

ICPS newsletter®

What kind of innovative doctrine does Ukraine need?

Outside the path of innovative development, Ukraine stands little chance of remaining independent and self-reliant. Doing what comes naturally will not bring Ukrainian society to innovation. It can only happen as the result of comprehensive, consistent social change. In this way, an innovative approach to development is a historical challenge as well as a historical imperative. The International Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS) has been one of the initiators of the development of an innovation doctrine for Ukraine, with Director Volodymyr Nikitin one of its authors

The innovative measure of a global world

The global innovation process is not uniform but includes elements of various innovative epochs: the Industrial Revolution, which is aimed at technical progress; the transition to an Information Society, which is aimed at accelerating the consumption cycle; and the epoch that is now being born—"development through multiplication," based on new technologies. This is the transition from *resource consumption through resource preservation to "development through multiplication."* The last is based on an ideology of development within the context of a balance between nature and culture, recognizing the need to preserve available resources and to create new ones, to raise the profile of local and regional communities and individual trajectories of lifelong learning.

Countries that have staked themselves on innovative development as a national goal have made innovative breakthrough a policy priority, either in the manufacturing process or in information communication, or in some combination thereof, depending on when they joined the innovation process.

The goal of innovation is to recreate an effective balance between humans and nature, changing the principles of community life, and shifting the values orientation and development philosophy of humanity.

To be successful, innovation policy must:

- base itself on the revival of the values of social development;
- set up the conditions for influential social groups to support the innovative path of development;

- rely on a new ideology and essence of innovation to replace the innovations of consumer culture;
- take into account world practice with previous innovations, paying particular attention to the mistakes of the past;
- determine the most appropriate niche in global development for Ukrainian society based on its current state and potential;
- depend on available resources and on an ideology and technology of multiplying them.

Ukraine has innovative potential

Various interest groups within Ukraine are currently opposed to innovation. Specifically, these are the businesses that depend on the exploitation of outdated technologies, politicians whose efforts are centered on the redistribution of what was generated by previous generations, social groups that are used to the old way of life, and educators and scientists who continue to recreate the knowledge and approaches of yesteryear or even yesteryear-century.

Nevertheless, Ukraine still has enormous potential for innovative development. Its education level is one of the highest in Central Europe. It inherited a scientific and technological base from the USSR, and it is already in possession of a definite number of potentially successful innovations. Based on its numbers of certified software programmers, Ukraine is fourth in the world, while the cost of its skilled labor is one of the lowest in Central Europe.

So far, none of this has turned into a development resource for the country because there is no mechanism for effectively exploiting any of it. The

purpose of national innovation policy must be to transform this into a renewable resource for development.

Ukraine's innovative doctrine was developed on the basis of conclusions and positions that were discussed and approved at the "Ukraine's Innovative Doctrine" First National Innovations Forum. This event was held under the aegis of the National Security Council on 14–15 December 2007. The initiative to hold such a forum and to sign to an Innovative Doctrine came from a slew of community organizations oriented on innovations and a number of scientific and educational institutions.

A strategic compass for Ukraine's innovation policy

The main strategic compass for Ukraine's innovation policy is to set up its own center of policy and government for the country's future.

Today, we have a situation in which Ukraine to a large extent has lost control of its own future, having turned into a battlefield between the representatives of different models of civilization, a territory where their hostile rivalry gets played out.

The history of Ukraine since 1991 has made clear and, unfortunately, painful, the border between civilizations that crosses Ukraine. Here, we can still feel the break between the historical spheres of influence of Orthodoxy and Catholicism, between Europe and Russia. To eliminate this problem requires socio-cultural innovation and new models of cultural thinking. Only through innovation will it be possible to transform the indivisible characteristics of this country from a reason for conflict to a source of wealth, born of cultural richness.

An innovative doctrine for Ukraine needs to be based on the fact that, to eliminate the divisions and confrontations that currently tear the country apart, all the different regions and social groups need to be included in carrying out a common system of innovation. In general, establishing Ukraine as a modern state and proper country needs to be

seen as an innovative project. In this lies the fundamental—and essentially the only—opportunity for a “Ukrainian idea” to be realized. A key point in an innovative economy is the parallel process of giving birth to the new while burying the antiquated. And the basis for one and the other must be a stable process of renewal.

The strategic stakes of an innovative doctrine

1. Stake on development and an ideology of multiplying resources.

In contemporary development systems, the accent is on the level of education, health and life expectancy, the quality of environment, and access to services—that is on a new quality of human existence. This is the basic criterion in modern development strategies. The success of a new innovation policy can be grounded only in community support for the idea of development, changing the consumer culture and the revival of an older social order to the ideology and organization of a society that is innovation-based. The main resource for instituting this idea of development is to develop groups of people who believe in social change and understand the actual mechanisms for enabling it.

2. Stake on open and public policy-making.

One reason why democratic change is taking time to happen in Ukraine is the deep gulf between the unreformed government machine and a real, new, working democratic political system that ensures free elections, political competition and a free press.

No state policy, including an innovative one, can work towards new objectives without change to the way that decisions are adopted and instituted. Government policy needs to have a clear strategy that is appropriate to its society, and priorities that are based on analysis. This makes it possible to consider different options, available resources, consequences and risks, as well as to have the tools for managing change.

All mature democracies have the technology for adopting decisions in order to reach such objectives, which provides the means to consider different interest groups. Moreover, it follows the procedures of public consultation and is carried out on the basis of standards and formats that are widely accepted in the international community. This is the technology of public policy.

3. Stake on Ukraine as an innovative off-shore region.

In the short and medium term, Ukraine is not capable of competing with mature innovative countries in terms of potential resources that might be used to introduce innovations. Therefore, the main strategic point in the medium term should be “a strategy,” that is, laying down the conditions that will allow foreign resources be engaged in realizing Ukrainian innovations. This means that Ukraine must completely turn its back on the idea of independently introducing innovations on the markets of know-how, technology and service. Instead, there needs to be a clear understanding that such opportunities are scarce and innovations quickly age.

4. Stake on a learning society.

For today, only that society that is constantly learning can have the capacity to provide human resources for development. It is necessary to establish and institute new standards for the content and quality of education, provide the necessary conditions for effective and transparent use of resources for developing the education sector, in order to shape a learning society.

Specifically, this means placing new requirements before education in terms of what is needed for the army, for public administration, for international labor markets, for the industrial complex, and for business in the context of innovative development. It also means ensuring that experimental learning institutions (educational and R&D) focused on contributing to the innovation project can find a place.

5. Stake on the regional and local aspect of new innovation policy.

Ideally, the entire nation should be receptive to innovation, but this is impossible: someone has to move ahead, while someone else had to ensure that a social foundation is created. Government policy needs to establish the balance between progress and stability in a focused manner, to ensure that social values are not placed under threat, while taking steps in the direction of the earliest development.

This means that the only approach to resolving this problem, and one that nearly all innovatively developed countries have followed, is to localize innovative activities and undertake a gradual process of “infecting” society with innovation. In

its turn, society can properly prepare itself for this process.

In short, innovation cannot be all-encompassing. This means that “islands of innovation” need to be established, points of development that can become a kind of innovative chassis for Ukraine. Government innovation policy needs to localize innovative activity and to undertake a targeted program of preparing society for change.

A postulate to this kind of regional innovation policy must be wide-ranging support for the country’s regions to enter world markets of culture, information and economy.

6. Stake on the communicative organization.

The country needs an ongoing communication platform where visions of the future can be openly discussed, as well as innovation strategies and programs, in order to establish the basic principles of innovation policy and to provide support for R&D groups to realize the vision of the desired future.

The policy of an innovative society

The main focus of innovation policy should be:

- support for innovative activities—support for commercial activity in the broadest sense of the word and for teaching innovation;
- rules of play that determine the options of innovations and partners, as well as a policy of establishing full innovative cycles;
- orienting towards establishing a common vision of the future, in which all different positions and types of activity are directed at reaching one and the same goal.

The entire country cannot develop at the same time. Individual places can develop that will unify the country and bring it forward. This is why the first thing that must change is the world-view of Ukraine’s citizens, to one in which innovations take their proper place. And organizing communication around innovation is that novelty that will make it possible to build a national innovation policy. ■

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