



## Disrupt Startup Malta. Part 1: Becoming a leader in innovation – vision and building blocks



On 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 one of the first international start-up conferences took place in Malta. The conference was organized by the [MCA](#), in collaboration with [TAKEOFF business incubator](#) and [Start-UP weekend Malta](#). The aim of the conference and roundtables was to “bring entrepreneurs, investors and policy makers together” to discuss future of Malta and it’s place in world economy driven by innovation.

Parliamentary secretary of Competitiveness and Economic Growth [Hon Jose Herrera MP](#) in his opening speech stressed that in Malta there is a need “to transform the Maltese economy into a home for innovation specialists, those that are best positioned to build tomorrow’s technologies”. In order to reach this goal Maltese Government has to “ensure that the economy encourages and facilitates investment” and make “economy attractive for those wanting to innovate within European markets”.



*Parliamentary secretary of Competitiveness and Economic Growth Hon Jose Herrera MP*

*In his turn [Mr Bernard Agius](#), Business Innovation and Development Manager at MCA, recognized the disruptive effect on traditional business models and that Malta need not see such disruption as a risk, but also as an economic opportunity. He argued that the Authority was “all ears” and ready to contribute to facilitate innovation.*

***Conference speakers and guests shared ideas on a ways, how Malta can achieve its’ goals and become a truly innovations island.***



**Mike Reiner** (Business Development Venture Capital in EMEA, Amazon AWS) explained that in order to form a successful innovation eco-system first of all a country has to have all the required “building blocks: government support, talent, mentors, angels, VCs, early adopters and customers”. But once blocks are in place it is important to “create outstanding experience”, “tell the story about entrepreneurship”.

## **How to get your story “out there”?**

Role models – “inspirational public figures, that can promote your country”

Success stories that “put a country on the map”

Examples to learn from: [Startup Chile](#), [Tech City UK](#)



**Mike Reiner at Disrupt Startup Malta, 17 July 2015**





*Mike suggested also to take a look at what Estonia had done in order to become known all over the world as one of innovation leaders. Being nearly as small as Malta, Estonia placed a bet on specialization and made its case in the space of cyber security and E-Government.*

## ***The way for Malta is finding its niche and spread its story far beyond the island.***

*Giovanni Natella (Co-founder of Pirate Roaming) supported Mike's ideas, specifying that it's not all about "individual start-ups in Malta, people should know about industries". One can "innovate in any industry, if Malta is good in tourism – innovate here", Malta should "choose it's own path".*



*Simon Azzopardi, Mike Reiner, Dave Haynes, Angelika Lattner, Giovanni Natella*



## ***How Malta can create right eco-system, collect all building blocks to become attractive in the eyes of entrepreneurs and investors?***

*Mike Reiner suggested that in order to form a pool of talents on the island, education system, especially in such areas as entrepreneurship should be changed, so that graduates would possess not only theoretical knowledge, but real-life experience in building companies.*



**Andrei-Andy Linnas, Disrupt Startup Malta**

**Andrei-Andy Linnas** (Takeoff business incubator manager in Malta) added that there is also room for development in the social sphere, he said “it’s important to have a transparent social contract, where all parties are on the same page and agree to contribute to the development of the community, not just think about monetary gain”, he added that society has to learn how to “tolerate



*failure” and relate to it as “education and experience”, there should be “mutual help and understanding” within all parties of the community.*

*In his thoughtful and rich on facts presentation “Malta’s role in a global start-up world” **Reinhold Karner** (Multinational entrepreneur and investor) looked into the future where technology revolutionises all areas of our lives like never before. In this future he sees a place for Malta, that historically proved itself to be “master of transformation”. He pointed out that Malta has to use it’s smallness and turn it into advantage – because it gives an opportunity to be very fast, flexible and adaptive.*

## **What are the key activities that will bring Malta to success?**



*Reinhold Karner, Disrupt Statup Malta*



As a closing note Mr Karner summarised a lot of ideas shared during the conference and pointed out key activities that would bring Malta to success:

- Becoming better by being different
- Encouraging entrepreneurship and becoming “a magnet for talented people”
- Creating an outstanding start-up environment
- Promoting the country
- Taking part in multinational clusters
- Forming hybrid investment pool
- Focusing on digital business

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