molecules and Materials, Radboud University Nijmegen, NL

Business representatives:

- **Rafal Bator** – Partner, Enterprise Investors, PL
Rafał Bator specializes in technology investments. His most important projects include AVG Technologies and restructuring of AB and Teta. Mr. Bator worked for Prokom Software Systems and Optimus, two Polish leading IT companies, as well as for PwC.
- **Justyna Garstecka** – CEO, Motherhood, PL
Founder and owner of the “Motherhood” company. Businesswoman of the Year (contest “Success Written in Lipstick”). Before setting own company Ms. Garstecka was a Brand Manager at Warner Bros.

Project management and Project-Support-Office:

- **Professor Robert Holyst** – Project Coordinator, head of Department of Soft Condensed Matter, IPC, PL
- **Agnieszka Tadrzak** – CREATE Project Manager, Manager for R&D funding at the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences, PL
- **Dr Patrycja Niton** – member of PSO, IPC, PL
- **Dr Monika Kuczynska-Wydorska** – member of PSO, IPC, PL.

THE COURSE OF THE MEETING

The main part of the assembly of the Advisory Board took place on November, 15, 2019. Its aim was to acquaint the AB members with the status of implementation of the project, and seek their advice on the key points related with the project, such as:

1. Should I stay or should I go – what is the best scenario for the continuation of the ERA Chair project?
2. Vertical integration of research activity – from basic sciences to industrial transfers within one group – how feasible it is in Polish reality? How limited is institutional support and level of IP services?
3. How to keep high research standards and build new organizational structure?

The meeting started with an opening speech of **Professor Robert Holyst**. After this introduction the ERA Chair holder – **Professor Maciej Wojtkowski** – presented the research and organizational progress of the Department of Physical Chemistry of Biological Systems. In particular, he discussed current research projects carried out by his Group and the International Center For Translational Eye Research (ICTER) – newly established research centre, financed by the Foundation for Polish Science. Professor presented research agenda of ICTER and structure of the new Center. ICTER will be sub-unit of IPC dedicated to eye aging diseases. Its activity will cover a broad range of disciplines: chemistry, physics and biology. However, it will focus on application.

The AB members shared their experience referring to the abovementioned key points and suggested various practical solutions, e.g.:

1. Should I stay or should I go – what is the best scenario for the continuation of the ERA Chair project?
 - ✓ AB members expressed a view that the CREATE project should be continued.
 - ✓ They suggested considering application for supplementary and synergy grant in the next perspective – under Horizon Europe programme, in particular - Teaming to enable continuation of the ERA Chair grant.
2. Vertical integration of research activity – from basic sciences to industrial transfers within one group – how feasible it is in Polish reality? How limited is institutional support and level of IP services?
 - ✓ Prof. Wojtkowski mentioned that he had been considering exploration of a new path in the future, namely starting Foundation financed from private funds.
 - ✓ Some members suggested that prior to that prof. Wojtkowski should apply for a grant from private sector, i.e. from reputable and well-known company. Funds acquisition from such a company would prove that technologies developed by prof. Wojtkowski and his team are good and attractive for industry. It would strengthen the opinion on prof. Wojtkowski and his team as reliable partners for business sector.
 - ✓ AB members also recommended concluding agreement between IPC and MCBO regulating ownership of IPR as regards to inventions developed by MCBO.

3. How to keep high research standards and build new organizational structure?

- ✓ AB suggested conclusion of an agreement with special purpose vehicles at the University of Warsaw – UWRC sp. z o.o. or the University Technology Transfer Center (UOTT) for management and support in commercialization.
- ✓ As a result of thorough discussion, the participants concluded that high standards cannot be maintained without building an appropriate infrastructure to support POB team activities.
- ✓ AB supported the idea of hiring project coordinators to support team work. According to his view, employment of highly efficient and administration-friendly people, seeing their mission in supporting research activities rather in an active rather than passive manner could support maintaining high research standards.