

## PWL 1 Mar 2010

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Monday, 1 March 2010

Dear Members of the AIT Community,

**§ Alumni Associations Express Support to AIT:** The joint meeting of the national chapters and mother chapter of Alumni Associations of the Asian Institute of Technology (AITAA) held on Saturday, 27 February, concluded on a very positive note with all alumni associations announcing their unstinted support to AIT and agreement that the "Exploration of a new Financing / Funding Model for AIT" study being conducted by the independent consultants should be allowed to continue and proceed smoothly. The face-to-face meeting helped clarify a lot of the issues and there was concurrence among alumni in that their role in the process should be a consultative one with the final decision left to the administration and the Board. It was suggested that another face-to-face meeting be held to deliberate and discuss the report of the consultants once it is submitted in April 2010. I also took the occasion to request the chapter presidents to encourage their respective constituencies to take active part in the alumni survey being conducted by the consultants as part of their study.

The meeting, which was attended among others by representatives of AITAA chapters from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Central Asia, China, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand apart from the AITAA mother chapter, called for greater communication between AIT and alumni so that the discussion on exploring a new financial model could be conducted in a constructive and comprehensive manner.

While the AITAA mother chapter maintained its neutrality on the issue, AITAA (Thailand) stated that they did not disagree with PPP model, but they had their concerns. AITAA chapters from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Central Asia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Philippines were positive about exploring the PPP model, while AITAA (China) chapter refrained from commenting on PPP issue till they received more information. Alumni chapters from Indonesia and Bhutan have also reacted positively.

At the start of the meeting I elaborated on how the landscape under which AIT is operating has changed from 1959, the year when AIT was founded. I provided background information on the status of the independent conceptual study while stating that the final report shall be presented to AIT by the end of April. There is a huge under capacity in the fields of higher education in China, India and many other countries in Asia and beyond. While AIT wishes to expand and open campuses all over, the financial structure of AIT has been changing over the years since the international community has gradually withdrawn its support to the institute.

I also took the opportunity to clarify that the Public Private Partnership (PPP) is not one model, but an umbrella model which is based on the triple helix approach. "The modalities of PPP remain to be discussed and deliberated and there has been no decision and the study will help us in exploring financial and funding models".

Mr. Syed Monzur Husain Bokhari, President AITAA (Bangladesh) remarked that since the major donors are no longer enthusiastic and the rate of student enrolment is going down, the PPP concept is not only a pragmatic way but also a practical approach to ensure that AIT remains sustainable. He also supported the under graduate program launched by AIT. Mr. Bokhari suggested that detailed discussions should take place before the parameters and boundary conditions of the PPP model are finalized.

Mr. Janaka Dharmabandu, President AITAA (Central Asia) appreciated the respect and sensitivity shown by AIT towards the alumni. Narrating from his experience from the PPP scenario in UK, Mr. Dharmabandu stated that "It seems almost mandatory that AIT will have to subscribe to the PPP type of arrangement." The word PPP should not be anathema as it is a modern concept which brings both money and expertise from the private sector and distributes risks accordingly. He quoted from trends in higher education in Australia to suggest that PPP is a credible alternative. "Let us conclude the debate and place trust on the AIT administration," he suggested.

Representative from AITAA (China), Mr. Fang Xianming stated that AIT should not compete not only at the Asian level but at the global level. He stated that the China chapter wished to see more details and studies on PPP before committing themselves on the issue. He welcomed AIT in China and stated that the AITAA chapter in China would not only support but also help promote AIT in China.

Dr. Pornsak Supparatarn, Executive Secretary of AITAA Mother Chapter, remarked that the mother chapter maintains a neutral role on the issue. We neither support nor oppose the idea until an overall opinion of the alumni is formulated, he said. He stated that the mother chapter positions itself as the center of communication among all chapters of AITAA in order to share information, ideas and suggestions to form overall opinion of the alumni on the issue. "AITAA plans to collect all feedback, ideas and suggestions from all national chapters around the middle of March after which the overall opinion of AITAA will be formed and submitted to AIT," he said. I asked Dr. Pornsak whether the mother chapter would respect the alumni survey being conducted by the independent consultants since feedback has also been requested separately by the mother chapter. Dr. Pornsak noted that the feedback requested by the mother chapter is from the alumni chapters, while the one from the consultants was sent to all the alumni, which they would also respect.

Mr. Moe Myint Kyaw, President AITAA (Myanmar) while appreciating the decision of AIT to involve the alumni remarked that "Alumni are not owners or decision makers of AIT." There can be several models including PPP which can be discussed as options. He suggested that AIT should focus on ASEAN and approach the organization to associate itself with AIT. This will help AIT since currently AIT has no owners, he remarked.

Mr. Ramesh Raj Bista, President AITAA (Nepal) assured AIT of all support at this crucial juncture. He suggested that various alumni chapters should discuss the details of the conceptual study once it is completed. "We must come with an open mind and without any preconceived notions," Mr. Bista remarked. Stating that PPP must not be equated with privatization, he stressed that the entire process and selection of private partners must be credible. The intergovernmental and international character of AIT must be maintained.

Mr. Abdur Rahman, Secretary General, AITAA (Pakistan) said that he was not against the PPP model for AIT. He suggested that the strategy for undergraduate program could focus more on joint programs between AIT and other universities. He also sought the creation of a planning think tank at AIT which is able to forecast challenges, set targets and plan actions.

Mr. Piyal D Hennayake, President, AITAA (Sri Lanka) stated that further discussions should await the final report of the independent consultants since AIT has no prior experience on PPP. When AIT proceeds with agreements, it should be done with due caution or else the good name of AIT will be tarnished.

Mr. So Polen, President, AITAA Cambodia suggested that the consultant should focus on scenario analysis and the impact of various options. "We hope to find a good solution so that AIT can progress," he said while adding that his alumni chapter would like to see more research on PPP.

Mr. Allen Surla, representative of AITAA Philippines while expressing his openness to new concepts remarked that there had been misinformation and miscommunication on the PPP model, as well as apprehensions on takeover and a propensity to overrun partner institutes. He added that the issue should not be prolonged and AIT should fix a timeline for this project. "Undergraduate programs can be the bread and butter for an institute like AIT," he added.

Representative of AITAA Thailand, Dr. Somchet Thinapong sought more "faith, trust and confidence" while stating that their chapter has concerns on the PPP model. "We do not disagree with the idea, but are deeply concerned since all PPP projects in Thailand have failed," he said. He cautioned against PPP projects remarking that people turn to PPP only when they do not know what to do. "AITAA Thailand chapter wishes to see prosperity and sustainability of AIT and seeks more consistency in approach," he remarked. He identified the New Charter, PPP and undergraduate classes as three key issues for AIT and its alumni. He called for more communication between AIT and its alumni. "Once we understand each other, we are in the same boat," he added.

I explained that just because PPP has not succeeded in some cases does not imply that it should not be tried. Often PPP has failed because of corruption in the public and private sector and if humans had not tried; they would not have landed on the moon. One should not get disheartened or give up by failure but rather learn from the mistakes and experiences, and try and take on more innovative approaches the next time around. PPP has been successful in many parts of the world and increasing number of studies have suggested that Thailand should engage positively with the PPP concept. I have welcomed more interaction and communication between AIT and the AITAA Thailand chapter on a mutual basis. Regarding undergraduate, I explained that graduate courses are more resource intensive.

Prof. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, Vice President for Resource Development welcomed all AIT alumni on AIT homecoming day and noted that this would be the first such opportunity during the second half of AIT's century. He also outlined AIT's plans to focus more on an endowment fund and requested all alumni chapters to get involved in the process.

Dr. Jonathan Shaw, Director, AIT Extension while moderating the discussions remarked that the need to change is urgent stating that "communication is critical on this issue". I have assured all alumni chapters that AIT would continue to communicate with them on all important issues, particularly on the new funding model.

Further details on the meeting are available at the below link:

<http://www.ait.ac.th/news-and-events/2010/news/alumni-associations-meet-expresses-support-to-ait/view>

The event was also broadcast live and is archived at the below link:

[http://203.159.28.31/Alumni\\_Series/alumnimeeting.wmv](http://203.159.28.31/Alumni_Series/alumnimeeting.wmv)

**§ Opinion Article in The Nation "Thai higher education needs public-private investment"**: An article on the topic "Thai higher education needs public-private investment" which was written by Mr. Vikrom Kromadit, CEO of Amata Corporation, and myself, was published in the Opinion Section of the 26 February 2010 issue of The Nation.

The article can be viewed at the below link:

<http://www.ait.ac.th/news-and-events/2010/ait-in-the-news/feb/thai-higher-education-needs-public-private-investment/view>

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/2010/02/26/columnists/Thai-higher-education-needs-public-private-investm-30123459.html>

The Amata Corporation is pursuing the "Amata Science City" project which is supported by the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), Ministry of Science and Technology Thailand, in the form of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and includes eight leading higher learning institutions in Thailand, as partners, with AIT as one of the lead institutions in this undertaking. Thailand's national strategy is to be a higher educational hub for the Greater Mekong Sub-region by 2016 and hub for ASEAN by 2026. The 2 to 3 billion Baht "Amata Science City" project will make strategic use of public and private resources and is envisaged to spur commercialization of research efforts, facilitate business-university partnerships, and enable market-based means of financing the type of innovation that creates jobs, wealth and a hopeful future for the people of Thailand. Amata currently contributes 7% of the GDP of the country, which is expected to rise to almost 20% when the "Amata Science City" becomes fully operational.

Related article: "AIT among founders of new Amata Science City"

<http://www.ait.ac.th/news-and-events/2010/news/ait-among-founders-of-new-amata-science-city/>

**§ Report on Further Outcomes of Nepal Visit:** In last week's letter I had reported on my participation as Chief Guest at the 7th convocation ceremony which was graced by the Rt. Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal H.E. Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal.

<http://www.ait.ac.th/news-and-events/2010/news/important-to-engage-private-sector-in-higher-education-president/view>

I would like to provide below highlights of some of the other meetings and events we had.

\* *Brainstorming Meeting on AIT Future Plans in Nepal:* On 21 February, AIT hosted a brainstorming meeting, among key stakeholders in Nepal, which included alumni and representatives from the EU, ADB, Nepal Administrative Staff College, South Asian Partnership Nepal, Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, Institute of Engineering, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal Development Research Institute, Nepal Economic Forum, High-level Commission for Information Technology, Nepal Bankers Training Institute. The objective of the meeting was to receive ideas and inputs from the participants on the future modalities of AIT's presence in Nepal, and plans for a gradual progression from an office to a full-fledged center and eventually university in Nepal. Participants also included current and potential partners who have expressed interest in hosting an AIT office or center. One of the objectives is to decentralize AIT's operations in Nepal which is expected to help AIT not only to better serve its clients in terms of price and promptness but also so as to remain more attuned to the local needs and requirements. In addition, it is also expected to extend the visibility of AIT in Nepal which would help attract participants to AIT for professional development courses as well as for Masters and PhD. programs.

The general feedback on the outcomes of the discussions are summarized below

- There was strong support in establishing a physical presence in Nepal, and participants viewed it as being very timely, since overseas development funds, are

likely to further increase to countries like Nepal. The objective in having a stronger physical presence in Nepal is not to lose opportunities and to better coordinate AIT's efforts in the country. In general there was concurrence in that the objectives of a proposed physical presence must be clear in terms of whether it is going to be a liaison or coordinating office. It was also recommended that AIT as an institute of excellence not engage in too many areas, which can be extremely challenging, but rather select the right partner institution, gaining ownership at the local level, and to establish credibility and then expand. Strong assurances of support were provided by alumni in high-level positions in Nepal, also suggesting to start with a few concrete activities, establishing credibility, and listing out what AIT expects or needs from the government, which they would be glad to help facilitate.

- It is important to look at the experiences from the ground since the local market is very price sensitive. There was strong support for "AIT's role in recycling knowledge and experiences and in bringing it to the forefront together its partners as a regional network institute".
- The importance in having some ownership with the Nepal Government was stressed, and in this context the Institute of Engineering, and Nepal Administrative College were recommended. It was noted that the Staff College has good infrastructure, manpower and strong linkages with the government, with their line ministry being the Ministry of General Administration, which is soon likely to become the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- Establish collaborative Ph.D. programs in major areas of need for Nepal, with students and supervisors coming from different partner institutions.
- There was a comment that alumni who have experience should also be engaged in the future plans for Nepal.
- There was also a suggestion that training and capacity building programs in the areas of leadership and sustainability be considered.

I have emphasized that the process of furthering AIT's efforts and presence in Nepal must be conducted through a consultative and inclusive process and stressed the importance in retaining the Institute's public mission.

\* *Pokhara University discussions:* Following my participation at the convocation ceremony, I met with Vice Chancellor Professor Keshar J. Baral, and his senior management team, and we have agreed on the following:

- To explore partnerships in the integrated bachelors-masters, and 2-stage bachelors program, targeting the engineering and management fields.
- To explore the possibility of faculty being hosted by Pokhara University. Pokhara University is willing to provide an economy roundtrip airfare, and also accommodation and local hospitality for interested faculty members.
- AIT and Pokhara University will jointly develop proposals, for the capacity building of Pokhara University faculty and programs, which could be submitted by Pokhara University to relevant donor agencies. Pokhara University will explore funding priorities and opportunities with local donor agencies.

\* *Partnership Agreement with National Bankers Training Institute (NBTI):* AIT signed a MoU with the National Banking Training Institute (NBTI) to provide capacity building programs for human resources development in the financial sector of Nepal. The MOU will help in organizing short term training programs, a Master's program in Business Administration (MBA) with a specialization in finance and banking, and a doctorate program in Business Administration (DBA), apart from a range of programs of mutual interest. Mr. Sashin Joshi, Chairman of NBTI, who signed the MOU on behalf of NBTI noted that the MoU is targeted at expanding facilities of higher learning in Nepal and would go a long way towards contributing towards a greater partnership between Thailand and Nepal. Mr. Sanjib Subba, Chief Executive Officer of NBTI expects the MOU to capitalize on existing networks and create joint programs between local and foreign universities. The NBTI is a national level apex banking academy established under the aegis of Nepal Bankers' Association with support from Asian Development Bank. Apart from commercial banks, its promoters include Nepal Rastra Bank and Rural Microfinance Development Center (RMDC). NBTI aims to deliver quality training and academic programs related with Financial Institutions in the region. NBTI will have centers in major part of Nepal and will closely work with development partners mainly in rural and micro finance areas through its centers outside of Kathmandu. H.E. Mr. Maris Sangiampongsa, Ambassador of Thailand to Nepal, and Mr. R. K. Ummat, Chief Executive Officer, Everest Bank Limited, who is a member of the NBTI Board also attended the event.

\* *Partnership Agreement with the Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC):* AIT signed MoU to push forward partnership efforts in national and regional development activities, management education, management development and management consultancy. NASC's Executive Director Dr Dinesh Pant who signed the MoU on behalf of NASC expressed confidence that the signing of the MoU with AIT would be a milestone towards expanding management development-related programs of a new kind and vigor in Nepal. Highlighting the importance of synergy effect of working together in management development efforts, Dr Pant also said promoting partnership and collaborations with regional and international institutions had been a part of its institutional strategies to expand and promote institutional services in Nepal.

Included in the MoU are provisions for training, education, research and consulting services in areas of mutual interest, particularly development, administration and management. Officials of both institutions expect the deal to open up opportunities for management of training and development, executive development programs, seminars and colloquiums, and in-house management development programs. Other aspects in the MoU are: a) management consultancy focusing on organization development, strategic management, human resource management, trainer development, financial management and procurement management; and b) networking for information exchange — including exchange of AIT and NASC research findings and publications, and exchanges by senior officials, faculty members, students and trainees — is key aspect of the MoU.

\* *Meeting with Secretaries Dr Ram Swaroop Sinha and Mr. Deependra Bickram Thapa, Ministry of Education:* The meeting focused on modality of opening an AIT office in Nepal. Dr Sinha and Mr Thapa welcomed the idea of opening of AIT office in Nepal. Since Ministry of Education is a key agency for setting up the centre, they promised full support from the Government side. The discussion was also focused on extending ongoing collaboration between the AIT Extension and Ministry of Education. Dr Sinha hoped for even more important role of AIT especially in building the capacity for the implementation of School Sector Reform Program which is jointly being funded by development partners including DANIDA, ADB, WORLD Bank, NORAD, UNICEF, etc.

\* *Meeting with Nepal Educational Foundation (NEF):* We met with Prof Sriram Mathe and Prof Pramod Bahadur Shrestha of NEF. Prof Mathe outlined ongoing activities of the NEF. The discussion was focused on collaboration between NEF and AIT for offering bachelors and master level programs. I also visited NEF operated college in Hattiban to observe the existing facilities. During the meeting, it was agreed that NEF will submit a proposal to AIT for consideration by the end of April 2010, outlining concrete areas of partnership.

\* *Meeting with Secretary General, Mr Manohar Bhattarai Constitutional Assembly Secretariat:* During the meeting, Mr Bhattarai briefed me on the ongoing constitutional making process. He also elaborated the key challenges faced by the secretariat. The meeting also focused on need for institutional capacity building of secretariat in the changed political context. During the meeting AIT Extension was requested to take facilitative role in the formulation of capacity building plan of secretariat which will be implemented with the support from development partners

\* *Meeting with South Asian Institute of Management:* The breakfast meeting with SAIM officials was arranged at Dr Prakash Chandra Lohani, Chairman of SAIM's residence. The meeting focused on the progress on implementing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which was signed in December 2009. Professor Bijaya KC, Dean of SAIM, updated the progress so far. The meeting also discussed the possibility of running short courses in collaboration with AIT Extension.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ramesh Raj Bista, President and Mr. Kiran Dongol, General Secretary of the AITAA-Nepal Chapter for having joined the AIT delegation in the meetings and interactions related to our visit, and also to Dr. Shailendra Sigdel, AIT Extension Representative, for all his assistance and support.

**§ Meeting with Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand:** On Wednesday, 24 February, I had a lunch meeting with Dr. Chitriya Pinthong, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, who also represents the Ministry on the AIT Board of Trustees. I took the opportunity to update Dr. Chitriya on some of AIT's ongoing activities and initiatives. She informed me of progress on AIT's new Charter, and that it will soon be submitted to the Thai Cabinet, following which it will be immediately opened up for signatures. Mr. Kittipod Hongsombat, First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, also joined the meeting.

**§ New Academic Senate Chair:** I would like to congratulate Professor Kazi M Ahmed on being elected as the new Chair of the Academic Senate Chair. As Chair of the Academic Senate, he will be participating in the President's Advisory Council that meets every fortnight, and would be able to contribute in decision taking on various academic issues on behalf of the Academic Senate. He would also be participating as invitee in the Board of Trustees meetings. I would also like to thank Professor Dennes Bergado for his interest in this position, and I am encouraged to note that there was a 61% participation of Academic Senate members in the election process, and wish the same or more turnout of members in the future Academic Senate meetings which is an important platform for academic issues.

**§ Academic Senate Meeting:** A meeting of the Academic Senate (AS) was held on 24 February, during which I was informed that members deliberated on the proposed revisions in the AIT Academic Degree Title regulation, and the recommendation on this would be finalized at the next AS meeting. The AS has agreed to endorse the revised curriculum of Microelectronics and Embedded Systems, Mechatronics and Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering Fields of Study from School of Engineering and Technology (SET); the curriculum of SET Undergraduate Program for the second semester; an addition to the existing regulation on publication requirement whereby "A doctoral student is required to seek formal approval from the Program Committee Chair before sending his/her scientific paper for publication in any journal"; and a Honorary Doctorate Degree Committee to review a nomination received was formed. Upon my request the review of policy on listing of grades of repeated courses in transcript was deferred for the next meeting to facilitate my participation.

**§ MoA Signing with EBARA Hatakeyama Memorial Fund (EHMF):** On 26 February, we welcomed the delegation from the EBARA Hatakeyama Memorial Fund (EHMF), Japan led by Mr. Shotaro Kuryu, Managing Executive Officer for Fluid Machinery and Systems Company, EBARA Corporation. The purpose of the visit was for AIT and EHMF to sign a MoA which provides the necessary terms and conditions concerning the installation of a Micro Hydro – Solar Hybrid System at AIT's Energy Park.

The Micro Hydro – Solar Hybrid System is a Micro Hydro Generating System using a standardized agricultural pump as a turbine. Based on the MoA, the system will be installed in connecting with the existing / modified energy generation system at AIT. The equipment, its installation and operation will be fully funded by EHMF. EHMF is a CSR group founded in 1989 whose aim is to promote voluntary activities for international cooperation in Southeast Asian countries on a non-commercial basis. The activities are formulated to meet with particular regional needs in ways that enhance the capability of human resources through technology transfer and to assist development of appropriate technologies.

The delegation from EHMF also met with Prof. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, Vice President for Resource Development and faculty from the Energy field of study, Prof. S. Kumar, Dr. Abdul Salam, Dr. Jai Govind Singh, Dr. Charles O.P. Marpuang, Dr. Vo Ngoc Dieu, Dr. Tripta Thakur, along with Dr. Pritam K. Shrestha, Head-ERCO and Mr. Sanjeev Jayasinghe Director for Fundraising.

**§ Meeting with METI, Japan:** Mr. Tako Hoshino, Director and Mr. Taro Aoyama, Assistant Director, Technical Cooperation Division, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan, AIT alumnus Dr. Subin Pinkayan, Chairman of the SERD Board and Chairman of Southeast Asia Technology Co. Ltd., and Mr. Noritada Morita, President of Asia Strategy Forum Co. Ltd. visited AIT on 26 February. I along with Dr. Anil Anal; Associate Dean, Research and Outreach, SERD; Dr. Abdul Salam, Assistant Professor, Energy FoS; Dr. Jai Govind Singh, Assistant Professor, Energy FoS and Dr. Charles Marparpaung, Visiting Faculty, Energy FoS attended the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to enhance the collaboration between AIT and MIET, Japan. Dr. Subin and Mr. Morita suggested AIT to make a proposal for a grant (up to 1 million US dollars) to MIET for establishing a Regional Environmental Research and Development Centre at AIT, especially focusing on climate change issues in the area of "Carbon Credit". I explained about our Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Development in the Context of Climate Change (SDCC) and its thematic sub-areas and various initiatives that have been taken. The proposal could be in line with some of the thematic areas and their objectives, and issues discussed during meeting were to identify a working group to make a proposal with a specific objective related to climate change and renewable energy. The faculty colleagues present at the meeting described various research activities related to climate change, water, agriculture, environment and energy; being conducted at the three schools of AIT. Mr. Hoshino was very positive and noted that AIT was already undertaking several activities that are aligned to the objectives of his organization. The visit of Directors of TCD, MIET was a follow up to a previous meeting held between Dr. Subin and Mr. Morita with Dr. Weerakorn. Dean SERD and Associate Dean Dr. Anil, SERD and faculty members from Energy and WEM FoS on 22 February. This follow-up meeting was held to discuss details of the utilization of the fund (1 Million Baht) donated by Dr. Subin to AIT, and it was proposed that part of this money be used as seed grant for conducting a feasibility study to establish the proposed centre to help generate further grants.

**§ Institute-wide Promotions Meeting:** On 25 February, I chaired a meeting which reviewed and discussed "Institute-wide Promotions Activities". The main themes of the meeting were to discuss about:

- Promotions means – which means should be utilized?
- Promotions for direct student recruitment, partnerships, research, training / consultancy, and image building of institute as a whole – who does it?
- Centralized vs. decentralized promotional activities and its pros and cons - Promotions by school / AIT Extension / Units? promotions by the central administration? The role of ERCO in promotions?
- Postgraduate vs. undergraduate promotions - who does it?
- Student recruitment agents for undergraduate and postgraduate - commission? more agents?

Following the discussions the following were concluded:

- Student Recruitment Agent (SRA) agreements shall be revised with attractive package of commission and cost sharing model, which will encourage SRAs to work actively. ERCO shall revise MoAs and communicate with current agents. More agents shall be recruited in countries with no current agents, so also in some countries wherein two or multiple agents may be required.

- Respective school is responsible for promotions for student recruitment.
- School Deans and AIT Extension Director shall be reporting on new promotion initiatives at the President's Advisory Council (PAC) meetings.
- ERCO shall coordinate one institute-wide promotions meeting for every three months.
- ERCO shall be responsible for Market Intelligence.
- ERCO shall be responsible for promotions for Branding/Institute level promotions, Image building of institute as a whole.
- ERCO shall be responsible for promotions for partnerships, and
- ERCO shall be responsible for promotions for Institute level projects.

**§ Central Asia Task Force Meeting:** AIT Central Asia Task force meeting was held on 25th September the purpose of the meeting to follow up on AIT Roadshow visit last year as well as the recent visit by Dr. Aida N. Karazhanova, Officer-In-Charge, AIT-UNEP Regional Resource Center for Asia and the Pacific (AIT-UNEP RRC.AP). As the TF meetings briefed me, the members were informed about discussions of Dr. Aida with the New University of Astana (NUA) on the proposed concept about the AIT Eurasian Center. NUA had confirmed their strategic interest in the joint programs with AIT, including research. NUA is specially interested in Bachelor degree and Master's Program in Climate Change. I plan to join the opening of NUA in July, and possibly opening of the AIT Eurasian Center at NUA later in September.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of Kazakhstan will provide the possible support in facilitation of enrolment of Kazakhstani students to AIT from amongst the large number of applicants to the Bolashak program for Master's and Doctoral degree programs. For this, an agreement is planned between AIT and the commercial arm of the Bolashak program through which self supported students are expected in a short term. MoES proposed AIT work closely with Bolashak program and NUA and develop and deliver the short-term courses at AIT or at the AIT Eurasian Center.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) had suggested that the AIT Eurasian Center could support the implementation of a new Astana initiative on "Green Bridge between Asia and Europe" to be developed as part of preparations of UNESCAP 6th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED-6), planned to be held in Astana in Sept/Oct. 2010.

The Almaty Institute of Power Engineering and Telecommunications (AIPET) as a strong potential partner, and already has a number of students from Central Asian states (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, etc) is interested in joint retreats for the teaching and research staff, workshops, and possibly, the UNEP Leadership Program on Environment Sustainable Development (LPSD), English language programs for Central Asian students, and 2-stage Master's and Doctoral programs with AIT. AIT and AIT-UNEP RRC.AP could develop the training package on LPSD with a focus on climate change, energy efficiency, renewable energy in Central Asia for delivery as a side event to MCED-6 in Astana

We plan to invite NUA, MoES, MEP and AIPET officials to visit AIT in 2010. Meanwhile from AIT side, Dr. Oleg Shipin will be visiting Kazakhstan in the first week of April to meet with officials from the above ministries and institutions to discuss the work plan to deliver the MoUs and the concept of AIT Eurasian Center as well as possibly to scope with partners two workshops (on nanotechnology issues, energy and environment as well as climate change) tentatively planned for May and July in Astana and Almaty. I would like to thank and commend Dr. Aida for her hard work and role in linking AIT with Central Asian countries.

**§ Update on Activities of the ASEAN Regional Center for MDGs at AIT:** AIT has been invited to co-host (along with the Peace Boat Foundation, UN-NGO-IRENE and local hosts in Beijing, China and Danang, Viet Nam) the 6th MDG roundtable on 20-23 April 2010 in the "Peace Boat" ship that will travel from Beijing to Danang. The outcomes of a recently held ARCMDG workshop on "MDGs analysis and operational indicators for gender mainstreaming and equality" are expected to be presented at the roundtable. The event would be an opportunity to present AIT and its activities, especially the ARCMDG activities, to the UN and NGO circle, since the outcomes of the roundtable would be further presented in the ECOSOC and MDG meetings latter in the current year. AITVN will also be invited for possible local hosting in Vietnam. While AIT may not have the resources to provide direct funding for the organization of the roundtable, it could be possible to provide intellectual resources from within the institute as well as from its partners. I have requested ARCMDG Director Prof. Jayant K. Routray to lead the AIT delegation to the roundtable. I would like to thank Ms. Hanifa Mezoui, ARCMDG Board member and The International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS) Permanent Representative to the United Nations and ECOSOC for inviting AIT to co-host the roundtable. Ms. Mezoui along with Mr. Nico Barito, UNITAR Senior Fellow and CEO of Urban Solutions Institute, Indonesia, were instrumental in the organization of the 5th MDG roundtable at AIT in March 2008 that resulted in the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Center of Excellence on MDGs (ARCMDG) at AIT.

**§ Update on AIT City Campus:** Last week we had a meeting to discuss the setting up of an AIT City Campus. It was agreed that a premise of 649 sq m would be appropriate, and needs to take into consideration the needs and requirements of the schools, AIT Extension and other units, as well as come up with a business model vis-a-vis the future use of the premise. The Head of the Contract Management Office (CMO) will follow up in pursuing the needed with the premise targeted for opening by September 2010.

**§ AIT Mission to Sri Lanka:** The Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology (SET) Dr. Nitin Afzulpurkar led an AIT delegation to Sri Lanka to follow up on the main activities and initiatives that SET is undertaking in Sri Lanka. From 6- 8 February 2010 the AIT delegation met with the following key persons and institutes which were arranged by Mr. Sanjeev Jayasinghe, Director Fundraising at AIT.

- Dr. S. Neville Fernando the Chairman of South Asian Institute of Technology and Management (SAITM).
- Professor Kapila G. A. Goonasekere the Vice Chancellor University of Vocational Technology.
- Mrs. M. B. A. Ekanayake, Secretary, Ministry of Science & Technology (MOST).
- Prof. K. K. Y. W. Perera Chairman Arthur C. Clark Institute for Modern Technologies (ACCIMT).
- Engr. Sanath Panawennage, CEO/MD of ACCIMT
- Prof. Sirimali Fernando (Mrs.), Chair National Science & Foundation.
- Mr. J. H. J. Jayamaha, Director General of External Resources Department.
- Mr. P. P. Ghanapala, Additional Director General (Technical), of Sri Lanka Land Reclamation and Development Corporation (SLLRDC).

During the visit the AIT team had further discussions with SAITM Chairman and its management and it seems very likely that we will start with a second batch of 80 or more students in November 2010 who are interested in the Mechatronics/ICT program. SAITM also would like AIT to broaden the scope of offerings in Sri Lanka in the areas of IT and Civil Engineering. I have requested SET Dean to formulate an AIT Civil Engineering curriculum in consultation with SAITM as

soon as possible, with a view to having the first intake in September 2010.

During the discussion with the Vice Chancellor University of Vocational Technology, which is a newly established university on vocational training established under an act of Parliament, Vice Chancellor informed that he has received ADB part funding to train his faculty in 2010, and plans to send applications for 5 staff to SET, 3 SOM and 3 SERD for August 2010 intake.

At the meeting with the Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), also participating was the Chairman, as well as CEO/MD of Arthur C. Clark Institute for Modern Technologies (ACCIMT), and Chair National Science Foundation. This meeting was a result of the December 2009 meeting Mr. Jayasinghe along with Dr Nandana Rajatheva Associate Dean SET, had with Hon Minister of Science and Technology. ACCIMT is keen to receive a proposal from AIT on a Masters Degree as well as Professional Masters in the fields of TC, Electronics, and Space Technology Applications and will therefore seek avenues to bring in partners and funding to make this idea feasible.

Dean Nitin took the opportunity to inform the Director General, External Resources Department on the meetings and outcomes with MOST and ACCIMT. DG confirmed rendering his assistance in facilitating the approval process. During the meeting with Additional Director General (Technical), SLLRDC, informed the AIT delegation that the project concept document together with the technical report on "Development of the Parliament Lake in Kotte to Extract Water for Drinking Purposes" was sent to National Planning Department (NPD) and awaiting their response.

The AIT delegation consisted of in addition to Dean Nitin, Dr. Nandana Rajatheva Associate Dean SET, Dr. Matthew N. Dailey Assistant Professor SET, Dr. Ake Faldt, Visiting Professor UG Program SET and Mr. Sanjeev Jayasinghe Director Fundraising. I have assigned Mr. Jayasinghe to follow up on the above activities together with SET. I wish to thank Dean Nitin and faculty colleagues and the VPRD office for the excellent outcome of the mission.

**§ News from the Sponsored & Contracted Projects Unit:** Dr Rajendra P. Shrestha Associate Professor in SERD/NRM received a research grant of Baht 822,000 from FAO. The project is titled "Development of Regional TCP project on mitigating climate change through implementation of improved agricultural practices in South Asia". FAO is currently working with four countries in Asia namely Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka to develop Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) on Land Management. Hence it was proposed to conduct a workshop at AIT with collaborating partners to develop country level TCP's. The project duration is for 6 months from 1 February 2010.

The AIT Extension will conduct the following training program:

- "Monitoring and Evaluation in Post Conflict Recovery" sponsored by Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, Nepal. The project will be from 22 February to 1 June 2010, and has a budget of Baht 442,000. There will be 8 participants from the ministry attending this program.

- "3rd Certificate Course in Management Consulting Essentials" The project will be from 22 February to 26 May 2010, and has a budget of Baht 667,875. There will be 12 participants attending this program.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Said Irandoust  
President  
Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

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Contact Us | How to Find Us

AIT Asian Institute of Technology, P.O. Box 4, Klong Luang, Pathumthani  
12120, Thailand  
Telephone: (66 2) 5245000 or (66 2) 5160110-44 Fax: (66 2) 5162126