

Success story, Georgia

As you know with starting of the FP7 program in EU, there was received decision to establish network of European innovation enterprises – EEN and coordinate this network with the help of CIP - Competitiveness and Innovation program. In H2020 the mentioned network is supported by new - COSME program (**the EU program for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises**).

I (as an NCP), had comprehensive information about abovementioned European initiatives and disseminated this information among Georgian organizations, SMEs, working in small and medium business. At the same time I made agitation of Governmental structures to join EEN with Georgian State organizations.

Fortunately I am member of EC funded IDEALIST projects since 2000 and had opportunity to contact the representatives of EEN with the help of the IDEALIST several projects.

The First meetings between EEN and IDEALIST started in 2010 and as a result, joint Brokerage Event (BE) at ICT conference in Brussels was held. Later in 2011 IDEALIST project executed Cooperation Agreement with EEN and in 2012 joint BE at ICT Proposers Day in Warsaw was organized.

Next years this cooperation became more intensive and several IDEALIST beneficiaries were involved in this process. I, personally was responsible for the establishment of cooperation between IDEALIST and European ICT professional associations and partly with EEN.

Meanwhile, during the mentioned years some organizations from EaP countries were involved in EEN (from AR, MO, BY, RU). Last year, in 2015, Georgia at last became member of EEN. Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia established two governmental structures:

Georgian Innovation and Technology agency and Enterprise Development Agency and they became the contact point organizations of EEN from Georgia. It was first of all country progress and at the same time fulfilment of our desires to see Georgia in the list of progressive European countries.

I would like to make short description of the mentioned organizations:

Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA)

Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency was assigned to coordinate and mediate an important role in the country in terms of innovation and technology development. The Agency shall ensure the achievement of the tasks facing the country and contribute to innovation and technological development based on economic welfare.

Innovation and creativity is a necessary precondition for the sustainable growth and development of the country. Since 2000 the global economy grow in Georgia by 3.2% annually, the main key to this growth is innovation. Innovation is a key source of competitiveness, economic growth and social transformation.

According to a World Bank report, published in June 2013 - "Innovation in Georgia" (my organization - ICARTI was in the working group which making the concept), Georgian companies which are actively using innovation in their work are developing faster and are creating 30% more jobs than not - innovative companies.

GITA was established in 2014, participates in the private and public sector, taking part in innovation and commercialization of research results, and promotes innovative entrepreneurship. One of the important directions are the formation of information society and programs necessary for the management and coordination of the policy in this area.

The Agency contributes to the introduction and use of information and communication technologies and innovations in various fields in order to improve their efficiency. Particularly in the financial and business sectors - in order to increase their competitiveness and the introduction of innovative technologies by entrepreneurs and start-up business financing incentives for innovative projects.

GITA is actively involved in formation of innovation centers, innovation labs and business incubators. One of the main objectives are creation high-speed internet access, e-commerce, distance education, computerization, to stimulate electronic services development and Utilization.

At present, the agency is mandated to coordinate and mediate innovation and technology development in Georgia. Its main targets are: to provide legal framework for innovation, support knowledge and innovation commercialization process, provide access to finance by grant programs and create infrastructure for innovation, the construction of new physical infrastructure for the creation of new technologies (e.g. technoparks, i-labs, fab-labs, innovation centers within universities), fostering dialogue between academia and industry.

According to this program on the base of GITA the Techno Park in ICT was established (on 11 January of 2016) by support of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. Techno Park was officially opened by Georgian Government and we hope its activity will be successful for the future.

Enterprise Development Agency (EDA)

The Entrepreneurship Development Agency (Enterprise Georgia) was established in March 2014 under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.

Enterprise Georgia is the first government institution in Georgia mandated to facilitate private sector (and in particular SMEs) development through a variety of financial and technical support mechanisms, as well as support the export.

At the same time the Agency is an integral part of the new State Program "Produce in Georgia", initiated by the Prime Minister of Georgia to encourage domestic production and increase productivity and competitiveness of SMEs.

The agency mission is to support Georgian enterprises in increasing profits, diversifying export structure and increasing competitiveness. The agency's main services to enterprises are coordination of relevant state support programs, easing access to finance, offering consulting, capacity building, business intelligence services (via outsourcing), promotion of Georgian export products and the country itself on international level. The agency is striving to develop entrepreneurship eco-system through PPP.

The agency targets value-added manufacturing and service industries. EDA emphasizes close cooperation with International Donors and other stakeholders.

I provided the mentioned material, as such type of structures are new in our country.

As you know last year, Georgia signed association agreement with EU and now association agreement with H2020 is signing. Therefore, according to the Governmental strategy/policy, Georgia is following to European standards, rules and technology policies.

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