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Isfahan
Regional Center for Technology
Incubator & Science Park Developme
(under the auspices of UNESCO)

ISFAHAN REGIONAL CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY
INCUBATOR & SCIENCE PARK DEVELOPMENT
(UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO)

NEWSLETTER



Isfahan
Science & Technology Town

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Development & Networking

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

What We Read in this Issue:

- *IRIS News & Activities*
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IRIS News & Activities

IRIS Co-Organized the 18th National Sheikh Bahai Technopreneurship Festival



The 18th Sheikh Bahai National Technopreneurship Festival was held in May 2024 in Isfahan. The event was hosted and organized by Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT) and with the support and co-organization of Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Incubator and Science Park Development (IRIS) under the auspices of UNESCO.

This festival which aims at disseminating culture of creativity, innovation and technopreneurship, encompasses all technopreneurial fields of science and technology including healthcare and medical equipment, technical and engineering sciences, agriculture, ICT, Robotics, steel and new materials, etc. It was intended to provide companies with investment opportunities in the technology development of Iran, and the introduction of these opportunities to investors, and business people.

The festival incorporated several programs including panel discussions and speeches by international experts from Russia on "Future of Technology", "Opportunities and challenges of Businesses and the Use of AI".

A B2B session also was held between Iranian and Russian Companies.

The competitive section of the 18th Sheikh Bahai festival was held on the second day of the event and the finalists were announced and awarded.

In general, the two-day festival provided a comprehensive competitive and non-competitive platform for interested parties to present their ideas and companies.



IRIS Co-Organized the 18th National Sheikh Bahai Technopreneurship Festival

The 18th Sheikh Bahai National Entrepreneurship Festival concluded with an awards ceremony graced by the presence of the Minister of Science, Research and Technology .

Mohammad Ali Zolfi Gol, the then Minister of Science, Research and Technology , emphasized the unique strengths of Isfahan province in the field of technology. He highlighted the presence of esteemed universities and the unparalleled Isfahan Science and Technology Town, noting their combined potential to drive technological advancements in the region.

The Minister also outlined the Ministry's commitment to transforming scientific knowledge into practical technologies. He cited the festival's focus on crowdfunding as a significant step towards achieving this goal, aligning with national economic objectives and accelerating the development of knowledge-based products.



Dr. Zolfi Gol- the Then Minister of MSRT



The former Governor of Isfahan, in his closing remarks, underscored the festival's significance as the most established event of its kind in the field of entrepreneurship.

Seyed Reza Mortazavi stated at the closing and awards ceremony of the 18th Sheikh Bahaei National Entrepreneurship Festival: One of the main components that can create the ability to compete and stay in the field in economic arenas is the presence in sectors related to the knowledge-based economy. The more complex the technology of a product, the more unquestionable our presence in competitive arenas, and we can play a special role in the stability of our economy.

The Sheikh Bahai Festival, as the most established entrepreneurship festival in the country, is committed to creating a competitive and collaborative environment for entrepreneurs.

It seeks to attract talented individuals, innovators, and researchers to this vital arena, encouraging them to compete and contribute to the nation's technological progress.



Dr. Mortazavi- the former Governor of Isfahan

The festival's focus on crowdfunding aligns with national economic goals and aims to accelerate the development of knowledge-based products.

The gathering of entrepreneurs from various disciplines promotes valuable interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaborations.

The festival serves as a platform for recognizing and rewarding outstanding achievements in the field of entrepreneurship.

Along with its mission IRIS organized special session and panel discussion on “ Future Trends in Start– up Ecosystem” with the attendance of international experts.

Organizing several B2B meetings between Iranian & Russian company was another activity of IRIS in this festival.

IRIS News & Activities

IRIS Attends the first ever gathering of Iranian C2Cs Organized by UNESCO Tehran Office

On June 24, 2024, the UNESCO Tehran Office (UTO) held a meeting themed "Exploring Cooperation and Enhancing Synergy between Category II Centers and UNESCO."



UNESCO Tehran office

The event gathered representatives from eight Iranian Category 2 centers, Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and different programme units of UNESCO Tehran Office.

Ieng Srong, Head of the UNESCO Tehran Office, highlighted the significant impact of Category 2 Centers (C2Cs) in promoting UNESCO's strategic objectives and their potential to make a global difference. He stressed the importance of leveraging the unique privileges of these centers to maximize their impact.

Participants engaged in discussions on common challenges faced by C2Cs and explored potential solutions and opportunities for multilateral collaborations. Key strategies were addressed to strengthen synergy among C2Cs and the UNESCO Tehran Office. Also, a strong emphasis was placed on increasing the visibility of centers' activities on their respective websites and UNESCO's websites. The importance of supporting centers in forming international partnerships and fostering cooperation with other UNESCO networks and universities was also highlighted as critical to achieving UNESCO's strategic objectives and national development goals.

During the meeting, participants were introduced to "The 2019 Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centers Under the Auspices of UNESCO" as a guiding framework to align centers' activities with UNESCO's objectives and enhance their overall impact. The meeting marked an important step towards strengthening cooperation among C2Cs and UNESCO Tehran Office, ultimately contributing to the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals.

IRIS made an introduction of itself and shared its experiences in networking and organizing international training programs with other centers. IRIS representative also elaborated on the possible ways of collaboration with other C2Cs in Iran and other countries. It also learned from the experiences of other successful C2Cs in the country and the guidelines provided by UNESCO Tehran Office.

The meeting concluded with Ieng Srong's closing remarks, underlining the importance of networking, international outreach, and digitalizing centers' activities to increase visibility. He also encouraged more experienced centers to take the lead in creating networks and fostering collaborations.



UNESCO Tehran office

International Symposium of Category 2 Centers was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Dr. M. Javad Omid
Director of IRIS

The International Symposium of the Category 2 Institutes and Centers under the auspices of UNESCO in the field of Natural Sciences was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 15 to 17 May 2024. This meeting was organized by International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation under the Auspices of UNESCO (ISTIC). The primary objectives of the symposium were to create a platform for enhanced coordination and collaboration among Category 2 Centers, fostering knowledge exchange and promoting shared goals while inspiring collective action. This is worth mentioning that the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2024 – 2033 as the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development. This international symposium was in line with the spirit of the decade, which is a call for the mobilization of global science efforts to achieve sustainable development and use science to respond to the complex challenges of our time and ensure a safe and prosperous future for all. (<https://reecwa.net>)

Dr. M. Javad Omid, director of IRIS participated in this event and provided a platform for networking and building links with other Category 2 Centers (C2Cs). He shared experiences and discussed center reports. The presence of numerous C2Cs from around the world made the event a valuable opportunity for collaboration and knowledge exchange.

IRIS Organized a Workshop on Science and Technology Parks in Mongolia

International Training Workshop on "Innovate, Integrate, Incubate: Knowledge and Experience Exchanging Workshop in STP Tenant Admission, Services, and Incubation Management"



Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Incubator and Science Park Development, under the auspices of UNESCO (IRIS) with the cooperation of Science Park Administration (SPARK) and the National Information Technology Park (NITP) of Mongolia organized successfully a training and experience sharing program in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on 19th of August 2024. The event was held at the sideline of ASPA 27th Annual Conference.

The event aimed to bring together key stakeholders, including government officials, industry leaders, researchers, and educators, to discuss best practices, innovative strategies, and collaborative opportunities within the realm of science and technology.

This full-day workshop, titled "**Innovate, Integrate, Incubate: Knowledge and Experience Exchanging Workshop in STP Tenant Admission, Services, and Incubation Management**," provided a comprehensive and engaging program, ensuring that participants gain valuable insights and practical strategies to enhance their STP operations and incubation management practices.

The workshop was mainly targeted those involved in STP industry in Mongolia. Therefore, some 80 participants from different organizations in Mongolia including Science parks, universities, research and innovation hubs, technology transfer centers together with a number of the international participants from South Korea, Vietnam, China, Japan and Iran attended this program.

The experts and speakers from Iran, China, South Korea and Thailand shared their knowledge and experiences with the participants in the form of presentations followed by Q&A and interactive sessions that ended with a panel discussion. It was also a great networking opportunity for the participants.

The workshop was inaugurated by representatives from Science Park Administration of Mongolia, National IT Park of Mongolia (Ms. Zolzaya Jargalsaikhan), and IRIS representative.

The sessions were conducted and moderated by Mozghan Yazdianpour, Herbert Chen, Junseok Seo, Watcharin (Lhing) and Ehsan Yazdian as the speakers.



The workshop was part of UNESCO IRIS's ongoing commitment to supporting member states in building knowledge-based companies and promoting sustainable development through training and Knowledge sharing.

Previously IRIS had organized several similar programs in Nigeria, Oman, China, Malaysia and Iran.

Visits to IRIS:

Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT), in collaboration with the IRIS Center, hosted three different delegations from Russia this fall. The visits coincided with three major events: The Second National Exhibition of Technology and Innovation of Isfahan (Fannema) October 1-3, 2024, the 3rd Exhibition of Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Industries and a visit by the First Deputy Governor of Novgorod Province (November, 12th- 2024)

The visits provided platforms for fostering international scientific collaborations. The Russian delegations had the opportunity to explore the cutting-edge research and development activities at the ISTT and the IRIS Center. Discussions focused on potential areas for joint research projects, technology transfer, and Technology exchange programs.

The Fannema Exhibition showcased innovative technologies and products developed by Iranian researchers and companies. The Exhibition, with the slogan 'We came to connect,' aimed to bridge the gap between the technological needs of industries and government agencies, the capabilities of knowledge-based companies in universities and incubators, and investment opportunities provided by financial funds."



The 3rd Oil and Gas Exhibition (October 17-20, 2024) highlighted Iran's capabilities in the energy sector. The specific approach of this exhibition is to showcase the application of cutting-edge technologies to address challenges and improve efficiency in the oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical industries. This event was made possible through the generous support and collaboration of the National Iranian Gas Company, the Fuel Consumption Optimization Company, the Iranian Oil Equipment Manufacturers Association (ISTMNA), the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, Isfahan Municipality, and the Isfahan Scientific and Technology Town. On the sidelines of the exhibition, a group of Russian visitors toured Isfahan Science and Technology Town, gaining insights into its activities and the IRIS Center. They also visited some knowledge-based companies specializing in the oil and gas sector.

A Russian delegation led by Evgenii Bogdanov, Deputy Governor of Novgorod Region, visited IRIS and ISTT on Tuesday 12th November, 2024 to explore collaboration opportunities. A group of businessmen active in different fields including food



industry and energy accompanied deputy governor to explore the possibility of establishing cooperation with Iranian companies. This visit marks a significant milestone in the growing relationship between Iran and Russia in the field of science and technology. The IRIS roles and responsibilities and potentials for cooperation in this field were highlighted during this visit.



IRIS Welcomes Head of UNESCO Office in Tehran at Sheikh Bahai Technopreneurship Festival



On May 14, 2024, Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Incubator and Science Park Development (IRIS) hosted Ieng Srong, the newly appointed Head of the UNESCO Office in Tehran, during the 18th Sheikh Bahai Technopreneurship Festival (SHTF).

During his visit, Mr. Srong was introduced to IRIS's extensive activities and achievements at both national and international levels. As a UNESCO Category II center, IRIS organized tours of three companies within Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT), showcasing their contributions to sustainable development. These companies focus on rural development and job creation, renewable energy and water preservation, and sustainable architecture. Mr. Srong expressed great admiration for the success and sustainability of ISTT's enterprises.

At the festival, Mr. Srong attended various side events, including panel discussions on future trends in the startup ecosystem. On the final day, he delivered a keynote speech at the award ceremony, commending IRIS for its significant role as a UNESCO Category II center. He praised IRIS's workshops held both nationally and internationally and underscored the vital role of science parks in promoting sustainable development. He was also briefed on ISTT activities and science & technology parks.

Some international B2B meetings were also arranged by IRIS at the sideline of the event where Iranian and Russian companies exchanged views and negotiated over future collaboration.



IRIS Hosts Delegation of Oil Experts from Tajikistan



On March 6, 2024, Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Incubator and Science Park Development (IRIS) welcomed a group of oil experts from **Tajikistan**.

This visit aligns with IRIS's goals of disseminating information and knowledge about science and technology parks and technology transfer in the region.

The delegation, consisting of 10 experts from the oil and gas industry, including geologists, refinery engineers, and petroleum production engineers, had the opportunity to learn about the technology ecosystem in Iran, with a focus on Isfahan.

Mozhgan Yazdianpour, IRIS's Director of International Affairs, provided insights into Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT) at both national and international levels, emphasizing IRIS's international achievements in hosting training workshops.

She also expressed IRIS's willingness to organize a tailored workshop on Science Park Development and Management for Tajikistan's technology ecosystem.

Additionally, the experts visited a temporary exhibition showcasing the products and achievements of prominent oil and gas companies settled in ISTT, and engaged in discussions with the CEOs of the companies.



The visit of participating teams of Physics Olympiad 2024 (IPHO 2024)

Physics Olympiad Students Visit IRIS and its Host Organization, ISTT

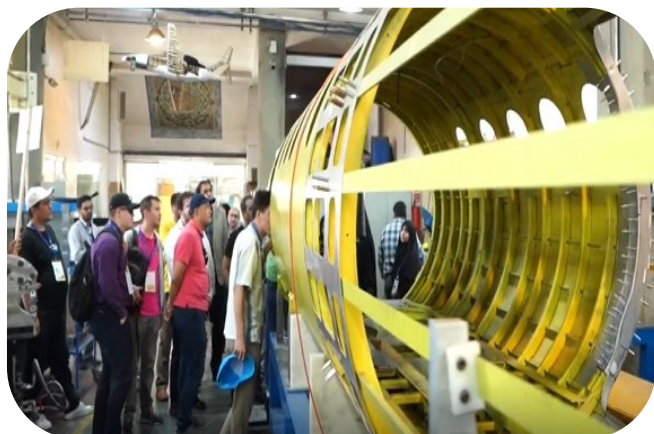


During the 54th International Physics Olympiad (IPHO 2024) held in the city of Isfahan, team leaders and participating students visited the Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT). In this visit, the world's physics prodigies got a firsthand look at the scientific and technological achievements of the knowledge-based companies located in ISTT and they learned about IRIS potentials in establishing collaborations with the respective countries.



With great enthusiasm, the students visited various laboratories and workshops of the companies and got acquainted with innovative projects in various fields of physics such as medical physics, nanotechnology, and renewable energies. Also, the visit to the Science Museum, which deals with physics concepts in an attractive and interactive way, was very enjoyable for the students.

This visit was a valuable opportunity for Olympiad students to get acquainted with the latest scientific and technological achievements in Iran and find more motivation to continue their academic path.



IRIS Explores Collaborative Opportunities with Polytechnic University of Armenia



Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Incubator and Science Park Development (IRIS) hosted distinguished guests from the Polytechnic University of Armenia, Kapan Branch, led by its Rector, on April 27, 2024.

The gathering aligned with IRIS's commitment to fostering knowledge exchange and cultivating partnerships among research institutions. As part of the visit, the delegation toured the premises of Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT) and visited two knowledge-based enterprises, gaining exposure to cutting-edge technological advancements.



International Students Explore Innovative Opportunities in STPs through IRIS

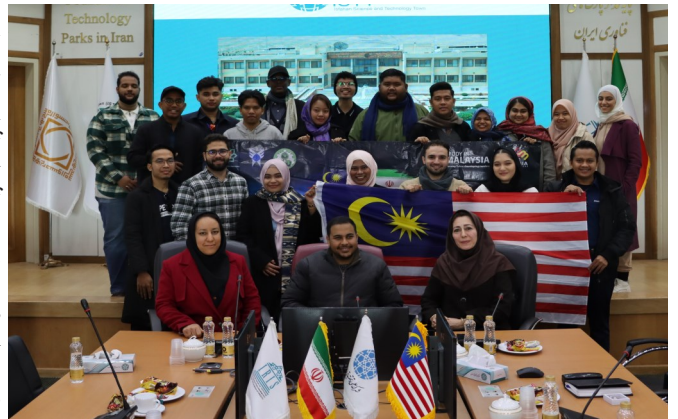


As part of its mission to expand information exchange and knowledge transfer and to make the young generation familiar with the concept of entrepreneurship/technopreneurship, innovation, knowledge based development, science and technology parks, etc as part of the innovation ecosystem, Isfahan Regional Center for Technology Incubator and Science Park Development (IRIS) hosted a group of international students coming from **Malaysia**.

On March the second, a team of international students visited IRIS and Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT) to get acquainted with the notion of entrepreneurship, science and technology parks, Iran's technology status and the contribution of ISTT to the knowledge-based economy in Iran.

The team comprised of 20 university students- with various origins (including Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Syria, Malaysia and Yemen) and various fields of study- who immigrated to Malaysia to continue their studies.

To promote the culture of entrepreneurship among would-be entrepreneurs in the region, IRIS welcomed these students.



Distinguished Delegation from Tatarstan Visits IRIS



On February 14th, 2024, UNESCO Regional Center for Technology Incubator and Science Park Development in Isfahan and Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT) welcomed a delegation from **Tatarstan**, led by the Minister of Education and Science, and the First Deputy of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Facilitated by the Isfahan Provincial Government, this visit was organized to introduce Iran's dynamic knowledge-based ecosystem and to facilitate knowledge transfer and cooperation at international levels.



IRIS Governing Board Meeting held in Isfahan



IRIS Governing Board Members from left to right: Prof. H. Chen, Prof. S. Hu, Prof. Y. Solaiman, Prof. J. Choi, Prof. M. Soomro & Prof. A. Chamkha.

The Governing Board members of the Regional Center for Technology Incubator and Science Park Development (IRIS), under the auspices of UNESCO convened virtually on Monday, December 30, 2024, at the Isfahan Science and Technology Town (ISTT), the host organization to IRIS. The Board, comprising of the representatives from China, South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Iran, and the UNESCO representative from France, were briefed on the two-year performance of IRIS.

A detailed report outlining the activities of IRIS over the last two years was presented to the Board members. Following the presentation, members shared their insights and recommendations for the center's future endeavors.

During the meeting, possible ways of cooperation and the contribution by each member country was discussed and the members provided new suggestions for this purpose.

IRIS invited three new members to the board from Korea, Kuwait and Malaysia to make a presentation of themselves and to share their views and suggestions in contributing to IRIS activities. The Board approved unanimously the membership of the three members.

Join-In Choi, a Professor of Management from South Korea, **Ali J. Chamkha**, a Professor of College of Science & Technology from Kuwait and **Rushdi Abdul Rahim**, the President and CEO of MIGHT from Malaysia joined the board for two years.

IRIS welcomes these new members and wish them success and prosperity in this new global responsibility.

IRIS, an international institution, is dedicated to assisting developing countries in establishing science and technology parks and incubators. It also facilitates the exchange of experiences and knowledge in the field of science and technology parks and incubators.



IRIS Board & Secretariat from left to Right: Ms. N. Yazdianpour, Prof. M. Omid & Ms. M. Yazdianpour

International Opportunities & Upcoming Events:

IRIS Co-Organizes the 19th Sheikh Bahai Technopreneurship Festival in May 2025

ISTT and IRIS have started operations for the organization of the 19th Sheikh Bahai Technopreneurship Festival. The event aims at disseminating culture of creativity, innovation and technopreneurship, encompasses all technopreneurial fields of science and technology. The festival is expected to host a number of international guests and participants from different countries including BRICS member countries. IRIS is also going to organize special session for talented startups with the presence of a number of UN agencies And embassies in Iran. The registration has already been started and the secretariat of the festival is receiving the plans to be evaluated for final selection stage. The superior and selected plans and companies will be awarded by the public and private sectors in May 2025 during the closing ceremonies.



International Opportunities & Upcoming Events:

Call for UNESCO/The People's Republic of China The Great Wall Co-Sponsored Fellowships Program 2025-2026



unesco

With a view to promoting the human resource development and capacity building of developing countries and to enhancing international exchanges in the field of education, culture, communication, science and technology and the friendship among peoples of the world, the Government of the People's Republic of China and UNESCO will co-sponsor a total number of seventy-five (75) fellowships in various fields of study at undergraduate and postgraduate levels during the academic year 2025-2026. Among these fellowships, forty-seven (47) vacancies will be open for new recruitment to candidates from 135 developing Member States in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Europe and Arab region.

Tenable at a selected number of Chinese universities, these fellowships are intended for students and researchers who plan to pursue degree study at the postgraduate level, or undertake individual research with periodic guidance from the assigned

supervisors in China.

A candidate may apply for either a one-year Visiting Scholar Program (as General or Senior scholar), or a Master's or Doctoral degree program with the duration of study ranging from 2 to 5 years. For further information please visit: <https://www.unesco.org/en/fellowships/greatwall>

Call for Applications: COMSTECH Award 2025



It is hereby announced that the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMSTECH) is calling for nominations for the 2025 Science and Technology Awards to recognize outstanding scientists in the fields of:

- COMSTECH Life Time Achievement Awards in Biology and Chemistry
- COMSTECH Awards for Excellence in S&T
- COMSTECH Award for Excellence in Science Communication

For Further information and Registration please visit: <https://comstech.org/comstech-awards-2025-announcement/>

The closing date of receipt of the applications is Monday, **March 31, 2025**. Applications received after the closing date shall not be entertained.

For any question please contact: awards@comstech.org

Get Exclusive Updates on IRIS News in IRIS Quarterly E-Newsletter!

This newsletter is published at the end of each quarter, providing an overview of IRIS latest News and Activities, Upcoming Events & International Opportunities.

We encourage IRIS members to share with us their accomplishments and international recognitions for inclusion in future newsletters. Additionally, We invite you to share your feedback and suggestions for improving this newsletter by emailing info@unesco-iris.com and/or Mozhgan.iris@gmail.com. Your input is invaluable in helping us create a more informative and engaging publication.

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