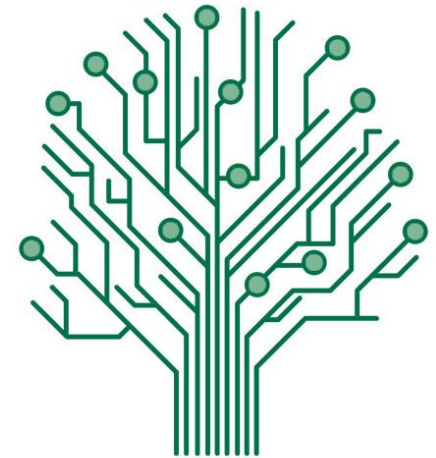


# **New Innovation/Excellence Center Concept**

**USAID Regional Competitiveness Initiative**



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## Excellence/Innovation Centres Initiative

**What:** Offering a comprehensive set of programs and services to foster innovation and grow sustainable local software economies.

**Why:** To connect people and organizations in the innovation ecosystem and give them access to resources, experts and facilities for collaboration and skills development.

**Who:** Students, entrepreneurs, academics, professional software developers, start-ups, IT professionals, industry/international organizations and local governments.

**Outcome:** Local centers around the world foster skills and intellectual capital, industry partnerships and innovation and cooperate with other similar regional Centers.

## **Opportunity/challenges**

- **Opportunities:**
  - ICT major driver for building innovation capacity and productivity in all vertical industries
  - ICT has high value-added
- **Challenges:**
  - Weak educational system
  - Below potential ICT market growth
  - Ineffective private-public dialog

## How to address Weak educational system?

- Complimentary (added) education
  - Enable access to knowledge, training, consultancy and certification based on world recognized models, standards and certification schemes
- Train-the-Trainer for teaching staff
- Partnership with Academic institutions
  - Cooperation with private programs like Microsoft Partners in Learning or CISCO NET Academy
  - Providing framework for Internship's and helping with updating/complimenting curriculums
- Support for life-long education

### Education Center

Lower cost  
of employee  
training

Opportunity  
for  
companies  
to deliver  
training to  
others

## How to address Below potential ICT market growth

- Low awareness about the business efficiency and effectiveness
  - Provide training in methods to achieve high competitiveness
- Fragmented market focused on the “domestic” opportunities
  - Provide regional networking opportunities
- „Open” closed public tenders to all
  - providing workshops and grouping support

### Networking Center

New business opportunities

Partnering with other companies

### Information Center

Access to information about funds

Large tenders participation

### Promotion Center

Opportunity to promote company or product

EIC Logo

## How to address Ineffective private-public dialog

- Enable participation of ICT companies
  - in policy making decisions
  - prioritising e-Government development for all sectors
- Promote local ICT companies as suppliers of ICT solutions for e-Government development

## How to start?

- First create **Excellence Center in ICT Training and Certification**
- Than, add **Innovation Center** to create one **Excellence/Innovation Center**
- Promote regional cooperation by building a sustainable ***Regional ICT Training and Certification Network***

## Mission

To provide the infrastructure and resources to help small and medium sized enterprises to:



Create innovative new products and services

Bring those products and services to market

Build well-managed competitive businesses

# What to measure?

Number of  
*assisted*  
companies

Number of  
trained  
employees

Number of  
start-ups

Number of  
new  
products

## **Phase 1: Establish Excellence/Innovation Center**

Private-Public Partnership  
(USAID & other donors-Microsoft/HP/CISCO)

First establish Excellence Center as non-profit  
(foundation, association or any other form),

Leverage existing scenario from European  
Software Institute (ESI) in Bulgaria

Add Innovation Center „component” and form  
one Excellence/Innovation Center

Leverage existing scenario from Microsoft  
Innovation Center in Croatia

## Phase 2: Involve other interested partners

Government on national and local level

Professional Associations and Communities /User Groups

Academic Institutions - Universities, Schools ...

Technology Parks / Science Parks / Incubators

Business Development Institutions

Investment/Fund Raising Organizations - Donators, EU Funds, Venture Capital...

Other vendors - like HP, CISCO, Telecom Companies ...

## **What is expected from donors?**

- Provide funds for
  - Venue
  - Staff (EIC team) payrolls
  - Marketing and publishing expenses

## **What is expected from private partners like Microsoft, Hewlett Packard and Cisco? (1)**

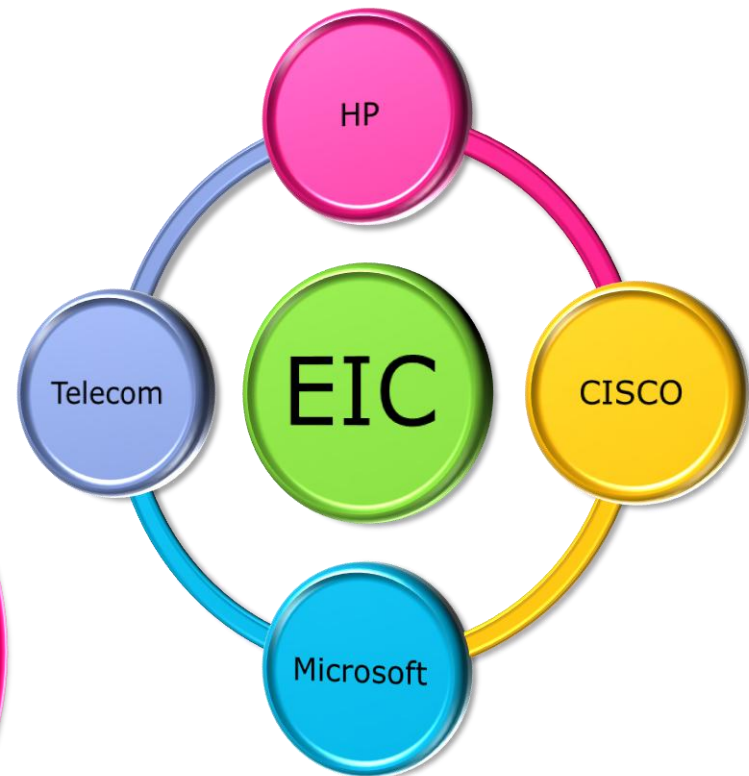
- Their product (software/computers/network equip.)
  - For classrooms and demo rooms
- Curriculums
  - Technical and Soft Skills / Business oriented
  - Classroom & e-Learning
- Methodology
  - HP Global Method (PM)
  - Microsoft Solution Framework
  - Microsoft Operation Frame

## **What is expected from private partners like Microsoft, Hewlett Packard and Cisco? (2)**

### ■ Programs

- Microsoft Bizspark/Webspark for start-ups
- Microsoft Partners in Learning (K12)
- Microsoft Academic Alliance (University)
- Microsoft IT Academy
- Microsoft Unlimited Potential
- Cisco Networking Academy
- Cisco Learning Network
- Hewlett Packard Academy

# Clustering of Excellence/Innovation Centers (EIC)



## How to make EIC self-sustainable?

- First 3 years supported by donors
  - Needed to build business capacities and develop the market
- EIC should gradually become sustainable by:
  - Providing consultancy and trainings
  - Organizing conferences and events
  - Executing research studies and developing publications
  - Equipment, software and know-how donations from well established ICT companies.
  - Sponsors, EU funds for projects, Venture capital sources

## Regional component

- European Software Institute in Bulgaria
- *Regional ICT Training and Certification Network*
- 95 Microsoft Innovation Centers around the world; two in the region: Croatia and Slovenia
- Possibilities:
  - Know-how and Technology transfer
  - Networking
  - Partnerships
  - Investments

## **Industry/Technology component**

- With vendors like HP, CISCO
- With telecom providers
- Blended trainings
  - Combination of hardware & software trainings – for example: “Business Continuity using Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 and HP Blade Servers”
- Interoperability between different technologies
  - Software platform, legacy and new software ...

## Summary - Requirements

- Successful adoption of EIC model requires:
  - Careful evaluation of local market needs (including Government and Professional Association's priorities)
  - Don't start from scratch; Use the momentum and experiences from others (ESI Bulgaria & MIC Croatia Working Model)
  - Strengthen alliances with International Institutions/Organizations
  - Facilitate Public-Private partnerships

## Summary - Results

- Excellence/Innovation Center can help to:
  - Stimulate the development of ICT industry across region, and by doing that – support all other vertical industries
  - Deliver knowledge transfer in both technology and business through classes, workshops, testing and demonstration
  - Boost new initiatives through Centers - *Regional ICT Training and Certification Network*

