

Academia and Startup Programming Partnership - INDUS-X WORKSHOP Series REPORT 29th AUGUST, 2023

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIA AND USA IN DEFENCE ECOSYSTEM THROUGH INDUS-X initiative

India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X) was launched at an event in Washington DC, USA on 21 June 2023 during the State Visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to the US. The INDUS X event was co-organised by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), Indian Ministry of Defence, and US Department of Defence (DoD).

An INDUS-X factsheet, highlighting the contours of collaboration under INDUS-X, with specific initiatives, was released at the event. One of these initiatives is the Academic & Start-up Programming Partnerships with Universities and Accelerators with an intent to lead best practice workshops to exchange best practices in defence innovation, fielding, and commercialization.

Under the aegis of INDUS-X, the inaugural Workshop on Academia & Startup Programming Partnership - INDUS - X Workshop Series, was organised in virtual mode by IIT Kanpur, India and Penn State University, USA on 29th August 2023 to facilitate translation of defence related academic technologies through start-ups. The objective of this workshop was to boost academic and start-up programming partnership with Universities and Accelerators, along with strengthening the start-up ecosystem in defense innovation.

The workshop highlighted the intent of bilateral collaboration in terms of technology creation and industry expansion to support startups, industries, academia, research institutions in collaborative innovation works and also pave the trajectory of economic growth of nations. Further, stakeholders developed an understanding about the components that drive technological advancements, foster innovation, and create a thriving environment for defence startups and established companies alike to network/co-create along with opportunities to build cross-border associations with various stakeholders.

The workshop gave an overview of the status of contribution by academia and start-ups towards defence innovations. Experts from defence agencies, academic institutions and industry, including startups, provided insights of future possibilities by extending such collaboration. The workshop emphasized the importance of investments in joint research at academic institutions in enabling research innovations and for translating academic innovations to products through startups. Training, exchange programmes, promoting access to research & development labs across borders, workforce development and building an innovation ecosystem. were identified as follow up tasks in reaching the endeavours of INDUS-X.

Several problem statements were observed during the above workshop i.e. limited bilateral collaboration for research and translational activities, restrictions in marketing defence technologies, fewer bilateral training and exchange programs for facilitating technologies from academic labs into products.

The workshop contemplated several measures to boost technology commercialization in defence through modified policy framework, legislation amendment, exchange programs for TTOs and startups leading to knowledge transfer for promoting academic technologies.

As an immediate outcome three workshops will be organized to further the agenda of academia-startup partnership under aegis of INDUS-X i.e.

- The first Physical workshop will be hosted by Penn state University in collaboration with AUTM which will include the training of manpower in India and USA involved in technology commercialization i.e. TTO managers and Incubation centre staff, the multi-day physical workshop will also facilitate academic research translation with defence Startups across US and

India, through collaboration of start-ups with various stakeholders. Funding opportunities may also be explored for defence startups during the workshop. The workshop will be jointly organized by Penn State, AUTM and IIT Kanpur and other stakeholders, steered by iDEX, MoD and DoD in first quarter of 2024.

- The second online workshop will be organized in India that will include the business nuances through Startups and Innovation ecosystem, the workshop will be organized to include startups in defence vertical from India and USA . The workshop will be jointly organized by IIT Kanpur, Penn State University and other stake holders driven by iDEX in first quarter of 2024.
- The third workshop will be organized in hybrid mode, to promote the space vertical as the main point of discussion for technological development, collaborative research and prospective exchange programs in last quarter of 2023 or early 2024.

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