

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

17 December 2008

(week 51)

(Confirmed)

Present:

Said Irandoust
Izel Ann Dante
Peter Haddawy
Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai
Sivanappan Kumar
Jayant Routray
Jonathan Shaw
Khin Ni Ni Thein
Vilas Wuwongse

Apologies:

Barbara Igel
Mr. Akhtar Nawaz Khan
Sudip Rakshit
Ram Shrestha

Secretariat:

Karma Rana
Namita Sravat

Invitee:

Ajit Annachhatre
Shawn Kelly

PAC 08.12.01 Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed all present to the PAC meeting and the apologies were noted. A special welcome was accorded to the Director of AIT-UN Office, Prof. Ajit Annachhatre, who was invited to the meeting to brief the members on the status of the drafting of a new MoU between AIT and the UNEP Regional Center for Asia-Pacific (RRC.AP).

PAC 08.12.02 Approval and Review of the Minutes of the PAC meeting - 26 November 2008

The minutes of the PAC meeting held on 26 November 2008 were approved.

Follow-up issues:

- 1] **Unified Bachelors-Masters Program:** As agreed during previous PAC meeting, the Director of the Unified Bachelors-Masters Program, Prof. Vilas Salokhe conducted a meeting with the concerned Fields of Study Coordinators on 2 December 2008. It was informed that ASE, ABM FEBT, EEM, and TC have already indicated their readiness to support the program. For the time being the current AIT Extension building has been identified to host the large number of students enrolled in this program, but later once the program runs full-fledged, institute could invest in developing infrastructure for this program.
- 2] **New AIT Charter:** The President informed the meeting that upon directions from MoFA, Thailand, the institute will start working on the AIT bye-laws. Further promotional trips that will be made to Japan, Brunei, Malaysia etc. in order to brief on new AIT Charter, and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Tej Bunnag has kindly agreed to accompany the President on this trips.

The President further informed that with the help of the VP-DR, Dr. Khin Ni Ni Thein, he met with Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Dr. Heyzer, has expressed support for AIT related activities, especially in the context of the new AIT Charter, and offered to arrange meetings with the Directors of the five ESCAP regional institutions, namely the Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (APCAEM) based in Beijing, China; Asian Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) based in Incheon City, Korea; Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology

(APCTT) based in New Delhi, India; Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops' Development in Asia and the Pacific (CAPSA) based in Bogor, Indonesia; and the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) based in Chiba, Japan, as soon as AIT attains formal intergovernmental status, in exploring ways in which there could be synergistic partnerships.

- 3] **Updates on AITCV:** The President informed that he had participated in AIT Center in Vietnam (AITCV) Council of Advisors (COA) Meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam; which was also attended by the VP-ER, Prof. Vilas Wuwongse; Director for Undergraduate Programs, Dr. Nitin Afzulpurkar and newly appointed AITCV Director, Dr. Amrit Bart. During the meeting AIT strategy 2013 was presented and AITCV was encouraged to follow suit in developing its own strategy in line with that of AIT. Dr. Amrit Bart was formally introduced to the Council. Dr. Nitin briefly presented the first undergraduate initiative in Vietnam. While the Council was generally pleased with this initiative, questions were raised whether AIT will be ready to accommodate Vietnamese undergraduate students in its campus within 2-3 years. The meeting concluded with the signing of MoU between Hanoi University of Technology and AIT to cooperate in an undergraduate program. The draft of the MoA between AIT and the International University of the Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City, was also discussed and is expected to finalize soon.
- 4] **Outsourcing of Infrastructure and related facilities:** The President informed that he is considering hiring the Siam Cement Group (SCG) Legal Counsel Limited to assist the institute in the final negotiations for the services fees and contract preparation with the selected service provider. He further informed that he has formed two committees as follows:
- A committee to develop performance indicators that could be integrated in the service contract, to be chaired by the Faculty Representative, Prof. Jayant K Routray and the Head of Administration, Ms. Izel Dante will serve as Committee secretary. To ensure that the perspectives of the different sections and constituencies in AIT are represented, there will also be representatives from the Schools and AIT Extension. The committee shall also consult the staff and resident constituencies to identify their respective representatives to this committee, as well as invite the representative of the law firm assisting the Institute in contract preparations in its deliberations.
 - A committee to work closely with the hired legal consultant in preparing the service contract for the outsourcing of the campus infrastructure facilities management and to be chaired by Dr. Naveed Anwar, Associate Director, ACECOMS, and includes as members Mr. Noppadon Rittipongshusit, Head Finance, and Mr. Avinash Patel, Former AIT Treasurer. One important task of the Committee will be to ensure that the recommendations made by the Committee working on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are also integrated into the contract.

It was **suggested** to also check and compare with other universities in Thailand who have outsourced their units similar to the ones AIT is planning.

- 5] **Property Fund:** Following up on the Board of Trustees resolution to explore the possibility of establishing a property fund for the campus-wide infrastructure plan, a meeting was held with Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) specialist on property funds, Mr. Adisorn, who shared useful and critical information on how best to understand such funds. Mr. Noppadon Rittipongshusit, Head-Finance and Ms. Ann Lopez-Fontanilla, Head-Student Office also joined the meeting. The SCB has committed to send a team to undertake a feasibility study on AIT Property Fund. It has also been informed by Prof. Vilas that there is possibility of getting soft loan from HEC in Thailand.
- 6] **Promotional Video:** The News and Media Specialist, Mr. Shawn Kelly informed that the revised promotional video will be ready by January 2009. It was agreed that instead of using former Ambassador to Thailand, the caption should be the Ambassador to Thailand (with dates specified).

The President stated that he has received two proposals for the video coverage of the AIT's Golden Jubilee celebration. These will be **reviewed by Mr. Kelly, who will also present another proposal for President's consideration.**

- 7] **P&P on MoU and MoA:** The draft P&P on MoU and MoA prepared by the Head-ERCO, Dr. Pritam Shrestha was distributed to the members for their review and approval. It was **agreed to deliberate on it during the next PAC meeting.**

PAC 08.12.03 New MoU between AIT and the UNEP Regional Center for Asia-Pacific (RRC.AP)

The Director of AIT-UN Office, Prof. Ajit Annachhatre briefed the members on the status of the drafting of a new MoU between AIT and the UNEP Regional Center for Asia-Pacific (RRC.AP). The UNEP delegation during a meeting showed their willingness for joint selection and appointment of RRC director who reports to AIT president for its day to day operations. However, in this case, UNEP expects that the director's position be jointly funded by AIT and UNEP. Other suggestion put forward to make the partnership more meaningful was that each party's responsibilities and resources be properly identified. UNEP agreed to minimum 50% representative in Joint Steering Committee (JSC) by AIT and also agreed that JSC would meet at least once per semester. UNEP can consider paying for utilities over and above the overhead payment provided the RRC director position is jointly funded. In order to initiate these changes, UNEP has suggested the "phased approach". Firstly, UNEP suggested extending the existing MOU till June 2009. Secondly, UNEP plans to appoint Mr. Mahesh Pradhan as Interim Director who would spend 80% of his time in UNEP office at AIT and the remaining 20% in ROAP, Bangkok. In the long run, UNEP also would like to have UNEP representative in AIT board.

All the suggestions given by UNEP were discussed at great length in meeting and Prof. Annachhatre was requested to forward AIT's response to UNEP's suggestions as follows:

- **Director:** The Director of RRC should be selected and appointed jointly by AIT and UNEP. The Director will report to AIT President for day-to-day operation of the center and also to the JSC whenever it meets. The director's position should be supported and funded through the income generated by the Center.
- **MoU:** Since the earlier MoU has already expired, AIT is of the view that the new MoU should be signed as early as possible, whenever it is ready. Until then the current MoU can be in operation. In this case, we need not wait for 6 months to sign the new MoU.
- **JSC:** As agreed by both AIT and UNEP, AIT will have at least 50% representation in the JSC and that the JSC will meet at least once every semester. The first tentative JSC meeting could be held in early January 2009 with ad-hoc members.
- **Overheads:** AIT follows the RCM (Responsibility Center Management) Model for all its Cost Centers. Accordingly, all Cost Centers are expected to pay for their direct utilities (such as water, electricity, rent etc.) and additionally pay the maximum overhead allowed by the supporting funding agency. AIT would like to follow the same RCM model in case of UNEP as well.

PAC 08.12.04 Issues from the President

- 1] **Follow-up Issues from Executive Committee and Board Meetings:** The President stated that the format of the paper on follow-up issues from Executive Committee and Board Meetings has been prepared for better planning purpose and keeping track of issues, and outlines the follow-up issues and actions taken. PAC members commended the format and **suggested to also include the 'actions to be taken' along with the deadline for completing them and the unit incharge specified.**

The President also mentioned that he has requested the Head-Administration, Ms. Izel to use ICT in tracking of status of applications, purchase requests, RTAs etc. online. It was suggested that this could be done by a student assistant/associate as a project. The VP-AA, Prof. Peter Haddawy informed that he is aware that Dr. Paul Janecek in CSIM FoS in SET has some students who could be recruited to do this exercise if funding is available.

- 2] **Academic Recognition of Outreach Work:** The President informed that it is proposed that faculty engaged in outreach activities and projects can include a request for review of their respective outreach activities in their application for promotion. The review process of outreach activities will be led by the outreach board and the concerned Field of Study and school will be involved in the review by assessing the academic relevance and quality of the activity. The outreach board will finalize and formulate a recommendation for the Faculty Evaluation Panel (FEP) review. It was informed that the Wetlands Alliance Outreach Coordinator, Dr. Theo Ebbers was asked to present the P&P on Academic Recognition of Outreach Work to the Schools and AIT Extension before finalizing it, and he will also be presenting it to the FEP that afternoon. The finalized P&P will then be forwarded to the Academic Senate also for their review.

- 3] **Updates on Fundraising:** Endowment funds of 100 m US\$ is being targeted by the end of 2013, the interest from this provide for about 30% of our yearly operational costs, and also serve as an important buffer or contingency to accommodate unforeseen fluctuations such as in currency or partner support to the Institute. For this fundraising assistance would be needed. Thus, a well known fundraising and management consultancy firm had been approached and they have sent proposal outlining 3 stages of their engagement and services to AIT, that includes Strategic Fundraising Review, External Fundraising Assessment and Campaign Advice / Support Services. The proposal will be further evaluated, and the success of this concept in the context of other organizations will also be examined. It is likely that the institute will enter into an agreement for at least Stage 1 with them, and so then the internal fundraising strategies would accordingly need to be realigned. The proposal could be sent to the PAC members in strict confidence if desired.
- 4] **Strategic communications:** The President mentioned that Mr. Alex Treadyway, whose most recent engagement has been with ICIMOD, will be visiting AIT from 26-28 January 2009. During his visit he will be scheduled to meet with the President, Vice Presidents, School Deans, Director AIT Extension, Director of the AIT Center in Vietnam, Director of the AIT Center in Indonesia, Head Administration, Head ERCO, Head Students, News and Media Specialist among others. Following his meetings and interactions he will be invited to provide his reflections outlining a possible scope of work with AIT aimed at further enhancing various strategic communications aspects of the Institute. It was agreed that the profile of some of the projects which he has undertaken over the past three years will be circulated to the PAC members for their information.
- 5] **Faculty Promotion after Retirement:** It was agreed that the Faculty promotion after retirement should not be considered. However, to avoid such cases, it was suggested that the decision on promotion cases should be taken within six months of application.
- 6] **Renaming PSSU:** The Promotional Support Services Unit (PSSU) will be renamed as the Media and Communications Unit (MCU). The MCU will remain under the External Relations and Communications Office (ERCO). This new title better reflects the mandate and primary work of this unit, which is to communicate the news and key messages of all things AIT through the media in Thailand, within the Asian region, and around the world. As "MCU" more explicitly denotes the core activities carried out by this unit, the name itself will make it easier for all audiences and media to contact AIT for these purposes. The MCU will also provide photographic and graphics service, video service capability, and will be charged with substantially increasing the profile of AIT through enhanced web presence and media penetration.
- 7] **Radio Amateur Society of Thailand (RAST) at AIT:** RAST which is a society under Royal Patronage of H.M. the King of Thailand, has a station at AIT, and they are keen to explore ways in which AIT could make more use of their Center, in initiatives and activities such as the new master offering 'Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation and Management (DPMM)' and have also offered to serve as guest lecturers. It was agreed that the Head-Infrastructure, Dr. Hoang Le Tien will facilitate the meetings between RAST and FoS coordinators of RSGIS and TC from SET, Program Co-Coordination of DMPM/SERD. Based on the feedback from these meetings decision could then be taken.

PAC 08.12.05 Feedback from School Retreats

It was **agreed** that a special PAC meeting (with all School Deans present) will be held to discuss the feedback from the school retreats.

PAC 08.12.06 AIT Strategy 2013

The revised version of the AIT Strategy 2013 after incorporating comments from the Board, Executive Committee, Institute-Level Advisory Board, and School Retreats was distributed to the PAC members for their review. Some further minor editorial and formatting suggestions were noted by Mr. Kelly, who would also incorporate any comments received from the Board members by 31 December 2008. The final version will be sent to the School Deans for distributing it to the faculty members in their schools. It was agreed that a special Academic Senate meeting could be convened in mid-January 2009 to present the final AIT Strategy 2013. The AIT Strategy 2013 will then be finalized and printed and ready for distribution by the end of January 2009.

PAC 08.12.07 Next Meeting

Due to time constraints it was agreed to defer the rest of the agenda items for the next PAC meeting that will be held on Wednesday, 7 January 2009. Members were requested to bring along the papers from this meeting.

/ns 30 December 2008