

## **ALBANIA (METE, ARTI)**

### **PROGRESS REPORT<sup>1</sup>**

#### **on recent developments regarding S&T cooperation in/with the WBC (June 2013 / Budva- December 2013 Zagreb)**

#### **1 Policy actions**

After the elections in Albania on 23 June 2013, new Government is in power. New Government of Albania on September 2013, new Minister of Education and Sport, new Minister of Innovation and Public Administration and new ministries and structures are developed. The ex-Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy was split in two ministries: Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Entrepreneurship and Ministry of Energy and Industry.

#### **2 Legislative initiatives - development of the legal and strategic framework**

Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Entrepreneurship was in the process of drafting strategy for the period 2014-2020 and now the strategy is reviewed in order to be in line with the program of the new Government, EU 2020 and SEE 2020:

- Business and Investment Development Strategy 2014-2020

An important part of the strategy occupy the innovation and entrepreneurship culture for SMEs

#### **3 Important events, meetings, training activities, etc.**

- In the frame of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (A-I-I) which is under the presidency of Albania for the period 2013-2014, Ministry of Economic Development and Entrepreneurship and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized in Tirana on **7<sup>th</sup> of November 2013** the round table **“Fostering Innovation for a Sustainable Growth”**. In this event have participated representatives from countries of the Adriatic and Ionian area such as Italy, Greece, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and other Albanian representatives from ministries and agencies related to innovation. This round table was a good opportunity of sharing experiences on specific innovative practices and financial instruments supporting research and innovation for SME development in the A-I-I region.
- On **14-15 November 2013**, took place the 4th edition of BALKAN VENTURE FORUM (BkVF) in Tirana, Albania. The (BkVF) plays an active role in supporting Balkan-based

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<sup>1</sup> The progress reports are collected in preparation of the meetings of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries and will be provided for download from the WBC-INCO.Net homepage ([www.wbc-inco.net](http://www.wbc-inco.net)) about one week before the meeting takes place. Therefore please submit your report to [office@wbc-inco.net](mailto:office@wbc-inco.net) until December 5, 2013.

entrepreneurs to connect with international investors and business partners. It showcases innovative companies to active investors and promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, investment readiness and access to finance in the Balkans. The main attraction of the Forum were Top 30 companies from Albania and Balkans that have been selected to pitch their business in front of experts who gave the chance some of the best teams to go to the European Venture Forum.

It was not only one winner but 6 teams were awarded as best pitching startups including: 123.al (Albania), iVote (Macedonia), Leevia (Italy), Energomechanic (Greece), TM Vista, Epikinonia (Greece) and SmartROFO (Slovenia)

BkVF Tirana was being implemented by Balkan Unlimited, Europe Unlimited, the VIBE project and Crimson Capital.

- **BkVF Venture Academy (28-29 September 2013, Protik Tirana, Albania)**

On **28-29 September 2013** by PROTİK Albania was organized a workshop to help businesses to apply and compete for a slot to pitch them to investors at the Balkan Venture Forum in Tirana. The two days training, was to help an idea, technology, product or service that has great business potential to approach investors and discover how to turn the ideas into commercial and financial success.

- **Bringing closer businesses and academic research through the creation of the first "Observatory" of the Albanian Investments**

Albanian Agency for Investment Development (AIDA), has undertaken the development of an initiative called "Investment Observatory". The observatory is a collaboration platform between universities that offer doctoral level studies and professional master on one side, and the business community, the Albanian Agency of Investment Development (AIDA) and by other donors. The main goal of this initiative is to guide the PhD topic States in response to specific challenges and requirements of Albanian businesses, as well as utilization and enable a better distribution of knowledge, studies and research that our universities possess.

- Albanian Agency for Investment Development (AIDA) has launched the initiative "**Have the courage to entrepreneur and innovate**". This initiative is being organised in an effort to assist Albania's promising entrepreneurs in taking the first steps to start up their own businesses. This is the second time a Business Plan Competition is going to be held in Albania, after the previous project, last year, of OECD in frame of Regional Competitiveness Initiative. At the final round, on December 17, 2013 the teams will deliver presentations of their business plans and the best five will be awarded by a jury composed by Albanian successful businessmen, AIDA representatives etc.

- **June 2013** - two members of ARTI participated in the training sessions organized by the University of Bologna "Models and Techniques of European Project management for universities: tools and practices to benefit from European funds for higher education institutes".

- **June 2013**- two representatives from ARTI participated in an exchange of experience meeting with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo.

- **31 October 2013** – two representatives from ARTI participated in the Meeting of Steering Committee of the project "Support for the Albanian Government participation in

community programs”, project leading by Ministry of Integration with partners METE, Ministry of Culture and ARTI.

- **4-7 November 2013**- two representatives from ARTI have participated in the Web-In Union Meeting on exchange of the best practices, in Croatia.
- **17-19 November 2013** one partner, as trainer, from ARTI participated in Strategic Workshop “Are you puzzled with ERA?”
- **20-23 November 2013** one partner of ARTI participated in “2<sup>nd</sup> Training Workshop on Smart Specialisation for South East European countries”, Skopje

#### **4 Development of international cooperation and actions on integration into ERA**

- The Directory of International Programmes within ARTI is managing the registration of 600 new Albanian researchers in E-Cris, together with IZUM Slovenia. This programme is still in the phase of the collection of the information due to lack of personnel.
- **On 2 – 6 September 2013** a delegation from Albania – ARTI, Ministry of European Integration, Ministry of Economy participated in a “Study Tour” in European Commission and some Agency, in order to enhance overall visibility of the EU assistance in Albania, while emphasizing the specific assistance related to the concrete area of Community Programs.

#### **5 Statistics - major changes / updates of relevant statistical data**

- In June 2013 representatives of UNESCO organized a meeting with ARTI and INSTAT in frame of the project on R&D statistics in Albania.

#### **6 Assessment of the developments and outlook on the next 6 months**

- During the December 2013, ARTI will organize Info Days in some Universities in Albania. This Info Days will focus on the new European programmes such as Horizon 2020, EURAXESS, Erasmus etc., and other info for JRC.