**Springboard exceeded its goals**

**The Central Baltic Springboard joint project with Riga, Tallinn and Turku is coming to an end. During the last two years there has been cross-border mentoring, meetings, and exchanging of ideas to give dozens of start-ups a new platform for accelerating their growth. The results indicate that the goals set were achieved.**

The Central Baltic Springboard project started in late 2015. The consortium included a university and a developer organisation from the cities of Turku, Tallinn and Riga, six partners in total. The partners from Latvia were Riga Technical University and Latvia Technology park.

”81 teams with 179 team members in three cities participated in the project. We supported the creation of a total of 18 registered cross-border co-operative companies, four of which were joint companies. These numbers show that we succeeded in increasing the cross-border collaboration of start-ups and business development organisations in Turku, Tallinn and Riga”, says Project Manager Johanna Puhtila from Turku Science Park Ltd, the lead partner of the project.

Local markets in Finland, Estonia and Latvia are limited and the idea of a start-up is to be scalable.

“There is need for global thinking, international networking and encouragement for developing a business to make it internationally successful. That’s why we set up this international project and applied for financing from the EU’s Central Baltic Programme**. As the project is now close to completion, it’s great to see that the participants made the most of it. We had a total of 81 teams in three 10-week programmes. And there were more interested companies for each programme than we could accept”, Johanna Puhtila says.**

According to **Ville Nikola**, CEO of the Finnish start-up Grail Group Ltd, the programme helped his team to expand the network of contacts. He says that the most valuable thing for him was international mentors giving him the courage to change his idea and urging him to make a true effort to realise his dream.

For early-stage companies, the programme offered help in finding the right B2B contacts.

“It was particularly great to see how the teams collaborated to help each other. One team had more know-how in programming, another in communications and marketing. There were even teams that recruited a new member from a team that did not take off this time”, Johanna Puhtila points out.

**FACTS AND FIGURES:**

* Project started in November 2015
* Three joint accelerator programmes in Riga, Tallinn and Turku with a total of
  + 81 start-up teams/companies (goal 45–90)
  + 179 team members (goal 150)
  + 18 registered co-operative companies (goal 15)
  + of which 4 joint companies (goal 2–4)
* **Funded by** the Central Baltic Programme 2014–2020
* Partners
  + Turku: [University of Turku](http://www.utu.fi) and [Turku Science Park Ltd](http://www.turkusciencepark.com/)
  + Tallinn: [Tallinn University of Technology](http://www.ttu.ee/en) and [Tallinn Science Park Tehnopol](http://www.tehnopol.ee/)
  + Riga: [Riga Technical University](http://www.rtu.lv/en/) and Latvia Technology Park