

## SOUTH EAST EUROPE INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

### SEEIC Working Group on Innovation Terms of Reference

6 December 2012

#### **Introduction**

As per conclusions of the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the South East Europe Investment Committee, held on 3 October 2012 in Sarajevo, the Secretariat is putting forward a proposed Working Group on Innovation (hereinafter: “WGI”) of the Regional Competitiveness Initiative Project has been transferred under the auspices of the South East Europe Investment Committee (SEEIC). WGI will operate as a standing Working Group of the SEEIC, ensuring continuity of the activities done so far and assisting in the achievement of SEEIC’s objectives contained in the Work Programme. The emphasis of WGI’s activities will be on improving the economic competitiveness of the Western Balkans by supporting policy reforms and activities aimed at stimulating innovation and knowledge economy development.

#### **Composition and Mandate**

The WGI will consist of the officials from the SEEIC members (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo<sup>\*</sup>). Other members of the SEEIC will be encouraged to nominate their representatives as well, in the interest of better policy learning and coordination. The members of the WGI shall be nominated by the respective Country Economic Team Leaders.

The WGI will meet at least once per year and will serve as a body where senior policy makers and experts from the Western Balkans can exchange ideas, lessons learnt, and best practices to improve innovation development in the region. WGI may invite private sector representatives, members of the academia and other committed donors and relevant institutions to attend its meetings as necessary.

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<sup>\*</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

The SEEIC and the RCC Secretariat will provide primary oversight and management of the WGI to ensure it contributes to the achievement of SEEIC's objectives. The main areas of WGI's involvement will include, but not be limited to:

- Promoting „triple helix“ linkages between academia, industry and policy makers;
- Encouraging establishment of a supportive entrepreneurial environment;
- Supporting private and public sector investment in R&D via coherent and regionally co-ordinated policies to enhance innovation and promote the knowledge economy and society;
- Facilitating the participation of enterprises and scientific institutions from SEE in EU programmes and EUREKA and developing effective linkages with European institutions fostering innovation and knowledge;
- Raising the level of knowledge absorption via policies that support existing clusters, networks, and centres of excellence to establish a regional cooperation framework fostering knowledge communities;
- Promoting natural science, maths and engineering studies while enhancing the quality of education provision and existing quality assurance mechanisms;
- Using available resources and private sector expertise to substantially increase the level of combined public-private sector investment in R&D as a percentage of GDP; and
- Considering measures to support business investment in R&D.

### **Organization and Structure**

The SEEIC / RCC Secretariat will do its utmost to ensure full participation by beneficiary economies in the WGI. However, a simple majority of the seven beneficiary economies in attendance will constitute a quorum for meetings of the WGI to proceed.

### **Timeline and Deliverables**

The WGI is set up with the expectation of providing the following deliverables in the outlined timeline:

- The SEEIC / RCC Secretariat will call upon the WGI meetings in a timely manner;
- The SEEIC / RCC Representative will chair the working group meetings.
- The SEEIC / RCC Secretariat will prepare minutes of all WGI meetings;
- The SEEIC / RCC Secretariat will distribute minutes from WGI meetings to committee members in 10 working days;
- WGI members will have 10 working days to submit comments; If no comments are received by the SEEIC / RCC Secretariat within 10 working days, the minutes will be considered final;
- The WGI should evolve or merge into a regional body which will continue deliberations on ways and means to improve the competitiveness of the Western Balkan economies beyond 2013
- WGI will in 2012 begin discussions on how it should transition into a permanent regional forum on competitiveness.

### **Remarks**

This Mandate Note on the Working Group on Innovations of the South East European Investment Committee is subject to changes and modifications as per agreements among the members of the SEEIC.