

Topics for doctoral (PhD.) theses for academic year 2024/2025

Field of study: 8. Economics and Management Study program: *Spatial and Regional Economics*

no. 1	Supervisor	doc. Ing. Peter Burger, PhD.
Title		CLUSTER POLICY SUPPORT AND THE FINANCING OF INDUSTRIAL CLUSTER MODELS
Detailed description of the topic (annotation or abstract)		The issue of clusters is currently receiving a great deal of attention as clusters have become an important tool of economic development in many countries and regions. The Slovak Republic is one of the worst ranked countries in the European Union in terms of cluster support. In the Slovak Republic, a legislative framework directly regulating the functioning and support of clusters has not yet been developed. Although several calls for cluster support (in 2013, 2014, 2017, 2020) have been made in Slovakia in the past, systematic, conceptual and predictable support of clusters is absent in Slovakia, unlike most European Union countries. The goal of this PhD thesis is to show using scientific methods that the correct setting of cluster policy rules and the optimal support of clusters can be an effective tool of economic, innovation and regional policy in Slovakia.

no. 2	Supervisor	doc. Ing. Peter Burger, PhD.
Title		PROPOSING A MODEL FOR THE OPTIMAL FINANCING OF THE INDIVIDUAL TYPES OF INNOVATIONS
Detailed description of the topic (annotation or abstract)		Innovation is a current research issue given its long-term importance in economic development in many countries and regions. In terms of innovation support, Slovakia is one of the most poorly-rated countries in the EU. Innovations can be divided into individual types based on different criteria. Many authors (e.g. Christensen, Kylliäinen) have drawn attention to the difference between individual types of innovation and how much their technological uniqueness differs as well as their impact on existing markets. While some innovations (incremental and sustaining) try to maintain or improve the company's position in the existing market, disruptive and radical innovations aim to change the rules in the existing market or create a completely new market. Although disruptive and radical innovations were relatively rare in the past, they are currently becoming more popular. While Slovakia is one of the least innovative countries in the EU, there is an innovative environment capable of generating several types of innovations with the potential to influence the economy in Slovakia and abroad. The aim of the current work is to map the innovation environment in Slovakia and find out what types of innovations are most often created and used in Slovakia. The goal is to propose a statistical model of optimal financing of the individual types of innovations based on their technological uniqueness and potential to penetrate foreign markets or influence the structure of currently existing markets.

no. 3	Supervisor	doc. Ing. Peter Džupka, PhD.
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Title	REGIONAL INNOVATION CENTERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL
Detailed description of the topic (annotation or abstract)	The topic is focused on verifying the impact of regional investments and policies on the performance of innovation ecosystems in less developed regions (Regions with long-term below-average ratings in the European Innovation Scoreboard). The topic is highly topical from the perspective of the European Commission, which is currently implementing a pilot project "Partnership for Regional Innovation" where Slovakia is also involved. The program is aimed at connecting developed regions with less developed ones with the goal of co-creating, testing, and mobilizing various financial resources and policies to support innovation ecosystems in the region. In this activity, through the ULYSSEUS project, the Technical University is also involved. At the same time, the Košice Self-Governing Region is part of the World Bank program - Catching-up regions, which provides a credible benchmarking against Europe and similar regions in the world. The World Bank provides technical and data support and helps to set and correctly direct the activities of the Innovation Center of the Košice Region.

no. 4	Supervisor	doc. Ing. Peter Džupka, PhD.
Title	ALLIANCES OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	
Detailed description of the topic (annotation or abstract)	The aim of the work is to explore the changes brought by the formation of European University Alliances in the area of universities' contribution to regional development and sustainable innovations. The involvement of universities in these alliances brings a new dynamic in the area of sharing research infrastructure, creating new research and innovation partnerships, new approaches to university education, higher mobility of students and researchers. The question remains as to how this new dynamic will affect the contribution of universities to regional development. Can less developed European regions profit from these new relationships, or will it lead to an even more significant strengthening of more developed regions? What are the prerequisites for less developed regions to fully utilize the potential of European University Alliances?	

no. 5	Supervisor	doc. Ing. Matúš Kubák, PhD.
Title	MAPPING AND REVEALING RESEARCH TRENDS AND COOPERATION NETWORKS IN PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION	
Detailed description of the topic (annotation or abstract)	Innovation is a driving force for economic growth, competitiveness, and societal progress. The European Union (EU) recognizes this and has been actively shaping innovation policies to foster research, development, and collaboration. Thesis aims to map and analyse these policies, and directly contributes to understanding how the EU supports innovation. CORDIS dataset provides a comprehensive view of innovation initiatives, funding allocations, and project outcomes. Leveraging the CORDIS database, which contains a wealth of information on EU-funded projects is a critical success factor of this research.	

no. 6	Supervisor	doc. Ing. Miriam Šebová, PhD.
Title		ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT TRENČÍN 2026 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE
Detailed description of the topic (annotation or abstract)		<p>The PhD thesis examines the broad social and economic impacts of the activities of the Trenčín 2026 European Capital of Culture (ECoC) project on the city of Trenčín, its inhabitants and community development. It addresses a research gap, as smaller cities are currently awarded the title of ECoC and face specificities in project design, implementation, and impacts. The work will build on the comprehensive framework developed in Liverpool (Impact'08), and is expected to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The research aims to quantify both the economic and social value of major cultural events, taking into account the dimension of sustainability.</p> <p>The topic is announced in the framework of the evaluation and monitoring cooperation of the ECOC Trenčín 2026.</p>