

**Institute for Private Enterprise and Democracy (IPED)** - foundation of the Polish Chamber of Commerce, started its activities in early 1993 in Warsaw. It is one of the first independent research institutes in Poland and the leading Polish think tank. The Institute, through projects, objective research and analysis, education and recommendations for economic policy, supports market reforms, development of democratic institutions and creates a favorable climate for business and non-governmental sector.

Our achievements include many implemented initiatives aimed at to make a positive impact on people, organizations and communities, and in consequently - our society and country.

IPED is focused on:

- building democracy;
- shaping economic policy that encourages entrepreneurship;
- deregulation of the economy;
- development of private enterprises, including SMEs;
- development of new technologies;
- cooperation of science and business;
- development of the labor market;
- development of business organizations;
- development of NGOs;
- combating corruption;
- business ethics;
- development of self-government.

The Institute team has created two nationwide programs related to the promotion of ethics that have found many enthusiasts across the country. The Entrepreneurial Culture Promotion Programme **Business Fair Play** was founded in 1998. Its aim is to promote ethics in economic activity understood as a set of standards of behavior in mutual relations of entrepreneurs with customers, partners, employees, shareholders, local community as well as local and state authorities. In 2022 we conduct 25th edition of the Programme. In 2001 IPED created a twin program addressed to local governments - **Community Fair Play** - Certified Investment Location. Its aim was, among others, to promote municipalities providing especially favorable conditions for investors as well as paying particular attention to the needs of local community. The program was implemented till 2018.

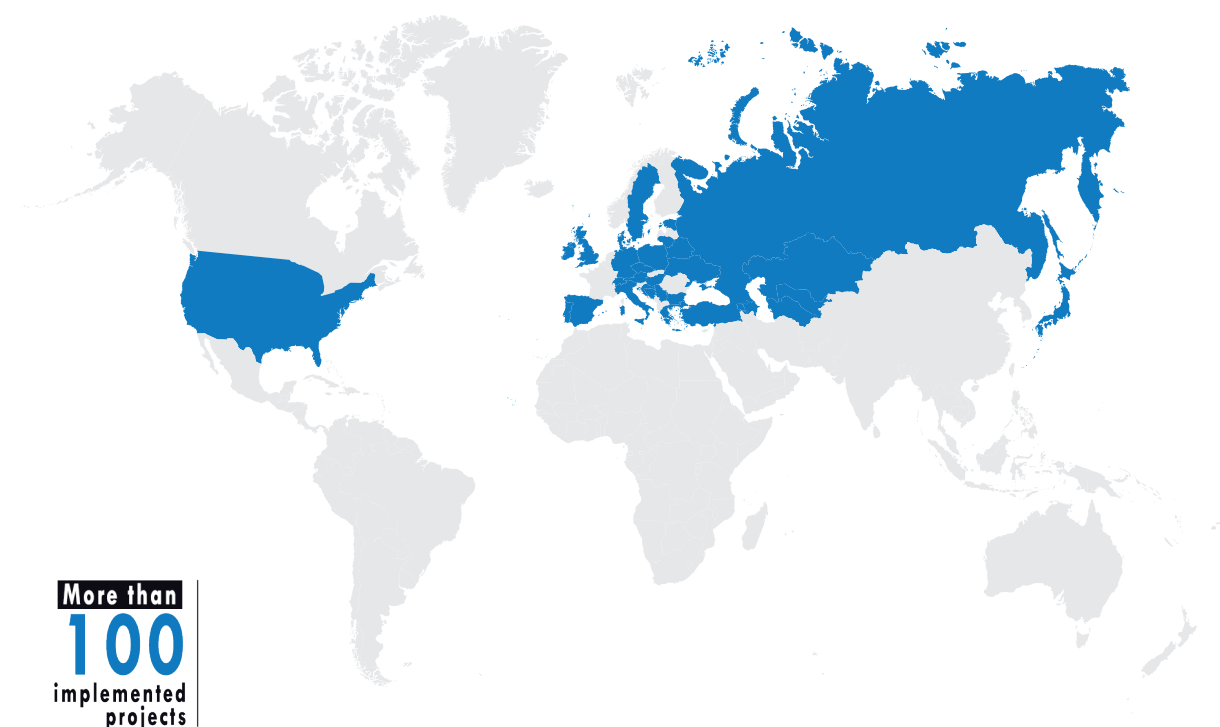


For over 29 years IPED has implemented more than 100 projects related to innovative economy, cooperation between Universities and businesses, advocacy for SMEs, development of standards in human resources management, elaboration of protection measures for disadvantaged groups, scaling down corruption in business, development of the civic society, promotion of business ethics and SME's development. The elaborated recommendations were implemented into the Polish legislation, including tax law, labor code, custom law and business register. Policy reports and issues briefs were used by the Polish Chamber of Commerce and by regional chambers in their advocacy programs.

Experts of the Institute have many years of experience in managing companies in accordance with the fair play standard. In 2014 and 2015 they worked with over 30 companies from all over the country representing different industries in the framework of the project realized by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development: „Corporate Social Responsibility” (within the Human Capital Operational Programme and co-financed by the European Union under the ESF) and „Increasing the competitiveness of regions through corporate social responsibility (CSR)” (funded by the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme). Moreover IPED cooperated with 25 companies in the framework of the project „Employment Fair Play. Become a mentor” (within the Human Capital Operational Programme and co-financed by the European Union under the ESF). The Institute's experts prepared a diagnosis of situation in each company in order to develop the company's development plan, including the field of CSR, human resource management, development projects and tools to implement them.

In 2017-2022, the Institute's experts provided training and individual advice to non-governmental organizations as part of projects implemented with the support of the Knowledge Education Development Operational Program, co-financed by the European Social Fund: „Effective NGOs and Chambers of Commerce” (10.2017-01.2021) and „Effective NGOs 2” (04.2020-06.2022). By implementing these projects (790 people from all over the country participated in them), we showed what actions can be taken by representatives of NGOs who want to strengthen their organizations and participate in the law-making processes - we provided training and advice to NGO staff on participation in public consultations and preparation for this process, strengthening expert competences, strategic planning, project management, HRM, obtaining financing.

IPED's staff participated in many training and advisory programs in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Central Asia, Kosovo, Russia, Croatia, Ukraine, Serbia, Belarus and Bosnia and Herzegovina, providing expertise on transformation process and market reforms.



The main achievements of the Institute include initiating many public debates with the participation of representatives of the government, the Polish parliament and well-known politicians. The recommendations and solutions proposed by the team of the Institute have often been implemented by authorities, for example solutions supporting innovation, including technological credit and financing for small and medium-sized enterprises. The solutions promoted by the Institute contributed to lowering taxes and reducing barriers for running business, monitoring public authorities and civil dialogue.

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**IB** Institute for Private Enterprise  
and Democracy



BUSINESS  
**FAIR PLAY**

**Business Fair Play**  
Business Culture Promotion Programme

**www.fairplay.pl**



## 1. Objectives of the Programme

In 2022 the XXVth edition of the program was implemented. The **Business Fair Play** certificates were awarded for the first time in 1998. Its completely new regulations, introduced by the **Institute for Private Enterprise and Democracy Foundation of the Polish Chamber of Commerce**, accepted a formula open to all enterprise sectors. The competition became a **certification programme**. Business support and promotion institutions, organisations of employers as well as clubs and associations of entrepreneurs throughout Poland – constituting the team of regional programme administrators – were invited to cooperate in the implementation of the programme.

**The purpose of the programme is to promote ethics in business activities**, understood as a set of standards of behaviour in the mutual relations of entrepreneurs with business partners, customers, employees, and shareholders, as well as the local community, local government and state authorities. It also supports the development of companies by promoting reliable and fair businesses, operating in accordance with the law and ethical principles.

The programme is usually implemented under the auspices of the Ministry of Economy (or the Ministry of Development and Technology or Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy). The idea of the programme is supported by the President of the Republic of Poland – Andrzej Duda (Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Bronisław Komorowski and Lech Kaczyński in the past) and the Prime Minister – Leszek Miller (and previously, Jerzy Buzek), who each year send letters of congratulations to the winners and to the organisers of the programme. In many voivodships honorary patronage is provided by the representatives of regional authorities.

## 2. Criteria imposed on businesses participating in the programme

The participants of the programme may be enterprises which:

- have conducted business activities during the whole calendar year preceding the year in which the particular edition of the programme is taking place;
- are based in Poland;
- have submitted a written declaration on the accession to the programme within the specified deadline (up to May 31st given year).

The verification of a business takes into account such parameters as the ability to solve problems, adherence to deadlines for the performance of liabilities, method of providing services to customers and of cooperating with suppliers, recommendations of business partners, working conditions and human relations, care for the natural environment, charitable activities, etc.

The certificate is awarded to those firms which have proved appropriate relationships and reliability in their contacts with:

- customers
- suppliers and other business partners
- employees
- competitors
- state offices
- local community.

## 3. Verification procedure

The programme lasts a full calendar year and is implemented in two stages. During the first stage, companies apply for their participation within the deadline provided for in the regulations (in the XXVth - current edition by 31 May 2022). Then, entrepreneurs receive an on-line questionnaire (companies which obtained a certificate in the previous edition fill in a simplified questionnaire) to be filled in, containing such questions as:

- Has the enterprise had arrears: in the repayment of credits towards banks, payment of liabilities to business partners, payment of employee wages, towards the Tax Office, Social Insurance Institution (ZUS)?
- Have any court disputes been conducted (with customers, suppliers, employees and others)?
- Does the company participate actively in charitable campaigns or events?
- How does it motivate its employees?



Those and other questions which have not been mentioned above are in a more detailed form in the questionnaire and the responses are awarded points. The documents are verified by Regional Commissions which are composed of representatives of voivodship offices, Marshal's offices, banks, employers' organisations, labour inspectors, labour offices, tax offices and the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS). The work of individual commissions is coordinated by Regional Administrators. The Regional Commissions prepare proposals of nominations for the second stage, which are eventually approved by the National Commission. An enterprise which is awarded a minimum of 70 points of on 100 possible is nominated to the second stage.

The second stage belongs to the organisers who, during visits, verify the compliance of the information provided by the company with the reality. The visits to all companies participating in the second stage are conducted in cooperation with the regional administrators. A company may be disqualified from participation in the programme on the basis of a justified protest of a competitor, a customer or an employee of the company. After each visit a report for the Presidium is prepared. The members of the Presidium make final decisions on the awarding of certificates, distinctions and special awards. The Presidium is composed of outstanding representatives of the Parliament, the state administration and Government agencies, enterprises and non-governmental organisations.

The official announcement of the results takes place during a formal gala (usually in November or December). Firms which have met the conditions imposed receive the Business Fair Play certificates. The best of them receive main awards in the form of statues handed by one of the members of the Presidium (in the previous years, by Deputy Prime Minister). There are also other awards, e.g. for innovation, for special pro-eco activities, for long-term participation in the program and for companies participating for the first time (more details - in the regulations of a given edition).

With regard to the interpretation of provisions and requirements contained in the rules and regulations, decisions are made by the National Commission which also reserves the right to withdraw or suspend the entitlement to use the Business Fair Play title if a company behaves in a manner unworthy of a reliable entrepreneur.

#### **4. Development of the Programme**

In 2022 the XXVth edition of the program was implemented. Each year the group of entrepreneurs wanting to confirm their own credibility is numerous. Over a period of 25 years, over 11800 applications were received, over 10800 certificates were awarded to 2575 companies. Many of them have participated in the program many times, even for over 20 years. One can assume that about 7-10% of enterprises applying for the Business Fair Play title actually did not meet the requirements. Over 200 firms from all of Poland applied for the XXVth edition, 191 firms received the certificate. The winners of the programme are firms from throughout Poland, of various sizes and belonging to many different industries. Previously, the largest number of enterprises among those participating were involved in production or services for the construction industry.

#### **5. Motives for accessing the programme and renewing participation in the subsequent years**

During the direct meetings with representatives of the Fair Play Enterprises we ask about the motives for the participation in the programme. The most frequent answers are the following statements:

- Making the company more credible
- Obtaining an objective evaluation of the enterprise
- Promotion
- Integration of employees
- Facilitation of business contacts and negotiations.

By applying for a certificate, enterprises wish to obtain something which would distinguish them among other firms present in the market, and attract the attention of customers and business partners as well as the media.

#### **6. Benefits for firms consequential to participation in the programme**

When organising the programme, we anticipated the benefits for its winners. The observations of the representatives of firms which have obtained the Business Fair Play certificate confirm our assumptions. The winners of the programme decided that the most important effects of the participation included:

- Obtaining of the reliability certificate
- Promotion (internet, media, bulletins)
- Meetings with regional government and local self-government
- More trust from customers
- More trust from business partners (including banks, organisers of public tenders etc.)
- Verification of the relationships in the company by its managing board
- Integration of employees
- Special projects for program winners only.

In our opinion, the presentation of a large number of reliable firms concentrated around the programme makes it possible to improve the image of Polish enterprises and encourage them to behave ethically. Enterprises participating in the programme, by respecting ethical values in their everyday activities, manage well in the market. This confirms the thesis that ethics and business go well together. Companies which have obtained the title of Business Fair Play are, at the same time, ones which have economic successes, are developing firms, investing both in modern equipment and in human capital. The programme shows that while acting fairly you can succeed and develop the firm. In the long-term strategy, the reliability and fairness helps the company to stay in the market and develop.

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