

Biographies of panelists



Catherine Johns

Innovation and Business Growth Director, Business Durham, United Kingdom

Catherine Johns is Innovation and Business Growth Director at Business Durham, the economic development company for County Durham, UK, that works with partners from academia, government and the private sector to deliver an environment that accelerates business growth. In 2010, Ms. Johns joined the board of the United Kingdom Science Park Association and is currently vice chairman. She is a member of the International Board of Directors of the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation. Ms. Johns won the North East England Key Woman Award in 2013 for “harnessing an impressive entrepreneurial instinct to a commitment and drive to deliver for public good”. She holds a BA and MA in Ancient History from Newcastle University.



Sanzhar Kettebekov

CEO, Autonomous Cluster Fund (Almaty Tech Garden), Kazakhstan

Mr. Kettebekov has been CEO of Kazakhstan's National Innovation Cluster management company since 2015, which focuses on smart environment and industry, new materials and energy, e-commerce and new media. Previously, he has held positions in innovative companies and startups working on cutting-edge interactive and intelligence technologies. Mr. Kettebekov is co-founder of Segment Interactive - a technology incubator focused on next generation solutions for media monetization and e-commerce using behavioural analytics. He holds a doctorate degree from Pennsylvania State University and a research faculty position at MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab working in collaboration with Harvard Medical on multimodal monitoring and interaction.



Tadeusz Peczek

President of the Board, EPRD Office for Economic Policy and Regional Development Ltd, Poland

Mr. Peczek is an expert on agriculture, business, entrepreneurship and economic policy, with experience of multi-functional regional development, and managing programmes and projects financed by the EU, Norway, USAID and the World Bank, among others. He is the founder of the Business Cluster Chamber of Commerce ‘Grono Targowe Kielce’ and co-founder of the Foundation for Education and Social Dialogue ‘Pro Civis’, the Institute of Techniques’ Technology and Management, and the Institute of Sustainable Development. Mr. Peczek has been President of the Board at the EPRD since 1995. Mr. Peczek is a graduate of Warsaw Agriculture University and Minnesota State University.



Yerbol Shormanov

Deputy Chairman of Astana EXPO-2017, Kazakhstan

Yerbol Shormanov is Deputy Chairman of the board of Astana EXPO 2017 in charge of marketing, promotion, sponsorship and participating countries since August 2015. In 1991 he graduated from the Almaty Institute of National Economy with the specialty of economist. Over the years, Mr. Shormanov has worked as Deputy Mayor of Almaty, head of the Almaty mayor's administration, and director of the Almaty Department of Business and Industry. He has many years of experience in customs administration for the Republic of Kazakhstan.



Valery Tsepkało

Director, High-Tech Park (HTP), Republic of Belarus

Mr. Tsepkało is a graduate of the Belarusian Technological Institute and Moscow State Institute of International Relations. He has extensive experience with the Government of Belarus, including as First Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador to the USA and Mexico, and Assistant to the President of Belarus in the sphere of science and technology. Since 2005, Mr. Tsepkało has been Director of the Belarus High-Tech Park. He is Member of the Strategic Council of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development and Governmental expert to the UN Secretary General in the field of information and communication technologies. He holds a Ph.D. in International Law and is an author of 80 articles on information technologies and global economics and author of 20 publications on e-government, hi-tech development and intellectual property rights.



Matthias Weber

Head of Research, Technology and Innovation Policy Unit and Deputy Head of Department, Austrian Institute of Technology AIT, Innovation Systems Department

Matthias Weber has worked in research, technology and innovation and the transformation of innovation systems for more than 20 years. His experience covers a broad range of thematic areas and industrial sectors, in particular processes of priority-setting and science-industry relations. He regularly advises governments, the European Commission and international organisations, including the OECD and UNIDO. Mr. Weber is currently a member of the Research, Innovation and Science Policy High-Level Expert Group (RISE), advising the European Research Commissioner. He has authored over 30 scientific articles on transformative innovation policy, foresight, and the governance of research and innovation policy.