



Fundación  
Centros  
Tecnológicos  
Iñaki Goenaga

## **Iñaki Goenaga: profile of an innovator**

Iñaki Goenaga joined the Gunmaking School in Eibar in October 1967 to launch what was then known as the Steels Analysis Laboratory, which was entrusted with the task of using the limited resources assigned to the students' practical training to provide local firms with the kind of quality control customers were beginning to demand.

After several years of making the best of what little was available, the Laboratory shifted several gears in 1971, when it received aid from the Association of Fine Steel Manufacturers. The support enabled the Lab to upgrade its technical resources and, under Iñaki's enthusiastically expert eye, take on much more work and expand its client portfolio. All of this helped to consolidate it as a long-term project.

During his time at the Gunmaking School, Iñaki Goenaga played a major role in hosting and taking part in the meetings held in 1977 and 1978 between the management staff who would later become directors of the earliest, supervised technology centres and members of the future Basque regional government, to prepare a catalogue of the region's technological requirements.

On 10 June 1981 a Constituent Assembly created the TEKNIKER Research Association, endowing Iñaki Goenaga's project with autonomy and its own legal identity. Under the wing of the Basque government's protection and guidance decree, the infant TEKNIKER began R&D work in 1982.

In the mid nineteen-eighties, showing huge business acumen and a concern for innovation quite unusual for the time, Iñaki Goenaga picked up on the imminent changes in technology and decided to reorient TEKNIKER towards manufacturing technologies, which have been the backbone of the centre's activity ever since.

Over the years, TEKNIKER continued to expand, eventually outgrowing its premises at the Gunmaking School. The director general set about looking for a site to build the new centre headquarters, which was inaugurated by the then regional president José Antonio Ardanza on 22 June 1990.

The first technology centre director to perceive the relatively unfavourable legal situation of Associations like TEKNIKER, Iñaki Goenaga decided to change the centre's status and converted it into a Foundation on 1 January 1996.

In the 1990s, Goenaga pioneered business promotion from technology centres and, from the earliest years of the decade, began to work with other entrepreneurs on setting up new technology-based companies. The effects of his original ideas survive to this day; TEKNIKER itself has contributed to and participated in the creation of more than 20 new organizations.

Goenaga's concern with entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs spilt over into the technological side of things. After some timid, but by no means unsuccessful joint experiences with the Spanish metrology centre CEM, as early as 1992 he became convinced of the future importance of precision engineering and microtechnologies, and started to work on what was originally known as "TEKNIKER Micro Machining", today embodied in its Micro- & Nanotechnologies Department.

Despite a painful illness, Iñaki Goenaga continued to run the centre until his death on 22 April 2002, after a 35-year professional career devoted to TEKNIKER, to technology, business and progress in the Basque Country.