**ARC Consulting** **EOOD**

ARC Consulting EOOD is the wholly owned consulting arm of ARC Fund, Bulgaria, a leading research think-tank in the area of information society, innovation and technology transfer. The company was set up in 2006 with the goal of further developing the experience of ARC Fund into consulting capabilities and commercialization of the knowledge pool of the organization. In the past years ARC Consulting has performed contract work for various stakeholders:

* the Bulgarian government in developing the country’s annual report assessing the progress of the national innovation policy and the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and communications in elaborating and implementing the national broadband plan in the country;
* DG Research and Innovation and DG JRC on ICT sector and national innovation policy developments, the contribution of European regions to the realisation of ERA, the elaboration of the Bulgarian smart specialization strategy, etc.;
* The World Bank on its work for enhancing Bulgaria’s competitiveness through innovation and on stimulating business incubation and internationalization of companies in the ECA region;
* International companies and foreign ministries on innovation performance of the respective economic sectors and on implementing innovation support national strategies and programmes;

ARC Fund has a solid track-record of successful international projects supported by the European Commission (FP4, FP5, FP6, FP7, Leonardo da Vinci, PHARE), the World Bank, UNDP, USAID, and German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), etc. ARC Fund was twice awarded Best National Performer - in FP5 and FP6 by the Ministry of Education and Science, the national coordinator for the EU Research Framework Programmes. The evaluation of the Bulgarian participation in the FP7 on the basis of most recent data from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science reveals that ARC Fund is among the Top 5 Bulgarian best FP7 performers for the period 2007-2012 with respect to both number of projects and total EU funding received per capita.

ARC Fund has pioneered and successfully implemented several innovative methodologies for assessing and monitoring ICT sector and policy developments in the country. As early as 2001, ARC Fund has led the Bulgaria Development Gateway civil society initiative consolidating the national dialogue on ICT for development and promoting a common vision among the relevant stakeholders in government, business, civil society, academic and research communities, and international donor organizations. In cooperation with highest state authorities in the IT, incl. the Ministry of IT and the Coordination Center for ICT at the Council of Ministers, in 2003, ARC Fund has conducted the first pilot national e-readiness assessment under the *info*Dev Programme of the World Bank, followed by *e-Bulgaria* reports in 2004, 2005 & 2006. As a follow-up, the *e-Municipality* assessment was implemented for three consecutive years between 2004-2006 with the support of the UNDP. In 2002-2004, for the first time in Bulgaria, ARC Fund introduced foresight methods within the e-government planning.

More recent experience includes the 5-year coordination of the ECAbit network, one of the sixth regional networks of business incubators and technology parks, facilitated and supported by the *info*Dev Programme of the World Bank. The coordination of ECAbit has involved consulting and training of the network members on internationalisation and business development projects (e.g. the creation of Mobile Broadband Application Labs in Moldova and Azerbaijan, the internationalisation of Bulgarian and Turkish companies, etc.).

Most recently, ARC Consulting / ARC Fund introduced a unique methodology for assessment of broadband roll out and mapping of broadband supply networks in the country. The results have been used by the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications in its EUR 20M-project on building broadband infrastructure in rural areas of this country, funded by European funds.