AGH to compete for a 15 million Euro grant to establish a new centre for IT and medicine

AGH, together with five partners, plans to establish a modern research centre, operating at the juncture of computer science and life science. First, however, it must succeed in a competition organized by the EU. At stake is a 15 million Euro grant.

Centre of Excellence for New Methods in Computational Diagnostics and Personalised Therapy – that’s the name of a new unit to be established by six institutions: ACK Cyfronet AGH, Klaster LifeScience Kraków, University of Sheffield and Insigneo Institute, Forschungszentrum Jülich, Fraunhofer ISI and the National Centre for Research and Development.

- We combine our forces and integrate our communities in order to bring together two of Małopolska’s intelligent specializations – IT and life science – forging a new, unique discipline which faces a bright future – says Kazimierz Murzyn, Managing Director of Klaster LifeScience Kraków.

The Centre will focus on development of innovative diagnostic methods and individual therapy, supported by cutting-edge computer simulations. In collaboration with external companies, scientists employed by the Centre will research new computational algorithms, models and technologies related to personalized medicine. The process will also stimulate growth of the local economy, offering new opportunities for the creation and development of small and medium enterprises.

- We regard this initiative as particularly important given its scope, and also due to the fact that it directly fosters improved quality of life – remarks Professor Kazimierz Wiatr, Director of ACC Cyfronet AGH, which is home to the famous Prometheus supercomputer – Both Cyfronet itself and Kraków as a whole have at their disposal a trove of competence in the form of experienced researchers and modern infrastructure. We are always on the lookout for ways in which science may serve the economy.

The Centre proposal has recently advanced to the second stage of the Teaming for Excellence Horizon 2020 competition, organized by the European Union. Successful entrants may be awarded grants of up to 15 million Euro.

- The goal of the program is to level the playing field for all EU member states. The European Commission has noticed that the scope of innovative activities is narrower in the developing countries compared to their western counterparts, and that the less advanced countries have trouble dealing with stiff competition from abroad – explains Jan Osiński from the National Centre for Research and Development. In his words, the 15 million EC grant would go towards administration and management of the new entity. At the same time, Polish candidate institutions must secure matching national grants – at least as much as is requested from the Commission. The corresponding competition is to be organized by the Foundation for Polish Science.

- In 15 years the new unit is expected to employ approximately 100 people. Its international scope will ensure inflow of graduate students from abroad – adds Marian Bubak from the Department of Computer Science AGH.