SUCCESS STORY
RCI Improves IT Competitiveness

Leveraging Resources to Improve IT Competitiveness in the E&E Region

One of the major objectives of RCI is to ensure the sustainability of ICT activities and to obtain commitment from other stakeholders and donors in the region to the activities performed.

RCI and its regional IT partner ESI Center Bulgaria/Eastern Europe have developed and implemented a specific model to support IT training and certification activities, while leveraging co-funding from other donors and partners.

RCI's model is part of a systematic approach used to support regional competitiveness. It is based on the *IT Competitiveness Pyramid*, which is used to assist regional clusters of firms to improve their processes and obtain the internationally recognized certifications, CMMI and IT Mark. All activities are implemented in partnership with regional stakeholders from donor organizations, business associations, firms and individuals. These stakeholders provide a significant part of the financing for and offer further support after the initial pilot projects.

The participation of other stakeholders not only leverages the RCI funds spent on the program but also ensures strong commitment and long-term sustainability for the initiatives.

The first programs based on the IT Competitiveness Pyramid were launched in 2005-2007. They have impacted the whole region and proved their sustainability:

- After the completion of the USAID program in Bulgaria, other programs such as EBRD Business Advisory Services Program and the Bulgarian Competitiveness Program, funded by EU, continued their support for the CMMI /IT Mark initiative. The ESI Center Bulgaria has become a regional excellence center in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.
- The RCI IT program in Macedonia was recognized as a development model for the region. In 2008 the German GTZ decided to fund a large-scale regional program based on the original RCI model, which supported more than 50 firms from six countries.
- RCI activities in Moldova were implemented in partnership with local firms and the CEED project funded by USAID. This not only contributed to the overall competitiveness of the Moldovan IT sector but also resulted in the creation of the excellence center for IT QLab that will develop local capacity for IT training and certification in Moldova.

The RCI project is implemented by SEGURA/IP3 Partners.