

AVI COMMENTARY

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Cambodia Needs Science, Technology, and Innovation Magazines

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Cambodia had enjoyed strong GDP growth of approximately 7% before the COVID-19 pandemic, mainly contributed by the garments and textiles, construction, tourism, and agriculture sectors. In the Industrial Revolution (IR) 4.0 era, which focuses on interconnectivity, automation, machine learning, and real-time data, Cambodia has adopted IR 4.0 to boost Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to catch up with other countries in the region and the world.

Therefore, the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation (MISTI) and the National Science and Technology Council established national policies such as “National Policy on STI 2020–2030” and “Cambodia STI Roadmap 2030”. The policy aims to strengthen the foundations for STI, improve the STI environment, and develop an STI ecosystem for sustainable development and enhanced quality of people’s livelihoods.

Moreover, MISTI formed an STI Advisory Board to provide policy recommendations. Such initiatives demonstrate the Royal Government of Cambodia’s commitment to promoting STI development as the engine for sustainable economic growth and enhanced social well-being of the citizens.

Although Cambodia has achieved remarkable economic and social progress in the last few decades, the country still needs to develop a higher standard of education to ensure that good quality human resources fit the market demand. The government should invest more in education and training to develop human capital from primary to university levels. It also needs to invest more in training programmes for teachers, researchers, and technicians. In addition, it needs to focus on fostering a scientific attitude in society to build research capacity and a knowledge-based society.

STI is important for economic development and people’s well-being. Research and Development (R&D) and education are potential sustainable growth and development pathways. Therefore, synergy should be created between science and society to share knowledge between scientists and the public. Communication channels are needed to share constructive perspectives and create prosperity for society.

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Examples of Early Knowledge Dissemination Platforms

An example of the early dissemination platforms for scientific discoveries and research findings, the so-called transactions, were initiated in European countries and other countries. These platforms include Journal des Sçavans (5th January 1665, France), Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society (Phil. Trans.) (6th March 1665, UK), American Journal of Science (AJS) (1818, the US), and Asiatic Researches, or Transactions of the Society for inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia (1788, India).

Later, conferences, science magazines, newspapers, scientific journals, and other serial publications were introduced as communication mediums. Famous journals, such as Nature and Science, were also established as interdisciplinary science magazines. Therefore, research publications have contributed to knowledge creation in society, and the countries that invested a lot in R&D have achieved high economic growth.

Why Does Cambodia Need STI Magazines?

In Cambodia, several magazines/journals are published by different organisations/institutions. However, there is not yet a magazine focusing on promoting STI. Thus, creating an STI magazine will contribute to the inculcation and enhancement of STI knowledge in Cambodia and alignment with the government's National Research Agenda 2025 and policies of embracing the digital economy and digital government. Moreover, it will respond to current social and economic changes due to growing digitalisation. Around 75% of Cambodian youth and middle-aged population use digital devices, which is expected to increase in the future. In addition, the magazine will help Cambodia catch up with regional and global trends in trade and commerce. It will support the country's efforts in FTAs and RCEP.

Based on the reasons above, we urgently need to establish the STI magazine, named STI Focus, with the following aims of serving the public: 1) acting as a medium for communication of science to the public; 2) disseminating scientific findings, technology trends, and STI policies; and 3) promoting STEM education and careers in Cambodia.

STI Focus is managed by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation Promotion and Development (D/PRO) of the National Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation (NISTI), MISTI. Moreover, the magazine ensures quality through peer review, with STI experts serving as members of the editorial board, editorial team, and review team. With a strong team and support from relevant institutions, partners, and top leaders, STI Focus will regularly publish two issues annually.

With this new magazine as a platform to communicate and promote knowledge of STI, researchers and young scholars are encouraged to submit their research findings for publication to promote STI research and development in Cambodia.

The views expressed are the author's own and do not reflect the views of the Asian Vision Institute.