



EU4Digital ICT Innovation Study Visit:

Meeting with startup ecosystem builders from Spain and Lithuania

CONCEPT

Topic: Journeys of EU organisations in building and developing startup ecosystems

Goal of the study visit: Meet the ecosystem builders from Spain and Lithuania who will share their journey: best practices in the entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem building and lessons learnt

When and where: 5 October 2021, 9:00-13:30 (CET), online

Format: Virtual interactive session

Event language: English

Objectives:

- Offer practical sessions on understanding the composition and functioning of an entrepreneurial ecosystem and what are practical steps leading to ecosystems' maturity.
- Share experience and know-how on the entrepreneurial ecosystem building and coordination processes by presenting the types of organisations typically leading development of the ecosystem as well as how collaboration between key ecosystem players/organisations is organised.
- Share the best practices on the entrepreneurial ecosystem development at different stages:
 - *Create ecosystem:* establishing activities, providing resources and supporting with expertise of previously newly established actors.
 - *Empower ecosystem:* supporting the sustainability of the already established stakeholders' activities and responsibilities, by providing them with expertise, mainly international, for professionalisation and generating high-quality content and impact for entrepreneurs and startups.
 - *Boost ecosystem:* supporting the optimisation of current stakeholders' activities and responsibilities as well as scale their operations by applying the best international practices and providing funding for the stakeholders to generate a larger capacity to support entrepreneurs and startups.

Target EaP audience:

- Entrepreneurial ICT ecosystem players in Eastern partner countries i.e. local policymakers (governmental institutions), ministerial level representatives and agencies coordinating the development of innovation ecosystem and digital markets.
- International organisations (Delegations of the European Union, among others), aid agencies and international financial institutions.
- Business incubators, accelerators, other innovation support and consultancy organisations empowering and boosting the entrepreneurial ecosystems.
- ICT innovation and entrepreneurship financial support actors (business angels networks, VC, development banks, etc.)

Number of participants: around 40 – 60.

EU organisations: Actors specialised in supporting the building of local (regional) entrepreneurial ecosystems for digital innovations - ecosystem builders. These organisations aim to ensure the wealth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem by creating, empowering and boosting its stakeholders, which is achieved by providing them with access to skills, resources and funds.

Organisations from Lithuania:

- [Startup Lithuania](#)
- The Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania
- Bank of Lithuania

Organisations from Spain:

- National Association of European Business and Innovation Centres ([ANCES](#))
- National Innovation Enterprise Inc (Empresa Nacional de Innovación, Sociedad Anonima ([ENISA](#)))
- Research Group on Bioinformatics, Intelligent Computer Systems and Educational Technology ([BISITE](#)) at University of Salamanca

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Meeting with startup ecosystem builders from Spain and Lithuania

AGENDA**Moderator:** Anna Pobol, EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Stream leader

5 October 2021		
Time (CET)	Topic	Participants / Speakers
8:45 – 9:00	<i>Time for connection – the event starts at 9:00 sharp</i>	-
Introduction and Keynote speech		
9:00 – 9:15	Opening notes: Study visit - inspiration for taking actions in the EaP Introduction of participants	<i>Rūta Šalvyte-Tamošiūnienė, EU4Digital Facility Deputy Team Lead</i>
9:15 – 9:30	Keynote speech: Building startup ecosystem in the EaP – why, how and the importance of initiative	<i>Jesus Lozano, ICT Strategic Advisor at European Innovation Council</i>
Virtual study visit to Lithuania, moderator – Rūta Šalvytė-Tamošiūnienė		
9:30 – 10:30	Startup Lithuania	<i>Roberta Rudokienė, Head of Startup Lithuania</i>
	Ministry of Economy and Innovation of Lithuania	<i>Ričardas Valančiauskas, Director of Innovation and Industry Department of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania</i>
	Bank of Lithuania	<i>Rūta Merkevičiūtė, Director of Financial Services and Markets Supervision Department at Bank of Lithuania</i>
10:30 – 11:00	Questions and discussion	<i>All participants</i>
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Lunch break</i>	
Virtual study visit to Spain, moderator – Jesus Lozano		
11:30 - 12:30	National Association of European Business and Innovation Centres (ANCES)	<i>Álvaro Simón de Blas, President of ANCES</i>
	National Innovation Enterprise Inc (Empresa Nacional de Innovación, Sociedad Anonima (ENISA))	<i>Jordi García, Chief Operations and Strategy Officer at ENISA</i>
	Research Group on Bioinformatics, Intelligent Computer Systems and Educational Technology (BISITE) at University of Salamanca	<i>Juan Manuel Corchado Rodríguez, Director of BISITE</i>
12:30 – 13:00	Questions and discussion	<i>All participants</i>
Closing		
13:00 – 13:20	Networking online	<i>All participants</i>
13:20 – 13:30	Wrap up and conclusions	<i>EU4Digital Facility ICT Innovation Team</i>

Annex 1. Background and definition of entrepreneurial ecosystem

An “Entrepreneurial ecosystem” can be defined as “the union of public and private entities, within a local, national or international scope, that joins efforts to promote the creation of new companies and ensure their success, by offering them access to knowledge, capital, market and resources, so that these highly profitable companies will invest their profits in the same ecosystem, thus creating economic wealth and boosting industry”.

Figure 1: ICT entrepreneurial ecosystems stakeholders¹



The entrepreneurial ICT ecosystems are focused on innovations, generating new business models, products and services, creating more competitive and efficient markets and improving the customer experience. An entrepreneurial ecosystem's primary **mission** is to unite all the resources that allow entrepreneurs to face all stages from their business idea to the generation of profits. The ecosystem helps to create a more dynamic economy by attracting ambitious and talented entrepreneurs, by generating creative thinking environments and entrepreneurial activities.

The entrepreneurial ecosystem is **composed of five elements** (knowledge, capital, market, resources and regulations) and needs the involvement and interaction of multiple stakeholders, including governments, entrepreneurs, foundations and educational institutions as well as the private sector.

Establishing and fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem is difficult given the level of sustained collaboration needed among governments, educational institutions, the private sector, and entrepreneurs.

The set of recommendations was developed in the EU4Digital Facility [Guide for building the ICT entrepreneurial ecosystems in the Eastern partner countries](#), to guide the ecosystem builders in the six Eastern partner countries with account of their needs. They cover activities to create, empower and boost the development of specific ecosystem actors and networks among them, including:

- Universities' (via specialised entrepreneurial programmes)
- Technology education centres (via implementing educational specialisation in emerging technologies as well as via funding capacity for R&D development)
- Tech parks and tech facilities (via technology clustering)
- Incubators (by implementing specialised incubation programmes and “idea-stage” grant schemes and by focusing on digitalisation of the local industry)
- Mentorship associations (by access to service providers' funding capacity)
- Venture capital firms (through fund of funds programmes and access to international markets; attracting international venture capital to the local ecosystem)
- Business angels networks (by strengthening the investment expertise and co-investment matching programmes)
- Crowdfunding platforms (through access to a critical mass of investors)
- Talent generation events, entrepreneurial events and investment forums (through sponsorship and internationalization)
- Startups (through access to business centres and international trade fairs)
- Connecting private sector with ICT ecosystem
- Creating ICT ecosystem databases.

¹ Source: EU4Digital Facility [Guide for building the ICT entrepreneurial ecosystems in the Eastern partner countries](#) (2021).



Annex 2. Short descriptions of EU organisations

Name	Description
Startup Lithuania	Startup Lithuania is a national startup ecosystem facilitator, which aims to have more startups in Lithuania and helps them grow by providing free consultations, organising different events and workshops, building bridges between different players of the ecosystem and attracting foreign startups to Lithuania via “Startup Visa Lithuania” programme. Startup Lithuania is powered by Enterprise Lithuania – governmental institution, which aims to support business establishment, entrepreneurship, and fosters export.
Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania	The Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of Lithuania is responsible for improvement of the investment environment, attraction of foreign investors, creation of favourable conditions for local investors, innovation development, support for the development of high value-added products, cooperation between science and business, promotion of clusterisation.
Bank of Lithuania	The Bank of Lithuania (BoL) is a central bank and a supervisory institution, responsible for implementing monetary policy (as part of the Eurosystem), ensuring stability of the domestic financial system, regulating, and supervising financial market participants, maintaining robust financial market infrastructure, as well as conducting macro-economic research and forecasting. Striving to be an innovative, proactive, and open central bank, the BoL avidly seeks to implement cutting-edge solutions that benefit society.
National Association of European Business and Innovation Centres (ANCES)	ANCES is the National Association of European Business and Innovation Centers in Spain, uniting 32 CEEIs and Business and Innovation Centres (BICs). This network is part of the European Business and Innovation Center Network (EBN) made up of more than 150 certified BICs and 100 organizations that support the growth and development of innovative entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs. ANCES contributes to the promotion and positioning of its member CEEIs or BICs in the national R&D&I system as well as their capacity to support the creation of new SMEs and / or new activities in existing ones, based on innovative elements with development potential.
National Innovation Enterprise Inc (Empresa Nacional de Innovación, Sociedad Anonima (ENISA))	ENISA is a state-owned company belonging to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, that since 1982 has actively participated in the financing of viable and innovative projects, promoted by SMEs and entrepreneurs. ENISA promotes a culture of entrepreneurship that pursues pooling and enhancing the keys to innovation, a culture that turns projects and companies into more competitive, more viable, sustainable and exportable new production, distribution and consumption models.
The Bioinformatics, Intelligent Systems and Educational Technology (BISITE) Research Group	The BISITE is a research group at the University of Salamanca formed by a group of researchers whose principal interest is the development and application of intelligent computer systems to different types of problems: AI, Deep Learning, Fintech, Blockchain, IoT, Industry 4.0, Cybersecurity and more. BISITE is multidisciplinary research group with around a hundred members with various professional backgrounds: computer scientists, biologists, pharmacists, physicists and economists. The group collaborates intensively in more than 50 research projects with companies, universities and research centres. The BISITE research group is responsible for the development of the IoT Digital Innovation Hub, which provides support to SMEs, facilitating access to funding resources for innovative projects and carries out technical diagnostics to SMEs to assist them in the development of new products and services based on IoT based on standardised methodology. Also, its members are in charge of organising several international congresses such as International Congress on Blockchain and Applications and much more.



Annex 3. List of speakers

	<p>Mr. Jesus Lozano, ICT Strategic Advisor at European Innovation Council and CEO at IT Entrepreneur</p> <p>Jesus Lozano is one of the high-level advisors of the European Innovation Council in the high-tech sector and has 27 years of management experience as an expert in business model innovation and operations strategy with a focus on ICT start-ups. Jesus is the CEO and founder of several IT start-ups worldwide. As an angel investor and venture capitalist, he is investing in technology start-ups, with a present portfolio valuation of 34m EUR. Currently, he is combining his professional career with a passion to support start-ups through investing, conferences, workshops, and mentoring sessions in Universities and international events. Jesus is a co-author of the “Top Challenge Acceleration Program” methodology to support entrepreneurs from idea-stage to seed-stage.</p>
	<p>Mrs. Roberta Rudokienė, Head of Startup Lithuania</p> <p>Roberta Rudokienė is a head of “Startup Lithuania” and managing this division for almost four years. Roberta supports local startups by facilitating connections between fast-growing businesses, venture capital funds, accelerators, startup friendly enterprises, and the government. Roberta is highly experienced in business development, sales, and marketing, and this year was nominated as one of the most influential women in startups space in the whole Europe.</p>
	<p>Mr. Ričardas Valančiauskas, Director of Innovation and Industry Department of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania</p> <p>Ričardas Valančiauskas is the Director of Innovation and Industry Department of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania. The Department is responsible for policies of technology, innovation, space and industry, including startup development. Mr. Valančiauskas has over 10 years of experience in the field of innovation support. Previously, he held various positions at the Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology (MITA). Mr. Valančiauskas has a dual background: he holds a Master’s Degree in Innovation and Technology Management and a Master’s Degree in Law.</p>



Ms. Rūta Merkevičiūtė, Director of Financial Services and Markets Supervision Department at Bank of Lithuania

Rūta Merkevičiūtė is a Director of Financial Services and Markets Supervision Department at Bank of Lithuania, that is responsible for capital markets, prudential supervision of less significant financial institutions (e.g. investment brokerage firms, asset management companies, and other) and financial services business conduct supervision. She is also a co-chairperson of Standing committee, consisting of EU-27 Competent authorities, on Payments Services at European Banking Authority (EBA), that's objective is to implement EBA's work programme, in areas related to payment services and electronic money and EU single payment market. She has professional legal qualification as an attorney-at law and for the past 12 years has been working both in private sector and financial sector's supervision in the areas of responsibility that include AML, payments, open-banking, lending, crowdfunding, investment services, FinTech industry, Regulatory Sandbox and transposition of EU Directives such as Payment Account Directive, Payment service directive 2 (PSD2) and AML directive 4 (AMLD4).



Dr. Álvaro Simón de Blas, President of ANCES National Association of Spanish Business and Innovation Centres (BIC)

Dr. Álvaro Simón de Blas is Director of BIC EURONOVA S.A European Centre for Business and Innovation of Malaga and President of ANCES National Association of Spanish Business and Innovation Centres based in Madrid. He has also been serving as a president of EBN European Association of European Business and Innovation Centres based in Brussels. Dr. Álvaro Simón is Associate professor at the University of Malaga, holding Degree in Economics and Business Administration and teaching business creation.

Dr. Álvaro Simón de Blas is an experienced European evaluator of the Business Innovation Centres BICs program; member of the selection committee of the NEOTEC Invierte CDTI Forum and EOI training programs. He has an extended practical experience of running his own strategy and financial consultancy and having worked at the Stock Exchange (Bank of London and South America) Lloyds Banking Group Spain as well as at ICEX Commercial Office of the Embassy of Spain in Tokyo (Japan).



Mr. Jordi García, Chief Operations and Strategy Officer at ENISA

Jordi Garcia is an EU expert economist in the field of innovation ecosystems and policy and of urban strategies. He is a researcher and practitioner with extensive experience in the different perspectives of growth and development of organizations and local and regional territories. Mr. Garcia is currently a Chief Operations and Strategy Officer at ENISA. From the public, private, scientific and non-profit point of view, he has learned the complex nature of local and regional economic activity. He aims to keep building more competitive, sustainable, and inclusive organisations and territories.



Dr. Juan Manuel Corchado, Director at BISITE, Professor at the University of Salamanca and President of the Air Institute

Juan Manuel Corchado is a full-time Professor with Chair at the University of Salamanca. He was a Vice President for Research from 2013 to 2017 and the Director of the Science Park of the University of Salamanca. Chosen twice as the Dean of the Faculty of Science, he holds a PhD in Computer Sciences from the University of Salamanca and a PhD in Artificial Intelligence from the University of the West of Scotland. He is the director of a renowned research group called BISITE (Bioinformatics, Intelligent Systems and Educational Technology), which has been created in 2000. Mr. Corchado is also the Director of the IoT Digital Innovation Hub and the President of the AIR Institute. He is a Visiting Professor at the Osaka Institute of Technology and has been Visiting Professor at the University Malaysia Kelantan and a Member of the Advisory group on Online Terrorist Propaganda of the European Counter Terrorism Centre (EUROPOL).