



**Economic and Social Development Unit  
South East European Investment Committee (SEEIC)**

Sarajevo, 25 January 2013

**REPORT**

**on the SEEIC Working Group on Innovation Study Visit  
to AREA Science Park, Trieste, Italy, 21-22 January 2013**

At the end of 2012, the South east Europe Investment Committee has formed a Working Group on Innovation (WGI), which has been transferred from the OECD Regional Competitiveness Initiative Project under the auspices of the SEEIC. WGI operates 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 under the Smart Growth Pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy, and emphasizing its activities on improving the economic competitiveness of the Western Balkans by supporting policy reforms and endeavors that stimulate innovation and knowledge economy development. Western Balkans Administrations' representatives have been nominated to this Working Group, by the economic team leaders, mainly from the line Ministries in charge of competitiveness and innovation, as well as from respective technology and business parks incubators.

The first activity of WGI was a visit to the AREA Science Park in Trieste, Italy, on 21-22 January 2013, which was organized by the SEEIC and the AREA Science Park, as per conclusions of the previous SEEIC Meeting in October 2012. The purpose of this visit was to explore the regional dimension of innovation that could develop and concentrate locally through a shared and interactive process, along with possibilities of its effective implementation by means of regional structured systems. Furthermore, the participants became acquainted with the operations of the Science Park and were introduced to the companies, incubator factory, research centers, and innovation facilities, based in one place and with the support of the regional Government *Friuli Venezia Giulia* strategies that valorize research and support research-industry collaboration.

The information participants received about initiatives, strategies and support measures which encourage innovation activity were estimates as useful, especially those that aim to assist competitiveness of the SME sector through the concept of an entrepreneurial economy based on knowledge, innovation and modernized technological capacities. This visit provided valuable information and concrete, practical examples and transfer of knowledge how a national and regional government can support the research & development and innovation activities, bearing in mind general consensus of the participants that the region needs assistance in

developing systems for innovation support. The participants of the study visit expressed hope such continuous efforts of the SEEIC and Regional Cooperation Council will provide support to the region in reaching knowledge and information, as well as possible funding needed for development of similar systems.

Finally, members of the WGI have commenced discussion and exchanged initial ideas on prospective mutual cooperation in strengthening capacities in business innovation, incubation and development, and are anticipating continuing to work in line with the development of the SEE 2020 Strategy, based on further proposals of the SEEIC/RCC.

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