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IT REALITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

The purpose of this research is to study the current state of the IT sector of the Republic of Belarus.

The history of the development of information technologies in the Republic of Belarus goes back decades. Back in the Soviet era, a strong school of mathematicians, engineers and programmers was created in the country. In the future, these specialists became the driving force of the most progressive projects and the introduction of innovations in all sectors of the economy.

Currently, in Belarus, 75 thousand students (24% of the total number of university students) study in STEM-specialties, including about 70 IT-specializations. The share of graduates of BSUIR accounts for 35.4% of employees of companies-residents of the Hi-Tech Park. It is worth noting that many Belarusians of different generations also work in successful IT companies around the world. However, of course, the main human resource potential is concentrated in the country itself [1].

In sovereign Belarus, the IT industry is the fastest growing industry, and every year it turns into an increasingly powerful driver of the country's economy, a sphere of strategic importance.

"The Silicon Valley of Eastern Europe", "The World Center for Artificial Intelligence Development", "A Paradise for programmers" – this is how authoritative foreign media, such as The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, and The Financial Times assess Belarus [2]. The main reason for this success in the IT sector is the High-Tech Park (HTP), created in 2005, which is rightfully considered the leading IT cluster in Central and Eastern Europe, offering the best conditions for opening, running and developing businesses. The main purpose of creating the HTP was to create conditions in the Republic of Belarus for the development of all sectors of the national economy, based, in turn, on new and high technologies.

HTP and its resident companies are increasingly taking high positions in the global and regional rankings that assess the achievements of the IT sector. The developments of specialists from Belarus often become the most prominent in the IT world. For example, more than a billion people in more than 150 countries around the world use mobile applications created by HTP residents. The most well-known and successful HTP projects are World of Tanks, MSQRD, Viber, Maps.me, Prisma, Apalon Apps, SayGames, Flo. Quite an interesting fact is that the game developed in Wargaming World of Tanks is one of the five most profitable MMO games with about 160 million registered users.

Speaking about the activities of the Hi-Tech Park, it should be mentioned that in July 2020, 886 companies with a total number of employees of about 63 thousand people were registered in the HTP [3].

It is notable that there are more than a thousand IT companies in Belarus. The main market for them is customers from the United States and Western Europe. Thus, the top 5 Belarusian IT companies for June 2020 included EPAM, IBA Group, Wargaming / Gamestream, Itransition, and iTechArt Group. Almost half of all IT specialists in Belarus work in these five companies. In turn, EPAM remains the largest employer in IT. The Belarusian office of the company has more than 10 thousand specialists. EPAM develops digital products and platforms, as well as complex design and software solutions. IBA Group is one of the largest developers in Central and Eastern Europe. A holding of more than 20 companies in 12 countries. They are engaged in complex projects in the banking sector, digitalization of public services. Itransition is an IT holding company (together with A1QA and iflexion), which has been repeatedly mentioned among the best outsourcing companies in the world (Software 500, The Global Outsourcing 100, Global Services 100 ratings). Almost 2 thousand people in Minsk. iTechArt Group has seven offices in Belarus, two in the United States and one in London. 1700 + employees. Projects in the USA, Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Russia, Hong Kong cover the financial and insurance sector, retail, healthcare, education, security, and telecommunications industries [4].

Thus, the results of the study show that a growing IT sector is currently formed in the Republic of Belarus. The creation of a High-Tech Park, as well as a low level of government intervention supported its development. It is noteworthy that Belarus is among the top ten countries in the world for implementing IT-business-friendly reforms, according to the World Bank. Belarus is also among the world leaders in the export of IT services per capita. The IT industry ranks third in the country in terms of the number of vacancies. Exports of the Hi-tech Park in 2020 exceeded $ 2.5 billion and provided more than 20% of the total export of services to Belarus [5]. All this suggests that the Republic of Belarus has all the necessary resources to increase the investment activity of the IT services industry, its direct expansion and improvement.

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