

**INNOVATION AS A DETERMINANT  
OF COMPETITIVENESS AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

**Gorica Bošković<sup>1\*</sup>, Ljubodrag Savić<sup>2</sup>, Vladimir Mičić<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>University of Niš, Faculty of Economics, Niš, Serbia

<sup>2</sup>University of Belgrade, Faculty of Economics, Belgrade, Serbia

<sup>3</sup>University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Economics, Kragujevac, Serbia

\**gorica.boskovic@eknfak.ni.ac.rs*

**Abstract**

The backbone of the competitive advantage of a contemporary enterprise is its ability to innovate. Innovations are indispensable for every enterprise, regardless of its size. However, smaller business entities, i.e. small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) have a greater innovative capability in comparison to big systems, since they are more willing and more prepared to apply innovations (raw materials, products, services, processes, production organization) and new technologies quickly and instantaneously, as well as to employ highly qualified personnel. Moreover, they are more adaptable to market changes and to new technologies, which is, again, the direct result of the development of their innovative capacities and activities.

Taking into consideration the tendencies in the development of SMEs in the Republic of Serbia, which indicate that the number of these enterprises is increasing, as well as their topicality and importance for the development of the national economy, the aim of this paper is to examine whether and to what extent an increase in the number of SMEs in the Republic of Serbia is followed by an increase in their innovativeness. This research question is of great importance as SMEs can attain a sustainable competitive edge and generate conditions for their further development only by means of innovativeness.

**Key words:** innovations, innovativeness, small and medium-sized enterprises, competitiveness, development.

**ИНОВАТИВНОСТ КАО ДЕТЕРМИНАНТА  
КОНКУРЕНТНОСТИ И РАЗВОЈА МАЛИХ И СРЕДЊИХ  
ПРЕДУЗЕЋА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ**

**Апстракт**

Основа конкурентске предности савременог предузећа јесте његова способност да иновира. Иновације су потребне сваком предузећу, без обзира на његову величину. Међутим, већу иновациону способност имају мањи привредни

субјекти, односно мала и средња предузећа (МСП) у односу на велике системе, јер су спремнија за брзу примену иновација (сировина, производа, услуга, процеса, организације производње), нове технологије, као и за запошљавање стручних кадрова. Исто тако, она су флексибилнија за промене које долазе са тржишта или од нове технологије, што је управо подстицано развојем њихове иновативне активности.

Имајући у виду тенденције у развоју МСП у свету, које показују да број ових предузећа расте, као и њихову актуелност и значај за развој привреде наше земље, циљ овог рада је да покаже да ли је и у којој мери раст броја МСП у Републици Србији праћен и растом њихове иновативности. Ово истраживачко питање је важно јер само уз иновативност МСП могу обезбедити одрживу конкурентску предност и створити услове за свој даљи развој.

**Кључне речи:** иновације, иновативност, мала и средња предузећа, конкурентност, развој.

## *INTRODUCTION*

Innovation is a significant determinant of growth, but primarily of survival of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the context of growing uncertainty and severe competition. The best growth strategy of these enterprises is orientation towards continuous creation of new and alteration of the existing products, services and processes. The dynamics of innovation is mostly determined by the rate of technological changes and thus by the intensity of economic development in general. Knowledge becomes an important factor of sustainable competitive advantage. However, it is not any kind of knowledge but one of innovation management (Savic, Boskovic, Micic, 2012, p. 36). The focus on innovation improves the performance of an enterprise, contributes to creating a sustainable competitive advantage on the market, i.e. its more effective development.

Over the last several decades, SMEs have become a strong factor in market economy development, a generator of new employment and a dynamic part of the greatest number of world economies, including the countries of the European Union. The significance the European Union gives to such enterprises can be seen in the fact that, during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, their participation has increased to 99.8% of the total number of enterprises. From June 2009, following the regional ministerial conferences on the European charter for small enterprises in the Western Balkans, the Republic of Serbia, as well as other countries in the region, has initiated the implementation of the 'Small enterprises act' which emphasizes the key role of SME in the European economy. These enterprises are highly significant, particularly for improving the innovation aspect of developed economies. However, due to business conditions, insufficiently supportive environment that would uphold their expansion on the basis of innovative development, many SMEs failed to comprehend the importance of improving the competitiveness of key technological innovations or were

unable to fulfill their innovation potential. It has been observed that only 10% of SMEs worldwide undergo long-term planning or possess long-term strategies for accomplishing significant growth and development. Namely, SMEs cannot sustain the costs of innovation or scientific research work in general. Access to external sources of financing is usually restricted and very often unavailable due to an increased dependence on financial institutions. In these terms, the situation in the Republic of Serbia is particularly difficult because of the country's current economical crisis. The majority of SMEs do not put innovation at the basis of their business activity, competitive advantage and development. The developmental potential of these enterprises has not been fulfilled in the least. For that reason, there is the need to improve the method of encouraging the development of SMEs in order to increase their innovativeness.

#### *1. INNOVATIVENESS AND COMPETITIVENESS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND*

Several factors are available to enterprises nowadays that can be used to achieve competitiveness on the market. These include: speed, price, technology, innovation, quality, reliability and information management (Madu, 2000, p. 937). Reduced business expenses (primarily reduced working expenses) or increased growth of factorial productivity are typical factors of micro-competitiveness. However, in the 1980s, professor Porter emphasized that the factors such as low cost of uneducated workforce and natural resources are losing importance in global competition, compared to the more complex factors, such as skilled scientific and technical support or advanced infrastructure (Porter, 1986, pp. 38-39). Namely, in a dynamic working environment, competitive advantage of an enterprise is susceptible to pressure and therefore changes quickly and often weakens and it is necessary to invest in its renewal and strengthening. An enterprise is forced to grow constantly through innovations and work improvement. Maintenance of current positions means stagnation as opposed to those who use business innovations for development and growth.

The competitiveness factors can be classified into two basic groups: price and non-price. The price competition factors are still the most important, particularly in mass production of standardized products. The range of non-price competition factors is very wide and refers to: number and type, characteristics, standards and quality of a product. Product quality improvement, primarily the quality of the process, through *innovations and development of new technologies* (which result in an increased work productivity), represents the key factor in strengthening the competitiveness of an enterprise.

A well-known theorist of management and innovation, Peter Drucker, emphasizes that innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship.

'Innovation represents an act which endows resources with a new capacity to create wealth. Innovation, indeed, creates a resource' (Drucker, 1996, p. 45). The contents of innovation, however, should not be equated with the term creativity. Innovation contains creativity but demands the possibility of realization. This possibility is best fulfilled through *small economic subjects* which connect it with market opportunities and thereby fulfill it. Small economies are appropriate for such undertakings because *the financier and creator of innovations is the owner of the capital*, who uses property to cover for the risks of business decisions.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), there are four types of innovation: product innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation and organizational innovation. Gary Hamel has expanded the list adding the fifth type of innovation which he called management innovation (Hamel, 2006, pp. 72-84).

Innovations are the initiators of values. They represent directing an idea into profitable products and services, processes or business practice and they change the rules of the market. Innovations that significantly change the market rules within a branch are one of the most important factors in value creation (Kalicanin, 2006, p. 276). The matter of sustainable value creation is actually at the core of competitive advantage. It can be observed that, for the past several years, the greatest value creators for shareholders were relatively young enterprises, i.e. those that had been in existence for only a few years (Kalicanin, 2006, p. 276). Considering the production of inventions, there are data that show that 'out of 70 most significant inventions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more than a half came from individual inventors ...' (Todorovic, Djuricanin, Janosevic, 2001). These enterprises achieved competitive advantage not because they performed already established activities but by changing the rules of the game. The flexibility and innovative potential of SMEs enables them to achieve excellent solutions in the production system, product innovation, even a completely new product, all by experimenting and applying small changes. These enterprises should focus on innovations that lead to drastic increases in values for owners-shareholders because, in that way, they would turn towards new sources of growth. However, material resources represent a limitation when it comes to protecting intellectual property, initiating serious production or market placement – this is one of the greatest problems for enterprises as innovators.

The long isolation of the Serbian market has caused SMEs to often base their development on innovations taken from other enterprises. The inclusion of Serbia into international trends has enabled these enterprises to join in with their own products based on domestic knowledge.

There is a great number of innovation indicators which measure the innovation performance of countries and enterprises, such as The Global Innovation Index – Innovation Scoreboard, The Global Innovation

Policy Index, etc. However, many of them do not include the Republic of Serbia and that limits the overview of the position of our country on the innovation map of Europe and the world.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Starting from the aim of this study – to show whether and to what extent the increase in the number of SMEs in the Republic of Serbia is followed by an increase in innovation, as well as in which areas innovation is mostly present, it is necessary to first discuss the level of development and the structure of SMEs. The achieved level of development and the significance of SMEs will be determined on the basis of three indicators: *number of enterprises, number of employees and gross value added*. Next, we will discuss the frequency in which innovations are present with respect to the size of an enterprise, the effects of technological innovations relevant to the enterprise, as well as the relation between innovations and development of SMEs in the Republic of Serbia.

The methods used in this research include the following: *analysis method* which will be applied for distributing the total number of enterprises into categories; *statistical methods* – for showing the trends in the number of enterprises, employment and gross value added of SMEs in Serbia; *historical method*, for collecting data and information from secondary sources concerning the achieved results in the area of SME development and their innovativeness; *synthesis method* – for generalizing the simple conclusions into more complex ones; and *compilation method*, for consulting and collecting the results of other research papers relevant for the needs of this research.

Concerning classification into categories, there are several quantitative (number of employees, property value, production range, turnover ...) and qualitative criteria (position on the market, market participation ...). On the basis of these criteria, the size of an enterprise can be defined. A problem may appear if only some size indicators are used because it may happen that the chosen indicator does not show the characteristics of a specific enterprise and, therefore, does not adequately indicate its size. An additional problem in defining and monitoring SMEs is represented in synonyms and various terms used to describe small and medium-sized enterprises. In foreign literature, small enterprises are usually called *small businesses*, while in our country, for a long period of time the commonly used term has been 'small economy'. In order to simplify the definition and classification, the majority of countries uses the number of employees as a criterion for classifying enterprises according to size.

The enterprises in Serbia are classified according to three criteria: *average number of employees, yearly income and value of business property*, determined on the day of writing the financial statement for the

fiscal year (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Law on Accounting and Auditing, No. 62/2013, p. 4).

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia conducted a research on the innovation actions of small and medium-sized enterprises for the period 2008-2010 and obtained the data concerning the innovations of product/services, process innovations, organizational innovations and marketing innovations (National Agency for Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia – <http://narr.gov.rs>). The research included 3.500 small and medium-sized enterprises and the sample was stratified according to size (small: 10 to 49 employees; medium: 50 to 249 employees) as well as according to the type of activity. About 15% of the selected enterprises were bankrupt and about 14% did not respond to the survey. The actual sample was 71.37%. Such rate could be considered very high and thus representative.

### 3. STRUCTURE, DEVELOPMENT LEVEL AND INNOVATIVENESS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA – RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In 2011, there were 319.802 enterprises in Serbia. Of the total number, 99.8% were small and medium-sized enterprises.

*Table 1. Number of enterprises, employment and GVA with respect to the size of an enterprise in Serbia in 2011.*

	Stores	Micro	Small	Medium	SME	Large	Total
<b>Number of enterprises</b>							
Number	228.540	78.890	9.656	2.218	319.304	498	319.802
%	71,5	24,7	3,0	0,7	99,8	0,2	100,0
<b>Employment</b>							
Number	203.520	155.472	195.602	232.279	786.873	418.404	1.205.277
%	16,9	12,9	16,2	19,3	65,3	34,7	100,0
<b>Gross Value Added</b>							
Value in billions	192,3	145,7	254,5	285,7	878,2	712,5	1.590,7
%	12,1	9,2	16,0	18,0	55,2	44,8	100,0

*Source: Data obtained from the Strategic Analyses and Research Sector of the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Self-Government, based on the information from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (related to the enterprises from the non-financial sectors).*

With respect to size, the most frequent are stores – 71.5, followed by micro-enterprises with 24.5%, small enterprises with 3%, medium-sized with 0.7%, while large enterprises are the least frequent and make up only 0.2% of the total number of enterprises (Table 1). Considering employment, SMEs employ 2/3 of economy workers, whereby an average

enterprise in Serbia employs 3.8 workers, which confirms the prevalence of stores and micro-enterprises.

The level of development and significance of SMEs is most frequently determined on the basis of three indicators: *number of enterprises*, *number of employees* and *gross value added* (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>). These indicators of business activities of SMEs in Serbia for the period 2005-2011 showed different trends, particularly after the financial crisis of 2008. Namely, the variation in the number of SMEs for the given period is significantly different from the trends in employment and gross value added. During the financial crisis, of the three indicators, *only the number of enterprises showed positive growth rate* (although significantly slower), while the other two indicators (employment and GVA) were significantly decreased (Figure 1).

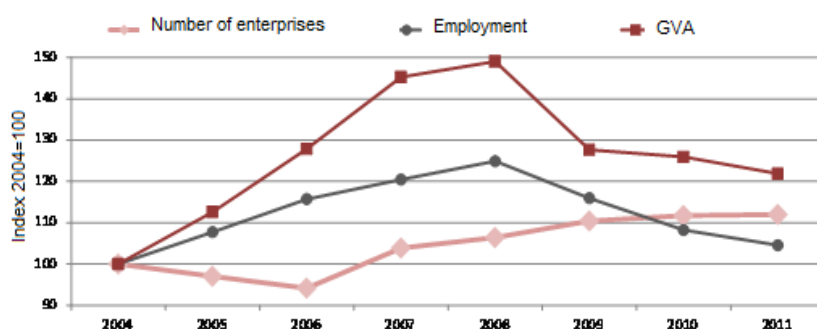


Figure 1. The trends in the number of enterprises, employment and gross value added of SMEs in Serbia during 2004 to 2011 (2004 = 100).

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

The number of small and medium-sized enterprises constantly increased from 2004 to 2008 and decreased during the next three years. Within SMEs, the number of stores and micro-enterprises constantly increased (Figure 2). This is the result of the fact that the greatest number of these enterprises is in the services sector where the financial crisis had less impact.

The number of large enterprises for the given period was constantly declining and, compared to 2004, the number was 35% smaller in 2011.

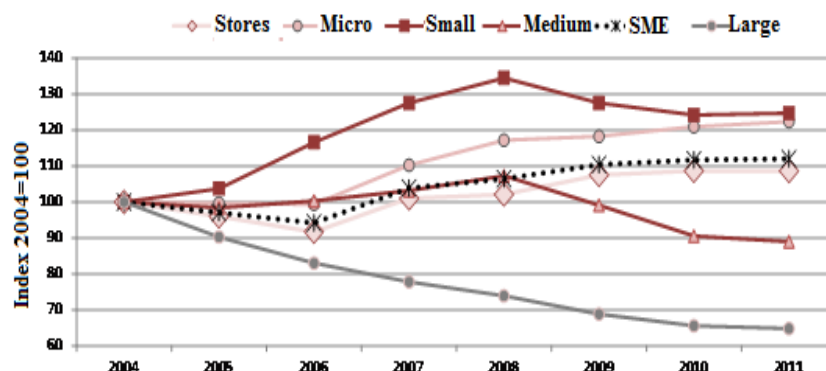


Figure 2. The trends in the number of enterprises according to size, in Serbia, from 2004 to 2011 (2004 = 100).

Source: The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

The SME share in the number of employees considering the total employment rate from 2004 to 2008 showed an increasing trend (from 54.7% in 2004 to 67.2% in 2008), whereas this number was reduced during the financial crisis.

Gross value added (GVA) of Serbian economy was growing during the period 2004-2008 along with the increased share of the SMEs in its formation. Within the SMEs, the small enterprises achieved the greatest growth in GVA. Since the beginning of the financial crisis, the overall GVA has been reduced and the greatest decrease was observed in SMEs, compared to large enterprises.

Table 2. The frequency of the types of innovation according to the size of the enterprise

Territory	product/ service innovation	business process innovation	abandoned innovation or still in progress	organiza- tional innovation	marketing innovation	non- innova- tors
Republic of Serbia	26,49	27,25	14,46	31,27	28,50	53,19
Medium	33,30	36,30	21,10	40,32	37,51	42,78
Small	24,86	25,09	12,87	29,10	26,34	55,68

Source: [http://narr.gov.rs/index.php/narr\\_en/Activities/Research-and-Analysis/Innovative-activities-of-SME](http://narr.gov.rs/index.php/narr_en/Activities/Research-and-Analysis/Innovative-activities-of-SME), p.2.

Considering the frequency of introducing a certain kind of innovation, with regard to the size of the enterprise-innovators, it was noticed that the most frequent were organizational innovations (total 31.27%, small 29.10%, medium-sized 40.32%), followed by marketing innovations, while product and service innovations were ranked last (Table 2), which does not contribute



to the competitiveness of these enterprises. Based on the analysis of the employees with a higher education, with regard to the type of innovation and size of enterprise, it has been determined that *only 12.48% of employees, who contribute to the innovativeness of the enterprise, have higher education.*

More than 60% of the enterprises-innovators state that they are the ones who had developed the new products/services, or they name the enterprises and groups they belong to. About 43% of the enterprises attribute business process innovations to themselves (Table 3).

*Table 3. Who developed a product/service or process?*

Size	Business subject itself or the group it belongs to	The subject in cooperation with other subjects or institutions	The subject has altered and adapted the product developed by someone else with
Product innovation			
Total	62,53	20,15	13,00
Small	64,09	9,39	12,91
Medium	19,05	10,76	3,53
Service innovation			
Total	60,76	20,31	14,53
Small	62,82	19,32	13,27
Medium	15,17	11,44	11,44
Business process innovation			
Total	43,55	30,17	17,24
Small	45,27	27,49	17,89
Medium	38,24	16,56	8,06

*Source: Ibid., p.5.*

The question whether the product/service innovations are new on the market or new only for the enterprise was answered in the following way: 36.46% of the enterprises-innovators stated that these innovations are new on the market, while 63.54% of the enterprises-innovators stated that the product/service was *new only for the particular enterprise*. The situation would be much more favorable if the numbers were reversed.

The enterprises decided that the *product and service quality improvement was the most significant effect of technological innovations*: 28.82% of all enterprises, 28.17% of small and 30.94% of medium-sized enterprises (Table 4). It is interesting to note that the reduction in the material and energy costs per unit of product, as an effect of the technological innovations significant for enterprises and their competitiveness, is ranked the last.

*Table 4. The effects of the introduced technological innovations considered very significant for an enterprise.*

Effects	Total	Small	Medium
Increase in product and service range	23,64	21,77	29,69
Replacement of outdated products and services	19,51	18,95	21,33
New market penetration and increased market share	14,99	13,11	21,09
Increase in product and service quality	28,82	28,17	30,94
Increase in production or service flexibility	17,19	17,60	15,86
Increase in production capacities / service range	18,07	16,32	23,75
Reduced working expenses per unit of product	14,94	13,98	18,05
Reduced material and energy expenses per unit of product	11,21	10,31	14,14
Reduced negative environmental impact	13,61	12,50	17,19
Employee health and safety improvement	16,63	15,38	20,70

*Source: Ibid, p. 7*

Despite all the problems that Serbian economy faces, SMEs represent the basis of development of new business ideas. However, due to the level of the overall social-economic development, domestic SMEs have not completely achieved their developmental potentials that would enable them to accomplish significant competitive advantage with respect to other enterprises, both domestic and foreign. The investments in research and development of innovation activities in Serbia have for decades been sparse (less than 1% gross domestic product), compared to the investments in the developed parts of Europe (about 3% gross domestic product). As a consequence, *the growth in the number of SMEs in Serbia is not accompanied by increased innovativeness*. Therefore, there is the need to promote the current model of economic development, first of all, the method of stimulating the development of these enterprises, in order to increase innovativeness and competitive power of SMEs, and consequently, the whole economy of the country.

SMEs should be perceived as the main initiators of innovation, employment, as well as social and local integration into Europe. Therefore, following the European example, we should create the most favorable environment for the development of small business or entrepreneurship. The European Union has adopted a new Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth – *Smart Europe 2020*. The document named ‘Serbia 2020: The concept of development of the Republic of Serbia until 2020’ which was created by Serbian experts following the model of ‘Europe 2020’ emphasizes investments of 2% GDP into knowledge and technology as one of the key requirements for development (according to: Savic, Boskovic, 2011, p102). The ‘smart growth’ priority includes the promotion of knowledge and innovations, as well as the improvement of conditions required for accessing the finances for research and development.

Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) was created by the European Union and it aims at stimulating the competitiveness of European enterprises. The major goal of the program concerning small and

medium-sized enterprises is to support innovational activities (including eco-innovation), provide better access to financial resources and offer business support on the regional level (<http://ec.europa.eu/cip/>).

It is not realistic to expect our enterprises to become branch leaders on the EU market but the direction they can and should follow in their development is towards innovative approach to the real demands of the market.

In order to improve the innovation activities and in that way the overall economic development of the Republic of Serbia, the Law on Innovation Activity has been adopted, which determines the principles, goals and organization of the application of scientific findings, technical and technological knowledge, inventions and discoveries, all with the aim of creating and applying new and improved products, processes and services (Law on Innovation Activity, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 110/2005 and 18/2010).

Due to the fact that their ability to compete on the global markets is limited by both internal and external conditions, the cooperation among the SMEs to improve the innovation potential (development of the so-called *business infrastructure*) has become a significant tool for overcoming various obstacles.

#### 4. BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR DEVELOPING SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON INNOVATION

A significant part of business infrastructure that provides favorable business environment for SME development are small business incubators. They represent an organized way of establishing small enterprises which includes numerous subjects, starting with the government, regional and local authorities, along with the financial institutions, large enterprises (donors), chambers, small business agencies and associations, scientific institutions (universities and institutes), interested businesspeople, entrepreneurs and experts in other professions – necessary for conducting research and development, transfer of knowledge into technology and technology into new products (scientists, innovators, project designers, engineers, technologists, economists, etc.) (Dostic, 2002, p. 125). The term incubator is a general term used to delineate various types of organizations that deal with establishing, ‘growing’ and developing new small enterprises in the first phases of their existence when they are most vulnerable to the external dangers and internal errors, from the initial idea to the stadium in the development when an enterprise becomes self-sustainable, i.e. economically strong enough to conduct business independently, without special conditions or help (Ilic, 2006, p. 68). Such institutions include: technology and science parks, innovational centers, industrial parks, business-innovational centers, or, in other words, *incubators*.

During the past few years, Serbia has established several business support centers (incubators). Within incubators, the enterprises have achieved innovative and economic results even exceeding the European average. The innovations included: products that represent a novelty for both Serbia and the world – 46%, and production processes that represent a novelty for enterprises – 78% and for Serbia 56%. Despite the financial crisis, turnover was increased by 24% during 2009 (compared to 2008), in 2010 it was 59% and in 2011 it amounted to 72%. It is astonishing that the results were achieved despite the young age of the managing teams within the incubators and the absence of an appropriate legal regulative relating to the incubators (<http://www.fefa.edu.rs>).

In addition to incubators, the important parts of business infrastructure which contribute to SME development are their clusters.

Clusters of SMEs represent business involvement of geographically close enterprises and institutions and in that way they get support in the areas in which they compete and cooperate. Clusters are also an effective instrument for overcoming the problems of international competitiveness of Serbian enterprises.

The clusters can be functionally (industrial clusters) and spatially defined systems of similar and related activities (regional and local systems). Classification can be based on the degree of the invested knowledge, considering that the level of technical development becomes less important than the ability to interact and exchange knowledge. Knowledge-based *innovative clusters* are spatially limited but, compared to the regional, they put greater emphasis on innovation and technical progress. Due to their specificities, innovative clusters attain benefits reflected in: improved options to create innovation, improved business formations, increased worker productivity and thus competitiveness and development of SMEs. The competitiveness of an enterprise in the cluster can be significantly increased by founding appropriate research centers, export promotion agencies, quality assessment institutions, as well as the promotion of new brands and locations. The basic elements of the competitive advantage of the clusters, listed in the modern literature, include: efficiency, innovativeness, high quality, low input costs and output expenses, product differentiation with regard to competition, speed and ability to respond to consumer demands, etc.

Being aware of the significance of the clusters in increasing the competitiveness of our economy, the government – the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development - has implemented the Program to support innovation cluster policy. Their goal is to contribute to the economical development of the country by supporting the increased productivity and competitiveness of domestic enterprises and entrepreneurs (by organizing them into clusters) and improving the cooperation between the SMEs and entrepreneurs on the one hand and the scientific research organizations on the other.

### *CONCLUSION*

1. Small and medium-sized enterprises are a significant element of development of modern economies because of their multiple contributions to employment, gross value added, generation of innovation and export. They are, by definition, more flexible than the big and powerful economic systems. Small and medium-sized enterprises create new ideas and search for fast and efficient economic solutions. The ability of SMEs to innovate is very significant because it enables competitive advantage of an enterprise, its branch and the overall economy.

2. Nowadays, SMEs and entrepreneurs are, without doubt, a very significant mechanism of development in our country as well. Their number has been increasing even during the current financial crisis, although the number of employees and gross value added in these enterprises has been reduced. Even though there is positive movement in the development of these sectors, which is comparable to the SME development in other countries, some chronic problems can still be identified. Financial funding is one of the major problems of the SME sector because the crediting of these enterprises in Serbia is rather expensive. All of this points to the fact that the developmental problems in our economy are very deep and they cannot be overcome quickly and easily. What is needed are structural solutions and, in that sense, the government should have a significant role.

3. The government should, among other things, stimulate innovations in the SME sector because innovativeness determines the competitiveness and development of the enterprises, and consequently of the economy as a whole.

In order to increase innovations in our economy, the following steps should be undertaken: (1) an increase in the awareness of the significance of innovation, (2) a reform of the existing scientific research institutions towards more focus on the commercial application of the research results and development, as well as an increase in their capacities, (3) creation of new conditions for greater investments in the private and public sector in the area of research and application of innovation, (4) development of infrastructure to support innovations, (5) working on reaching the international levels in scientific research activity and knowledge exchange and (6) strengthening of the link between science, education and economy.

4. Without the support from institutions, acquiring new technologies, opening new workplaces and penetrating new markets are very hard to achieve. Therefore, the role of the government, as a creator of innovation policy, is crucial. For example, with every document strategically important in terms of economy, the European Union puts at the center of its policy and measures for stimulating the development of SMEs those activities that are directed at their foundation, innovation and networking, particularly the development of the SME incubators and clusters.

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## ИНОВАТИВНОСТ КАО ДЕТЕРМИНАНТА КОНКУРЕНТНОСТИ И РАЗВОЈА МАЛИХ И СРЕДЊИХ ПРЕДУЗЕЋА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ

Горица Бошковић<sup>1</sup>, Љубодраг Савић<sup>2</sup>, Владимир Мићинћ<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Универзитет у Нишу, Економски факултет, Ниш, Србија

<sup>2</sup>Универзитет у Београду, Економски факултет, Београд, Србија

<sup>3</sup>Универзитет у Крагујевцу, Економски факултет, Крагујевац, Србија

### Резиме

Конкурентност савременог предузећа зависи од његове способности иновирања (производа, процеса, организације...). Иновације су потребне сваком предузећу, али већу способност иновирања имају мала и средња предузећа (МСП) у односу на велике системе. Број малих и средњих предузећа у свету расте и њихов раст би требало да буде праћен растом иновативности. У нашој земљи, међутим, то није случај.

Достигнути ниво развоја и значај МСП у овом раду је сагледан на основу три показатеља: броја предузећа, броја запослених и бруто додате вредности, при чему се кретање броја ових предузећа у периоду 2005–2011. године значајно разликује од кретања запослености и бруто додате вредности. У периоду кризе, од 2008. године, од три посматрана показатеља, само је одређени број предузећа наставио позитивну тежњу раста (при чему радње и микропредузећа имају највеће учешће, што је лоша тенденција развоја МСП), док је код остала два показатеља забележено опадајуће кретање. Анализа је показала да МСП у Републици Србији имају највеће учешће иновација у организацији предузећа, затим следе иновације у маркетингу, док су иновације производа и услуга на последњем месту, што не иде у прилог конкурентности ових предузећа. Установљено је, такође, да је број запослених са високим или вишим образовањем, који могу највише да допринесу иновативности МСП, низак, као и да у више од 60% случајева сама МСП развијају новоуведене производе. У преко 60% случајева, иновације ових предузећа по питању производа и услуга јесу новине само за то предузеће, док је око 36% тих новација ново за тржиште. Много би повољнија ситуација била да је овај однос обрнут. За најзначајније ефекте технолошких иновација предузећа су оценила побољшање квалитета производа и услуга, али, нажалост, те иновације се у овим предузећима налазе на последњем месту.

Поред свих проблема који карактеришу привреду Републике Србије, МСП су, ипак, темељ развоја нових пословних идеја у њој. Потребна је промена досадашњег односа државе према развоју МСП, доношење нове политике њиховог развоја, у чијој ће основи бити развој иновативности. Иновативност одређује конкурентност и развој ових предузећа, а последично и привреде као целине.