



ISFAHAN REGIONAL CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY
INCUBATORS & SCIENCE PARKS DEVELOPMENT
(UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO)

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LATEST ACTIVITIES ON SCIENCE PARK
AND INCUBATOR DEVELOPMENT AND
NETWORKING IN THE REGION

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Positive feedback from UNESCO on the Evaluation of IRIS

IRIS has been under the auspices of UNESCO since 2010. This periodic agreement with ISTT as its host was initially extended for 6 years and its continuation was subjected to further performance evaluations at the end of its duration. With the expiration of the initial agreement period, UNESCO's team of experts conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the institutes past performance and determined the scope of its activity and affectability. In the report presented at the 197th session of the UNESCO's executive board, the review team concluded that "IRIS has conducted various activities to support UNESCO's programs and activities in promoting a culture of innovation" and recommended that UNESCO renew the agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the continuation of IRIS as a category II center under the auspices of UNESCO.

On the basis of the initial signed agreement between UNESCO and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the main emphasis of work of the center would be on facilitating the integration of developmental approach into science, technology, and innovation, organizing capacity building, providing policy advice, facilitating the exchange of experience and best practices, and conducting research and problem solving in science park and technology incubator development. The initial focus of this would be on issues related in the Economic Cooperation Organization: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan, but it may have broader potential and take an international lead with time.

The overall goal of the center is to increase capacity for the governance of Science and Technology Parks throughout developing countries by:

Conducting capacity building activities, Providing technical assistance, Facilitating knowledge transfers, supporting research, Networking, and Information exchange and dissemination.

With this in mind the evaluation concluded that "IRIS has conducted various activities to promote a culture of innovation. The importance of IRIS's work is reflected in the strong support that IRIS has received from the Government of Iran. IRIS has also significantly contributed to UNESCO's program activities in assisting UNESCO's member states in the development of Science parks and Technology Incubators. In this regard, the center has conducted more than 40 training workshops, provided technical assistance and annually organized the Sheikh Baha'i Technopreneurship Festival. Over the last five years, the center has trained more than 550 individuals. In addition, the center has been very active in the propagation of science, technology and innovation for sustainable developments".

The review team recommended that UNESCO renew

the agreement and also encouraged UNESCO to provide greater support to IRIS in relation to developing, presenting and delivering innovative training programs and workshops. In light of the satisfactory evaluation, the director general recommended the granting of the status of a category II center to IRIS.



Visitors to IRIS :

IRIS has been the host to many International Visitors and has hosted several workshops with international participation.

IRIS has been host to many international delegations coming to Iran, and has also been the host and organizer of several workshops with global participation.

Here are but a few of the names amongst the many International delegations whom have recently visited IRIS;

Several delegations from Germany; including a delegation of Industry Officials from the Bremen region, and another consisting of the managers of the different German Provincial Chambers of Commerce , and also one from the Cyber Forum Consortium and the University of Karlsruhe in the Baden-Wurttemberg region have come to IRIS.

Apart from Germany, IRIS has been host to a delegation from Finland which included Finland's Under Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and also the Ambassador of Finland to Iran.

A delegation from the London School of Economics came to IRIS under the recommendation of the Director of UNESCO's Tehran Cluster. The director also recommended visiting IRIS to a special UN envoy for the development of Trade and Commerce (UNCTAD).

A group of representatives from Hong Kong's Trade Development Council came to IRIS in the hopes to further develop relations and commerce with the parks in the region and their settled SME's (especially in Iran) .

Other representatives of various institutes and companies around the world including representatives from the BSL company of the Netherlands, professors from the American University of Stanford , the Senegalese Ambassador , the Secretary General of the Pakistani Scientific Academy , Georgian Director of Customs at Tiflis.

Apart from it's many visitors, IRIS organized several workshops with international professors.

--Workshop with Dr. Rainer Hasenauer, professor of Vienna University of Economics and Business, on "Marketing of High-Tech Products".

—Workshop with Dr. Oliver Yu, president and CEO of STARS Group and also consulting associate professor of Stanford University, on ' Technology Portfolio Planning''

—Workshop with Mr. Enayati, CPA/CFO & Co-Founder of Eiger International Financial Management company on "Raising Capital for Your Business; Explore Effective Options & Craft A Successful Strategy "



The Collaboration of IRIS and IPM:

An Orientation Tour of Oman's leading Innovation Park (Innovation park of Masqat), and International Companies tailored to ISTT's settled SME's

A specialized delegation of Iranian companies active in different research and development fields attended a technopreneurial orientation tour to the Sultanate of Oman in cooperation with Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT), and the Innovation Park of Muscat (IPM), which is an initiative of the Omani Research Council (TRC). IPM's main focuses of activity were in Health and Medical Sciences, Water and the Environment, Food and Agriculture, and Biotechnology and Renewable Energies. With respect to the Omani areas of specialty and with the assistance of ISTT, IRIS gathered a group of 15 persons working in similar fields at ISTT to participate in the orientation tour in the hope to establish future collaborations and close working ties between similar SMEs. During this trip, many sessions were held between the members of the two parks in which the two parties negotiated about mutually beneficial opportunities for collaborations.

The orientation tour included;

- A Visit to IPM to meet and negotiate with its managers.
- A Visit with high ranking officials of TRC.
- A Meeting with a number of private Omani companies active in similar fields of the accompanying Iranian members.

The first day of the Tour started with a presentation delivered by Dr. Abdulbaqi bin Ali Al Khabouri, the director of Science Parks at TRC. The presentation highlighted the available facilities and investment opportunities of the four key areas of interest at Muscat's Innovation Park. The main focus of Al Khabouri's presentation was on the investment opportunities available at IPM where he elaborated on how to ease the way for joint investment and economic cooperation between the Sultanate and Iran.



This presentation was followed by a presentation by Faisal bin Ali Al Hinai, the head of Promotion and Industrial Investments Department at the Public Authority for Investment Promotion and Export Development (Ithraa), on Oman's economic growth, urban development, and prosperity reflected in the tourism and advanced infrastructure of the Sultanate, especially in the past few years following the beginning of the Renaissance Age of Oman. Mr. Al Hinai went on to point out reasons and incentives for investing in Oman, which include the ease of doing business, a five-year tax exemption, and 100 per cent foreign ownership in free zones.

He also introduced key investment areas and various economic clusters suitable for the consideration of IRIS.

Dr Mohammad Javad Omidi, the Director of IRIS then went on to address the room on the availability of means and opportunity to build bridges of cooperation, and open joint channels between Oman and Iran. He also stressed on the importance of the use of the regional knowledge-based economy through IRIS and IPM.

Ms Yazdian, the Director of International Affairs at IRIS later went on to give a lecture on ISTT's activities and to introduce the companies present in the delegation.



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The companies participating in the tour took the time to introduce their identities and the nature of the activities they practice in addition to explaining the economic feasibility of their potential for bilateral collaboration, and upcoming plans of joint cooperation. The first day of the tour concluded with a visit to the corridors of IPM, and a look through the divisions and contents of the innovation building, visiting the entertainment centre, the work-shops, and the manufacturing building, and finally concluding the visit with a stop at the Sultan Qaboos University.



On the second day, the delegation gathered by IRIS participated in a meeting with the officials of IPM in the presence of H.H. Sayyid Dr Fahad bin Julanda al Said, assistant secretary general for innovation development, and a number of TRC representatives to explore potential collaborative opportunities.

The meeting began with Dr Hilal bin Ali al Hinai, secretary general of TRC introducing the National Research Strategy and also the various projects and research programs offered by the institution. This was followed by a presentation by Dr. Omid on general investment opportunities in Iran, and possible cooperation in particular through its various companies operating in the fields of science, technology, oil, gas and many and etc. He also provided recommendations on practical ways for working with IPM in the near future. The remainder of the tour was dedicated to pre-organized business matching sessions between the group members and internationally renowned companies established in Masqat.



IRIS - ISTIC Joint International Workshop

IRIS and ISTIC jointly held a workshop on “Technopreneurship in Developing Countries”

Iran's category II center under the auspices of UNESCO, IRIS together with the cooperation of Malaysia's category II center under the auspices of UNESCO, which is better known as the International Science, Technology and Innovation centre for the South-South Cooperation (ISTIC), Co-organized a training workshop on the subject of “Technopreneurship in Developing Countries”. This workshop which was held in Isfahan's infamous Abassi Hotel from the 10th to the 14th of May 2016 had participants from many developing countries including Iran, Malaysia, China, Indonesia, Turkey, Oman, Nigeria, Iraq, Tunisia, India, and Azerbaijan.

The Mayor of Isfahan, Dr. Jamali Nejad was one of the speakers at the opening ceremony of the workshop. Dr. Jamali Nejad expressed his satisfaction towards the hosting of this event in Isfahan and hoped Isfahan would be a frequent destination for the diffusion of knowledge and experience throughout the region.

In recent years, the role of knowledge economy has expanded and Technopreneurship has emerged as a way for developing new growth sectors in the innovation economy. Thus one of the principle objectives of IRIS and ISTIC has been to induce capacity building in science and technology through the provision of policy advice and exchange of experience and best practices. To this mean the workshop mainly targeted the technology managers and researchers of universities and



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research institutes from developing countries who were involved in developing inventions or patents, and also directors of international commercialization units of universities and R&D Institutes. The workshop aimed to provide the necessary knowledge on how to commercialize their research findings with mentorship on subjects including Technopreneurship and its role in creating impact, Technology Development, Idea Validation, Opportunity Assessment, Business Models, Business Planning, Financing, and issues on Intellectual Property (IP).



IRIS has received positive feedback from the attendee's of the workshop on its content and venue. The workshop attendees expressed their satisfaction in the all round informative and well managed schedule of activities .

Possible ways for future collaboration with the institutions being represented by the attendees were also examined, the result of which will emerge soon.

IRIS and ISTIC wish to expand their cooperation in the future making such collaborations a frequent matter. The two centers plan to hold a workshop on "Technopreneurship for Women and Youth" during the next National Sheikh Baha'i Technopreneurship Festival in Iran.



The Renewal of the Agreement between UNESCO and I.R.IRAN *ISTT to host IRIS for a second term.*

With the recommendation of UNESCO's review team to renew the agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran for the continuation of IRIS at ISTT for another term, the renewal was officially agreed upon and announced. The new agreement was then drawn up and the signing of which was scheduled for the 12th of May 2016.

The signing of the agreement took place during the opening ceremony of the 12th National Sheikh Baha'i festival with Ms Esther Kuisch Laroche, Director and Representative of UNESCO's Tehran Cluster Office and Dr Vahid Ahmadi, the Deputy Minister for Research and Technology.

The signing ceremony was attended by many high ranking Iranian officials including Dr. Mohammad Farhadi, the Minister of Science, Research and Technology, and Hossein Sistani, the Deputy Governor General for Human Resource Development and Management of the Province of Isfahan. All participants were happy to be apart of the official renewal of the agreement and a testament to the continuation of the centers activities.

Dr Mohammad Javad Omid, the Director of IRIS expressed his satisfaction in the signing of the new agreement and announced that the center has many new projects underway for providing technical assistance, facilitating in knowledge



The Renewal of the Agreement between UNESCO and I.R.IRAN *ISTT to host IRIS for a second term.*

transfers, supporting research incentives, and the exchange and dissemination of Information.

Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT) later celebrated the renewal of the agreement with UNESCO at Isfahan's infamous ***ChehelSotoon Palace (Garden)***. This celebration which coincided with the 20th anniversary of ISTT's establishment (the host of IRIS), incorporated 450 international and domestic guests.



ISTT President, Dr. Mehdi Keshmiri cutting the cake for the renewal of IRIS's agreement with UNESCO, and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of ISTT.

IASP Director General Luis Sanz sent his congratulatory message on the occasion to ISTT. This message was presented to the audience through a video prepared for this occasion. Mr. Sanz said: " I have always considered ISTT's serious concern with the international dimension of their activities as a sign of the right understanding of how innovation policies and business creation programmes should be conceived in today's world. This correct understanding has resulted in a significant number of international activities that ISTT and IASP have co-organised in the past years: training seminars, workshops, conferences and the like.

In all of them, the eagerness to learn from international experiences and to adapt such experiences to the Iranian reality has guided ISTT's approach." he also stated that the guiding principles and actions at ISTT has made it possible for it to be the host of IRIS for a second term.



The 8th Governing Board Meeting of IRIS

The Governing Board Members of IRIS convened in Isfahan

In May 2016, the eighth governing board meeting of Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Incubators and Science Park Development (IRIS) convened in Isfahan's Abbasi hotel. This session brought together the Iranian members of IRIS with a number of its international counterparts including Ms Esther Kuisch Laroche, Director and Representative of UNESCO's Tehran Cluster Office, and Prof. Byung-Joo Kang, Professor at Korea's Hannam University who was stepping in for Prof. Deog-Seong Oh, the Secretary General of the World Technopolis Association (WTA). The members of the annual governing board meeting of IRIS which focuses on the main achievements and objectives of the regional center, came together to discuss the present accomplishments and the future plans they have for the center. A presentation on the activities of the center during the first period of the agreement between UNESCO and the I.R. Iran was presented to the board and the successful evaluation of center was acknowledged. The governing board members expressed their satisfaction in the renewal of the agreement with UNESCO and hoped for an even better second period of cooperation.

The center's main achievements of the previous year were also presented and the details to which the center plans to proceed were discussed.

Amongst the issues that were discussed during the meeting was the subject of IRIS's annual budget. Several suggestions for creating independence were made in this regard that was very well received from the governing board members.

It was unanimously agreed upon that acting on such suggestions can greatly resolve the issues of dependency raised in the evaluation of IRIS by UNESCO.



Another topic that was discussed during the session was the subject of increasing the number of IRIS's Governing Board members with the inclusion of other domestic and international experts in the field of Science and Technology Parks and Incubators.

The suggestion to include more international experts was due to the fact that it was believed that by increasing the number of IRIS's international board members they could extend the reach and influence of the center.

During the session Ms. Laroche, also introduced several projects from UNESCO's Tehran cluster officer to be pursued by the center, the suggestions of which was met with great enthusiasm by the board and is currently under process.

The candidacy of Isfahan Science and Technology Town to host the 2018 World IASP Conference was also raised. The governing board members unanimously supported ISTT's bid and promised the full help and support of IRIS to this endeavor. It was agreed that by hosting IASP 2018, together IRIS and ISTT can greatly influence the regional culture and environment for entrepreneurship with the attraction and assembly of world renowned experts from the field of science and technology parks to Isfahan and the centre.

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