



## Entrepreneurship and innovation for development

**Entrepreneurial Panama: The role of public policy and innovation** was the Forum that gathered more than 300 persons together to engage in a dialogue about entrepreneurship and innovation for development. The event was organized by the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the Knowledge City Foundation, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Empretec Panamá and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises of Panama (AMPYME).

Opening remarks were made by Jorge Arosemena, Executive Director of the City of Knowledge Foundation, Rubén Ramírez, Representative Director of CAF in Panama and Fiorina Mugione, Chief of the Entrepreneurship Section of the Division of Investment and Enterprise in UNCTAD and by Giselle Burillo Sáiz, Minister of AMPYME.

The Forum concluded with three technical roundtables from which a series of policy recommendations were drawn which are listed below. These recommendations will be further developed in a forthcoming document in which details will be defined, including the responsible lead institutions, date of implementation, funding allocated and monitoring and evaluation procedures.

While UNCTAD's methodology which was used for the technical roundtables covers six policy areas (Formulating a national entrepreneurship strategy; Optimizing the regulatory environment: Enhancing entrepreneurship education and skills; Facilitating technology exchange and innovation; Improving access to finance and Promoting awareness and networking) it was decided to focus on three of these areas, based on the results of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Panama 2011, which were also presented in the Forum.

### **Recommendations to promote entrepreneurship in Panama: Facilitating technology exchange and innovation**

1. Strengthen the means of communication and diffusion of policies and programmes aimed at information and communications technology and their impact on small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
2. Conduct a diagnostic of the state of entrepreneurship, technology and innovation that allows to obtain a clearer picture of the current state of affairs in Panama.
3. Strengthen and reinforce University -Enterprise -State alliances with the aim of promoting innovation and technology in SMEs.

### **Recommendations to promote entrepreneurship in Panama: Enhancing entrepreneurship education and skills**

1. Develop and implement a law that incorporates the obligation to establish a chair in entrepreneurship at all levels of the education system. The law should clearly state the role of the public, private and education sector as well as its integration,

based on best successful cases from the Government, or by international entities such as UNCTAD.

2. Develop an interactive teaching methodology with case studies adapted to the local reality.
3. Establish a diploma degree on entrepreneurship for teachers and professors.
4. Develop a public-private organization which promotes entrepreneurship in the different regions, taking as a base the Entrepreneurship Centre of AMPYME.

### **Recommendations to promote entrepreneurship in Panama: Improving access to finance**

1. Facilitate the access of SMEs to the stock market.
2. Incorporate into the regulation the possibility of recognizing both tangible and intangible goods as guarantees
3. Create financial mechanisms that reduce the gap between "seed capital" and "angel investors" with regards to access to funds.
4. Develop a database with the information and details on available funds and services for entrepreneurship development