

VETEC Project

Position paper on International Knowledge & Technology Transfer

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For a long time the “International Dimension” in Knowledge and Technology Transfer has been located in the transfer of knowledge between developed and developing countries. Akin in its intention to development aid, this kind of transfer was mainly thought to provide developing countries with the means to tackle global challenges, increase welfare and growth and assist them in catching up to the technological frontier. However, recent developments, mainly in Information and Communication Technology, have spurred the diffusion of organizations and institutions like Fablabs, Makerspaces and Incubators across the globe. In addition, some developing countries have strengthened their research systems enough to focus on the introduction of KTT elements into universities and publicly-financed research organizations. This development provides opportunities for collaboration and exchange, particularly when combined with already existing efforts regarding collaborative research projects.

The focus on KTT among German universities varies and quite a number of different administrative models and institutional philosophies exist. The TU Dresden was recently successful in retaining the title of “University of Excellence” among German universities. As part of the university development concept TUD is to establish a “Center for Transfer and Entrepreneurship” in the coming years. This center will concentrate the resources of TUD in the realm of KTT and will be able to take an international dimension into account.

While undertaking the VETEC project, a number of beneficial factors surfaced that highlight the opportunities of IKTT, especially with regard to developing countries in general and Vietnam in particular. First, being a technical university, TUD undertakes a wide range of projects that are closer to application than those of universities with a stronger focus in humanities. Moreover, research is strong in areas around “Grand Challenges” for developing countries, e. g., wastewater treatment, forest management or healthcare to name but a few. A number of research collaborations with Vietnam already exists in these areas that would provide a very fruitful ground for further engagement in KTT activities. Second, TUD has a very good reputation among Vietnamese researchers and state officials. In GDR times quite a number of Vietnamese people have studied in Dresden (or close by), who are now in very powerful positions. There is a significant amount of goodwill. Moreover, Dresden hosts one of the largest communities of people with Vietnamese descent in Germany.

The German federal government has already issued a call together with the Vietnamese government supporting collaborative cross-border research for the development on new applications (including firms). These initiative shows that there is mutual agreement to strengthen collaboration in the future and TUD would be in a very good position to applied for these kinds of grants.

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