PERFORMANCE REPORT

INTER ISLAMIC NETWORK ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(INIT)

July 2010

INIT SECRETARIAT

NISTE Building, Sector H-8/1

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Table of Contents

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1. Introduction & Background of INIT

1.1 Introduction

Information Technology has become one of the most important and promising technologies of the present world. It is crucial for the advancement and development of any country. The possibilities created by the Internet revolution, networking and advances in telecommunications have spurred a new era of opportunities and global competition.

Muslim countries own nearly 50% of the world's oil resources, 40% of global agricultural out put. However, the hard reality is that the total share of the Muslim world in high-tech products is far and few and even there is a disproportionate technological capability gap among the Muslim countries themselves. With changing paradigms of economic development where the natural resource endowment is giving way to man-made resources and the comparative advantage means having information ahead of the competitors, the challenge for the Muslim world today is to gear up the potential of Information Technology for the development and progress of the Muslim Ummah.

The World of Islam constitutes over a billion people with rich traditions of learning and knowledge. However, the unfolding of IT revolution has created a quantum gap between the Islamic world and the developed west. The lack of information and its restricted flow has made the Islamic countries less responsive towards introducing applications for research on the one end and education, business and art on the other end of the spectrum.

In order to realize its immense potential, the 'Information' needs to be channeled through systems and networks. It is up to the Muslim leadership to put in place institutional mechanisms that can address issues of interconnectivity and realize benefits for the Muslim Ummah. It is estimated that currently there are over 350 million users of Internet, with over 60% in US and Western Europe alone. Although, the IT data relating to the Muslim countries is scant, however, according to the careful estimates, Muslim countries have less than 2 % of the Internet users and that too mostly concentrated in Malaysia, Pakistan and the Gulf states.

Presently, there are over 2 billion web sites worldwide and over 60% of US businesses have Internet presence. By 2003, B2B e-commerce was worth US $ 7 billion. Approximately 70% of this trade took place in Western Europe & US. With the exception of a few countries; Internet trading is non-existent in the Muslim world. Policy planners must appreciate that the countries, which are reaping the benefits of IT today, started thinking of it decades ago. The leading countries had put in place plans and resources in 80s. There has to be a long-term implementation agenda. Among the Muslim countries, only Malaysia, Pakistan and UAE have come close to that. Malaysia's "Cyber Jaya", Pakistan's IT Policy and Action Plan and the UAE's ambitious project of transforming Dubai into an "Internet City" are notable examples of the bold initiatives within the Islamic world.

1.2 Reasons for Establishing the INIT

The issues and challenges of the information age faced by the Muslim world have resulted in establishing the 'Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology (INIT)'. The very reasons for establishing the INIT include;

i) Most of the Islamic countries lack in skilled work force and required infrastructure;
ii) Shortage of IT professionals due to brain drain/emigration of experts to the developed countries;

iii) Majority of the Islamic countries import computers and peripherals with minor assembling being done locally;

iv) The software development is only in the nascent stage and the capability gap with the developed countries is widening;

v) Inadequate investment in human resource development and information & communication technologies.

The time has come when the Muslim world need to pool its resources and help bridge the widening gap in technological advancement and must formulate joint programs of action to achieve the best results. The Muslim countries, therefore, need to build a bigger and better base for their present and future needs. They must not only strengthen their national IT Systems but also endeavor to develop the institutional mechanisms for the benefit of Ummah.

Thus realizing the importance of Information Technology in the socio-economic development of the Muslim World and in order to bring the Muslim World at par with the advanced nations, the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) proposed to establish the Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology (INIT or Network, used interchangeably) among the member Islamic countries.

1.3 Establishment

The proposal to set up Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology was approved by the 10th General Assembly Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) held on 16th to 18th February, 2002 at Islamabad, Pakistan. COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), Islamabad is the host institution and Government of Pakistan is the host Government for the INIT. The permanent secretariat of the Network is at the COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan.

1.4 Status

The Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology is an inter-state, non-political and non-profitable entity. It is an independent, autonomous and self-governing institution. The Network works on learning and deploying Information and Communication Technologies among Muslim Ummah particularly those member countries who opt to be its members.

1.5 Mission Statement

INIT aims at directing and encouraging research, development and use of ICTs and associated systems in promoting collaboration and cooperation among its member states through building capacity, encouraging dialogue, maintaining databanks, assisting in education and training and automating the governmental and business processes.

1.6 Objectives

The initiative of establishing INIT was taken in order to comply with the desires of the Muslim community for utilizing, directing and encouraging the use of Information Technologies and associated systems to promote collaboration and cooperation in building human resources and institutional capacity through encouraging dialogue, maintaining databanks, assisting in training, research and development, dissemination of information, automating the governmental and business processes through the mediation of Information Technology and provide appropriate means therefor. The following are major objectives of INIT.

a) To form, maintain and promote an association of member states which will engage in the proactive learning and utilization of IT;
b) To carry out research, development and use of electronic systems through an association of member states and associated organizations;
c) To help develop world class IT infrastructure within its member states;
d) To develop an extensive pool of academically and technically skilled IT manpower at all levels to meet the local and export needs;
e) To promote extensive use of IT applications in Government, trade, industry, homes, agriculture, education, health and other sectors of economy;
f) To promote and encourage both local and foreign investors to ensure the development of IT sector (software, hardware and service industries) in member states and the use of IT products and services;
g) To create strong domestic and international markets through promoting linkages and reinforcing networks for IT products and services; and
h) To facilitate dissemination of knowledge and technology flow(s) from comparatively advanced Islamic countries to the less advances ones.

2. Inaugural Meeting of INIT

The Inaugural Meeting the General Body of INIT was held on July 28, 2005 at Islamabad, Pakistan. The meeting was participated by the General Body members representing the following Islamic countries:

1. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
2. Republic of Azerbaijan
3. Republic of Gambia
4. Republic of Sudan
5. Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

In addition to the above countries, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and State of Qatar had also joined the INIT (and were paying their membership subscription fee). Besides, taking up certain administrative issues like opening of bank accounts for INIT, appointment of legal advisor, tax/audit consultant, membership campaign and logo of INIT.

The General Body approved the following:

- Charter of INIT
- Budget for INIT
- Future Programs of INIT

In its pursuit to achieve the above mentioned objectives, INIT has devised certain programs and initiated/supported activities under these programs.

3. PROGRAM – I

Promoting Collaboration and Cooperation among Members States

The current level of efforts in science and technology in Muslim countries is much below than desired. It has not fully realized the importance of advancement in Science and Technology. The scientific and technological gap between Muslim and the developed countries is widening with every passing day. The result is an increasing dependency of Muslim countries on the technologically advanced world and a widening technological gap between the two worlds.

Closer understanding among Muslim countries is essential towards the development of long lasting partnerships. Such understanding is often the product of deliberate and conscious efforts over a period of time. This intimate relationship is poorly developed and has not taken a firm root among Muslim countries. It is imperative for Muslim countries, to realize

the importance and long-term impact of cooperation and collaboration in scientific research, in order to overcome the threat of exclusion from the race for economic prosperity.

Given limited resources, both financial and manpower, amongst Muslim countries, cooperation for S&T efforts has become crucial. Pockets of excellence exist among Muslim countries in specific technologies, for example, information and communication technologies; petroleum engineering; micro-chip design; highway construction; and water desalination. This expertise can be shared and enhanced through joint projects among interested parties. This cooperation can also focus on the new and emerging technologies, particularly, in specific applications that build on the comparative advantage of Muslim countries.

The Muslim world, therefore, has a critical need for close coordination and cooperation between the public and the private sector, both at the stage of identification and solicitation of ideas, as well as at the implementation-stage. The Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology (INIT) encourages and supports the interaction and collaboration between the leading institutions, practitioners and intellect of Islamic countries.

The following activities have been performed under this program:

3.1 Two (2) Day International Conference on 'Contemporary Issues in Information Technology in OIC Member States'

The INIT convened a two (2) days International Conference on Contemporary Issues in Information Technology in OIC Member States on July 26 – 27, 2005 at Islamabad, Pakistan. The Conference provided a platform for exchange of ideas on issues which have a bearing on the generation of knowledge and building expertise crucial to the economic growth for the world, in general and the Muslim world, in particular. The Conference brought together experts and scientists from across the Muslim world to share their research and development experiences in the field of information technology with a select gathering of intelligentsia, academics, industry professionals and a fairly diverse representation from other members of the civil society.

A total of twenty (20) papers were presented including ten (10) invited talks and ten (10) contributed papers.

The scholars, practitioners and academicians from the following five countries participated in the Conference:

- Islamic Republic of Pakistan,
- Republic of Azerbaijan,
- Republic of Gambia,
- Republic of Sudan, and
- Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The Conference focused on identifying and articulating research and development challenges and agenda in information technology and fostering collaborations among practitioners and researchers in the following key areas and issues in information technology with the OIC system in perspective.

- IT development and policy-making: Theoretical perspectives and practical challenges;
- Strategic information systems planning;
- Electronic government initiatives in Muslim countries;
- IT applications in the public and private sector institutions; and
- Distance education in Muslim countries.

3.2 Two (2) Day International Conference on 'Technology Based Development: Strategies and Options for Pakistan'

A two (2) days International Conference on 'Technology Based Development: Strategies and Options for Pakistan" was held on August 22 – 23, 2006 at Islamabad, Pakistan. Following three eminent professors were invited to deliver key note address and plenary talks:

1. Prof. Dr. Nawaz Sharif, Program Director of Graduate School, University of Maryland University College, USA.
2. Prof. Dr. Nazrul Islam, Professor School of Management, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok Thailand.
3. Prof Dr. Vladimir Kozharnovich , Program Manager, Technology Promotion Unit, UNIDO Vienna USA.

Besides the above, heads of local S&T organizations also delivered the positions papers related to their respective spheres of work which included Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Chairman, Pakistan Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Executive Director, Higher Education Commission, Chairman, Pakistan Science Foundation and Executive Director, Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in South (COMSATS),

The experts delivered a total of nine (9) lectures and four (4) rounds of panel discussions were organized. The Conference was participated by the scholars and technology experts from the following four (4) countries:

- Islamic Republic of Pakistan,
- Kingdom of Thailand,
- Republic of Austria, and
- United States of America

The Conference was organized taking into cognizance of the close links of science and technology with the future pace of development, its potential to contribute in areas such as economic growth, health care, national security, environmental protection, sustainable development, etc. The experts covered different areas of emphasis in Technology Based Development delivered lectures on the following tracks:

- Strategic Competencies for Sustainable Development
- Social Impact of Technologies Development
- MOT Education and Research/ Corporate Universities
- Innovation and New Product Development
- National Systems for Technology Development
- Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship
- Technology Incubation
- Areas of Rapid Technological Change
- Technology Transfer/Technology and Security
- Technology Foresight and Forecasting
- Information and Communication Technology Management
- The Integration of Technology and Business Strategies
- R&D Management
- Project Management
- Knowledge Management
- Industrial and Manufacturing System Technologies
- Supply Chain Management
- Virtual Organizations and Partnerships/E-Commerce
- MOT in Developing Countries
- Technological Alliances, Mergers and Acquisitions
- Theory of Technology

3.3 Three (3) Day International Conference on 'Integration of Information Technology in Science Education'

The INIT organized a three (3) days International Conference on the "Integration of Information Technology in Science Education" on January 16-18, 2007 at Gazimagusa - Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The Conference was organized in joint collaboration with the Islamic Conference Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH); COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), Islamabad – Pakistan; Ministry of National Education and Culture, Government of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; and Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The Conference come out as an excellent event of deliberations/exchange of intellectual thoughts spanned over an intense program of three (3) days in which invited talks on twelve (12) topics and scholars contributed twenty two (22) papers were presented.

The eminent scholars and academicians from the following countries (arranged in alphabetical order) participated in the Conference:

1. Federal Republic of Nigeria
2. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
3. Islamic Republic of Iran
4. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
5. Macau, SAR Peoples Republic of China
6. Republic of Azerbaijan
7. Republic of Turkey
8. The State of Palestine
9. Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
10. United Arab Emirates

3.4 Two (2) Day Workshop on 'Science, Technology and Innovation Policy'

Knowledge has become a source of economic might and power in the 21st Century. Emergence of new technologies in the areas such as Information and Communications Technologies, Biotechnology, New Materials and Nanotechnology has made unprecedented impact on economic growth and social development. Science, Technology and Innovation are essential elements of socio-economic development of nations. In the wake of globalization, science, technology and innovation have gradually moved to the centre stage of the policy-making process of developed and developing nations.

The science, technology and innovation system of a country must be infused with new vitality if it has to play a decisive and beneficial role in advancing the well being of all sections of society. The country must recognize the central role played by science, technology and innovation in raising the quality of life of the people, particularly of the disadvantaged sections of society, in creating wealth for all, in making the country globally competitive, in utilizing natural resources in a sustainable manner, in protecting the environment and in ensuring national security. The national science, technology and innovation policies and their implementation must adjust to the new global realities and also satisfy social and economic goals.

With the aforementioned in view, the INIT in collaboration with COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad convened a 2 – Day Workshop on 'Science, Technology and Innovation Policy' on October 17 – 18, 2009 at Islamabad Club, Islamabad.

The Workshop was focused on significant changes in pedagogies through science, technology that has introduced new ideas. Following were the main focused areas:

- Importance of Technological Innovation for Industrial Development;
- Innovations in Industrial Development;
- Fundamentals of Enterprise Based Technological Innovation Management;
- Technological Innovation Processes;
- Innovative Processes and Active Intermediaries;
- Technology Innovation Related Measurements; and
- Technological innovations & Decision Making.

The Workshop also included two sessions of 'Moderated Discussions' moderated by the leading researchers and practitioner on the following topics:

a) Science, Technology and Innovation for Development: Experiences of Pakistan
b) Human Potential: A Terrible Waste and Tremendous Opportunities

The Workshop consisted of 4 sessions which included invited talks on 4 topics delivered by the main resource person of the Workshop Prof. Dr. Nawaz Sharif and 2 sessions of moderated discussion on the above mentioned topics one each moderated by Engr. Dr. Muhammad Akram Sheikh, Former Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Govt of Pakistan and Prof. Mukhtar Ahmed, Member (Operations and Planning), Higher Education Commission, Govt of Pakistan.

The Workshop provided an excellent opportunity to focus upon many of the issues related to the formulation and implementation of Science, Technology and Innovation Policies, and removing shortcomings and improving the national systems for developing policy relevant S&T statistics and indicators.

3.5 Three (3) Day International Workshop on 'e-Education Across Borders'

To combat the challenges of educated and qualified workforce needed in the developing world in general and OIC member states in particular; there is drastic need of embedding a culture of lifelong learning which can respond to the ever evolving skill requirements. The rapid pace of social, economic and technological change, together with concern over the threat to the future competitiveness has particularly created renewed urgency to find solutions to the problems of a growing ICT skills gap and inadequate levels of digital literacy in the workforce in these countries. To meet these goals, e-Education can be a vehicle offering better options for producing access to education in a relatively short time.

Thus the promotion of e-Education is an essential social investment requiring serious, long-term government support from the member countries. It has the potential to be adopted as a fast track option for gearing up the process of sustainable development in the South. The developing world must recognize and move with maximum pace to tap the tremendous potential of e-Education by provision of necessary infrastructure, improving the quality of teaching, promoting lifelong learning, developing both core and higher order digital literacy competences, and stimulating the development of e-Content. The investment in digital literacy programmes and the development of e-Learning communities will allow individuals to assume greater responsibility for their own learning and employability.

Thus realizing the importance of e-Education in the socio-economic

development and in order to contribute in bringing the developing countries at par with the advanced nations, the Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology (INIT) in collaboration with OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) and COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), Islamabad, is holding a 3–day International Workshop on 'e-Education Across Borders'. The Workshop has been tentatively scheduled to be held in the 2nd quarter of 2011.

3.6 2 Day International Conference on 'Diffusion of ICTs in Academia: Learning in the Digital Age in Islamic Countries'

With the emergence of new global economy, 'powered by technology, fueled by information and driven by knowledge', the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are seen as having a great potential for improving the human condition by creating new economic and educational opportunities, improving health delivery, improving governance, and improving the general provision of services. The ICTs play a pivotal role to expand access to education, strengthen the relevance of education to the increasingly digital workplace, and raise educational quality by, among others, helping make teaching and learning into an engaging, active process connected to real life. ICTs have been utilized by education ever since their inception, but they have been massively present in schools only since the early 1980s.

The developing world has seen an increased pressure for a more rapid infusion of ICTs into academics in recent years. For developing countries in general and Muslim countries in particular, the ICTs have the potential for increasing access to and improving the relevance and quality of education and thus represents a potentially equalizing strategy for these countries.

Taking cognizance of the above and to combat the challenges of educated and qualified workforce, the Inter Islamic Network on Information Technology (INIT) in collaboration with Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), Islamic Scientific Educational and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), Industrial Consultancy and Research Centre (IRCC), Republic of Sudan, University of Science and Technology, Sudan is convening a 2 Day International Conference on "Diffusion of ICTs in Academia: Rethinking Learning in the Digital Age in Islamic Countries' on October 4 – 5, 2010 at Khatoum, Republic of Sudan.

The Conference will provide a forum for academicians and professionals from Islamic countries to help facilitate exchange ideas and discuss best practices in diffusion of ICTs in academics of developing and developed world. It will present a unique opportunity for fostering collaboration, and strengthening cooperation and dialogue among the delegates. It aims at improving links between measures and initiatives at all levels, providing a forum to all the players in enabling their respective areas of academics in integration of ICTs i.e. universities, schools, training centres, decision-makers in the Islamic countries.

The Conference would rectify the shortage of infrastructure and skills associated with diffusion of ICTs in the academics, ways and measures necessary to improve the integration of ICTs in academics, social inclusion and help promote the employability and adaptability objectives of the developing world in general and Islamic Countries in particular. Common recommendations and priorities will be established by involving the educationists, academicians, IT professionals, and ICTs training players.

4. PROGRAM – II

Establishing Institutes of Information Technology in Member States

The world is changing fast from an agrarian cum semi-industrial society into an information society where value is based on the ability to use, share and create knowledge and information. Obviously, the success in the information society demands a critical mass of personnel qualified in information and communication technologies. Better prospects of higher education for the youth enhance opportunity for economic development of a country. The establishment of institute of higher learning in information technology in the member states of the Network envisages educating youth in academic and research disciplines of present day emphasis such as computer sciences, computer engineering, telecommunication engineering, management, etc.

The Network in its pursuit of sensitizing the Information Technology in the member states helps to establish Institute of Information Technology in the interested Network member states. The Network member states willing to make equity contribution of at least one half of the probable cost of the venture, which is expected to be of the order of US $ 1.0 Million for a modest set up can make a request to the Network for their advice and assistance.

The detailed plans are worked out in consultation with the respective Network member states keeping in view their national needs and the resource endowments. It is expected that the Institute of Information Technology would be forerunner to modern institution(s) of higher learning specializing not only in the Information Technology per se but in a broad and diverse range of related academic and research disciplines.

The institution(s) so developed thus contribute in the socio-economic development of the respective INIT member states. Besides the equity contribution by the host country, funding for the venture is sought on a case to case basis from other sources including but not limited to multilateral institutions like the COMSTECH, Islamic Development Bank, Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), etc. for the purpose.

The following activities were undertaken under the program of Establishing Institute of Information Technology in INIT member states:

4.1 Feasibility Study for Establishment of Institute of Information Technology at Khartoum, Sudan

Like other developing countries, the Republic of Sudan is also fast changing from an agrarian cum semi industrial society into an information society where value is based on the ability to use, share and create knowledge and information. The INIT has offered help to the Government of Republic of Sudan in preparing a plan for setting up an Institute of Information Technology in Khartoum, Sudan.

A detailed Feasibility Study was carried out and Feasibility Report was prepared which suggested implementation of the project in the following three time horizons with the expectation that the Institute of Information Technology would be forerunner to a modern institution of higher learning specializing not only in the Information Technology per se but in a broad and diverse range of related academic and research disciplines.

Short Term – Providing skill building opportunities to the youth in Sudan in IT and related disciplines.

Medium Term – Providing skill building and higher education facilities to the youth for certificate and diploma courses and gradually moving towards bachelor and master degree programs.

Long Term – Providing higher education opportunities in information technology and related disciplines at bachelor, master and PhD level in a conducive learning environment to be able to contribute in the socio-economic development of Republic of Sudan.

4.2 Proposal for Initiating Information Technology Courses at Pakistan Embassy School at Syrian Arab Republic

While the world sees with excitement the advent of 'Information Age', the fast evolution, use and proliferation of information technologies is a phenomenon not witnessed earlier in the history of mankind. It is against this backdrop that, H.E. the Ambassador of Pakistan in Syria requested the President INIT/Rector CIIT during latter's visit to Damascus to help the Pakistan Embassy School, Damascus initiate Information Technology courses there.

The INIT took the assignment with full enthusiasm and prepared a Report for Initiating Information Technology Course at Pakistan Embassy School and Syrian Arab Republic. The Report presented fairly good account of Information Technology courses along with contents divided into two parts:

Part – I - Described the basic computer orientation lessons for initiating Information Technology courses in Class – I to Class – VIII. The details briefly elucidated objectives, contents to be studied and the set of skills expected to be built therefrom.

Part – II - Presented an ensemble of courses arranged in generic skill categories that they impart; e.g. office automation, programming, networking, database management, etc. Furthermore, the courses were arranged in ascending order of difficulty i.e. Level I – IV. Each successive step moved from 'Basic' to 'Intermediate' to 'Advance' and onto the 'Professional' level.

4.3 Feasibility Study for Establishing Yemen Academy of Information Technology, Republic of Yemen.

The INIT in coordination with Embassy of the Republic of Yemen Islamabad and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Yemen conducted a feasibility study for establishing Yemen Academy of Information Technology – Republic of Yemen. The Study team during visited Yemen from April 12 – 18, 2008.

The Study Team during its visit to Yemen, held discussions with a number of stakeholders coming from academia, Government and industry and recommended a multi-phased plan extended over a period of ten years.

The Study Team recommended establishing Yemen Academy of Information Technology to be undertaken in the following three phases.

Phase – I	=	Year 1 – 4
Phase – II	=	Year 5 – 7
Phase – III	=	Year 8 – 10

A complete Road Map/Action Plan for establishing the Yemen Academy of Information Technology has also been prepared and included in this Study. The details of necessary human resource, infrastructure and financial requirements on a proposed timeline are also presented.

5. PROGRAM – III

Information Technology Popularization and Capacity Building Fund

An 'IT Popularization and Capacity Building Fund' (Fund) has been established under auspices of the Network. Under this Fund, demonstration projects are invited from among the Network member states that support the goals of popularization, capacity building, content development, process re-engineering, etc. Those projects are funded which exhibit the deployment of innovative and cost-effective approaches in addressing social, technological and academic issues in a coordinated manner.

The funding criteria requires inter alia, that only such projects to be funded which have representation in their formulation, execution and delivery to interest groups/stakeholders coming from at least more than one economic sections of society. Consideration is also given for the information/experience gained from implementation of the projects that can be used to test new approaches, identify best practices, and suggest more flexible ways of responding to issues thus helping improve the program and service delivery, in multiple geographic locations.

The funding is provided after public solicitation of projects from among the Network member states and asking for proposals on a structured format. Initially funding for each individual project is restricted to one half of the total cost (of such project) or US $ 8,000/-, whichever is less. Pursuant to the decision by the General Body of INIT regarding establishing an 'IT Popularization and Capacity Building Fund' for supporting projects with the goals of IT popularization, capacity building, content development, process re-engineering, etc. The following event was partially sponsored by the Fund:

5.1 Two (2) Day First International Workshop on Curricula Development and Optimization in Business Administration, April 13 – 14, 2006

The Workshop was, inter alia, focused to foster the productive relationship and improve national capacity for intellectual and economic growth as well as supporting the discovery of new IT knowledge, eventually enhancing the competitive level of IT skilled workforce. It delineated efforts for suitable educational policy that ultimately helped the institutions, researchers and industry professionals working in the fields of IT.

5.2 Five (5) Day OIC, COMSTECH Workshop on Bioinformatics: Current Progress and Practical Application at Baku, Azerbaijan – June 23 – 28, 2008

The INIT collaborated with the COMSTECH, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of Azerbaijan and COMSATS Institute of Information Technology in convening a 5 Day OIC COMSTECH Workshop on 'Bioinformatics: Current Progress and Practical Application' at Baku – Azerbaijan on June 23 – 28, 2008. The proposed Workshop is, *inter alia,* focused to foster the productive relationship and improve research and development capacity among 9 OIC countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan) in the emerging cross-disciplinary area of Bioinformatics where information technology and computational techniques are utilized to advance research in life sciences and holds a great promise especially in the areas of agriculture and healthcare. A few of the major objectives of the Workshop were as under:

a) To outline briefly the history, current status and perspectives of Bioinformatics in the world and, particularly in OIC member states represented in this Workshop;
b) To introduce this modern cutting edge area of research to the participants, to

give theoretical knowledge and practical experience of using bioinformatics resource available, as well as the development of new tools of computational analysis in molecular biology and biotechnology;

c) To discuss the possibilities of collaboration between the scientists from the OIC countries, Europe and USA (joint research projects, groups etc); and

d) To represent the modern Bioinformatics research tools (methodology and software) the Workshop participants for practice and further potential use in their institutional research programs as well as to discuss possibilities of distributing these resources in other OIC countries.

The Workshop was attended by participants from nine OIC member states and provided an excellent opportunity to build, renew and strengthen the research and development linkages in the subject area within the OIC member states.

5.3 1st South Asian International Conference – SAICON 2008, at Muree,– Pakistan , November 12 – 14, 2008

The INIT collaborated with Department of Business Administration, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) which is also founder and host of Regional South Asia Chapter of the Academy for Global Business Advancement (AGBA) has for convening First South Asian International Conference SAICON 2008 on November 12 – 14, 2008.

The Conference was organized under the theme of Globalization and Change: Issues, Concerns and Impact and was a host to as many as 60 foreign delegates and 150 local delegates. The Conference had over 12 research papers on Information Technology and its popularization with respect to the changing issues and scenarios of world. The discussion at such an international level helped member Islamic countries to better identify the upcoming problems and propose solutions and identify the areas of common interest.

6. PROGRAM – IV
Training and Capacity Building

Learning, education and training benefit individuals, enterprises and society alike. Education and training make individuals employable, help them gain access to decent work and escape poverty and marginalization. Education and training also improve individuals' productivity and income earning opportunities at work, their mobility in the labour market, and widen their choice of career opportunities.

A critical challenge that faces human society at the start of the twenty-first century is to attain full employment and sustained economic growth in the global economy and social inclusivity.

This challenge has recently become even more complex and demanding. Economic, social and technological change is gathering pace and calls for continuous policy and institutional adaptation in order to meet new needs and seize the opportunities that are opening up in a rapidly integrating world economy.

It has been increasingly recognized that people's endowment of skills and capabilities, and investment in education and training, constitute the key to economic and social development. Skills and training increase productivity and incomes, and facilitates everybody's participation in economic and social life.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the overall goal of the global economy should be to provide opportunities for all people to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. This requires the attainment of four strategic objectives that are vital to social progress: employment creation, supported by increased and effective investment in human resources development, learning and training for employability, competitiveness, growth and social inclusion of all; promoting human rights at work, improving social protection; and promoting social dialogue. This framework addresses both the quality and quantity of employment and provides the basis for new human resources development and training policies.

In line with such realizations, the INIT has initiated its 'Training and Capacity Building' program. Under this program, the Network promotes training and capacity building activities of the skilled personnel among OIC member states. It encourages collaboration and cooperation in building human resources and institutional capacity through dialogue, disseminating information, conducting training workshops, schools, capacity building activities and exchange of ideas in selected institutions within the Network member states.

The Network promotes training and capacity building activities of the skilled personnel to promote collaboration and cooperation in building human resources and institutional capacity through dialogue, disseminating information and exchange of ideas in selected institutions within the Network member states. The following activities have bee performed under this program from the forum of INT.

6.1 One Week Training Course on Technology Transfer Policy for developing countries 12 - 17 October, 2009

The INIT collaborated with OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) USA, in convening a one Week Training Course on **"Technology Transfer Policy for Developing Countries"** from October 12 - 17, 2009 at COMSTECH building, G-5 Islamabad.

The course was delivered by Technology Transfer & Policy experts from the developed and developing world.The Course was designed for participants from the private & public sector's science & technology managers, policy planners & researchers. The Course mainly included the following;

- International Competitiveness and Technological Change (mainly introducing key concepts and terminology for training course);
- National System of Innovation: Industrialized countries and Newly Industrialized countries (mainly setting foundation of different National Innovation Systems (NISs) as these systems have an impact on international technology transfer activities)
- Technology Transfer and Globalization
- Globalization of Research and Technology (mainly a firm perspective showing how firms have attempted to internationalize some of their R&D activities, which impacts on facilitation of technology transfer programmes)
- Foreign Direct Investment

6.2 International School on Formal Analysis of Security Protocols

The five (5) days International School has a joint collaboration of COMSATS

Institute of Information Technology and United Nations University, Macau SAR China, Higher Education Commission (HEC) and INIT.

The major objectives of School include:
a) to help the students develop an understanding of CSP as a language for modeling and reasoning about systems of interacting concurrent components;
b) to help the students understand the use of formal methods to specify, analyze and verify security protocols; and
c) to familiarize the students with the emerging research issues in this area.

The International School has tentatively been scheduled for March 2011.

7. PROGRAM – V
Information Portal of INIT

The INIT Information Portal was launched by H.E. Prof. Dr. Atta ur Rahman, FRS, N.I., H.I., S.I., T.I., Coordinator General, COMSTECH & Federal Minister/Chairman, Higher Education Commission, Government of Pakistan on July 27, 2005.

The Information Portal is in the process of continual development and can be accessed at www.init.org.pk.

The Information Portal already have and more content is being added on the following subjects:

- Information about Islam
- Articles and research papers
- Projects database
- Scientists
- Link directory
- Yellow pages
- Greeting and charting services
- Job bank
- Online poll
- Classifieds
- Discussion and news groups
- Mailing lists
- Newsletters

The INIT is also working on development of a the following two databases to build a compendium of IT professionals in the Islamic world.

7.1 Database of higher education institutions in the Islamic world offering undergraduate and graduate level programs in the fields of information and communication technologies.

7.2 Database of highly qualified manpower in the Islamic world having expertise in fields of information & communication technologies.

8. PROGRAM – VI
E-Journal

The Network plans to launch an E-Journal for publication of quality research articles/papers through web. It was agreed that the Information Portal maintained by the Network would be an excellent medium for hosting the E-Journal.

9. Membership Campaign for INIT

In its pursuit to increase the outreach of its programs and different opportunities available under the umbrella of INIT, the INIT offers two kind of memberships as outlined below:

9.1 Country Membership

The INIT encourages and invites OIC members states to join hands in harnessing the potential of IT and contribute towards

bridging the widening gap between the Muslim and developed world. We understand that with the association of OIC member states, the Network would be able to come up to the expectations of the Ummah. The INIT has constituted a system of mandatory annual membership fee the OIC member states which opt to be members of the Network.

The INIT has run an extensive membership campaign during the preceding years. Invitations to join the INIT and dissemination of information about its programs were made to the 57 OIC Member States through the good offices of the Coordinator General, COMSTECH and the President, INIT.

The campaign has evoked a lot of interest. At present, besides active members of INIT, a number of other Islamic countries have also shown their interest to joint the Network. Until now, following counties have become its members:

i. Islamic Republic of Pakistan,
ii. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,
iii. Republic of Azerbaijan,
iv. Republic of Gambia,
v. Republic of Sudan
vi. State of Qatar,
vii. Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

In addition to the above, a good number of counties have expressed interest in the activities of the INIT and are expected to join the Network which include Arabic Republic of Egypt, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kingdom of Morocco, Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Republic of Indonesia, Republic of Mali and Syrian Arab Republic.

9.2 Associate Membership

The INIT invites the research and development organizations/institutions in the field of information technology from OIC member states to avail the opportunity to become 'Associate Members' of the Network.

All universities, institutions of higher learning/training, R&D institutions, accreditation bodies, quality and standardization institutions, etc. are eligible to apply. The 'Associate Membership' will be offered to the interested organizations/institutions without payment of any fee for the year 2008-09. Thereafter a nominal fee contribution of US$ 100 from each applicant/associate member will be charged.

The Associate Membership will be renewable after each 2 years upon payment of the renewal fee (US$ 100/-). The Associate Members will be eligible to apply for participation/funding in/from the programs of the INIT. The organizations interested to become Associate Members can fill in the Associate Membership Form (available on the website of INIT i.e. www.init.org.pk and send it to the Secretariat of INIT.

The Associate Membership campaign of INIT is one of its efforts to not only form a central grid of the institutions of higher learning in the fields of information and communication technologies from the Muslim world but also to provide a forum the researchers and practitioners from these institutions to get into joint collaboration and research activities and benefit from the expertise of the qualified human resource available in the Muslim world.

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For further information please contact

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