

US-ARMENIA INNOVATION CORRIDOR

PHASE I: STUDY TOUR

INTRODUCTION

The US-Armenia Innovation Corridor (USAIC) is a platform to identify, organize and advance US-Armenia connections around research commercialization, innovation, and entrepreneurship. USAIC provides assistance to start-up companies, innovative projects, and universities wishing to explore US-Armenia collaborations and partnerships around commercializing innovations. USAIC services include:

- Access and guidance to using university and state resources
- Expert guidance in business development, networking, financing, marketing
- Analysis of technology and patentability of intellectual property.

Goals

USAIC aims to connect Armenian universities and start-ups to the U.S. market and boost their global competitiveness. Twice per year, the U.S.-Armenia Innovation Corridor would open applications to start-ups and university-based projects from all industries and regions from Armenia seeking research partners, market and customer information, and access to investors and capital.

Outputs/Outcomes

Following the results and findings of this initial visit, the USAIC will create an innovation network with the goal of connecting Armenian researchers and startups to U.S. corporations, universities, and other innovation and entrepreneurial networks. Participants will gain and share business development experience to guide decision-making, recommendations for U.S. market entry, and connections to potential customers, partners, and industry associations. These experiences will be replicated at host universities and networks across Armenia. An initial study tour in Fall 2016 will provide a framework and roadmap for this initiative.

OBJECTIVE

At the initiative of the US-Armenia Innovation Corridor Program through partnership with the Innovation and Industrial Development Fund (IIDF) and American Councils for International Education (American Councils), a delegation of senior researchers and experts from science, industrial, private and nonprofit sectors will conduct an initial study tour to emerging innovation ecosystems to see first-hand efforts to manage the social and

economic challenges of advancing the launch and development of high-growth research and innovation projects. The custom study tour for working-level managers and leaders will provide U.S. and Armenian peers to share opportunities, challenges and best practices. The aim of the study tour is getting to know one of the best practices in innovation infrastructure development and technology transfer – the models elaborated and used in the U.S. national innovation system providing training and support for entrepreneurship among the participants to cultivate creativity in academic community.

STUDY TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

The U.S. study tour, hosted by experts and mentors, will sharpen the focus of bilateral collaboration and joint projects. This is an opportunity for the delegation to be briefed by public agencies, academics and leaders from the private sector, business incubators, philanthropy, nonprofits, and communities in the US on the issues of producing tangible results.

During the study tour, several themes will be addressed through seminars and workshops:

- Technopark management training courses
- Regulatory and legal issues
- Entrepreneurship curricula
- Relations with companies and capital
- Technology transfer practices and management of university research and commercialization
- Professional advice and legal, technical and business support
- Introduction to innovative, cost efficient and replicable models
- Packaging innovative research and social enterprise concepts into viable businesses

The participants will engage in workshops focused on common experiences and challenges to better understand the challenges and opportunities of innovation infrastructure development and technology transfer. Participants will tour local institutions including, in particular, leading public and private universities and technoparks, business incubators, business and trade associations.

The study tour will highlight innovations in Armenia with the greatest entrepreneurial propensity and product viability, as well as methodologies to facilitate the transition between institution, industry and community by proper intellectual property protection. The study tour will wrap up on the final day with a debriefing seminar.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

The study tour to the U.S. will provide IIDF partners the opportunity to learn from world-class organizations active in innovation infrastructure development and technology transfer.

The innovative, cost efficient and replicable models used by host organizations will provide input toward the development and validation of technology transfer models with a strong international networking component. More broadly, the study tour will create the framework for the training of specialists and professionals in Armenia's emerging innovation ecosystem.

Representatives from Armenian universities, IIDF, and American Councils will meet with U.S. counterparts in higher education aiming to advance entrepreneurial competency in engineering and innovation management education to build a university entrepreneurial ecosystem. The study tour will provide a comprehensive introduction to key innovation, technology transfer, and regional economic development themes. Each day will concentrate on a specific program, with several overlapping themes. At the end of the visit, a final session led by American Councils will summarize and draw conclusions, establish concrete future plans with the aim to establish a successful tech-transfer and innovation system in Armenia.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

During the visit, participants will have a chance to get familiar with the U.S. technology transfer system, entrepreneurship education, and regional support for startups. This exchange is aimed at gaining insight in the different business models in the field of innovation and technology: innovation policies, entrepreneurial culture, tech transfer methodologies, and trends. Topics of the study tour will present case studies in priority industries (healthcare, agriculture, electrical engineering, etc.) and provide an industry-specific approach toward technology commercialization.

For a pilot study tour of five working days¹, American Councils selects the Washington, DC innovation cluster as an ideal starting point for the U.S.-Armenia Innovation Corridor model. This region is home to government agencies, major research universities, business incubators, trade organizations, and representative government relations offices of major corporations. In addition, the region is a growing technology hub for highly regulated industries: healthcare, transportation, education, energy, smart cities, and cybersecurity.

¹ The length of the study tour can be expanded to include additional days, depending on the priority of IIDF and its partners. One option is to include a day trip to Philadelphia for meetings with universities, incubators, capital groups, etc. A study tour can also accommodate participation in a key industry conference, such as an Association of University Technology Managers training course, or another event.

Sunday	Arrival in Washington
Late Afternoon	Meet delegation at airport
Evening	Welcome & Introductory Dinner – American Councils Advancing cross-border startup collaborations – American Councils
Monday	University Tech Transfer and Government Policy
Early Morning	Overview of U.S. innovation infrastructure development and technology transfer – Tech Transfer Society, Washington, DC (T2SDC)
Late Morning	Management of university research, intellectual property, and commercialization – University of Maryland, Office of Technology Transfer
Lunch	
Early Afternoon	University-Industry partnerships for commercialization – National Council for Entrepreneurial Tech Transfer (NCET2)
Late Afternoon	Packaging innovative research and social enterprise concepts into viable businesses – George Mason University, Mason Enterprise Center
Tuesday	Financing and Incubators
Early Morning	Technopark management – Association of University Research Parks or International Business Innovation Association
Late Morning	Incubator tour – 1776 Crystal City
Lunch	
Early Afternoon	Financing early-stage technologies – Maryland Technology Development Corporation
Late Afternoon	Technology venture investors and business, venture philanthropy & corporate responsibility – Village Capital or Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) or National Venture Capital Association
Wednesday	Innovation Ecosystem Development in Priority Sectors

Early Morning U.S. government perspectives on healthcare tech transfer – **National Science Foundation, National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences**

Late Morning Corporate accelerator programs – **Medstar Innovation Institute**

Lunch

Early Afternoon Food science commercialization – **Rutgers University**

Late Afternoon Accelerator programs for healthcare startups – **BioHealth Innovations**

Thursday Trends in Entrepreneurship

Early Morning Innovative, cost efficient and replicable models in innovation and entrepreneurship – **George Washington University, Innovation & Entrepreneurship**

Late Afternoon Ensuring proper commercialization of intellectual property – member of the **Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM)**

Lunch

Early Afternoon Social and economic challenges of high-growth development of research and innovation projects – **Development Innovation Ventures**

Late Afternoon Immigration and workforce issues – **Denton's**

Friday Roadmap Development

All day Closing Remarks and Roadmap Development – **IIDF and American Councils**

All day Follow up meetings with **university researchers and other organizations**

Saturday Free Day & Farewell Dinner

Sunday Depart to Yerevan