

Strateg  
STATE & IN  
EURASIA FORUM

center for a new economy  
**Strategeast**



# 2023 ACTIVITY REPORT



# Table of contents

<b>4</b>	<b>Our Team</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Advisory Board</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>StrategEast Westernization Report 2023</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Global Minds Initiative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• StrategEast State and IT Eurasian Forum</li><li>• Digital for Freedom Forum in Warsaw</li><li>• StrategEast IT Hub</li><li>• Startup acceleration and ecosystem development</li><li>• Fostering IT Industry Development</li></ul>
<b>34</b>	<b>Global Minds Initiative Advisory Board</b>
<b>36</b>	<b>Reports and Analytics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Billion in the Distance: Central Asian IT Exports and Strategies for Growing Them</li><li>• StrategEast Westernization Report 2023</li></ul>
<b>37</b>	<b>Media Outreach</b>
<b>38</b>	<b>Our plans</b>

# Our Team



## **Olena Koltsova,** Chief Operating Officer

Mrs. Koltsova oversees all operational aspects, ensuring the smooth functioning of its programs and initiatives.

Mrs. Koltsova has an extensive IT, Telecommunications, and game development background, with over 15 years of experience in these industries. She holds a Bachelor's degree in International Economic Relations from Ukraine State University of Kyiv International University and a Master's degree in International Law from Ukraine State University of Finance and International Trade. She has a wealth of knowledge and expertise as a Chief Executive Officer.

Throughout her career, Mrs. Koltsova has worked for some of the most prestigious companies in the industry, including Ericsson and Vodafone. She has achieved great success in her roles, leading teams to develop innovative products and services that have been adopted by millions of customers around the world.

Mrs. Koltsova is an expert in strategic planning, business development, and operations management. She is passionate about creating a positive work environment and inspiring her team to reach their full potential. Her leadership style is focused on collaboration and communication, and she is committed to helping her team members grow and develop their skills.



## **Lidia Shavlo,** Chief Analyst

Ms. Shavlo is responsible for coordinating StrategEast research projects, overseeing and managing various analytical functions, and prioritizing the Center's information requirements.

With a career spanning over 15 years, Ms. Shavlo has garnered extensive experience in solving complex problems, developing data-driven solutions, and managing projects, specifically in communications and public relations across the public and private sectors. Prior to her tenure at StrategEast, she made significant contributions while working at the PRP PR agency, an affiliate of Weber Shandwick, where she successfully planned and executed award-winning PR strategies for an array of international clients, including prominent entities such as Avon, Coca-Cola, Jacobs, Johnson & Johnson, Mastercard, Microsoft, Richter Gedeon, USAID, and others.

Furthermore, Ms. Shavlo has held various managerial positions at diverse organizations, including a Ukrainian tech startup, Sayenko Kharenko law firm, which boasts a clientele including Fortune-500 companies, as well as the Investment and Trade Facilitation Center, a Ukrainian Member of Parliament, and a political party.

Her academic pursuits include a Master's degree in English philology from Kyiv National Linguistic University and certification programs in Public Governance and Policy Analysis at Kyiv School of Economics.



## **Lika Merabishvili** Regional Director for Caucasus

Ms Merabishvili is responsible for the extension and implementation of educational projects and IT industry advocacy in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

She is a Co-Founder of the non-governmental organization Space for Education and Development. She has more than 10 years' experience in project planning and management.

Ms Merabishvili is holding a Ph.D. Degree in Psychology. She acquired her doctoral qualification from both Georgian (Ivane Javakshvili Tbilisi State University) and Spanish

(Universidade da Coruña) institutions. Along with her civic initiatives, Lika holds academic positions as an Associate Professor and a Supervisor of Bachelor's Program in Psychology at the Alte University, a Guest Lecturer at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and Caucasus University.

Lika Merabishvili is a Fellow of Fellowship program of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility.

Ms Merabishvili aims to contribute to the development of young people, women, NEET, and society as a whole in social, educational and professional terms through the formal and informal education; raising public awareness; civil society development; citizen mobilization, and civic engagement that increases the European integration in Georgia.



### **Olha Sytnychenko,** **Regional Director for Gulf states and Latin America**

With over a decade of industry experience, Ms. Sytnychenko has established and developed worthwhile projects in the tech sector in North and South America, Europe, and Asia.

She has comprehensive oversight of all activities, including strategy development, partnership creation, and program execution, which shape StrategEast's impact in these strategically important regions.

Before joining StrategEast, she was the Head of the International Relations Department at the IT Ukraine Association, the largest national association of IT companies in Ukraine. Under her leadership, bold changes were made to reposition the organization for the future and adopt global momentum to propel the ecosystem's growth.

In her previous tenures, Olha had also greatly contributed to driving organizations' initiatives, being Head of the Supervisory Board and Director of tech organizations.

Olha holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy, a Master's in Psychology from the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, and a Master's in Finance from Kyiv National Economics University.



### **Helen Uvarenko** **Global Education Lead**

Helen Uvarenko is an experienced business manager based in Switzerland with a history of working in the biotech consulting, software, and hardware industry. Ms. Uvarenko is skilled in communication, risk management, and agile framework and has an inside track within the Ukrainian startup community and Ukrainian-Swiss Business Association.

Before working for StrategEast, she ran the joint venture Deep Pharma Intelligence within the position of Head of Pharma Analytics and established the department structure, including business development, marketing, media relations, and research.

Helen has worked for numerous IT startups and corporations like Clover.Tech, Parimatch.Tech, Conceptor.Inc – Ukrainian startup accelerator with successful product cases such as Jetbeep, nect.WORLD, SolarGaps, and others.

As for education programs, she was a part of the managing team responsible for the launch of Parimatch Tech Academy. Helen holds her Bachelor's degree in Computer

# Our Team



Engineering from the Taras Shevchenko National University.

## **Rovshan Rahimov**

### **Regional Director for Central Asia and Eastern Europe**

Rovshan Rahimov is responsible for arranging and leading meetings with existing and potential new partners, developing strategies for optimizing corporate processes and tools on supporting current and new engagements in the countries in the Eurasian region.

Before joining StrategEast, he had extensive experience constructing business operations and organizing thematic digital events in cooperation with industry stakeholders from South Asia and North America. Successful collaboration with funders, investors, banks, and associations was done during representation of the Microfinance Information Exchange non-profit organization in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Rovshan was a part of the team on various social projects funded and implemented by USAID Azerbaijan and Vision Fund International, improving strategic partnership, transparency, and startups of private and public entities.

He holds a Master's degree in economy and management from Azerbaijan, is an expert in performance monitoring and analysis of financial service providers reached in the USA, and is certified in tourism industry management by the UNWTO.

Currently, he also puts his professional knowledge to use developing his students as a university lecturer on various subjects and spheres of economics.



## **Dinara Issenova**

### **Public Engagement Manager**

Dinara Issenova has over seven years of experience in education administration. Prior to joining StrategEast, Dinara held various roles in education management.

At Astana Hub, Dinara served as an Education Manager and participated in launching the Tech Orda program, a government initiative aimed at training Kazakhstani IT specialists with the involvement of international IT companies. She also worked as a Project Coordinator at Almaty Management University, where she collaborated with UNDP to support the economic empowerment of Afghan women through education and training in Kazakhstan.

In addition, Dinara worked as a Chief Specialist for Academic Mobility at Almaty Management University, where she built partnerships with foreign partner universities and coordinated student and teacher exchange programs.

Dinara holds a Master's degree in Education Administration from Vytautas Magnus University, a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from North Kazakhstan State University, and a master's degree in Economics and Business from Almaty Management University.

Dinara is committed to promoting socially responsible and accessible education projects that bridge academia with business, government, and society. Her expertise includes the internationalization of higher education institutions, international relations, and coordinating educational and social projects.



### **Kseniia Cherniaieva** PR Manager

Ksenia Cherniaieva is responsible for public relations at StrategEast. She oversees work with journalists and coverage of essential news of the institution in media resources.

Ms. Cherniaieva has more than 10 years of experience in communications and more than five years of experience in PR. She has a Master's degree in journalism from the Oles Gonchar Dnipro National University. Having started her career in journalism, Kseniia worked for leading news agencies in Ukraine and was involved in economic, social, and political journalism.

Kseniia Cherniaieva has a wealth of knowledge and experience as a PR specialist. Before joining StrategEast, she worked with Ukrainian and American B2B and B2C IT companies, where she closely interacted with local and global journalists and was involved in the publication of opinion columns, expert articles, and interviews with leading technical and business media resources.

One of Kseniia's main tasks in this position is to increase awareness of StrategEast in Eurasia and Western countries.



### **Inna Hanushevych** Project Manager

Inna Hanushevych has a distinguished background in various roles, showcasing exceptional analytical, organizational, and communication skills.

Inna's educational background includes a Master's degree in International Law from Institute of International Relations, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

Her career path reflects her dedication to fostering positive change. Before joining StrategEast, Inna served as a national expert on Anti-Corruption Issues with the United Nations Development Program. This role deepened her understanding of anti-corruption strategies and the development of actionable prevention measures, making her a valuable asset in the pursuit of ethical governance.

Inna has also worked with the Ukrainian government sector, where her responsibilities included facilitating seamless communication among team members and key stakeholders, making her instrumental in ensuring project success. In this capacity, she engaged with international technical assistance projects, conducted performance evaluations, organized strategic sessions, and meticulously monitored project progress.



During the reporting year, StrategEast managed not only to expand and strengthen its cooperation with international financial institutions, development agencies, governments, and global IT companies, but also to form a completely new region for the technological map of the world, which, thanks to our efforts, is rapidly becoming a digital single market. Of course, I am referring to the region of the Gulf, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, with a population of over 150 million people united by close cultural traditions. Bringing together the Middle East, Caucasus, and Central Asia, we form the digital single market where intellectual passion, global entrepreneurial skills, and smart money from the Gulf join cutting-edge technologies and innovations from the Caucasus and Central Asia, creating a global center of digital excellence.

In this report, you will find information about a large number of specific efforts that StrategEast has made on our path to forming this single market: organizing visits to the Gulf for delegations from Central Asia and the Caucasus, holding webinars, participating with startups from Eurasia at the main events in the

Gulf countries, and holding a panel on Knowledge as a New Energy within the framework of the StrategEast State and IT Eurasian Forum in Almaty dedicated to the prospects of the region's transition from an economy of natural resources to a knowledge economy. In the course of working on building a single market, we saw that thanks to our cooperation with the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, where the IT system was mainly created with participation from American engineering companies, the Gulf countries' digital ecosystem will also be based on products from trusted vendors.

We also work in Eastern Europe, where a full-scale war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine continues. Ukraine's IT industry has become the backbone of Ukraine's digital resistance and digital resilience during this period of Russian aggression. However, no less important is the fact that in wartime, Ukraine's IT industry has been the only sector of the economy where production increased. StrategEast has expanded its support for the IT sector in Ukraine, helping to attract additional investments to the country, promoting the Ukrainian IT industry in old and new markets, and bringing knowledge and experience from Silicon Valley to Ukraine. In November, Warsaw hosted the Ukrainian Digital for Freedom forum, organized by StrategEast in cooperation with USAID and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine. We believe that the Forum will be an excellent launch pad for the Digital Marshall Plan for Ukraine's recovery.

StrategEast believes that cooperation between all stakeholders is the key to success in developing Eurasia's IT industry.

Over the past year, we have increased cooperation with international institutions – large-scale educational projects have been implemented in the regional cities of Georgia and Azerbaijan together with the EBRD, and in the spring of 2024 we plan to expand the project to Central Asia. Across Eurasia, we have significantly expanded our cooperation with USAID, jointly implementing, in particular, programs such as training business angels and creating coalitions of donors for IT development.

Cooperation with global IT corporations allowed us to launch a training program for 2,050 students from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in modern IT specialties together with Google, become regional partners of the Oracle Academy, and plan the launch of a joint educational program with Microsoft in 2024.

StrategEast is also building ties with Western universities. After the article "Digitalization in Eurasia" was published by prime US outlet Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, I was invited to contribute to Oxford Diplomatic Dispatch, and a guest lectured at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

With all of these current and future efforts, StrategEast is proud to be a leading independent institution working to develop the Eurasia's digital economy, in collaboration with international financial institutions, development agencies, global tech companies, and Eurasian governments.

**Sincerely,**  
**Anatoly Motkin**  
**President of StrategEast**

*Anatoly Motkin*



# Advisory Board



## Horton Beebe-Center

### President Emeritus of the Eurasia Foundation

As head of the Eurasia Foundation, Mr. Beebe-Center made a great contribution to the development of small and medium-sized businesses in post-Soviet countries, always with a focus on good governance and involving civil society in political life. Mr. Beebe-Center is fluent in Russian and holds a BA in Soviet Studies from Brown University and a MA in Russian Studies from Harvard University.



## Amb. Clifford G. Bond

### Former Official at the U.S. Department of State

Clifford G. Bond is a retired Foreign Service Officer who served as U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2001–2004 and Special Envoy for Srebrenica in 2007–2008, Chargé d’Affaires ad interim in Tallinn, Estonia in 2018, and as Chargé d’Affaires, ad interim in Stockholm, Sweden in 2019.

Ambassador Bond recently served as the Acting Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia from November 2016 to April 2017.

Prior to that, Ambassador Bond served as the Coordinator for Assistance to Ukraine at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv. In his Department of State career, he has carried out a variety of political, economic, and commercial assignments in Washington, D.C., at the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, and U.S. Embassies in Belgrade, Stockholm, Prague, and Moscow.

From 2004–2006 he was a member of the faculty of National Defense University, where he conducted seminars on national security studies. He has also served as the Special Advisor to Congress’s Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission.

Since retirement in late 2011, he has been the Vice President of the American University in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He received his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service and a graduate degree from the London School of Economics.



## Debra Cagan

### Former Official at the U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense

Debra L. Cagan worked as a career diplomat at the Department of State and as an official at the Department of Defense from the Reagan to Trump administrations, including serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Coalition, Peacekeeping, Humanitarian, and Disaster Relief; Senior Director for European, Russian, and Eurasian security issues; Special Advisor for Strategic and Nuclear Policy for Europe; and Senior Advisor to U.S. and NATO military officials. Ms. Cagan led negotiations for the Highly Enriched Uranium Agreement with Russia and headed coalition operations for Iraq and Afghanistan.

Ms. Cagan, a native Chicagoan, has a BA and MA from the University of Iowa and completed additional postgraduate work at the University of Chicago towards her doctorate, where she was named the first female fellow for the prestigious Armed Forces and Society Consortium.



## Michael Haltzel

### Senior fellow, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies

Mr. Haltzel has made great contributions to the establishment of peace and security in Eastern Europe after the fall of many communist regimes. He is the recipient of awards from many Eastern European states, served as an OSCE monitor for the first postwar elections in Bosnia, and is the author or editor of 10 books on European history and international relations. Mr. Haltzel holds a PhD in International Studies history from Harvard University.

# Advisory Board



## Mark Pritchard

**Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom, Vice-President of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**

Mark Pritchard is a Member of the UK Parliament, a member of the UK's governing Conservative Party, and has served in the UK Parliament since 2005.

Mr. Pritchard has extensive international experience, being the first MP to serve consecutively on the NATO, Council of Europe, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assemblies.

He is currently Leader of the UK's delegation to the Organisation for Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, a UK Prime Ministerial appointment. He is also the UK Prime Minister's Trade and Investment Envoy to Georgia and Armenia.

Mr. Pritchard is a former Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party's International Office and has advised political parties throughout Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.



## David Tkeshelashvili

**Head of Administration (Chief of Staff) to the President of Georgia (2010-2013)**

Mr. Tkeshelashvili instituted a series of structural and policy reforms for decentralization and sustainable regional development in Georgia.

Mr. Tkeshelashvili led regional development and the local self-government reform process, first as a State Minister for Regional Issues, and later, under his leadership, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure was created.

He served as a minister in that agency until 2010.

Mr. Tkeshelashvili holds an MA in legal studies from Tbilisi State University and an LLM degree from Emory University in Atlanta.



## Daniel A. Witt

**President, International Tax and Investment Center**

Mr. Witt has worked on the drafts of tax codes in many countries of the former USSR, always following the principles of good practices.

Thanks to his contribution, the economies of these countries have gained a new chance for sustainable development and earned confidence around the world. Mr. Witt received a BBA (magna cum laude) in public administration and an MBA in finance from Western Michigan University.

# Westernization Report 2023



The third edition of the StrategEast Westernization Report 2023 is a unique biannual study providing a comprehensive snapshot of Westernization in post-Soviet Eurasia. In this report, the experts from Eurasian and Baltic countries describe the most important political and economic events that occurred in the post-Soviet region over the last year.

Looking at the events, which will most likely affect the degree of Westernization in their respective countries, the experts singled out the major circumstance impacting almost all of the countries that gained or restored their independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The prior year, 2022, was overshadowed by a singular event, which dominated nearly all of our experts' analytical materials - the war unleashed by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. This reverberated throughout the entire region. The report identifies the consequences of recent global events and their impact on Westernization in the post-Soviet space.

While Russia is currently only waging a full-scale hot war against Ukraine, it also continues to fight cold wars against every single other country that declared or regained its independence after the collapse of the USSR. Prior to 2022, Russia passed off its attempts at increasing its influence in the region as "cooperation". If the leaders of neighboring countries did not actually believe this, they at least pretended to. Over the last year, we have seen this "cooperation" morph into a series of operations aimed at forcing loyalty. Russia has shown it is willing to weaponize any leverage available to it in these wars. When it comes to energy, our experts from Lithuania, Moldova, and Azerbaijan focused on changes to the energy sector as the past year's main event. Lithuania has completely abandoned the purchase of Russian energy, while Moldova has diversified its supplies, and Azerbaijan has cooperated with the European Union in an attempt to partially replace Russia as a reliable gas supplier to Europe. Ethnic Russian segments of the population, from Latvia and Estonia in the Baltic States to Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia, still play a major role in domestic politics. At the same time, it is clear that in all three countries, experts describe that population's diminishing loyalty to the Russian Federation in the wake of the war in Ukraine.

## StrategEast presented the Westernization Report 2023 to the Henry Jackson Society

On July 25, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast presented the key trends unfolding in the Eurasian space based on the results of the StrategEast Westernization Report 2023.

The corresponding roundtable discussion was organized and hosted by the Henry Jackson Society at their London premises and was chaired by Ariella Durban, HJS's Executive Research and Communications Assistant.

The discussion with participation of Eurasian and European diplomats highlighted the importance of cooperation and awareness among nations to navigate the challenges posed by Russia's actions.



# Global Minds Initiative

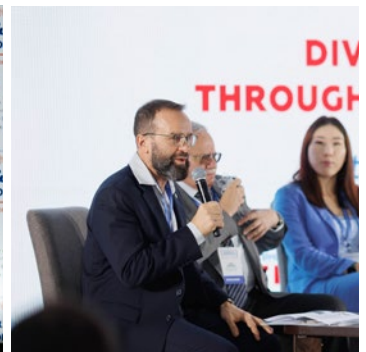
## StrategEast State and IT Eurasian Forum in Samarkand

The 4th StrategEast State and IT Eurasian Forum took place on October 24-25, 2022 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan with the lead topic: **Diversity through Inclusivity**.

It was organized with the support from the government of Uzbekistan and our global partners – USAID and the EBRD, IT parks in the region, and major tech companies including MasterCard and Google. The event was attended by representatives of international financial institutions and development agencies, including USAID, EBRD, the World Bank, UNDP, and global and local IT industry leaders.



Panelists: **Nikolay Yarmov**, Senior Business Advisor, AmCham Uzbekistan | **Yurii Antoniuk**, Vice President, CEE Head, EPAM Systems | **John Farr**, Industry Value Advisor, SAP Middle East | **Steve Hoffman**, Chairman and CEO, Founders Space | **Elena Krukovskaya**, Chief Operations Officer, Exadel | **Felix Lammers**, Manager Corporate Partnerships & Co-Founder, Plug and Play Uzbekistan | **Olga Skorokhodova**, Head of Former Soviet Union, Government Affairs and Public Policy, Emerging Markets, Google



The forum was co-partnered by:



## Policy Recommendations based on Forum 2022:

1. Eurasian countries that have not yet declared developing their IT industry as a state goal are urged to include IT on their list of national priorities.
2. Set up an educational system specialized in IT.
3. Create special legislation for the IT sector as an essential factor for global IT companies' entry into Eurasian markets.
4. Countries need to create national and regional-level venture funds in order to attract investments from global IT companies.
5. In order to develop Fintech, governments and local financial regulators are encouraged to create a sandbox for Fintech experiments.
6. We encourage international financial organizations and development institutions to support the IT industry more effectively by creating country and regional-level "donor coalitions".

# Global Minds Initiative

## StrategEast State and IT Eurasian Forum in Almaty

On November 7-8, 2023, StrategEast organized the StrategEast State and IT Eurasian Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The lead topic for this year's event was **Knowledge as a New Energy**.

More than 50 speakers from different countries shared insights on the use of technology and developing the IT sector. Among the speakers were Kanysh Tuleushin (First Vice Minister of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan), Steve Adelman (Founder and Managing Director of Nexus Partners), Marvin Liao (Global Macro Investor specialized in Startups, Partner at Diaspora Ventures), Gail Gannon (Founder & CEO of Ensanté, Tech for Good Advisors for startups, Founding Director of the Neurotech Collider Lab & Faculty, University of California Berkeley), and others.

The forum was attended by 150 participants.



Panelists: **Kanysh Tuleushin**, First Vice Minister of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan | **Maxim Verenich**, Head of Learning & Development, Exadel | **Yury Antaniuk**, Vice president, Head of Central and Eastern Europe, EPAM | **Olga Skorokhodova**, Head of Caucasus, Central Asia and Russia, Government Affairs and Public Policy, Emerging Markets, Google | **Marvin Liao**, Global Macro Investor specialized in Startups, Partner at Diaspora Ventures | **Svetlana Vyrypaeva**, Managing Director for Central Asia, HP

### **Kanysh Tuleushin**, First Vice Minister of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan

"Kazakhstan, like Uzbekistan and other countries of Central Asia, has a very fast-growing population, we have to think about what we are going to do with the younger generations. While focusing on education including increasing English proficiency, we need to find a balance developing both sides: the innovation ecosystem in terms of growing the number of startups & product development, and at the same time advancing our country's outsourcing and service industry.

### **Marvin Liao**, Global Macro Investor specialized in Startups, Partner at Diaspora Ventures

"This is the best time to be in technology. The region of Central Asia is well positioned to take advantage of major trends like SaaS/Cloud, Defensetech/Aerospace and Fintech. Tech is an important part of every country and investors portfolio."



### **Maxim Verenich**, Head of Learning & Development, Exadel

"I would suggest that Kazakhstan should prioritize the improvement of English proficiency and also consider moving towards Full-Stack development, as this aligns with the current market demand. To foster the growth of a young generation of local talents, it is essential for universities to establish partnerships with IT companies that can offer tailored educational programs that align with the current market requirements."

### **Yury Antaniuk**, Vice president, Head of Central and Eastern Europe, EPAM

"The Central Asian region has all the necessary opportunities to develop the reputation of an attractive IT Hub for global clients and tech companies. Local industries and governments should focus on implementing cutting-edge technologies, especially cloud-based solutions that concentrate on AI and data, and investing in growing future specialists and unique young talent markets. One of its key competitive advantage is its large population of young and hard-working people. With the right policies and education, we can see impressive results in the IT industry in a few years."

### **Olga Skorokhodova**, Head of Caucasus, Central Asia and Russia, Government Affairs and Public Policy, Emerging Markets, Google

"Digital transformation has been a profound engine of progress for emerging economies. AI is the new frontier of digital transformation and of economic growth. It has real potential to change the world as we know it. To unlock the economic potential of AI-powered digital transformation in the emerging markets, Google offers a holistic approach, focusing on four pillars: physical capital, human capital, technology, and competitiveness. Our approach is reflected in the Future Readiness Economic Index (<https://portulans-2022.web.app/2022/>) which revealed that Central Asia and the Caucasus as a whole have strength in talent, with a comparatively high level of skills supported by the ability to grow and retain human capital."

# Digital for Freedom Forum in Warsaw

StrategEast hosted the Digital for Freedom Forum in Warsaw on November 23-24, 2023 in partnership with USAID and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine.

StrategEast's Digital for Freedom Forum in Warsaw served as a platform enabling and strengthening international partnerships for Ukraine's digital recovery and development. The Forum brought together representatives of global tech companies and investors, the Ukrainian IT community, the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, international financial institutions, and global development agencies. It provided an opportunity to discuss what needs to be done to improve the Ukrainian IT industry and to make it the primary economic booster for post-war Ukraine.

The forum was co-partnered by:



Panelists: **Michał Olszewski**, Funding Box – the leading CEE; **Ruslan Furtas**, Principal, Horizon Capital; **Marvin Liao**, Partner, Diaspora Ventures; **Ihor Markevych**, Innovations & Tech Lead, Advantage Ukraine; **Boleslaw Michalski**, CEO of GoIT Poland; **Ivan Petrenko**, Managing Partner, Angel One Venture Fund

**Alex Bornyakov**, Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine:

“Ukraine possesses significant technological potential, which will serve as the foundation for the country's recovery and economic development after victory. Therefore, our emphasis is on ensuring stable conditions for the operation and growth of the technological sector. It is crucial for IT companies to persist in delivering high-quality services to global clients, for startups and scale-ups to attract investments, and for a considerable number of high-tech products to be developed in Ukraine. The future of Ukraine is envisioned as a robust technology hub and an authentic startup nation”.

**Nataliia Petrova**, Project Manager, Office of Economic Growth, USAID:

“Our approach involves a competitive process to hand pick initiatives with potential for success. Five years ago, we identified technological sector as a key focus because it has the capacity to transform every aspect of our society. Tech has the power to make processes transparent, governments more accountable, and to foster sustainable growth.

Very often, there's no playbook, and none was provided on February 24th. We, as an institution, are willing to accept higher programmatic risks as we pursue various opportunities to achieve our mission and objectives. Ukraine has a lot to offer even in the current restricted environment - the country has become a testing ground for many technologies, can offer data for various areas of research - we can't afford to wait until after the war to rebuild the country. We are committed to fostering enduring collaboration with Ukrainian businesses, empowering them to not just survive but to thrive in the face of adversity.

We support business development by granting SMEs access to expertise, which enhances their decision-making processes, reduces costs, and offers numerous benefits. Ukrainian companies seeking advisory services are encouraged to apply for the 'Advice for Small Businesses' program on the ERBD's MEREZHA platform. As a response to the ongoing war, the Bank has increased the grant compensation for local advisory projects to 85%”.



Panelists: **Matthew Murray**, Adjunct Professor, Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, Harriman Institute; **Valery Krasovsky**, CEO, Sigma Software Group; **Oksana Myronko**, Head of Communications, European Business Association; **Olga Shapoval**, Executive Director, Kharkiv IT cluster; **Katerina Snehirova**, Marketing Manager, Exadel

**Michael Mizrahi** - Academic Manager - Jerusalem and vicinity and the seashore area, MaofTech Accelerators - The Ministry of Economy and Industry – Israel:

“Israel has been saved by its startup ecosystem, which offers a replicable model for global success. Remarkable organization, coupled with government support are potent instruments for change. Israel’s Startup Support Network even offers qualified replacements for startup employees during military service, underscoring the value of resilience, a lesson we’ve learned from Ukrainians who continue to provide services no matter what. It’s worth noting that virtually every Israeli startup leverages Ukrainian code or services, drawing inspiration from Ukraine’s war-tested strategies for surviving and thriving in uncertainty. I urge you all to recognize your own potential, as Ukraine already stands as an innovation giant. If you require our assistance and wish to build something new together, we are eager to collaborate”.

**Marvin Liao**, Global Macro Investor specialized in Startups, Partner at Diaspora Ventures:

“Before 2022, Silicon Valley largely steered clear of anything related to DefenseTech. However, in a world where the threat posed by Russia looms large, investment in defense technology has become not only compelling but essential. Today, it stands as one of the most captivating and critical sectors within the tech landscape, with Ukrainians at the forefront. Take Brave1, for instance, a driving force behind innovation in this industry, influencing not only established players but also startups, thereby shaping the future of defense technology”.



Panelists: **Alex Bornyakov**, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine; **Marcin Gajdziński**, General Manager for Poland, Baltics and Ukraine, IBM; **Yury Antaniuk**, Vice President, EPAM Systems; **Anatoly Motkin**, President, StrategEast

# Strategieast IT HUB

## StrategEast signed an agreement with the EBRD on expanding the IT HUB program to 5 regions in Georgia



On December 9, 2022, StrategEast, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) signed a collaboration agreement on implementing the IT HUB program in Georgia.

The document was signed by Lika Merabishvili, Regional Director, StrategEast; Catarina Bjorlin Hansen, EBRD Regional Director for the Caucasus; Avtandil Kasradze, Chairman, GITA. The event was also attended by Irakli Nadareishvili, the Deputy Minister of Economics and Sustainable Development of Georgia.

The IT HUB program covers 5 regions of Georgia and includes 40 students in each region. The students gain theoretical and practical knowledge that will provide them with skills of executing various complex IT projects. Successful graduates will be employed by different global and local tech companies with the support of StrategEast.

The project is being implemented with financial support from the EBRD in partnership with GITA.



## StrategEast IT HUB officially launched in Azerbaijan

StrategEast, in collaboration with the the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Center for Analysis and Coordination of the Fourth Industrial Revolution lauched the IT Hub Azerbaijan project.

The official kick-off meeting was held on February, 7, 2023, in Baku, Azerbaijan and was attended by Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast; Helen Uvarenko, IT Hub Program Manager at StrategEast; Rovshan Rahimov, Partnership Development Manager at StrategEast; Tamerlan Tagiyev, Executive Director of the Center for Analysis and Coordination of the Fourth Industrial Revolution by the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan (C4IR); Kamola

Makhmudova, Head of the EBRD in Azerbaijan, representatives of the Ministry of Science and Education of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan, and rectors of key Azerbaijani universities.

The project envisages free IT trainings for young Azerbaijanis from remote regions including the cities of Ganja, Sumgayit, Lankaran, Mingachevir, Shirvan, and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. IT Hub Azerbaijan provides training for 80 students in 7 specialties.

The trainings led by international experts in computer science, programming, business analysis, and other disciplines, will be conducted virtually and last 11 months.

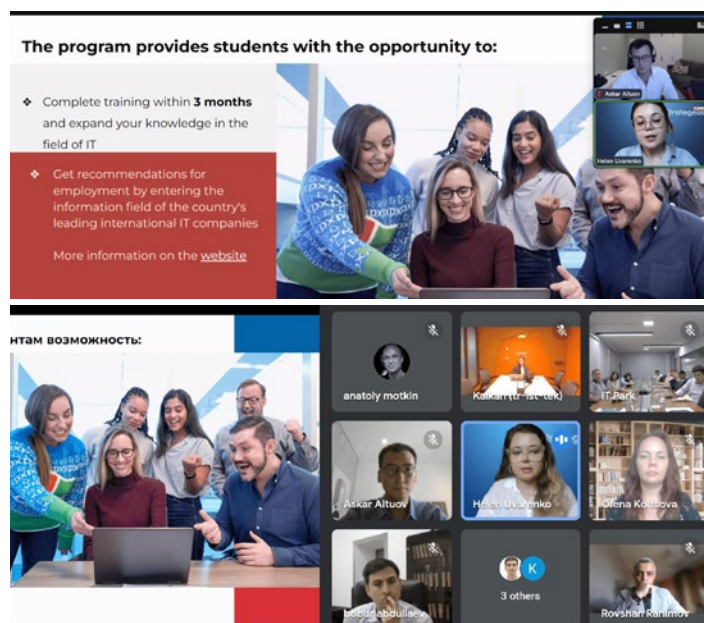
This is the second enrollment of students for StrategEast IT Hub in Azerbaijan. The first one took place in 2021.

## StrategEast and Google launched an IT HUB Program in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan

On Aug 9, 2023, StrategEast and Goolge officially launched "Google Developer Relations & StrategEast IT HUB" program in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

The kick-off session in Uzbekistan, organized by IT Park Uzbekistan, StrategEast and Google, brought together representatives from renowned institutions, including Inha University in Tashkent, New Uzbekistan University, Westminster International University, Tashkent University of Information Technologies (named after Muhammad al-Khwarizmi), Sharda University Uzbekistan, Amity University in Tashkent, Sambhram University in Jizzakh, IT Park University, and AKFA University in Tashkent. Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, Helen Uvarenko, IT HUB Program Manager, and Rovshan Rahimov, Regional Director for Central Asia and Eastern Europe, attended the meeting and gave presentations.

The Kazakhstan launch event was attended by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Narxoz University, Turan University, Suleyman Demirel University, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Nazarbayev University, Kazakh-British Technical University, Serikbayev East Kazakhstan



Technical University, L. N. Gumilev Eurasian National University, IT International University, Toraihyrov University, Satbayev University, Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University, and Astana IT University.

Over the span of 3 months, the program equips over 2,000 students with sought-after skills.



# Startup acceleration and ecosystem development

## StrategEast presented 15 Eurasian startups in Saudi Arabia



StrategEast has partnered with Monshaat to support Biban 2023 – the premier startup event held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on March 9-13, 2023.

StrategEast provided 15 startups from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan with an opportunity to meet with investors and find new collaborations. The participating startups were: Dolon Technologies (Kazakhstan); RDTTest, Gardarika (Ukraine), Identomat (Georgia), Nova soft, zypl.ai (Tajikistan), Iman, BILLZ (Uzbekistan), unqod (Kyrgyzstan), CITIX, UvU Shuttle, beyne.ai, niami.kz (Kazakhstan), Animal ID, and Rainexio (Ukraine).

The startups spoke on the Biban alks stage – the main scene in Saudi Arabia for presenting innovative ideas that week.

With its impressive innovative growth and global aspirations, which make the Gulf region a perfect fit for the Eurasian startup ecosystem when it comes to both knowledge partnership and entrepreneurial opportunities.

## StrategEast took part in Silicon Valley Startup Grind



## StrategEast moderated a panel on the Ukrainian startup ecosystem at an event at Berkeley University



On April 10, 2023, an event “Tech Education and Entrepreneurship in Ukraine”, dedicated to the Ukrainian startup ecosystem, was held at the Faculty Club at the University of California, Berkeley, and organized by Science, Entrepreneurship and Technology (SET) University, the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, USAID, and StrategEast.

StrategEast President Anatoly Motkin moderated a fireside chat with Oleksandr Borynyakov, Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine. During the conversation, they discussed issues of IT education and entrepreneurship skills development in Ukraine were discussed, as well as best practices that can be adopted on the government level to stimulate the growth of the tech sector and innovations during crisis.

Representatives of SET University, USAID, Berkeley Haas School of business, Embassy of Ukraine in the US, Ukrainian startups, and IT clusters also delivered speeches at the event.

On April 11, 2023, Startup Grind’s Global Conference 2023 was held in Redwood City, California, bringing together startups, VC funds, and policymakers from all over the world. The conference was attended by StrategEast President Anatoly Motkin and StrategEast CSO Michael Sheitelman. At the conference, StrategEast representatives reached agreements with Silicon Valley mentors on their participation in StrategEast training programs in Eurasia, as well as on joint work with Californian VC funds to attract investments in startups in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

The StrategEast delegation took part in a side event organized by Consulate General of Ukraine in San Francisco. The event included a discussion of the development of the Ukrainian startup ecosystem, and promising AI projects in particular. As part of the side event, there were also pitches of 10 Ukrainian startups also made pitches to Silicon Valley investors as part of the side event.

## STARTUP ACCELERATION AND ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

### Anatoly Motkin delivered opening remarks at Dubai's IT Market for Start-Ups Webinar



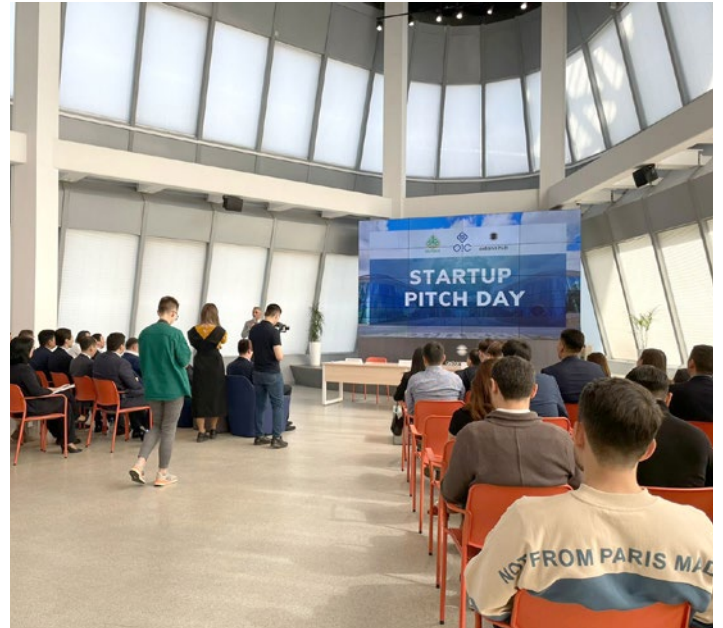
On November 6, 2023, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, delivered the opening remarks at the “Dubai IT Market for Start-Ups Webinar,” a collaborative effort organized by the Dubai Chamber for Digital Economy in collaboration with StrategEast, and with valued cooperation from the Kyrgyz Republic’s High Tech Park and the Kyrgyz Software and Services Developers Association (KSSDA).

The event aimed to promote Kyrgyz startups on the Dubai market, offering a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs seeking to establish cooperation with Dubai-based companies.

In his opening remarks Anatoly Motkin emphasized the importance of international collaboration and knowledge-sharing in the fast-paced digital landscape. He highlighted the potential for Kyrgyz startups to tap into the vast opportunities offered by the Dubai IT market.

The program featured a lineup of distinguished speakers, each sharing their expertise and insights to empower Kyrgyz startups with the knowledge they need to thrive in Dubai’s tech ecosystem: Hans Larsen, Manager of the Digital Economy Acceleration Digital Operations Department at the Dubai Chamber; and Azis Abakirov, Director of High Tech Park of Kyrgyz Republic.

### StrategEast signed a MoU on venture capital market development in Kazakhstan

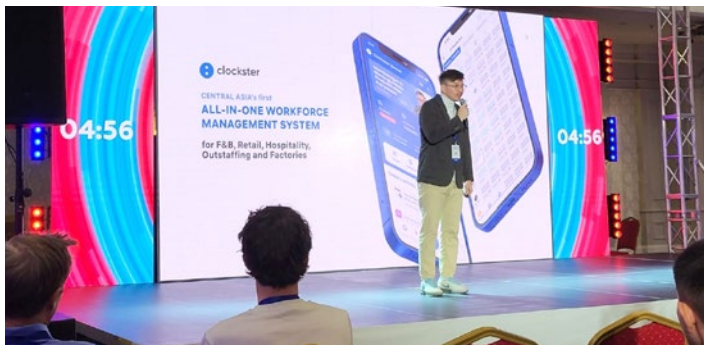


At an official ceremony held in Astana, Kazakhstan, StrategEast signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Astana Hub and BGlobal Ventures, Ltd.

The parties will cooperate in the areas of maintaining the venture capital investment market, improving the competitiveness of start-up projects on international markets, enhancing IT export and foreign investment inflow, participating in regional programs and events, and conducting acceleration for start-up projects at all stages of growth.

The partners agreed to consider all possibilities for further collaboration on the development of Kazakhstan’s business climate.

### Six Startups Pitched at the EBRD Venture Program at the StrategEast State and IT Eurasian Forum



On November 7, 2023, EBRD Star Venture Startups Investor Pitch event showcased six startups within the EBRD Star Venture Programme at the StrategEast Forum in Almaty. The event was supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Young entrepreneurs presented their pitches to the esteemed panel of judges which included: Marvin Liao (Global Macro Investor specialized in Startups, Partner at Diaspora Ventures), Chris Burry (UC Berkeley SCET Global Ambassador, Co-CEO of US Market Access Center), Steve Adelman (Founder and Managing Director of Nexus Partners), and Jay Onda (Venture Investments Director, Marubeni Ventures, Inc.)

Every participant had 12 minutes to give a five-minute pitch, four minutes for a Q&A, and three minutes for feedback from the judges. The jury evaluated startups from such fields as HR, smart parking, Islamic halal banking, fintech, and others.

The event was divided into two segments: EBRD Star Venture Presentations, in which participants gave an insightful overview of the EBRD’s initiatives, showcasing their commitment to fostering innovative startups in the region, and real pitches from startups, in which entrepreneurs had a unique platform to pitch their groundbreaking ideas to a diverse audience of global investors gathered at the Forum.

# Fostering IT Industry Development

## CENTRAL ASIA

### StrategEast discussed ongoing and planned activities in Kazakhstan



On the sidelines of the Digital Almaty Forum, StrategEast President Anatoly Motkin met with Yersultan Yermanov, Director of Development of the IT Industry, Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Magzhan Madiyev, the founding CEO of Astana Hub.

The parties discussed the challenges and prospects of IT industry development in Kazakhstan and agreed to further deepen their collaboration in creating new IT jobs, and enhancing IT exports in the country.

On February 2-5, the Fifth International Digital Forum “Digital Almaty: Digital Partnership in the New Reality” is took place in Almaty. The main topics included modern global challenges in the development of the industry of innovative technologies.

### StrategEast starts collaborating with the government of Uzbekistan on IT development



During his visit to Tashkent, Anatoly Motkin met with Sherzod Shermatov, Minister for Development of ITC of the Republic of Uzbekistan and his team.

The parties discussed cooperation plans for the coming year in particular, digital capacity development training in regional centers of Uzbekistan, assistance to local IT companies in reaching out to international customers; attracting Uzbek startups by StrategEast as part of the BIBAN tech event in Saudi Arabia this March; as well as engaging global tech leaders to develop digital infrastructure in Uzbekistan.

In addition, Mr. Motkin held a meeting with Suldonmurod Rasulov, Head of export department at IT Park Uzbekistan. They discussed Uzbekistan’s participation in the launch of the California-based venture fund Catapult Ventures in Central Asia, and StrategEast’s assistance in attracting international financial institutions and development agencies to the development of the IT ecosystem of Uzbekistan.

They also discussed cooperation between StrategEast and the IT Park in the field of joint work on analytical reports, as well as in promoting the Uzbek IT industry in the Gulf region.

### Central Asian IT report presented at major venues



On May 30, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, presented the EBRD-USAID-StrategEast joint analytical report at the EBRD’s headquarters in London. The report included policy recommendations on how to foster development of the IT export-oriented industry in Central Asia.

The event was opened with welcome remarks and an introduction by Zsuzsanna Hargitai, Managing Director, Central Asia, EBRD.

A panel discussion entitled, “The billion in the distance: How tech exports can transform Central Asia”, was moderated by Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, and included distinguished speakers: Arkadiy Dobkin, Chairman of the Board, CEO & President of EPAM; Barbara Rambousek, Director, Gender & Economic Inclusion, EBRD; Dirk Werner – Director, Head of Telecommunications, Media and Technology & VCIP.

On April 14, Anatoly Motkin attended a special panel “How tech export can transform Central Asia” at the Atlantic Council where he presented a report by StrategEast on strategies for developing IT exports in the region.

The panel discussion participants included Arkadiy Dobkin, Chairman of the Board, CEO, and President at EPAM Systems, Inc.; Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast; Elena Son, Executive Director, American-Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce, US-Kyrgyzstan Business Council, US-Tajikistan Business Council; and Sarah Wall, Project Director, Future Growth Initiative, Palladium. The meeting was moderated by Suriya Evans-Pritchard Jayanti, nonresident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council’s Eurasia Center.

In addition, the report was presented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan with a panel including representatives of USAID, IT parks, and professional associations from the region.

## CENTRAL ASIA

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

### StrategEast spoke at the Central Eurasian Venture Forum 2023



On June 2, StrategEast participated in one of the biggest business forums – the Central Eurasian Venture Forum 2023, the leading innovation-focused venture conference in Central Asia.

Rovshan Rahimov, Regional Director for Central Asia and Eastern Europe, has delivered a speech at the “Venture capital landscape of Central Eurasia”, a panel discussion on economic growth, private and government participation in investment areas, and the creation of attractive investment projects.

Other speakers included Sardor Mukhamedaliev, Regional Partner of ICLUB Global; Pavel Koktyshov, Managing Partner of MOST Ventures; Ravshan Kurbanov, CEO, FIFTYFIVE Group; Mammad Karim, General Partner at Caucasus Ventures; Jyldyz Isabekova, Country Director of Accelerate Prosperity Kyrgyzstan; and Irakli Kashibadze, CEO at Future Laboratory; Abdul Sharopov, Advisor at AloqaVentures.

### StrategEast explored new ways of IT ecosystem development in Central Asia



During his working visit to Almaty, Kazakhstan, on August 2nd, Anatoly Motkin, StrategEast President, jointly with Dinara Issenova, Public Engagement Manager at StrategEast, held meetings with global development agencies and international financial institutions.

At a meeting with Tatiana Proskuryakova, the World Bank’s Regional Director for the Central Asia region, Mr. Motkin presented StrategEast’s ongoing and planned activities in Central Asia. The parties also discussed collaboration opportunities for the region.

The meeting with Dr. Amir Piric, Director, UNESCO Representative for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan was focused on possible areas of collaboration in Central Asia, and in particular in Kazakhstan.

### StrategEast presented key components of Central Asia’s IT sector potential for the US market



On August 9, 2023, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, participated in the webinar on Opportunities and Challenges for American ICT Sector in Central Asia: Conversation with Central Asian ICT Decision-Makers, hosted by The US-Kyrgyzstan Business Council (USKGZBC) and US-Tajikistan Business Council (USTJBC).

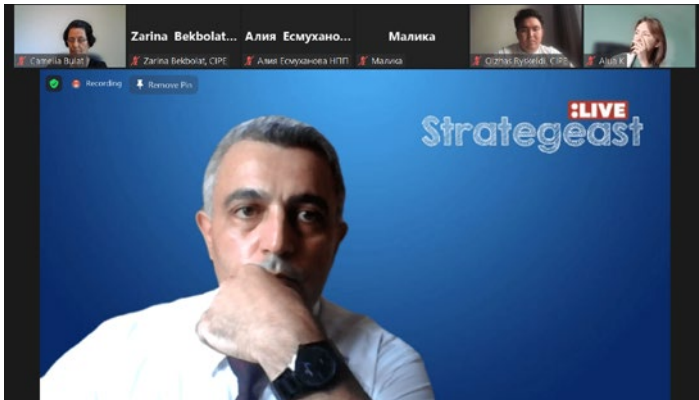
The conversation featured Sherzod Shermatov, Minister of Digital Technologies of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Cristen Bauer, Legal Advisor, Commercial Law and Development Program, U.S. Department of Commerce; Sherali Kabir, Minister of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Tajikistan; Indira Sharshenova, Deputy Minister of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic; Elena Krukovskaya, Chief People Officer, Exadel; Sarah Wall, Project Director, USAID’s Future Growth Initiative Activity, Palladium; and Farkhod Ibragimov, CEO, IT PARK Uzbekistan.

Mr. Motkin walked through the main developments of StrategEast’s groundbreaking report on The Billion in the Distance: Central Asian IT Exports and Strategies for Growing Them, which delves deep into Central Asia’s IT sector. This comprehensive study offers a unique perspective on the region’s tech industry, analyzing its current state, identifying key players, and forecasting future trends.

## CENTRAL ASIA

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

## StrategEast discussed export strategies for the Central Asian IT sector at CIPE's webinar



On August 18, StrategEast participated in a webinar organized by CIPE Europe & Eurasia on the “Discussion of priorities in the development of e-commerce in Central Asian countries”. Rovshan Rahimov, Regional Director for Central Asia and Eastern Europe, spoke about StrategEast’s experience and research on exports and strategies for growing the Central Asian IT sector; attractiveness for potential US investors, and methods to facilitate connections to the US and other international markets.

Other speakers included Aziza Shuzheeva, President of Techno Women, Founder of the Digital Transformation Public Foundation and Alua Korpebayeva, founder of Clever market in Kazakhstan; Aibek Kurenkeev, President of the E-Commerce Association in Kyrgyzstan; Firuz Zainidini, Head of the e-commerce department of CJSC Babilon Mobile in Tajikistan; Muzaffar A’zamov, Chairman of the Association of E-Commerce of Uzbekistan. The event was facilitated by Camelia Bulat, Senior Expert at CIPE.

Among the main points of discussion were the barriers to e-commerce in Central Asia; the identification of priority areas for e-commerce development in the region for increasing its competitiveness in regional and international markets; constraints and opportunities to leverage investments, and financing opportunities from the global e-commerce hubs to the region; developing connections with leading business associations to advance the competitiveness of e-commerce in Central Asia and in external markets.

## StrategEast held Donors Coordination Meetings in Kyrgyzstan jointly with KSSDA



The donors’ coordination meetings were held in Bishkek on June 14, and September 14, organized by StrategEast jointly with the Kyrgyz Software and Services Developers Association.

The participants agreed to unite efforts on conducting delivery training for IT companies in Kyrgyzstan, in order to reach international markets and employers, with the key focus on reaching regions of the country while promoting women-led companies and organizations with female founders; providing angel accelerated training programs for current and prospective angel investors in Kyrgyzstan, adding best practices of global expertise and expanding the investment potential of local startups; sharing the list of recommendable startup candidates from Kyrgyzstan to participate in Saudi Arabia’s largest SME and entrepreneurship forum Biban 2024, within a framework of StrategEast and Monsha’at (the Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority of KSA) partnership project.

The participants agreed to unite efforts on conducting delivery training for IT companies in Kyrgyzstan; to provide angel accelerated training program for current and prospective angel investors in Kyrgyzstan; to share the list of startup candidates from Kyrgyzstan to be recommended to participate in Saudi Arabia’s Biban 2024 forum, within a framework of StrategEast and Monsha’at partnership project.

## CAUCASUS

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

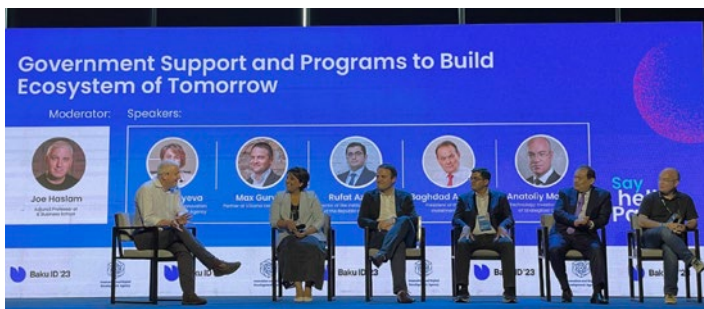
### StrategEast discusses joint activity in Georgia with the Asian Development Bank



Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, and Lika Merabishvili, StrategEast Regional Director in the Caucasus, had a working meeting with representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Tbilisi: Elene Gvpadze, Senior Investment Officer, and Tea Papuashvili, Associate Project Officer on Infrastructure.

The parties discussed areas for future collaboration, including creating jobs and attracting foreign direct investment to the IT sector. The meetings' agenda was also dedicated to StrategEast's Future Hub program implementation aiming to take the Eurasian IT industry to a new level from the export of services to the creation of its own world-class products.

### StrategEast took part in the Baku ID '23 event



On July 8, 2023, StrategEast took part in the Baku Investment Day, Azerbaijan's main startup and innovation event powered by SABA. HUB Innovation Center aimed to drive the ecosystem forward.

During this event, there were opportunities to see the best startup projects and discuss the future of the innovation ecosystem by meeting local and international investors, mentors, experts, and other contributors to the global ecosystem.

Anatoly Motkin took part in the panel discussion, "Government Support and Programs to Build Ecosystem of Tomorrow", along with Inara Valiyeva (Innovation and Digital Development Agency), Max Gurvits (Vitosha Venture Partners), Rufat Azizov (the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan), and Baghdad Amreyev (Turkic Investment Fund) moderated by Joe Haslam (Brown University).

### StrategEast attended the USAID's Women Who Tech Working Group meeting



On May 30, Lika Merabishvili, Regional Director for the Caucasus of StrategEast, attended a follow-up meeting of the Women Who Tech Working Group at the USAID Economy Security Office in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The participants set the next steps for the upcoming activities and prepared action plans for the future. Other attendees included organizations that work on gender equality and the ICT sector in Georgia.

The Women Who Tech Working aims to empower women in the ICT industry. The meeting was organized within the USAID Economic Security Program.

### StrategEast is to scale up partnership with the World Bank and EBRD for IT sector development in the Caucasus



On September 11, 2023 Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, and Lika Merabishvili, Regional Director for Caucasus at StrategEast, held a series of meetings with regional directors of international financial institutions.

During the meetings with Alkis Drakinos, Regional Head of the Caucasus for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and Rolande Pryce, World Bank Regional Director for the South Caucasus, the parties discussed the prospects for IT sector development in the Caucasus region and extension of institutional partnership.

## CAUCASUS

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

## StrategEast jointly with Evido held a meetup in Georgia on Meta solutions for business growth



On September 26, StrategEast and Evido held an event aimed at speeding up the development of the Georgian digital market and helping advertisers find new growth opportunities with Meta. The Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) was a partner of the event.

The event was opened with a welcome speech by Lika Merabishvili, the Regional Director in the Caucasus of StrategEast.

Along with other speakers, the main guest speaker was the representative from Meta, Maxim Osipov.

The event covered such topics as the keys to unlocking Meta ads solutions' potential, the holiday season with Meta AI, and the new opportunities of marketing automation with Meta Advantage suite, benefits of AI for ad campaigns: Advantage+ solutions for eCommerce, mobile applications, holiday marketing on Facebook: top best Practices, winning creative tactics.

## Georgia's IT sector takes a leap forward: Lika Merabishvili spoke at the Moldova DemTech Conference



On October 27, 2023 Lika Merabishvili, Regional Director for Caucasus at StrategEast, delivered a speech at the "Securing Democracy in the Digital Age" conference during the Moldova DemTech Conference and Hackathon.

The focus of her discussion revolved around the exceptional progress of Georgia's IT industry since 2020 when the country implemented a new tax regime aimed at attracting international IT companies. Her presentation, "IT Industry in Georgia: The Great Leap Forward", offered valuable insights into the stunning growth of the Georgian IT sector.

In her speech, Merabishvili pointed out that since the introduction of the new tax regime, Georgia's IT industry has made substantial strides. The first quarter of 2023 witnessed a remarkable achievement, with the country generating an impressive income of \$231 million from IT services. This remarkable feat underscores the rapid and robust development of the IT sector in Georgia.

The event, hosted on October 27-28, was a collaborative effort of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Moldova, the Alliance of Democracies, the Hanns Seidel Foundation Moldova, and the Eastern European Center for Multiparty Democracy (EECMD).

## EASTERN EUROPE

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

### StrategEast President outlined Ukraine's digital recovery outlook at the DGAP webinar



Anatoly Motkin, StrategEast President, gave a talk on Ukraine's tech ecosystem outlook at the webinar hosted by the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) "DACH Tech Talks: Resilience of the Start-Up scene in Ukraine".

The discussion was centered on how tech startups and the tech industry have been impacted by the ongoing war, how potential partnerships and international collaborations between developer teams have flourished even under these extremely adverse circumstances.

Mr. Motkin encouraged attendees to start thinking of the country's recovery now, rather than waiting until the ceasefire is in place: "The tech sector is one of the two pillars of Ukraine's resilience along with the military. The IT is less vulnerable than other spheres, it is one of the most transparent and accountable sectors. What we have to do is to encourage investing in the local startup ecosystem. Thanks to the unprecedented support of Ukraine's international partners, today's ambitious visions for a new Ukrainian economy are completely feasible. It has high chances of becoming one of the most digitally modern nations."

The panel included Dr. Katja Muñoz, Research Fellow, Technology and Foreign Policy, DGAP; Daniel Krauss, CIO & Founder, FlixBus; and Liudmyla Petrenko, Professor of Business Economics and Entrepreneurship Department, Kyiv National Economic University.

The discussion was moderated by Rainer Rudolph, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy in Vienna and Senior Fellow at DGAP.

### Anatoly Motkin spoke at the Atlantic Council's panel "The role of the digital economy in Ukraine's reconstruction"



On April 13, the panel "The role of digital economy in Ukraine's reconstruction" took place at the Atlantic Council in Washington, DC.

The panel was organized as part of the Atlantic Council's IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings event series which convenes Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors from around the world to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the global economy in 2023.

The opening remarks were made by Ambassador John E. Herbst, Director of the Atlantic Council's Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center.

Participants of the panel embraced Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation Alex Bornyakov of Ukraine alongside CEO of Stellar Development Foundation Denelle Dixon, President of StrategEast Anatoly Motkin, and Deputy Assistant Administrator at USAID Mark Simakovsky to better understand the role of technology in Ukraine's rebuilding efforts since Russia's invasion.

In his speech, Mr. Motkin outlined the importance of digital resilience. In addition, he proposed a separate Ukrainian Digital Recovery Conference, comparable to the Ukrainian Recovery Conference held in Lugano.



### StrategEast discussed collaboration with Amazon in Ukraine and other Eurasian countries

StrategEast President Anatoly Motkin met with Tomek Olejnik, Head of the Public Sector, CEE, Amazon, and Marta Kokoszka, Principal, Public Policy, CEE, Amazon.

The parties discussed the ways of joining efforts to support the Ukrainian digital sector as well as cloud ecosystem development in other Eurasian countries.



## EASTERN EUROPE

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

## StrategEast moderated the panel on Ukraine's tech sector at the SelectUSA



During his visit to the US SelectUSA Investment Summit 2023, held on May 1-4 in Washington, D.C., Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast moderated a panel at the side event "Ukraine's growing tech sector offers hope amid wartime".

The discussion was focused on the resilience of the Ukrainian knowledge economy and creative businesses during the ongoing war in Ukraine. The distinguished founders of creative and tech businesses in Ukraine shared their best practices in staying resilient during the time of war, including how they adapted to the challenges of war, collaborated with others for greater impact, navigated uncertainty, and empowered innovation within their organizations.

The panel gathered stellar speakers: Iryna Volnytska, President of SET University; Danylo Tonkopyi, CEO & Founder of Delfast Bikes; Natalia Denikeeva, Director of IT industry development department; Sviatoslav Kavetskyi, Lviv IT Cluster Supervisory Board Chairman, N-iX LLC, Director of Industry Affairs.

## Anatoly Motkin moderated a panel on digital transformation in EaP countries



## Anatoly Motkin moderated session at the Doing Business in Ukraine: Challenges and Opportunities conference



On June,7 Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, took part at the Doing Business in Ukraine: Challenges and Opportunities conference in Warsaw.

Mr. Motkin moderated a session on "Marketplaces: essential entry points into Polish and European markets" embracing distinguished speakers Mikołaj M. Bulanow, Key Account Manager, Amazon and Emilia Gregorczyk, Business Development Partner, Allegro.

About 40 speakers participated in the conference, including representatives of the Government of Ukraine, the business community, international development agencies. The topics covered included resumption of business operations, maintaining and increasing exports in times of war.

The event was organized by the USAID Competitive Economy Program in Ukraine (USAID CEP) in partnership with the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine and in cooperation with Diia.Business Center Warsaw and the Polish Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers.

On June 16, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, moderated a panel "Eastern Partnership Digital Trends", at the Moldova Digital Summit in Chisinau. Mr. Motkin lead the discussion aiming to showcase the variety of digitalization projects in Eastern Partnership countries and the understanding of global and local trends.

Panelists included Thibault Chalet, Program Manager DG NEAR, European Commission; Dmitri Gugunava, Chief Manager of Digital Governance at Digital Governance Agency in Georgia; Shahin Aliyev, Advisor to the CEO of the Innovation and Digital Development Agency in Azerbaijan; Aneta Babayan, Partnership & Portfolio, Information System Agency of Armenia; and Vitalie Tarlev, Digitalisation Advisor in the Economic Council to the PM of Moldova.

## EASTERN EUROPE

### StrategEast took part in the roundtable on public-private partnerships cooperation in EaP region



Speaking at the round table “Public-Private Partnerships Cooperation in EaP Region” at Moldova Digital Summit, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, revealed the latest trends and case studies of successful collaboration between businesses and governments in Eastern Europe.

The discussion was moderated by Victor Guzun, Policy expert at IPRE, alongside presenters Angela Dumitrasco, Regional Manager of e-Governance and Digitalisation project/ National Coordinator of Projects in Moldova, GIZ; Aneta Babayan PhD, Partnership & Portfolio, Information Systems Agency of Armenia; Suren Krmoyan, Founder/President of Digital Armenia; Hrachik Yarmaloyan, Regional Project Manager “Re-engineering of Public Services in the Eastern Partnership” at GIZ; Edita Ghazaryan, Director of Development and Special Projects at Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE); Shahin Aliyev, Advisor to the Chief Executive Officer; Kanan Akparov, Director at DOST Digital Innovations Center; Dmitri Gugunava, Chief Manager of Digital Governance at Digital Governance Agency in Georgia; Tornike Jobava, Deputy Chairman at GITA; Sabina Huseynova, Chief Specialist on International Relations at DOST Digital Innovations Center; Vitalie Tarlev, Digitalisation Advisor in the Economic Council to the PM of Moldova; Ana Chrita, Director at Tekwill; Marina Bzovii, Director at Moldovan Association of ICT Companies; Mary Nemciuc, CEO and Founder at Technovator; Ionela Titirez, EU4Digital, and others.

## THE GULF

### StrategEast plans to start operations in Oman in collaboration with Madarek



StrategEast President Anatoly Motkin visited Oman to discuss our plans to assist in developing the IT industry in that country.

Madarek Digital Solutions hosted StrategEast during the visit.

Madarek co-founders Fatma Yousuf Alawi Al Ibrahim and Aiman Al Zakwani emphasized the importance of developing the digital economy in Oman and Madarek Digital Solutions hosted StrategEast during the visit.

Anatoly Motkin assured his Omani counterparts that StrategEast will attract all necessary resources to foster the development of Oman’s IT industry.

### Anatoly Motkin took part in Abu Dhabi’s AI Connect Conference



On December 12-13, Anatoly Motkin participated in Abu Dhabi’s AI Connect conference, where he met with representatives of leading technology companies, AI practitioners, and representatives of government agencies responsible for the development of AI and the digital economy.

**THE GULF**

**StrategEast will support Dubai in developing the local IT ecosystem**



President of StrategEast Anatoly Motkin held a meeting with the CEO of the Dubai Department of Economic Development Abdul Baset Mohammed Abdulla Al Janahi, and Senior Department Manager Salama Juma Mohammad Al Aslai Al Falasi

They agreed to launch joint activities to foster the start up ecosystem development in Dubai and to attract foreign direct investments into this sector.

**StrategEast is to join efforts with the global tech leaders to develop IT industry in Bahrain**



During his visit to Bahrain in early February, StrategEast President Anatoly Motkin held meetings with business-enabling agencies and institutions.

At his meeting with the Bahraini Labor Fund – Tamkeen, the parties discussed joint efforts for the startup ecosystem and venture capital development in Bahrain.

The meeting with the Bahrain Economic Development Board senior executives – Majeed Al Majid and Redha Karim - was dedicated to the IT industry development in Bahrain, as well as attracting leading international IT engineering companies to launch their operations in Bahrain.

The agenda of the meeting with Mary McGinnis, Executive Director at the American Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain included collaboration in attracting international IT companies' expertise for Bahrain's digital capacity enhancement.

**FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT**

**StrategEast joined forces with AmCham Kuwait to develop the knowledge driven economy**



StrategEast President Anatoly Motkin met in Kuwait City with Paola De La Roche, Executive Director of AmCham Kuwait to discuss collaboration opportunities for developing the knowledge driven economy in Kuwait in accordance with the New Kuwait Vision 2035.

They discussed how to assist the local private and public sector in Kuwait to foster the digital transformation process and to attract top global expertise to Kuwait.

Mr Motkin has described the opportunities for synergy between the IT sector in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Kuwait based on the highest level of expertise accrued in the region, supported by global tech leaders.

**StrategEast launched joint activity with Qatar in Eurasian region**



In early March 2023, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, visited Doha to explore collaboration opportunities between Qatar and the Eurasian IT companies.

During his meetings with Jeroen Nijland, Invest Qatar Director and Abby Chan, Qatar Financial Center Vice President, Anatoly Motkin has discussed the synergy opportunities for Qatar in Eurasian region based on StrategEast's experience.

**THE GULF**

**StrategEast held a round table on “Digital MECCA: Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia as a digital single market”**



On March 16, StrategEast hosted an online round table for the GCC states’ representatives “Digital MECCA: Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia as a digital single market”.

The event participants discussed the potential for a mutually beneficial partnership within the MECCA (Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia) region and ways to achieve it. By collaborating with IT companies from the Caucasus and Central Asia, Gulf countries stand to gain twice: not only as consumers of high level digital services but also as a hub for global tech companies to open their offices locally.

Opening the discussion, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, revealed the most pressing issues of creating partnerships for the successful tech ecosystem development. The event speakers were: Mariam Lashkhi, Member of the Parliament of Georgia; Sultonmurod Rasulov, Head of export department of IT PARK Uzbekistan; Avigail Menashe, Executive Director of Kyrgyz Software and Service Developers Association; and Jason Harman, SVP, Head of Middle East at EPAM.

**StrategEast presented the best way for Saudi Arabia to become the global hub of digital excellence**



**FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT**

**StrategEast signed a MoU with Madarek on tech ecosystem development in Oman**



StrategEast signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Omani innovation platform Madarek with the aim of developing the technology ecosystem in Oman.

This collaboration will foster knowledge and best practices exchange to extend an international subject-matter-expert pool to Madarek Network and the Omani Business Community.

The parties will work together on creating startup development programs uniquely designed for the needs of the Omani startup environment, according to the best international practices and as a result of collaborations with key stakeholders, including from Silicon Valley.

The programs will focus on developing the competencies and accelerating the growth of local startups to allow them to scale up enter global markets. StrategEast will leverage its international expertise and solid relations with leading tech institutions and investors to showcase the Omani Startups internationally and attract institutional and angel investors.

Speaking at the panel “Bridging International Ecosystems and fostering collaboration between SMEs” at the premier tech and startup event in Saudi Arabia – Biban 2023 in Riyadh, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, emphasized the importance of cross-region collaboration for to scale up Saudi Arabia’s SME sector.

“Connecting the Saudi Arabian regions with the Caucasus and Central Asia based on the knowledge driven economy is the best way to preserve and develop the local human capital in the country.

Based on the StrategEast global experience, attracting the leading global engineering IT companies to Saudi Arabia is absolutely necessary for the knowledge transfer and will lay a foundation for establishing a global hub of digital excellence in Saudi Arabia.”, said Motkin.

The discussion was moderated by Philip Lemmerz, Partner at PwC Middle East and the speakers on the panel also included: Fahad Jamal Alnaeem, Deputy Minister for Investment Development of Saudi Arabia; Saud Alsabhan, Vice Governor of Entrepreneurship at Monsha’at – Saudi Arabian SME General Authority; and Roland Daher, CEO at AstroLabs.

## THE GULF

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

### StrategEast invited Qatar to play a more active role in developing the IT ecosystem in the Caucasus and Central Asia



During his working visit to Qatar in March 2023, Anatoly Motkin, StrategEast President, held a meeting with Jeroen Nijland, Invest Qatar Director and Khalid N. Sadiq Al-Hashmi, Assistant Undersecretary, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Qatar.

The parties discussed joint activities to create new global IT hub based on fostering cross-region technological collaboration.

Motkin invited Invest Qatar and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Qatar to take part in StrategEast's State and IT Eurasian Forum planned for November this year in Almaty..

### StrategEast joined efforts with the Omani Ministry to develop the local IT ecosystem



StrategEast President Anatoly Motkin met with Dr Ali Al-Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology at Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in Oman and his team.

The parties discussed prospects for cooperation between the ministry and StrategEast Center for a New Economy.

The teams of StrategEast and the Omani Ministry have started discussing the format of cooperation on the development of the IT ecosystem of Oman and the roadmap for joint work.

### Anatoly Motkin presented the modern concept of digital government solution at Oman's Digital Governance Forum



On May 23, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast delivered his remarks at the Oman's First Digital Governance Forum in Muscat, Oman.

Speaking on the Digital Transformation in the Government Sector, Mr. Motkin described the modern concept of the digital government solutions developed by EPAM Systems, which includes a human-centric government service model with the following main principles: customer's needs first, digital first government, contactless public services, inclusive government, unified digital portal, and cross-state agency partnership.

With regard to the components for creating a model digital government solution, Mr. Motkin mentioned a combination of user friendliness with a high level of cybersecurity as the path to building a sustainable e-government. In addition, when creating a platform, special attention should be paid to data governance with the main principles of data findability, data access and security, data quality across data lifecycle, and regulatory compliance.

The launch of a new e-governance solution is also a good opportunity to develop local IT talent.

Mr. Motkin shared his vast experience building solid digital ecosystems in Eurasian countries, and shared a case study of one of the most successful implementations of digital government solutions designed in Ukraine - the Diia ecosystem.

Event speakers also included Omani officials – Director General of Digital Transformation and Empowerment of Sectors – Ministry Transportation Communications and Information Technology, Undersecretary of Administrative and Finance & Planning Affairs Ministry of Health, Undersecretary for Public Prosecution, Undersecretary of Communication and Information Technology, and Ministry of Transport, Communication, and Information Technology.

## THE GULF

### StrategEast discussed digital economy development opportunities in Saudi Arabia



On July 5, 2023, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, visited a reception at the invitation of the Ambassador of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Michael Ratney, held in his residence in Riyadh.

The gathering was dedicated to discussing the results of the SelectUSA Summit and startup ecosystem tour.

The 2023 SelectUSA Investment Summit was the largest Investment Summit to date, with record levels of participation from over 4,900 attendees from 83 international markets and 55 states and territories, all gathering to take advantage of in-person networking and informative programming on key industry topics affecting the FDI community.

### Anatoly Motkin urged creating a digital bridge connecting the Gulf to Central Asia at COMEX Bahrain



## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

### StrategEast held a joint market-focused webinar, "Opportunities in Saudi Arabia - Vision 2030" with MMJS

**WEBINAR ON**

**Opportunities in Saudi Arabia for IT companies - Vision 2030**

**26<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

11:00 Tbilisi | 12:00 Tashkent  
13:00 Almaty

1.5 Hours

zoom

The Webinar will be held in English

**AGENDA**

- Exploring the Benefits of Establishing in KSA - Vision 2030
- 100% Foreign Shareholding Entrepreneur License
- Sector Startup Programs & Incubators
- Cloud Computing Special Economic Zone & Taxes overview

**SPEAKERS**

Anatoly Motkin  
President, StrategEast

Anas Salhieh  
Partner, KSA Tax

Maha Mishal  
Manager, Corporate Services

USAID IT PARK CARI astorica hub

On September 26, 2023, StrategEast, in collaboration with MMJS Consulting KSA, held a market-focused webinar "Opportunities in Saudi Arabia – Vision 2030", a session guide to Saudi Arabia's emerging digital economy.

The discussion examined insights on business incorporation, tax benefits, and eligibility criteria for a 100% Foreign Shareholding Entrepreneur License, as well as an overview of taxes in Saudi Arabia. Insights were provided by industry stalwarts Anatoly Motkin, President, StrategEast; Anas Salhieh, Partner – KSA Tax, MMJS Consulting; and Maha Mishal, Manager – Business Incorporation, MMJS Consulting.

On October 11, 2023, Anatoly Motkin delivered a speech at COMEX Bahrain, addressing the promising outlook of the IT sector in Central Asia and advocating for collaborative efforts to establish a digital bridge connecting the Gulf to Central Asia.

Mr. Motkin, StrategEast President, shared his insights and vision for the future of Bahrain's IT industry, aligned with the Economic Vision 2030.

In his address, he outlined a two-component approach to transforming Bahrain's IT landscape into a regional powerhouse.

First, attracting global engineering companies – within the next five years, StrategEast envisions the soft-landing of advanced and successful international engineering companies with a strong presence in Eurasia. This strategic move aims to facilitate the extensive development of local talent and the transfer of high-level global technological expertise. By fostering collaboration with these industry leaders, Bahrain can rapidly enhance its technological capabilities.

Another pivotal aspect of StrategEast's vision is the establishment of synergy between Bahrain's startup ecosystems and those in Central Asia and the Caucasus. This collaboration is designed to leverage the strengths and innovative potential of both regions, creating a fertile ground for entrepreneurial growth and digital transformation.

## THE GULF

### StrategEast organized high-level meetings for Eurasian IT sector leaders in Dubai



On October 16-17, 2023, StrategEast organized high-level Dubai-Eurasia digital ecosystem development meetings, bringing together the heads of IT parks in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and government officials from Georgia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan responsible for digital economy, in cooperation with the Government of Dubai, Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy, and Dubai World Trade Center.

On October 16, the delegation was hosted by the Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy for a visit, with participation from Saeed Al Gergawi, Vice President of Dubai Chamber of Digital Economy; Abdullah AlGaoud, Director DCDE; Maurice Tanas, Senior Manager DCDE; and Hans Larsen, Manager DCDE.

The meeting with Google in the Middle East & North Africa featured Olga Skorokhodova, Head of Russia and CIS, Government Affairs & Public Policy; and Poliana Geha, Manager, Emerging markets, Government Affairs & Public Policy, Google Cloud.

The meeting took place in Dubai, UAE, and provided a unique opportunity to explore GITEX Global, the world's largest Tech show, and Expand North Star, 2023's premier startup event. The event offered government-to-government and business-to-business meetings upon request, along with a pass covering GITEX GLOBAL's 10 co-located shows. Under Expand North Star, co-located shows feature Future Blockchain Summit, Fintech Surge, and Marketing Mania.

### StrategEast organized a working visit of Eurasian IT sector leaders to Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park



As part of its commitment to regional cooperation and digital transformation, StrategEast facilitated a productive meeting of IT sector leaders from Central Asia and the Caucasus on October 17 as part of the high-profile United Arab Emirates-Eurasia digital ecosystem development discussions, gathering prominent minds in the field.

The meeting provided an exclusive opportunity for IT sector leaders to engage with His Excellency Hussain Al Mahmoudi, CEO of the Sharjah Research Technology and Innovation Park (SRTIP), along with the accomplished SRTIP team. Together, they embarked on a profoundly insightful journey dedicated to advancing digital ecosystem development, a subject of paramount importance on the contemporary tech landscape.

## OTHER REGIONS

### StrategEast hosted a webinar for LATAM on ways of fostering IT industry development



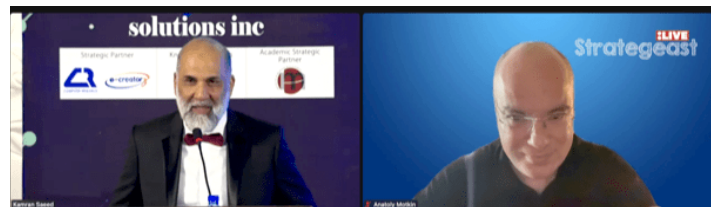
On February 15, StrategEast hosted a webinar on "How to Make LatAm a Global IT Hub based on the Eurasian Experience". The central topic of the discussion was the development of the IT industry as a driving force for economic development and a social game-changer.

Over the last few years, many countries in Latin America have been making efforts to develop the local IT Industry. Now, with the Russian-Ukrainian war in the background, Latin America has a unique opportunity to attract a vast number of American engineering companies that are currently widely presented in Eurasia. Generally speaking, by working systematically, Latin America has the potential to become a new global IT Hub.

The event hosted prominent speakers Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast; and Arkadiy Dobkin, CEO & Co-Founder, EPAM Systems; Jesse Torres, CEO & Founder, Prime B2B took part in the panel discussion. Fabrizio Operti, Manager of the Integration and Trade Sector, Inter-American Development Bank, moderated the event.

The webinar was attended by the representatives of trade promotion organizations responsible for digital services export promotion operations from Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

### The President of StrategEast delivered a keynote speech at the Pakistan CIO Summit and EXPO in Karachi



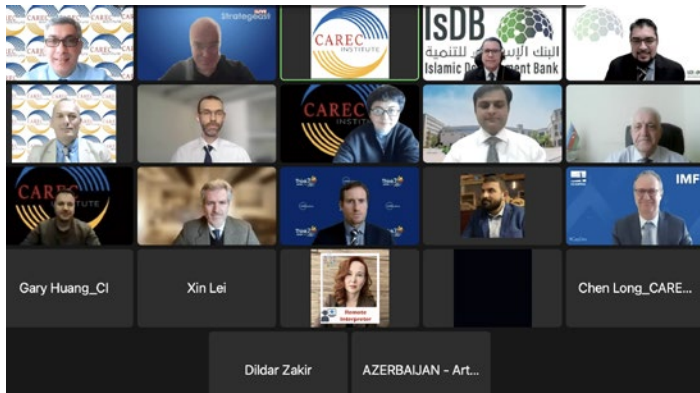
StrategEast participated in the Pakistan CIO Summit held on March 7 in Karachi. In particular, the Center facilitated international panelists' participation: Tamar Kitiashvili, Director General, Vocational Skills Agency, Georgia; Andrew Wrobel, Founding Partner, Head of Education & Research, Emerging Europe, UK; and Sam Rapley, Senior VP of Engineering & Delivery, Ciklum, UK.

In addition, Anatoly Motkin, StrategEast President, delivered a keynote speech moderated by Veqar Ul Islam, Chief Executive at JBS – Jaffer Business Systems.

## OTHER REGIONS

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

### StrategEast took part at the online discussion with CAREC Institute's report on Digital FDI Ecosystem presentation



Speaking at the webinar Digital CAREC Virtual Policy Dialogue: Digital FDI Ecosystem, Anatoly Motkin, StrategEast President, offered his views on policy recommendations aimed at attracting investment in the digital economy and how cross-regional collaboration fosters ecosystem growth.

Mr. Motkin shared what has to be done to attract leading international IT companies to the CAREC countries to speed up regional integration, address the lack of digital skills, foster investment in the tech sector, and raise venture capital.

By addressing these issues, the CAREC region would attract more foreign direct investment and foster inclusive growth.

An open dialogue session featured distinguished speakers – Norbert Funke, Director, IMF, CCAMTAC; Soo Hyun Kim, Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP; Mikhail Bunchuk, Senior Digital Development Specialist, the World Bank, Central Asia Regional Office; John Beirne, Vice-Chair of Research and Senior Research Fellow, ADBI; Syed Hassan Alsagoff, Manager of Science, Technology and Innovation Division at Cooperation and Capacity Development Department at the Islamic Development Bank; Imed Drine Alsagoff, Lead Economist for MENA and Europe at the Islamic Development Bank.

The discussion was moderated by Ayoob Ayoobi, chief of Capacity Building Division, CAREC Institute.

### StrategEast discussed collaboration opportunities with the Islamic Development Bank

Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, met at the Islamic Development Bank headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia with Kadir Basboga, Senior at Country Strategy and Cooperation Department; Imed Drine, Lead Economist for MENA and Europe at the Bank, and Syed Hassan Alsagoff, Manager of Science, Technology, and Innovation Division within the Cooperation and Capacity Development Department.

During the meeting, they discussed collaboration opportunities including joint regional projects in Central Asia aimed at scaling up the region's knowledge driven economy.

### StrategEast's President proposed key strategies at IsDB Digital Inclusion



Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, presented proposals during his participation in the 3rd IsDB Digital Inclusion Technical Working Group (IDITWG) meeting, which was held in Jakarta, Indonesia on October 20, 2023.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Digital Transformation Summit 2023 Jakarta, a collaborative event co-organized by the Ministry of Communications and Informatics of the Republic of Indonesia, along with various government entities and private sector representatives. It marked a significant occasion as the IsDB launched its new Digital Inclusion Strategic Partnership Program (DISPP), aimed at supporting and accelerating the execution of the Bank's Digital Inclusion Strategy for 2024-2027 across six countries. This program includes pilot initiatives with international organizations, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), and United Nations agencies.

Mr. Motkin suggested key additions to the IsDB's Digital Inclusion Strategy for the upcoming years. His proposals encompassed a range of initiatives, including the incorporation of regional educational programs and cooperation with universities, global educational collaborations, the promotion of regional and transnational partnerships, and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and startup ecosystem. These recommendations hold the potential to reshape the digital inclusion landscape and contribute to sustainable development across the regions under IsDB's purview.





## OTHER REGIONS

## FOSTERING IT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

## Anatoly Motkin took part in a discussion on the social impact of AI and ChatGPT



On April 17, Anatoly Motkin delivered a speech at a session on the social impact of AI and ChatGPT, organized by CxO Global Forum, a major Pakistani industrial think tank, and Engro, the premier Pakistani enterprise with a global reach.

As AI continues to transform industries and shape our daily lives, it is critical that we consider its impact on society as a whole. In this session, the speakers explored the ways in which AI can be used to create a positive social impact, as well as the potential risks and challenges that come with its use.

In his speech, Mr. Motkin underlined some of the most significant social impacts of AI, and considered the ways to ensure that the benefits of AI are shared fairly across society. Most importantly, he discussed the role government and other stakeholders can play in shaping the development and use of AI and digital technologies as a whole for the benefit of societies.

The panelists included Azhar Nawaz, Group CIO, Engro; Jean-Pierre Auffret, Director, Research Partnerships, George Mason University, US; Shaukat Ali Khan, Global CIO, Aga Khan University; and Taruni Ramamurthi, Head of Emerging Markets (Asia), Amazon Web Services.

## Anatoly Motkin shared insights at the Asian Practice Showcase Workshop



On November 6, Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, presented cross-region opportunities for IT industry development in Eurasia at the Asian Practice Showcase session, as part of a hybrid event held in Seoul and online. The workshop, which was organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), aimed to promote advisory services on digital transformation.

Anatoly Motkin shared his insights on digital transformation and its impact on Eurasia, emphasizing the potential for innovative solutions to drive economic growth and development in the region. Mr. Motkin highlighted the significance of regional collaboration and digital innovation in addressing complex challenges.

The session, which featured distinguished speakers from various parts of Asia, offered attendees a comprehensive perspective on the current state and future prospects of digital technology in the region. The discussion covered a wide range of topics, with a special emphasis on the role of the digital technology in fostering prosperity, inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability across Asia and the Pacific.

The event was moderated by Arndt Husar, a representative from the ADB's Digital Technology for Development Division. The discussion included speakers from China, India, Kazakhstan, and Malaysia: Yutian Zheng, Global Relations Project Director at TusStar Business Incubator; Anish Anthony, Chief Delivery Officer at T-Hub; Madi Tazhikenov, Director of International Relations and Investment Office at Astana Hub; and Ahmad "Ash" Kashfi, SVP of Ecosystem Development at Cradle Fund.

# Global Minds Initiative Advisory Board



**Giorgi Alexidze**  
CEO, NewAge

CEO and co-founder of Newage, the product-led IT company based in Ukraine. With a Degree in Computer Software Engineering from Georgian Technical University and over a decade's worth experience as a CTO and CIO in technology companies, Giorgi brings an in-depth perspective on the way technology impacts the world today. By applying his technical and managerial experience in the workplace, Giorgi has been instrumental in developing SaaS products with a global reach.



**Dr. Gregory Asmolov**  
Lecturer in Digital Entrepreneurship and Marketing Department of Digital Humanities, King's College London

Gregory Asmolov is a Lecturer on Digital Entrepreneurship and Marketing at the Department of Digital Humanities at King's College London. His work focuses on how information technologies, specifically social media and crowdsourcing platforms, constitute the role of individual users and crowds in crisis situations. His current research explores how digital platforms change the everyday lives of users who are located far away from a conflict zone, and how information technologies contribute to their users' participation in warfare. His additional research interests include disinformation and social polarization and the role of digital networks in the emergence of alternative socio-political spaces. He holds a BA in Communication and International Affairs from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, an MA in Global Communication from George Washington University, and PhD in Media and Communications from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).



**Dastan Dogoev**  
Former Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic

Dastan Dogoev began his career as a functional specialist at Freebalance Inc., a Canadian Government ERP software company. Mr. Dogoev then began his career as a civil servant, working as the Deputy Chairman and later Chairman of the State Registration Agency, Digital Development Advisor to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Director of the "Digital Central Asia-South Asia" project funded by the World Bank, and Chairman of the State Committee of IT and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic. Prior to these appointments, he was the ICT Development Director of state-owned company Info-Systema under the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mr. Dogoev earned an MPA from Harvard Kennedy School and holds a BA (Hons) in Corporate Strategic Management from Kingston University London.



**Arkadiy Dobkin**  
President of EPAM Systems

Mr. Dobkin is the principal founder, CEO, and President of EPAM Systems. Under his direction, EPAM has grown to become one of the world's leading software and product engineering services companies.

For the past 20 years, Mr. Dobkin has been increasingly recognized as an instrumental force in bringing the vast software talent pool of the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe to the international business community. In 2015, Mr. Dobkin was inducted into the Ernst & Young World Entrepreneur of the Year Academy and the Elite Entrepreneur of the Year Hall of Fame. Mr. Dobkin holds an MS in Electrical Engineering from Belarusian National Technical University.



**Talmon Marco**  
Co-founder of Viber and Juno

Talmon Marco is the founder of Viber, a proprietary cross-platform instant messaging VoIP application for smartphones with over 400 million users, and Juno, a ride-sharing service.

In 1995, Mr. Marco co-founded Nortex Software, a Civil Engineering software developer. In 1997, he co-founded Expand Networks, a privately held venture, and the current world leader in Application Traffic Management. Mr. Marco served as the President of Expand Networks until 2004.



## Prosser Stirling

**Prosser Stirling has over 30 years of experience in Government Affairs and International Relations with Oracle, DEC, and IBM.**



## Christopher Burry

**Co-founder and Co-CEO, US Market Access Center Inc. Global Ambassador, UC Berkeley Sutardja Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology**

Christopher Burry has over 30 years of experience in the technology industry and as a serial entrepreneur. His background covers Enterprise Architecture, software development, infrastructure technologies, operating systems, methodology development, and IT operations. As an entrepreneur, Mr. Burry has founded multiple companies in the software and services sectors. He has served as a coach and mentor to entrepreneurs since 2005.

In addition to his work at UC Berkeley, Mr. Burry is currently the co-CEO at the US Market Access Center. Over the last 10 years, he has trained and mentored well over 2,500 startups in over 40 countries. USMAC's alumni have raised over \$2.5B in capital and collectively are worth in excess of \$8B USD.

While at USMAC, Mr. Burry has led the company's engagement with the Bangladeshi Ecosystem. In 1999, he co-founded Avanade (a Joint Venture between Accenture and Microsoft). During his first two years at Avanade, Mr. Burry led the team that opened offices in 15 cities in 12 countries. At the time of his departure in 2009, the company had reached almost USD \$1B in revenue. Today, Avanade is a wholly owned subsidiary of Accenture with revenue in excess of \$4B USD. Mr. Burry has personally led entrepreneurial training and market entry programs in more than 40 countries including Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, France, Italy, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Georgia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.



## Sergey Tokarev

**IT entrepreneur, Founding Partner of Roosh**

Entrepreneurial talent and investor flair have helped Sergey create more than 30 companies and make more than 100 profitable investments in projects worldwide. His investment portfolio includes such well-known names as Reface, Oura, Deel, Facemoji, and many others. Twenty years of experience in technology also helped him achieve these results. Before switching to investing, Sergey tried many roles: from a call center operator to managing positions in large companies.

Sergey graduated from Moscow University for the Humanities with a degree in Management. He also studied at the University of Malta.



## Valery Vavilov

**Chief Vision Officer, founder and Chairman of the Bitfury Group**

Valery Vavilov is the Chief Vision Officer, founder, and Chairman of the Bitfury Group – the world's leading emerging technologies company. Valery's entrepreneurial experience and passion for blockchain led him to found the company in 2011, when blockchain was just beginning to capture the world's attention and imagination. Under his leadership, the company has expanded its focus to provide custom-designed software and advanced hardware in cryptocurrency, blockchain, and artificial intelligence. Prior to founding Bitfury, Valery spent more than 15 years in a variety of technical and leadership positions.

He received his M.S. degree in Computer Science from Riga's Transport & Telecommunication University in Latvia and completed the Stanford Executive Program at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business. Among other leadership initiatives, he is a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Fourth Industrial Revolution Council on Blockchain.

# Reports and Analytics



## The Billion in the Distance: Central Asian IT Exports and Strategies for Growing Them

StrategEast issued the first regional report and policy recommendations, “The Billion in the Distance: Central Asian IT Exports and Strategies for Growing Them”, prepared with the support of USAID and the EBRD.

We wrote this report to examine how the export-oriented IT sector has been developing across all five Central Asian countries, where it stands today, and what might lie ahead. What are the export volumes? What have been the growth rates, and what is driving this growth? What has already been done, and what else could be done? In other words, what is the big picture as the region’s export-oriented IT sector begins to come into its own, with single-digit millions of exports turning into tens, hundreds, and eventually, perhaps, billions and beyond?

To answer these and other questions, we combed through numerous data sources and, most importantly, talked to more than 40 experts from every country in the region, including government officials, policy experts, and CEOs and senior managers of the largest global IT companies operating in Central Asia, as well as local tech entrepreneurs.

The result of this work is the first in-depth study to examine the Central Asian region’s export-oriented IT sector as a whole. The report’s analysis and recommendations will help country governments, international development agencies, financial institutions, and global and local IT players find the right tools to grow an export-oriented IT industry in the Central Asian region. These tools will be helpful for developing country and regional strategies by all the stakeholders listed here.



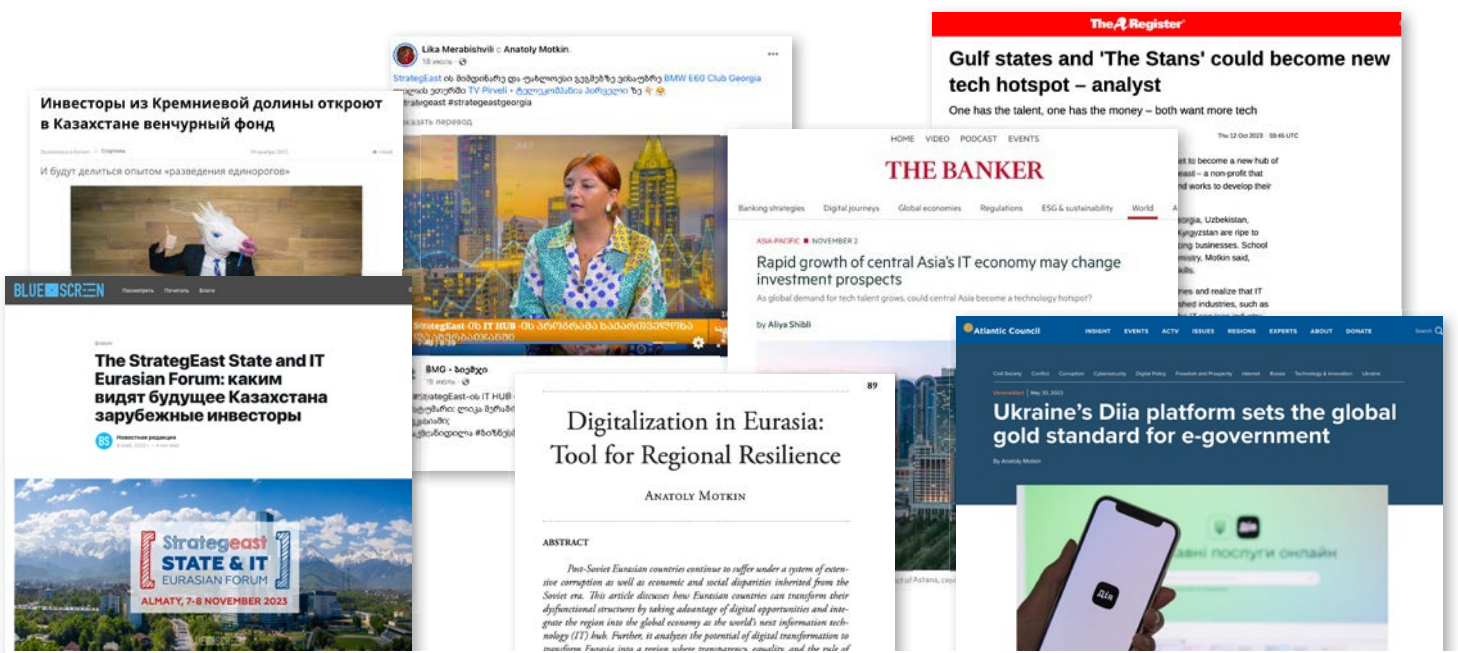
## StrategEast Westernization Report 2023

StrategEast has released its flagship bi-annual Westernization Report 2023, in which experts from Eurasian and Baltic countries describe the most important political and economic events that occurred in the post-Soviet region over the last year.

The experts analyzed the events that will most likely have an impact on the degree of Westernization in their respective countries, and singled out the main circumstance affecting almost all of the countries that gained or restored their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The prior year, 2022, was overshadowed by a singular event, which dominated nearly all of our experts’ analytical materials - the war unleashed by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which reverberated throughout the entire region. The report identifies the consequences of recent global events and their impact on Westernization in the post-Soviet space.

# Media Outreach



Throughout the past year, media outreach efforts have successfully positioned StrategEast and Anatoly Motkin as thought leaders in the realms of digital transformation, technology hubs, and regional economic development.

Anatoly Motkin, President of StrategEast, and the organization have been actively engaging with various media outlets, contributing thought leadership on critical topics. Here's a recap of recent media coverage and engagements

**The Atlantic Council Ukraine Alert:** In a blog post, Motkin urges Ukraine to embrace a digital transformation strategy for economic recovery, emphasizing the nation's potential to reinvent itself in the post-war era. He highlights the IT sector's pivotal role in meeting upcoming challenges.

**The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs:** Motkin contributes an article discussing how Eurasian countries can leverage digital opportunities for structural transformation, positioning the region as the next global IT hub. He emphasizes the potential of digital transformation to instill transparency, equality, and the rule of law.

**The Register Interview:** Motkin discusses the potential for Gulf states and countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus to become new tech hotspots. He explores the region's appeal to Gulf States seeking digital economies and shares insights on budding tech talent.

**The Banker Interview:** Motkin shares insights on how digital technologies are reshaping competition dynamics and geopolitical balances, even in Central Asia. He anticipates the region's emergence as a new technological hub, drawing investment from multilateral banks.

**Economichna Pravda Article:** Motkin emphasizes the short-term need for closer interaction between Ukraine and the countries of the Persian Gulf to significantly increase revenue and investments in Ukraine's IT market. This aligns with StrategEast's focus on promoting digital ecosystem investments.

TV Appearances by Lika Merabishvili, Regional Director for the Caucasus at StrategEast:

- Formula TV's "Sheni Dila" (Your Morning) Show: Discussing the StrategEast IT Hub program's potential to prevent brain drain from Georgia.
- Women's Narrative TV Show on BMG: Delving into IT talent development in Georgia and the IT HUB project.
- Midday Program on Euronews Georgia: Sharing tips on acquiring an IT profession from scratch.
- "Meetup: Meta Solutions for Business Growth" on Euronews Georgia: Discussing key topics for the development of the Georgian digital market.
- TV Trialeti Interview: Lika Merabishvili provides tips on becoming an IT professional free of charge for young Georgians.
- Radio Fortuna Interview: Lika Merabishvili discusses IT Hub development and other StrategEast projects in Georgia.
- StrategEast State and IT Eurasian Forum Coverage. This forum, held in Almaty, gained extensive media attention:
- Forbes Kazakhstan covered the announcement of a venture fund and potential \$1 billion IT exports.
- Blue Screen explored international investors' perspectives on Kazakhstan's future and export potential.
- Digital Business provided a comprehensive overview of key insights from the forum.
- MENAFN covered the exchange of e-government experience between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.
- Trend.Az highlighted the forum's impact on the IT sector, emphasizing its significance in business and technology.

# Our plans



In 2024, StrategEast is launching a joint program with Microsoft for Startups. Microsoft for Startups Founders Hub helps startups radically accelerate innovation by providing access to industry-leading AI services, expert guidance, and the essential technology needed to build a future-proofed startup.



CAPITOL HILL

A group of Ukraine's most prominent IT entrepreneurs will join the StrategEast delegation in Washington for an internship. Entrepreneurs will get acquainted with the work of public and private sector institutions and present the most successful IT projects in Ukraine to American policymakers and think tanks.



The joint program with Oracle Academy will upskill professors from dozens of universities in Eurasia, as well as help these universities bring their technology curriculum in line with global technology industry standards. Oracle Academy provides educational institutions with the resources they need to help educators develop core computing knowledge and skills aligned with industry standards and using current technologies so they can teach students the skills they need to succeed.



In 2023, StrategEast successfully presented 15 startups from Eurasia at BIBAN 2023 - the key startup tech event in Saudi Arabia. Participation in the forum helped Eurasian startups attract new investments from the Gulf countries. In 2024, a representative delegation of 50 startups from all countries of Eurasia will take part in BIBAN together with StrategEast.



With support of StrategEast, IT companies from Eurasia will be represented at major events in the Gulf, including WebSummit in Doha, Qatar and the Gitex Forum in the Emirates. A delegation of 10 U.S. companies with a presence in Central Asia will travel to Doha to negotiate the placement of orders from the Gulf countries in Central Asia.



# About StrategEast

StrategEast is a leading independent institution working to develop the Eurasia's digital economy, in collaboration with international financial institutions, development agencies, global tech companies, and Eurasian governments.

StrategEast is a non profit organization with offices in the United States, Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

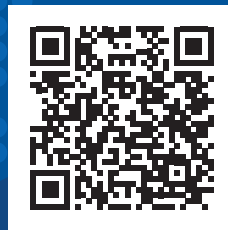


Photo credits: StrategEast press service

© 2023 StrategEast  
All rights reserved

StrategEast  
1900 K Street, NW  
Washington, D. C., 20006, USA  
office@strategeast.org  
www.StrategEast.org