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**A public policy analysis of the Hungarian  
“Regional Knowledge Centres at Universities (RET)” scheme:**

**Theoretical perspectives, policy learning and evaluation**

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*Extended abstract*

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The primary objective of the paper is to set out the theoretical framework (concentrating on the relevant innovation policy literature, notably the “systems of innovation” [SI] approach) and the questions to be pursued in my proposed dissertation. The main topic is the public policy analysis of the Hungarian government’s policy to promote the knowledge economy by fostering academia-industry co-operation via a specific “Regional Knowledge Centres at Universities” (RET) scheme.

The added value of the proposed research is i) a thorough overview of the theoretical foundations of and the empirical justification for public policies aimed at strengthening academia-industry co-operation in general and in the case of the Hungarian scheme in particular; and ii) an empirical analysis of the policy cycle and the impact of the Hungarian RET Programme, drawing on a wide range of quantitative and qualitative sources.

The following broad issues will be discussed:

- The theoretical foundations and the rationale of state intervention in innovation processes with the aim of enhancing research, technological development and innovation (RTDI) activities, focusing on the role of public policy for promoting and strengthening co-operation between industry and academia.
- A review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature on the topic of “competence/knowledge centres” as vehicles for fostering industry-science relations in general and collaborative research in particular: major findings of the growing body of research on the impacts of public policy aimed at establishing and operating such centres in other countries (e.g. Sweden, Austria), the methodological concerns relating to the measurement of these policies’ impact on regional and national economic development and on the RTDI performance of the SI.
- The major elements and characteristics of the Hungarian SI will be discussed with particular emphasis on insufficient academia-industry co-operation, which provides a major obstacle for converting scientific knowledge and the results of academic research into innovations (and indirectly to economic growth).

- Finally, the development of the RET scheme is discussed in the framework of the policy cycle approach. The focus will not only be on the role of the relevant stakeholders and the policy community, but also the impact of international experience (“policy learning”) which is clearly of primary importance in this particular case.