



CEED SLOVENIA – CONNECTING ENTREPRENEURS IN THE REGION

Access to new markets

Ljubljana, SLOVENIA – In an effort to encourage entrepreneurs to expand their businesses beyond their domestic borders, CEED activities this year have had a more international focus. Following the successful visit of thirty Slovene entrepreneurs to Serbia in January, CEED Slovenia organized another business trip to Macedonia and Kosovo in May.

The program was composed of different activities that facilitated networking and the identification of business prospects. In cooperation with the Slovene-Macedonian Business Club and CEED Macedonia, a networking event was organized that included one-on-one meetings between Slovene and Macedonian entrepreneurs. Additional meetings were organized with the directors of established Slovene companies such as Lek, NLB, Fructal, and Studio Marketing, and with the economic advisor from the Slovene embassy. Their personal experiences shared valuable insight on doing business in Macedonia. A beneficial meeting was also held with representatives from USAID's Economic Growth Office and its Competitiveness Project as they presented more opportunities in Macedonia.

In Kosovo, Slovene entrepreneurs joined a Business Forum that was organized by AmCham Kosovo and CEED Macedonia. The forum was an excellent occasion to learn about investment opportunities in Kosovo and Macedonia and it offered a constructive opportunity for Slovene, Macedonian and Kosovo entrepreneurs to network. Additional meetings were organized with representatives of the USAID Kosovo and Slovene companies, NLB and Birra Peja.

The experience has demonstrated that business visits are an effective



Slovene and Macedonian entrepreneurs meet in one-on-one meetings in Macedonia.



Andy Owen, world-famous direct marketer, presents at a Top Class event in Macedonia.

way for entrepreneurs to acquire valuable business contacts and better understand new markets. As a result of the Slovene group of entrepreneurs' satisfaction with the visit to Macedonia and Kosovo, they have requested that CEED organize a similar trip to Albania

CEED MACEDONIA – ORGANIZES THE LARGEST DIRECT MARKETING EVENT EVER IN MACEDONIA

Capacity Development

Skopje, MACEDONIA – On May 28, 2009, CEED Macedonia and R3 Infomedia organized a comprehensive conference 'Discover the secrets of successful direct marketing' presented by one of the world's most respected direct marketers, Andy Owen. The event was part of the Top Class program but was open to the public. Of the 180 participants, 143 paid to attend, affirming for CEED that the community judges this activity—attracting acknowledged industry experts—to be important and valuable.

In this special presentation Andy reviewed crucial topics for appropriately applying direct marketing such as 'how to create messages that connect and sell,' and effective copywriting. He illustrated practical techniques for the delivery of the message including direct mail, postcards, and email with 'call to action' elements. The presentation furthermore included many "do's and don'ts" as well as award-winning examples of direct mail advertising, email and inserts from all around the world.

A review of the evaluation forms submitted at the end of the conference indicate that the audience was highly satisfied with the event. One attendee commented on the form that "Andy presented very practical and applicable direct marketing tricks and tips that every manager could use. This was a great event that should not be missed."

CEED BULGARIA – TOP CLASS ICT ENTREPRENEURS LEARN FROM THE INDUSTRY “MASTERS”

Capacity Development

Sofia, BULGARIA – On May 15, 2009, Mr. Peter Statev, Chairman of the Bulgarian ICT Cluster and owner/CEO of one of the largest ICT firms in Bulgaria, SMARTCOM, led a practical Top Class training session on the development of the Bulgarian ICT sector and where it is headed. Entitled ‘The ICT Sector -- Development through to Globalization,’ Mr. Statev provided the class with an in-depth lecture on the growth of the ICT sector and the impact ICT will have on the development of Bulgarian businesses as a whole. Mr. Statev additionally outlined for the class his personal experience negotiating and selling his first company to a venture capital firm. Finally, Mr. Statev reviewed the TOP CLASS entrepreneurs’ companies, providing each with personal recommendations on the next steps the participant needed to take.

CEED ROMANIA – POSITIONING SMEs FOR FINANCE

Access to Finance

Bucharest, ROMANIA – As of June 2009, Romanian SMEs are now able to access between €250,000 and €1.5 million in non-reimbursable grants under the EU Sectorial Operational Programme. The general objective of the Programme is to increase Romanian companies’ competitiveness and sustainable development and to reduce the disparities in average productivity as compared to the European Union. The Programme seeks to make the Romanian productive sector environmentally friendly, increase R&D capacity, leverage the potential of ICT for better business management, and increase energy efficiency. The most appealing part of the Programme for CEED’s clients is Priority Axis 1, which aims to cultivate innovative and eco-efficient production systems. Priority Axis 1 is available to companies eager to create new production facilities or extend existing ones, to those acquiring intangible goods such as software, know-how, licenses, patents and technical solutions, and to those executing new product and service development initiatives.

Since 2007 and funded by various U.S. and EU grants, CEED has conducted numerous seminars outlining for SMEs the various EU capital provision programmes, the criteria for accessing



Peter Statev, SMARTCOM owner/CEO, leads a Top Class training session.

those programmes’ funds, and the regulatory requirements and procedures. Given its recognized understanding of the rules and regulations associated with these former and current grants, CEED has taken the first step in providing more specific ‘access to finance’ consulting services to SMEs and their entrepreneurs. CEED has just finalized the business plan for a €1.9 million investment project for one of its clients and is working to complete similar plans in the near future.

CEED BULGARIA – HELPING MICRO-FINANCE INSTITUTIONS ADDRESS THE FINANCE CRISIS

Capacity Development

Sofia, BULGARIA – CEED works to support entrepreneurs who want to dramatically grow their companies. Getting finance to fund this growth however has never been more challenging. As a result of a recent review of the current state of microfinance in Bulgaria conducted by CEED and financed by the European Investment Fund, CEED Bulgaria was asked by the German Cooperative and Raiffeisen Confederation (DGRV) to co-organize a seminar addressing how the financial crisis will affect microfinance institutions, and what remedial action should be taken to best meet the challenges. On May 20 and 21, 2009 CEED-Bulgaria’s Executive Director, Nikolay Yarmov, summarized findings from this research and outlined the opportunities that microfinance institutions now have to more efficiently manage their businesses. The presentation was followed by a discussion of next steps with the more than 25 directors from credit cooperatives and microfinance organizations in attendance.

Center for Entrepreneurship and Executive Development (CEED) is...

... a community of high expectation entrepreneurs providing the know-how and networks needed to drive businesses forward. CEED is for entrepreneurs who want sophisticated, yet practical training and connections to finance and new markets. CEED was established by the [Small Enterprise Assistance Funds \(SEAF, www.seaf.com\)](http://www.seaf.com) with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). SEAF provides growth capital and operational support to businesses in emerging markets and those underserved by traditional sources of capital, achieving attractive risk-adjusted returns while generating meaningful local economic benefits. SEAF and CEED are based in Washington D.C. and have offices across the globe.

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