
EXECUTIVE WORKSHOP FOR EUROPE
BRIDGING THE DIGITAL INNOVATION DIVIDE
*Fostering Digital Entrepreneurship and
Startup Ecosystems*

12-13 September 2017
Ljubljana, Slovenia

*Venue: ICPE - International Center for Promotion of Enterprises
Dunajska Street 104, P.O Box 2592, 1001 Ljubljana, Slovenia*

More information at <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2017/EW/Executive-Workshop-on-Bridging-the-Digital-Innovation-Divide.aspx>

CONCEPT NOTE

CONTEXT OF THE WORKSHOP: Innovation plays a major role in the development agenda by enabling public sector transformation, and creating new and improved services for citizens. It also leads to transformation in the private sector and the economy at large, enabling businesses to develop ICT solutions and compete on a regional and global scale, ensuring a strong private sector, economic growth, and the sustainable creation of jobs. Beyond this, innovation in ICTs is an opportunity to harness the power of technology to address some of the great development challenges that are unique to the regions and the countries concerned. It is an essential part of a thriving ICT sector, enabling businesses to develop ICT solutions and compete on a global scale by creating jobs, wealth, and economic growth. This growth in sectors can help close the digital and innovation divides, creating a more equal world where more and more people can enjoy the benefits of ICT innovation.

Leading ICT policies have been changing, from a focus on broadband and infrastructure, to a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship. Much of countries investment in specialized infrastructure on digital access, content, and the policies that helped countries start on the digital journey, have not met expectations nor created sustainability. Traditional approaches to address the demand challenges and close the digital divide has been met results tepid results.

In response to this challenge, many countries, led by public sector or international/regional organizations have invested in innovation infrastructure like incubators and accelerators, but these specialized infrastructure to create appropriate solutions are struggling to create success stories. Countries with a desire to establish competitive ecosystems are finding that their talents and startup continue to migrate to best-in-class ecosystems such as in Silicon Valley.

Technological changes, such as Internet of things (IoT), 5G, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), are providing new opportunities to address the digital divide, but the fundamental approach or job to be done has not been addressed in many struggling ecosystems. Newer technology will bring digital ubiquitously in all industries, impacting all sectors, from agriculture, to energy, health, education, banking, manufacturing, citizen services. They raise a new perspective that the digital divide will grow because they are only a few countries who can leverage these technologies to develop appropriate solutions and unlock markets, jobs. Despite a growing enthusiasm and initiative from stakeholders in creating digital wealth and inclusion, much work remains.

OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKSHOP: This two days executive workshop aims at building regional and national capacities and skills in developing digital ecosystems, including designing policies, implementation programmes and projects. Programme of this workshop builds upon the recently launched ITU toolkit on Bridging the digital innovation divide: A toolkit for strengthening ICT centric ecosystems, and will be supported by a series of national and regional best practices and initiatives fostering ICT centric innovation and digital transformation. This workshop is organized within the framework of the ITU European Regional Initiative on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Youth, adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014 (WTDC-14), Dubai.

It also contributes to the Digital Integration, one of the pillars of the RCC-coordinated Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans, endorsed by WB6 Leaders at the Trieste Summit of the Berlin process (12th July, 2017), in particular focusing on promotion of the uptake of smart technologies and accelerating digital transformation as well as supporting skills development and access to digital talent.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: This executive workshop targets all stakeholders involved in nurturing and building digital innovation environment, favorable to entrepreneurship and creation of startups. In particular, its agenda has been customized for the needs of the ICT policy makers, regulators, national innovation agencies, development agencies, entrepreneurs, ecosystem builders, academia as well as institutions willing to undertake a national reviews on the ICT centric innovation ecosystems and develop coherent approaches to move countries towards an innovation driven economy.

EXPECTED RESULT: Identification of stakeholders, champions and good practice programmes in the region interested in undertraining national ICT centric innovation ecosystem reviews, thereby advancing digital transformation and advancing digital integration. Furthermore empowering participants with methodology, frameworks, tools and context relevant case studies to accelerate digital transformation through promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

ORGANIZERS

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – ICTs. ITU is committed to connecting all the world's people – wherever they live and whatever their means. Through our work, we protect



and support everyone's fundamental right to communicate. The Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), being one of three pillars of ITU, fosters international cooperation and solidarity in the delivery of technical assistance and in the creation, development and improvement of telecommunication and ICT equipment and networks in developing countries.

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) is an all-inclusive, regionally owned and led cooperation framework. This framework engages RCC participants from the South East Europe (SEE), members of the international community and donors on subjects which are important and of interest to the SEE, with a view to promoting and advancing the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the region.

International Center for Promotion of Enterprises (ICPE) is an inter-governmental international Center with its headquarters in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The ICPE is mandated to pursue and promote international cooperation in areas related to entrepreneurship development, SME and infrastructure sectors, corporate governance, technology transfer, strategies for privatization, FDI, promotion of knowledge-based societal change through research, training, consultancy and information services in these fields.