

**Republic of Macedonia – Ministry of Economy** (Country/EC)

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

**on recent developments regarding S&T cooperation in/with the WBC  
(1<sup>st</sup> half 2011 or November 2010 / Becici - May 2011 / Ohrid)**

**1 Policy actions**

(e.g. essential changes in the political authorities, administrative bodies, agencies, institutions, personnel, development/launch of new national funding programmes, etc.)

One of the key documents relevant for creation of favorable climate for development and strengthening the competitiveness drivers is the document “Industrial Policy of the Republic of Macedonia 2009-2020”. It is an integrated and proactive policy and it defines directions in the development of competitiveness of Macedonian Industry based on knowledge, innovations, internationalization, cooperation and clustering, entrepreneurship and SMEs development, as well as eco aspects of development. Implementation of the document including some measures for innovation enhancement is realized currently through several programs and measures that are realized by different institutions-ministries and agencies.

Macedonian Government with support of OECD Investment compact Regional Competitiveness Initiative project for Western Balkans (RCI WB) will develop an innovation strategy “Innovation policy for the Republic of Macedonia 2012-2020” giving the framework and activities for stimulating innovation in the economy. This document is expected to be finalised by the end of this year.

With the financial support from BERIS project in 2010 the **Innovation Score Board for Republic of Macedonia** was prepared for the first time, and it is a document which represents a methodological exercise aimed, primarily, at providing methods and tools for the future implementation of a Macedonian EIS, providing summarized and robust evidence, which raises public awareness, supports a political debate and gives policy makers hardcore evidence, as one fundamental input for policy making.

The aim of the envisaged Innovation policy is:

-to strength Macedonian companies through commercialisation of R&D, implementation of new technologies and improvement of innovative thinking and the entrepreneurial spirit,

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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 Monday, May 16, 2011.

- to strength the cooperation between the academia and industry,
- to provide favourable climate for preventing brain drain and to keep graduates in science and technology in the country,
- to strength capacities of public institutions that are dealing with science, technology and innovation.

Important role in innovation support has different donor projects.

**USAID** has created an **Association for supporting Innovation and promoting innovative entrepreneurial culture, Innovation Center – Skopje**. It is a local NGO established as a spin-off of USAID Macedonia Competitiveness Project.

The Innovation Centre will have two core objectives:

1. *Building the capacity of Macedonian Innovators and Firms* to adopt, create and commercialize innovations and technologies
2. *Creating an innovation “ecosystem”* able to support innovative ventures and bring them to market in a commercially viable way.

The Innovation Center serves as the link between innovators and partners within the wider Macedonia Innovation Network, facilitating a critical mass of knowledge, technology and resources needed take an innovation from concept to commercialization. The main objective of the Innovation Center is commercialization of new businesses and innovations through attracting local and foreign investors, thus enabling innovative financial options.

This will be achieved by creating an eco-system of organizations, experts and companies that provide their services in the commercialization field. This eco-system is consisted of Innovation Advisors, Macedonian Business Angel Network, Innovation Fund, innovators, Entrepreneurs, etc.

**National Centre for development of innovations and entrepreneurial learning** (NCDIEL) is established in November 2009 with financial support for period 2009-1011 from Austria Development Cooperation (ADC) in Macedonia. NCDIEL is working closely with Ss. Cyril and Methodius University Business Start-up Centre ([www.bsc.ukim.edu.mk](http://www.bsc.ukim.edu.mk)) that was also funded by ADC in April 2006.

NCDIEL is designed as a centre opened for innovative, technology-based and profit orientated ideas. It has a selection system which starts with on-line application of business ideas, followed by selection of the best 80 ideas, training in 13 modules of entrepreneurship and small business management issues, business plan competition and finally ending with at least 10 newly funded companies. The Centre activities continues with provision of seed capital for start-ups, counseling and coaching of the established companies, all in direction of straightening the capacities of newly established companies to successfully sustain and grow on the market.

NCDIEL as its main target group have young population in Macedonia (< 35 years):

- Recent graduates and students from all Macedonian Universities
- Students from Macedonian high schools and primary schools

Also, NCDIEL is working very closely with university and school teaching staff, professionals, researchers, policy makers, representatives from state institutions/agencies and private companies in order to share with wider groups its vision, mission and aims.

Recognized absence of special fund for early finance of innovative ideas and businesses NCDIEL with partners is planning to establish first Innovation fund in Macedonia.

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

Innovation strategy developed with support of OECD as well as other relevant strategies/programs developed by the Ministry of Education and Science will be a main framework for designing the innovation support schemes.

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

Few OECD missions and individual meetings with innovation stakeholders were organized in order to develop the concept for the strategy.

NCDIEL organized 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference for Entrepreneurship, Innovations and Regional Development, May 5-7, 2011 in Ohrid.

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

(e.g. new bilateral/international agreements, memberships, support structures, important international projects, programmes, etc.)

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

Recent data related to innovation are processed in the Innovation Score Board for Macedonia.

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

*(Optional personal opinion)*

Finalization of the innovation strategy and its adoption by the Government, as well adoption of concrete action plan for it's implementation.

Active participation in WBC INCO NET and other projects related to innovation enhancement.

## **Appendix: additional data**

*(Delete if not applicable.)*

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