

Parks of the highest achievements

Famous business sites of High-Tech Park and Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park set the bar

By Alexander Velikhov

A journey of a thousand miles is said to begin with a single step, and the successful Belarusian 'Silicon Valley' High-Tech Park certainly seems to prove so. Meanwhile, interest is increasing daily in the new Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park.

According to estimates by one of the world's top analytical companies, Belarus is among the premier 30 states for offshore programming, having begun on this path in 2004. Belarus' 'Silicon Valley' was originally dismissed by many as a fantasy but Decree #12 'On the High Technology Park' has led the way (signed by President Alexander Lukashenko on September 22nd, 2005).

The goal of the project has been to create favourable conditions for the development of export-oriented programming and all spheres of new and high technologies. It aims to focus resources on scientific potential and, already, the HTP is one of the leading innovative IT clusters in Central and Eastern Europe. It is home to over 100 resident companies, employing over 13,000 people.

Belarusian scientists are taking part in a range of IT projects: from systematic analysis, consulting and selection of hardware to design and development of complex systems. More than half of the HTP companies manufacture their own software products and, last year, six were among the world's top suppliers of IT services.



High Technologies Park relies on the promising young professionals

ers of IT services.

According to Valery Tsepka, the Director of the HTP's Administration, affiliated enterprises of world famous companies may soon become residents: VeriFone (an American IT developer and one of the world's largest manufacturers of payment terminals) and Yandex (a Russian IT company which owns the search engine of the same name and an Internet portal). Mr. Tsep-

kalo notes that interest from major foreign companies has increased dramatically of late. In 2012, an affiliated company of Russian Sberbank-Technology Company joined the HTP, alongside 13 other new residents. There are 118 organisations resident in all — half of which are joint and foreign ventures. Last year, the HTP created 2,500 jobs, employing around 15,000 specialists.

The Belarusian-Chinese Industrial Park occupies the same 8,000 hectares or more, located in the South-West Smolevichi District, north of Minsk National Airport. About \$16bn has been invested in various projects. The territory is to receive a large complex, including industrial sites based around major electronics, machine building, chemistry and biomedicine enterprises, supported by residential ac-

commodation, office space, logistics zones and financial centres.

The new industrial park is to host scientific research projects. Interest is being drawn towards the project with tax breaks (on profit and property ownership). Like those at the original HTP, employees will pay just 9 percent income tax. Belarusian industrial giants are showing interest, with Horizont planning new plants.

Of course, the Minsk Region (the largest in Belarus) is primarily interested; around 500,000 jobs are to be created in the area, explains the Chairman of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, Boris Batura. "We're aiming to start construction of the first sites at the industrial park by May-June. The state investment programme envisages funds for infrastructure (water, canalisation, heating, power supply and gasification) to support the expected \$5bn+ of investments due to arrive in our region," he emphasises.

The Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park is to occupy around 80sq. km, offering unprecedented privileges and preferential conditions for residents, to attract investments: modern infrastructure, significant tax breaks over extended periods and one-stop services to speed up registration. Naturally, resident companies will also gain access to the Customs Union market, avoiding duties and quota restrictions.

On close terms with computers

By Yury Chernyakevich

National Statistical Committee notes that Belarus' average monthly salary rose by 4 percent in March (against February) — to reach \$541 in equivalent

Those whose jobs are connected with IT are receiving the highest salaries; programmers were earning over \$1,400 a month in March. Close behind are those in the oil processing industry, whose salaries rose almost 20 percent from February to March, reaching \$1,200. Next in line are air transport workers, whose average salary has increased by more than 15 percent, standing at around \$1,100.

The sphere of financial

intermediation, i.e. banks, dropped two positions in March in terms of salary — falling from second to fourth place, with salaries slightly more than \$1,000. The top five is closed by those engaged in the chemical industry, with salaries of around \$900.

Minsk wages are even higher, reaching Br6.208m on average (\$716 in equivalent).



Credit supplements gold and foreign currency reserves

Belarus receives another \$440m from Anti-Crisis Fund of Eurasian Economic Community

The Ministry of Finance notes that, this year, Belarus fulfilled its obligations, enabling it to receive its fifth tranche of financial credit from the Anti-Crisis Fund. On April 30th, 2013,

\$440m was received, as the Ministry of Finance explains, noting that the loan 'will be used to replenish international reserve assets and finance the Republic's balance of payments deficit'.

On April 1st, 2013, the country's gold and foreign currency reserves amount-

ed to \$8bn, according to the International Monetary Fund. Two years ago, the Council of the Anti-Crisis Fund of the Eurasian Economic Community approved a financial loan of \$3bn for Belarus, with credit allocated in six tranches over two years (in accordance with the 10 year stabi-

lisation programme of the Belarusian Government).

Including the fifth tranche, the country has received \$2.56bn so far, to support the balance of payments and replenish international reserves. This year, the Republic expects to receive the sixth tranche, worth \$440m.

Water Code largely promotes harmonisation of legislations

By Yury Gromov

Over 180 companies from 21 countries take part in 15th International Water and Heat Specialised Exhibition

Leading companies from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia,

Estonia, Poland and elsewhere have presented their produce at the exposition in Minsk, with entrants demonstrating the latest developments in the sphere of water and heat supply.

Belarus' First Deputy Minister for Nature Resources and Environmental

Protection, Vitaly Kulik, notes that the country purposefully pursues ecological policy aiming to bring closer its legislation with European legislation. "In particular, this tackles water directives. We've submitted for consideration to the Government new Water

Code which would largely promote harmonisation of our legislation with that of the European Union. The decisions which are stipulated there are of course based on rational use of our water resources although Belarus isn't deprived of these," notes the official.