
**RISING INNOVATION &
EMERGING TALENTS**

**FROM
THE
EAST**



BELARUS
ECOSYSTEM OVERVIEW

**WRITTEN AND
PUBLISHED BY**



BELARUS (BLR) ECOSYSTEM OVERVIEW

KEY ATTRIBUTES OF THE STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

In a historical context, Belarus was one of the most technologically advanced republics of the former Soviet Union. Most of the computers and computers' components were being produced here. Thanks to the interdisciplinary education system in Belarus, local ICT specialists have deep knowledge in mathematics, engineering, physics and other sciences and can be very creative at solving complex problems.

The ICT sector plays a key role in the Belarusian economy. Due to the accumulated knowledge and flexibility the sector seems to be crisis resistant and has great potential to produce relatively high value added. As of 2016, the gross value added of the Belarusian ICT sector amounted to 1.9 billion EUR or 4.5% of Belarus's GDP.

In many ways, 2020 was a turning point for the global startup ecosystem, and of course for the Belarusian as well. The country and the startup ecosystem are entering a new decade with lots of possibilities and unfortunately with lots of challenges. We try to summarize the most important problems as follows:

- damage to the country's international image,
- declining investor interest,
- changes in the development of the domestic legislative framework, weak legislation in the sphere of entrepreneurship, which leads to low level of innovations in the ecosystem,
- lack of transparency in the system of public procurement,
- ongoing crisis,
- Belarus has low expenditures on R&D (0.6% of the GDP, 2018),
- lack of private supporting institutions such as incubators, business angel networks or venture funds, in Belarus, public funds are the main source of investments in R&D,

- underdeveloped mechanisms of perception of innovations (lack of intermediary organisations the Belarus's innovation system including Technology Transfer Offices, University Incubators and Collaborative Research Centres). There are several barriers to collaboration of academic (universities, Research institutes) and industry (mainly high tech enterprises),
- constrained access to research and infrastructure,
- relatively low share of non-state financing of R&D,
- founders fleeing abroad,
- weak academia-academia collaboration and knowledge transfer,
- huge interest in Belarusian technological talents from neighboring countries

In light of the above, the innovation ecosystem shows the structure below (see Figure 1.):

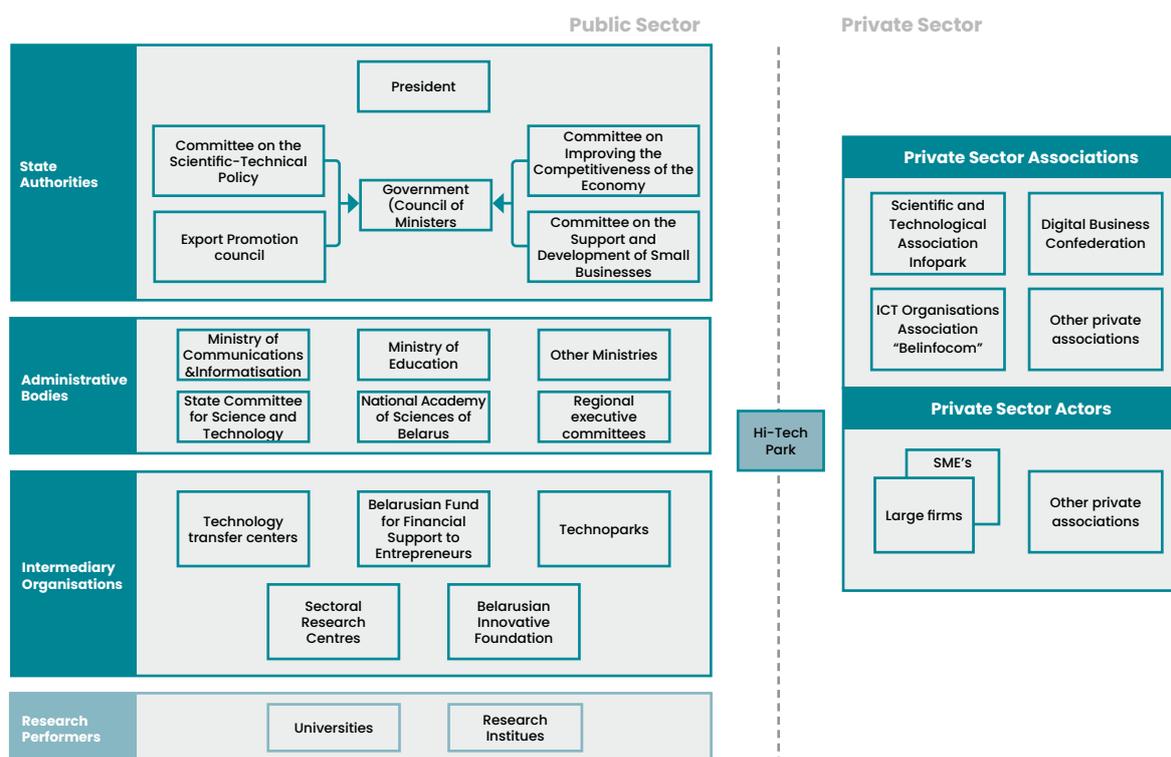


FIGURE 1. The structure of the Armenian technology ecosystem.
 Source: European Commission–Kantor Management Consultants (2018)

The economic and other crises have severely tarnished the growth potential of the ecosystem. Nevertheless, the ecosystem is showing signs of revival. In terms of the general progress or evolution, the following table (Table 1.) tries to cover the most relevant factors and indicators.

INDICATOR	DYNAMICS	2020	2018 ²
Number of companies that took part in the survey	+21.5%	260	214
Startups older than three years	+134%	26.0%	11.1%
Startups in the growth and development stage	+114%	25.0%	11.7%
Startups that are formally incorporated	+47%	81.7%	55.3%
Startups that work solely on the Belarusian market	-47%	29.8%	56.3%
Startups that have regular income	+67%	46.2%	27.6%
Startups with international teams	+49%	31.7%	21.3%
Startups with founders working full-time	+55%	63.2%	40.7%
Volume of investments, \$M	two times	170	85

TABLE 1. Dynamics of the startup development in Belarus.
Source: USAID–Belbiz Group (2021: 11)

Examining the situation in more detail, the following events and facts can be highlighted.

Belarusian startups closed a number of successful investment rounds. In total they raised about USD 60m in 32 deals. PandaDoc and Flo, two startups with Belarusian founders, had two biggest deals in 2020. They were followed by the classic seed series in Loona and Vochi. GiveAway has been selected for the international accelerator Y Combinator (USA) and other startups have been trained in accelerators globally,

including Starta Ventures (USA), Rockstart (Holland), EXPARA (Singapore), Pulsar (Russia), Upward (USA), MTS Accelerator (Russia).

In order to develop local startups, the following notable incubators and accelerators operate in Belarus:

Rocket DAO is a venture community with hundreds of registered members. Rocket DAO is a marketplace for innovative startups, smartest experts and the most sophisticated investors that provides each party with tools necessary for cooperation and success. The community includes Startup Jedi (media partner for startups), Founders Club – startup studio, Investclub.vc – business angels network and Startup Training Camp acceleration program.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/rocket-dao/about/> <<https://rocketdao.io/>>

The **Startup Hub Imaguru** invests in cutting-edge technology companies from Europe, who create an impact on societal problems, connecting them to top notch tech talent. The mission is to leverage technology as a catalyst of positive change, to further point the tech ecosystem in the direction of societal and environmental challenges. It offers co-working space to innovative entrepreneurs, holds educational events and meetups, provides access to a large community of venture market representatives of the country, organizes large field-specified conferences (GEW Belarus, Venture Day Minsk).

<https://imaguru.co/>>

TechMinsk Accelerator was founded in 2013 with the support of USAID and based at Imaguru Startup HUB, TechMinsk is designed to help top innovative startups from the region scale globally. The accelerator helped the following companies to grow: MSQRD, Trackduck, PandaDoc, StoryLine, FriendlyData, OneSoil etc.

<https://techminsk.com/>>

In Belarus the innovation related strategies are mainly focusing on wider social and economic issues:

- The Strategy on the Development of Informatisation in the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2022.
- The National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period through 2030.

Leaving many problems behind some promising and prosperous startups can be mentioned operating in Belarus or achieved global success:

REMARKABLE STARTUPS:

Apalon is a successful mobile development company. It is part of a leading media and internet company IAC. The total amount of the apps' downloads exceeds 600 millions. Apalon's portfolio includes the best-selling and award-winning applications, such as NOAA Weather Radar Live: Clime, Weather Live, Productive, Pixomatic, Sleepzy, and more.

[<https://apalon.com/>](https://apalon.com/) [<https://www.linkedin.com/company/apalon/>](https://www.linkedin.com/company/apalon/)

Belka Games is a game developer and publisher operating since 2010, one of the fastest growing companies in the industry with offices in several cities and countries. Belka Games handles all sides of the game development and marketing process: from creating and testing prototypes to LiveOps and analytics. Clockmaker, Funky Bay and Solitaire Cruise are 3 top grossing projects of the company with >1 million users playing daily.

[<https://belka-games.com/about/>](https://belka-games.com/about/)
[<https://www.linkedin.com/company/belka-technologies/about/>](https://www.linkedin.com/company/belka-technologies/about/)

Beesender is the leading add-on for chats and chatbots on the Creatio marketplace. Beesender helps you to develop relationships with your customers even if you work from home. We will robotize some of your most critical business processes for customer care, sales, marketing and HR.

[<https://beesender.com/>](https://beesender.com/)

Easybrain was founded in 2016, Easybrain is a mobile game developer with more than 1 billion downloads. In 2021 Easybrain merged with Embracer. As part of the Embracer Group, Easybrain continues to develop strong mobile game titles and strive towards new achievements.

[<https://easybrain.com/>](https://easybrain.com/)

Fabby is an app that automatically edits photos and videos like a professional designer.

[<http://www.fab.by/>](http://www.fab.by/)

GanttPRO GanttPRO is an online Gantt chart software for project management with 700k+ users all over the world. They have created an online Gantt-chart software that lets everyone build comprehensive project plans in a few minutes, effectively collaborate on projects with team members, set accurate estimates and track the progress of projects.

[<https://ganttpro.com/about-us/>](https://ganttpro.com/about-us/) [<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ganttpro/>](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ganttpro/)

Onde stands for on-demand services. Onde product is a dispatch platform with apps for the ride-hailing companies around the Globe. It is based on cutting-edge mobile taxi apps as well as web dispatch panel. The whole solution is hosted on the cloud helping our clients to save on infrastructure costs.

[<https://onde.app/>](https://onde.app/) [<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ondeapp/>](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ondeapp/)

OneSoil: The precision farming platform that uses satellite imagery and machine learning to help monitor sown areas, predict and plan the farm operations, increase productivity, and save resources.

[<https://onesoil.ai/en/>](https://onesoil.ai/en/) [<https://www.linkedin.com/company/onesoil/>](https://www.linkedin.com/company/onesoil/)

PandaDoc empowers teams to easily communicate with customers through personalized documents that can be created in minutes, build meaningful relationships, and save more time.

[<https://www.pandadoc.com/about/>](https://www.pandadoc.com/about/)

RocketData RocketData is an easy-to-use platform to manage your company's business information and reviews among 30+ location-based services: maps, search engines, all popular directories, GPS devices and social networks. RocketData adds information about your company to these services, finds mistakes, fixes them and protects your data automatically. RocketData also helps your business to engage with local customers wherever they are talking through. The platform monitors and gathers customer feedback and provides the tool to answer it from a single interface.

[<https://rocketdata.io/>](https://rocketdata.io/) [<https://www.linkedin.com/company/rocketdata-io/>](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rocketdata-io/)

Scorum is the first blockchain powered sports media platform. Scorum is a growing IT product company founded in 2017. We develop AI-powered high-load B2B products for online entertainment.

[<https://www.linkedin.com/company/scorum/about/>](https://www.linkedin.com/company/scorum/about/)

Synesis Group is a technology firm headquartered in Minsk, Belarus. Founded in 2007 as a software design house, Synesis helped Viber, Yandex, Alfresco, and other well-known companies to develop successful products. Today, more than a billion people worldwide are using these products daily. As of today, Synesis has evolved into a smart city provider with a comprehensive product portfolio for Public Safety, Secure Messaging, Cybersecurity, Event Management, and Instant Lotteries. With a team of 400+ world-class engineers, Synesis is well-positioned to deliver production-level software in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, and Cloud Computing.

[<https://synesis-group.com/about/>](https://synesis-group.com/about/)

Verv (est. 2013) helps people achieve personal goals, embrace a healthy lifestyle and happier life through simple and effective mobile solutions.

[<https://verv.com/about/>](https://verv.com/about/)

Viber is a calling and messaging app that connects people—no matter who they are, or where they're from. Each month, hundreds of millions of people connect, for free, with their loved ones via messaging, high-quality voice and video calls, and more.

[<https://www.viber.com/en/about/>](https://www.viber.com/en/about/)

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