



# Focus on ITEA's Country focus

50 editions of collaboration and innovation across borders



**For 50 editions, the 'Country focus' in the ITEA Magazine has explored how countries support their (software) industries and promote innovation.**

**Through interviews with Public Authorities, we have learned more about their priorities and how ITEA plays a critical role in helping countries to achieve their goals.**

**As we publish this celebrative edition of the ITEA Magazine, it's the perfect moment to look back at some trends and highlights that were shared over the years.**



## Building awareness and connectivity

At the start of the ITEA Magazine, from 2008 to around 2012, the 'Country focus' articles often highlighted how countries started to embrace the transformative potential of software innovation. "IT crops up in virtually every area," one Public Authority noted, underscoring the universal impact of software on diverse industries.

Countries recognised that (international) collaboration was key, and ITEA emerged as an important platform for connecting stakeholders across borders. "Key benefits of participating in ITEA include increased productivity, competitiveness and wealth; the ability to participate with large European companies and involvement in collaborative R&D with other SMEs, academic institutions and large organisations – something not normally possible for a small SME."

Although ITEA started a decade earlier, awareness still needed to grow in several countries. "We are on a mission to make people aware of the potential for collaborations across Europe – and beyond." These early efforts laid the groundwork for countries to leverage ITEA's network and services.

## Expanding horizons

From 2013, the countries' emphasis shifted from foundational infrastructure to ambitious technological advancements. This period marked a clear shift towards digitalisation and a focus



on specific sectors heavily dependent on ICT. The importance of SMEs and international collaboration was increasingly emphasised. "The ITEA framework and the ITEA family provide a good environment for SMEs to begin or to broaden their cross-border research cooperation."

Several countries also frequently credited ITEA's bottom-up approach for fostering impactful projects tailored to market needs.

### **Emergence of AI, data and sustainability**

The period of 2018-2024 saw the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), big data, quantum computing, cybersecurity, 5G and a focus on sustainability, and these technologies were seen as key drivers of transformation. Countries recognised that software was integrated across all sectors.

The focus shifted towards leveraging digitalisation to address broader societal challenges. "The things we are striving to achieve, such as prosperity, wellbeing and quality of life, must be realised not only together but in a sustainable way. That's where the technological innovations that are produced in programmes like ITEA can ensure that our production, farming, healthcare, energy supply and other key aspects of life are affordable and sustainable. And in all these areas we are seeing how innovations like digitalisation and artificial intelligence are helping to overcome our societal challenges," another Public Authority summarised.

### **ITEA's importance**

A consistent story throughout the Country Focus articles has been ITEA's unique ability to align national priorities with international collaboration. ITEA empowers governments to amplify their innovation strategies. From advancing digitalisation

initiatives to fostering pioneering research, ITEA provides the structure to translate national goals into international success stories. "ITEA projects are well suited to achieve fast exploitation of research results. Funding of such projects is a meaningful complement to our national research strategy. Synergies emerging from fruitful collaborations create an added value for all project partners in their own countries."

Thanks to its focus on business needs, its ability to create true international collaboration and to attract and support industry, academia and SMEs, mostly globally, ITEA has significantly contributed to shaping software innovation in Europe and beyond. As we celebrate this golden milestone, it is clear that ITEA has been more than just a facilitator – it has been a catalyst for transformation.

### **Looking ahead**

Although this milestone also marks the end of the ITEA Magazine, ITEA will make sure to continue its story with the same enthusiasm, dedication and effectiveness as it has shown over all these past years. Together with the Public Authorities, the project partners and ITEA Bodies, we will continue to make the world a better place through software innovation!

