

Technology Market Scan

INTERNATIONAL

Public investment for research and innovation

A new *Science Business* report, based on a review of economic studies around the world, finds wide variation in how economists estimate the impact of public R&D investment – ranging from a dead loss in some cases to 14,000 per cent in others, depending on the type of technology, the nature of the programme, and the way the impact is measured. But over the past decade, the report finds, a preponderance of broad economic analyses has pegged the long-term return on one euro of public investment in the area of 20 cents a year. This compares to a 6.8 per cent annual return for the past 10 years of the US stock market (S&P 500) or 3.1 per cent for 10-year Euro Area Government Bonds.

Around the world, governments spend more than \$1.7 trillion a year on research and development – but often have difficulty tracking the impact. Some investments have had profound impact, such as the US Human Genome Project in the 1990s which, by one estimate, for every dollar invested paid back \$141 in new medicines, products, services and employment. Likewise, the European Union's investment over 30 years in mobile technologies – funding more than 380 research projects, and in the 1980s and 1990s leading the charge for cross-border technology standards – catalysed the growth of mobile phone markets around the world.

The report, by Science Business policy analyst Philip Hines, was released on 27 June in Brussels, at the annual meeting of the Science Business Network. It brings together 58 companies, universities, and public-sector organisations dedicated to research and innovation. The group also released a report on international cooperation in research and innovation, urging changes in the EU's Framework Programme to boost global participation. As with all Science Business policy and news reports, the opinions expressed are those of Science Business itself and do not necessarily reflect the views of Network members.

<http://sciencebusiness.net>

Global Innovation Index 2017

Released jointly by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Cornell University, INSEAD and the 2017 GII Knowledge Partners, the Confederation of Indian Industry, PwC's Strategy& and the National Confederation of Industry (CNI) and Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae).

Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, the USA and the UK are the world's most-innovative countries, while a group of nations including India, Kenya, and Viet Nam are outperforming their development-level peers, according to the Global Innovation Index 2017 co-authored by Cornell University, INSEAD and WIPO. Key findings show the rise of India as an emerging innovation center in Asia, high innovation performance in Sub-Saharan Africa relative to development and an opportunity to improve innovation capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Each year, the GII surveys some 130 economies using dozens of metrics, from patent filings to education spending providing decision makers a high-level look at the innovative activity that increasingly drives economic and social growth. In a new feature for the GII, a special section looks at "invention hotspots" around the globe that show the highest density of inventors listed in international patent applications. Now in its tenth edition, the GII 2017 notes a continued gap in innovative capacity between developed and developing nations and lackluster growth rates for research and development (R&D) activities, both at the government and corporate levels.

<http://www.wipo.int>

ASIA-PACIFIC

CHINA

Artificial intelligence revolution

A new AI development plan calls for China to become the world leader in the field by 2030. On July 20, China's State Council issued the "Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan" which articulates

an ambitious agenda for China to lead the world in AI. China intends to pursue a "first-mover advantage" to become the "premier global AI innovation center" by 2030. Through this new strategic framework, China will advance a "three in one" agenda in AI: tackling key problems in research and development, pursuing a range of products and applications, and cultivating an AI industry. The Chinese leadership thus seeks to seize a "major strategic opportunity" to advance its development of AI, potentially surpassing the United States in the process.

This new plan, which will be implemented by a new AI Plan Promotion Office within the Ministry of Science and Technology, outlines China's objectives for advances in AI in three stages. First, by 2020, China's overall progress in technology and applications of AI should keep pace with the world's advanced level, while its AI industry becomes an important economic growth point. By this time, China hopes to have achieved important progress in next generation AI technologies, including big data, swarm intelligence, hybrid enhanced intelligence, and autonomous intelligent systems. At that point, the value of China's core AI industry is targeted to exceed 150 billion RMB (over \$22 billion) in value, with AI-related fields valued at 1 trillion RMB (nearly \$148 billion). Concurrently, China should have advanced in gathering top talent and establishing initial frameworks for laws, regulations, ethics, and policy.

Next, by 2025, China should have achieved major breakthroughs in AI to reach a leading level, with AI becoming a primary driver for China's industrial advances and economic transformation. At that point, China intends to have become a leading player in research and development, while widely using AI in fields ranging from manufacturing to medicine to national defense. China's core AI industry should have surpassed 400 billion RMB (about \$59 billion), with AI-related fields exceeding 5 trillion RMB (about \$740 billion). In addition, China plans to have achieved progress in the creation of laws and regulations, as well as ethical norms and policies, along with the establishment of mechanisms for AI safety assessment.

Ultimately, by 2030, China intends to have become the world's premier AI innovation center. At that point, China believes it can achieve major breakthroughs in research and development to "occupy the commanding heights of AI technology." In addition, AI should have been expanded and its use deepened within multiple domains, including social governance and national defense. By then, China's AI industry is targeted to exceed 1 trillion RMB (\$148 billion), with AI-related fields totaling \$10 trillion (\$1.48 trillion). To support its continued primacy in AI, China plans to create leading AI innovation and personnel training bases, while constructing more comprehensive for legal, regulatory, ethical, and policy frameworks.

<http://thediplomat.com>

Tax incentives for tech SMEs

China has announced measures to encourage research and development (R&D) by tech firms through favorable tax terms, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) said in a statement. Small and medium sized-enterprises (SME) in the technological sector can deduct an additional 75 percent of the R&D costs that occurred before paying taxes, effectively lowering their taxable income, according to the statement.

Tech SMEs that chose alternatively to capitalize the R&D costs as intangible assets in the current accounting period can amortize the assets at 175 percent of the original costs. The new tax term will be in effect from the beginning of 2017 to the end of 2019, the statement said.

China has been offering tax incentives to spur corporate dynamism and competitiveness, offering tailored measures to firms of different types. The MOF also announced tax incentives for venture capital firms, allowing them to deduct a certain amount of taxable income for investing in startups. The value added tax (VAT) system will also be streamlined, with four VAT brackets reduced to three, the MOF said.

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn>

Promoting innovation, entrepreneurship

China will go further on innovation-driven development and entrepreneurship, with more policy incentives to entrepreneurship from overseas. A guideline is approved at a State Council executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang to further enhance the support for innovation and entrepreneurship.

China will establish an integrated digital business license registry, and enable one-stop registration for foreign enterprises and their domestic counterparts within a given timeframe for due procedures. The government will simplify procedures of work and residential permit application for high-calibre foreign talents, and pilot integrated service in housing, schooling and medical care. Overseas students in China who start new businesses can also apply for residential permit with their diplomas.

Statistics by the State Administration for Industry and Commerce shows that the country saw the registration of more than 13 million new enterprises between March 2014 and February 2017, 94.6 percent of which are in the private sector, adding an average of 15,600 new enterprises on a daily basis in the first five months of this year, giving employment a major boost.

The country will also put in place programs to support Chinese students overseas to return for business startups and innovation, and enable overseas Chinese entrepreneurs, including those from Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, enjoy the same public services as local residents, according to the guideline. More efforts will go to the protection of intellectual property rights, while invigorating technology markets and explore a mechanism that can ensure timely commercialization of research findings with fiscal support in some areas.

The country will also expand the funding channels for enterprises, including measures to enhance the credit support and relevant services and reform on rules for state capital to take part in venture capital investment, according to the guideline. The upgrading of the real economy will

get a boost from enhancing the development of innovation and entrepreneurship platforms, the sharing economy and the development of digital economy.

<http://www.shanghaidaily.com>

INDIA

Innovation lab to promote water and sanitation

Start-ups in Kerala will work closely with the Innovation lab to build products addressing water, sanitation, mobility and agriculture. The Kerala Government and UN's Office of Information and Communication Technology will join hands to set up the country's first UN Technology Innovation Lab in Thiruvananthapuram, it was announced recently.

The Kerala Startup Mission will be spearheading this initiative on behalf of Kerala government and water, sanitation, mobility and agriculture are areas the state government have identified as best suited for this innovation centre, as it would not only address the needs of the state but also can be a collaboration lever with other UN member states experiencing similar issues, said an official. The start-ups in the state will be working closely with the Innovation lab to build products addressing these issues.

The proposed centre would be a United Nations technology project led by the Office of Information and Communication Technology and staffed with members from both the technology and substantive programme areas of the UN.

<http://www.thenewsminute.com>

Intellectual property exchange

India will soon have an Intellectual Property (IP) Exchange, joining the league of countries like Hong Kong and United Kingdom, where individuals and commercial entities both in India and overseas will be able to buy and sell intellectual property rights across various sectors. The exchange will be developed under the ministry of science and technology through the National Research Development Corporation (NRDC). The idea of setting up a

patent exchange similar to those in Hong Kong and the UK was floated in the ministry around two months ago. The project has already got in-principle approval from the science and technology ministry.

“We have been mandated with the task of creation of the proposed IP exchange and the process will take around 8–9 months for collecting data and setting up the exchange. We are already undertaking exercise of collecting necessary data and information on patents filed worldwide on multiple technologies, predominantly on agriculture and allied sectors,” said NRDC chairman and managing director H. Purushotham.

In India, IP rights are given by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks (CGPDTM). According to its annual report of 2015–16, India witnessed about 30% increase in filing of intellectual property applications compared to previous years. In 2015–16, 3,41,086 applications were filed for IP rights as against 2,35,306 in 2011–12.

According to India Brand Equity Foundation’s Innovation and Patents report released in June, India’s research and development spend is estimated to reach \$71.5 billion by 2016 from \$66.49 billion in 2015. In 2015, India became the world’s sixth largest annual research and development spending country, accounting for 3.53% of global R&D expenditure. R&D spending in India is anticipated to grow from 0.9% to 2.4% of the country’s GDP from 2014 to 2034 respectively.

The number of multinational corporations with R&D centres in India has grown at a CAGR of 4.57% from 721 in 2010 to 943 in 2016. During 2010–16, the workforce in MNC R&D centres increased at a CAGR of 10.08% and reached 363,000, which is estimated to further increase to 387,000 by 2017 in India.

<http://www.livemint.com>

Mission for ultra-supercritical technologies

India will launch a national mission on advanced ultra-supercritical technologies for cleaner coal utilisation at a total cost of \$

238 million and setting up of two centres of excellence on clean coal technologies at \$ 5 million each. “In its quest for cleaner fuels, a national mission on methanol and di-methyl ether is being mounted. A new centre on solar photovoltaic, thermal storage and solar fuels research has been approved at approximately \$ 5 million. Funding opportunities have been announced in the area of energy storage, clean coal, waste water treatment amounting to \$ 10 million,” said the Government of India in a statement at the 2nd Mission Innovation (MI) Ministerial and 8th Clean Energy Ministerial at Beijing, China.

India also announced two MI-centric funding opportunities in smart grid and offgrid access at \$ 5 million each. Joint virtual Clean Energy Centre with UK and Indian Government funding of £ 5 million each has been initiated. Under the Indo-US Joint Clean Energy Research (PACE – R) the new collaborative public-private programme on smart grids & energy storage has been approved. India has also embarked upon a joint programme on renewable energy with Norway.

Eighteen months ago on November 30, 2015, leaders of 20 countries came together to launch Mission Innovation (MI), a landmark 5-year commitment to accelerate the pace of innovation and make clean energy widely affordable and accessible worldwide. MI now comprises 22 economies and the European Commission, representing the European Union, and collectively accounts for more than 80 percent of the world’s total public financing of clean energy R&D.

<http://www.business-standard.com>

INDONESIA

Spending on tech start-up incubation

Indonesia has nearly doubled its public spending on incubating tech-based businesses from Rp 190 billion (\$14.1 million) to Rp 370 billion (\$27.6 million), a government official said. The number seems minuscule still when compared to the funds the archipelago’s neighbouring countries are setting aside. Malaysia has budgeted

for RM200 million (\$46 million) to support its local startups, and Singapore recently introduced a new S\$200 million (\$146 million) startup building programme. Thailand, too, recently announced a Digital Economy Fund worth \$147 million.

Jumain Appe, directorate general of innovation at the Indonesian technology and higher education ministry, told reporters in Jakarta that the increased budget shows the government’s commitment to push innovation and entrepreneurship. “We are targeting about 60 incubation units from which 500 startups are expected to be created,” he explained.

The government had funded 45 incubators with last year’s budget. Jokowi’s administration continues to look for pockets of funding to catch up with the private sector that has dominated the budding industry. It has said that it is looking at converting a part of the government’s credit facilities for micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), labelled people’s business credit (KUR), into venture capital funds to be deployed in startups.

<https://www.dealstreetasia.com>

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Patent office supports inventors

An Iranian science official says the country’s Vice Presidency for Science and Technology Affairs supports Iranian inventors who seek to obtain patent protection for their inventions and innovations from international centres and commercialize them. The director of Iran Patent Office, Mehdi Zaghimi, says Iranian inventors can enjoy the support of the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology Affairs to take out patent for their scientific and industrial achievements and commercialize them, which is a costly and difficult process.

Zaghimi added over the past two years, the Iranian industrial and scientific society has witnessed an almost 100-percent growth in the number of patents issued by leading international centres for its inventions. In 2015, only 48 patents had been granted to Iranian inventions, he said, adding, however, that in 2016, the figure rose to 94.

"Among the services Iran Patent Office provides domestic knowledge-based companies with is offering a 90-percent support [to them] in the process of obtaining patent protection from leading international centres. This is because the process of taking out international patent rights is quite costly and time taking. Over the past few years, Iran Patent Office has shored up more than 30 percent of the Iranian inventions in the process of getting patent rights."

He added Iran Patent Office has set up a number of [invention] commercialization and intellectual property offices in Iranian universities which hold specialized workshops on the process of obtaining patent protection for inventions. Zaghimi put the number of these offices at 41, adding they have been established with the cooperation of Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology and domestic universities. In 2015, he said, some 160 patent applications were submitted to Iran Patent Office. "In 2016, the figure rose to 300, of which only 30 percent are processed."

<http://ifpnews.com>

Incentives for export of knowledge-based products

The Iranian Fund for Innovation and Prosperity (NSFund) has approved a 2% cut in the interest rate of export loans in a renewed effort to help boost Iran-made knowledge-based products in the international market. Knowledge-based firms can now receive export loans at 9%, Behzad Soltani, head of the fund said in a press release. "Knowledge-based companies may apply for loans once they finalize an export deal with foreign companies. They will receive loans on par with the value of their contracts," he added.

The firms would be obliged to start production for exports after they receive the loans, Soltani said and noted that repayment would start after a negotiated grace period. Firms can also apply for loans after exports. Such companies can take loans on par with the value of their exports at [an extra] 1% interest.

Launched in 2008 as an independent entity, the fund is in charge of offering financial services to knowledge-based companies.

However, firms need to be licensed by the Vice-Presidential Office for Science and Technology. The fund started operation in 2013, NSFund's loans and investments amounted to 14.9 trillion rials (\$397 million) over the past two years (March 2015–17).

So far 3,037 knowledge-based companies are registered with the vice presidency including 1,751 startups, 867 firms active in production sector and 419 industrial knowledge-based firms. Firms involved in biotech, medicine and medical equipment accounted for the largest portion of the revenue earned—3.6 trillion rials (\$96 million) in the past two years.

<https://financialtribune.com>

MALAYSIA

Training facility to develop skilled workforce

MIMOS Berhad and the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) jointly launched a human capital development centre, called MIMOS-NCIA Advanced Competency Development Centre (MIMOS-NCIA ACDC). MIMOS, an agency under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), is Malaysia's premier Applied Research and Development Centre in ICT, Industrial Electronics Technology and Nano-Semiconductor Technology. NCIA is the authority responsible for the socio-economic development in the Northern Corridor Economic Region (Koridor Utara), which encompasses 25 districts in northern Peninsular Malaysia in the states of Kedah, Perak, Perlis and Penang.

MIMOS-NCIA ACDC offers an end-to-end, world-class, high-technology industry training facility aimed at fostering hands-on experience needed to produce highly-skilled workforce in the Electrical & Electronics (E&E) sector. The local E&E industry is being encouraged to take advantage of the MIMOS-NCIA ACDC to build a workforce with the high-level skills required for Industry 4.0. The E&E sector is key driver for Malaysia's industry, contributing RM288 billion (USD 67.2 billion) or 36.7 per cent of total national exports in 2016.

The Centre is expected to produce 2,000 high-impact E&E professional over five

years, meeting the demand from all E&E companies operating in the country presently. The advanced shared service facilities, which form a large part of MIMOS-NCIA ACDC, are internationally certified with ISO9001: 2008 and ISO/IEC17025. The facilities support NanoVerify programme, a joint programme between NanoMalaysia Berhad and SIRIM QAS.

<http://www.opengovasia.com>

PHILIPPINES

Bill to boost scientific innovations, inventions

The House Committee on Science and Technology has approved House Bill 4581 filed by Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, which aims to boost the country's scientific innovations and inventions, research and development towards social progress and global competitiveness. Titled "Science for Change Program (S4CP) Act" with the theme of "Science for the People," and a budget that could reach PHP672 billion by 2022, HB 4581 is designed to help accelerate science, technology and innovation (STI) developments and enable the country to keep up with current global technology and innovation trends.

S4CP was launched by the house committee on science and technology chaired by Bohol Rep. Erico Aristotle Aumentado. When enacted, it will be implemented by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). It was hailed by legislators as a key towards higher standards of STI and global competitiveness. The total R&D budget for 2017 is PHP5.8 billion. The bill proposes an estimated R&D budget which starts at PHP21 billion next year, more or less doubling yearly over the next five-year period, and could reach PHP672 billion in 2022.

S4CP focuses on four core concerns: 1) Program Expansion, 2) New Programs, 3) S&T Human Resource Development, and 4) Accelerated R&D Program for Capacity Building of Research and Development (R&D) Institutions and Industrial Competitiveness. S4CP target areas for R&D include health, food and nutrition; human security; agricultural and aquatic productivity; creative industries, tourism

and services industries; nuclear science for health, agriculture and energy; and agriculture; renewable energy; Biotechnology for agriculture, health and environment; Space Technology and ICT development; Artificial Intelligence, and climate and environmental sciences, among others.

It gives special focus on "S&T education, training, and services" and supports "indigenous, appropriate, and self-reliant scientific and technological capabilities, and their application to the country's productive systems and national life."

<https://www.update.ph>

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

New technology committee

To promote the development of so-called fourth industrial revolution technologies, the government is creating a committee headed by a person from the private sector - a contrast to other presidential committees that President Moon Jae-in is personally chairing. According to the Presidential Advisory Committee for State Affairs Planning, Moon's de facto transition team, preparations for the forming of the committee will begin next month and its launch will be in August. Moon is directly supervising the plan.

The de facto transition team said the person who heads the committee will come from the private sector and be higher in status than government ministers. The second-in-command positions will be shared by the Minister of Science, ICT and Future Planning and the Blue House policy chief. "The committee will be setting the nation's policy directions in regard to the fourth industrial revolution," said Park Kwang-on, the de facto transition team spokesman. "It will be in charge of fine-tuning the policies of different [government] departments while also gauging public opinion and evaluating performances."

The government intends fourth industrial revolution technologies to enter industrial fields and also the daily lives of the public, the spokesman said. While the Ministry of Strategy and Finance has played a central role in developing technology policies, that role will be taken by the Science and ICT Ministry, which has a more direct con-

nection to evolving technologies and related businesses.

The decision to invite an expert from the private sector to head the fourth industrial revolution committee is seen as the government's attempt to encourage innovative technology changes led by the private sector. Past administrations' concepts of new growth engine projects were mostly led by the government.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com>

Road map to upgrade robot technology

The Republic of Korean government has unveiled a road map to develop robot technologies and utilize them in various industrial sectors, the industry ministry said. The plan was a follow-up of the government-led project to upgrade the country's robotics sector set up in November last year, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. The ministry and state-run research centers, including the Korea Institute of Science and Technology and the Korea Institute of Robot and Convergence, have participated in mapping out the road map for the past six months.

Under the plan, related technologies have been categorized into eight core sectors, such as manufacturing, agriculture, medical services, safety and software, which can allow for a more efficient research and development process, the ministry said.

Earlier, the government said it would invest 500 billion won (\$445 million) in the coming five years to foster the domestic robot industry as a new growth engine for Asia's fourth-largest economy. (Yonhap)

<http://www.koreaherald.com>

SINGAPORE

Single point of access to government grants for business

The Government Digital Services (GDS) team at the Government Technology Agency of Singapore (GovTech) is currently developing the Business Grants Portal (BGP),

which is designed as a single point of access for companies to find and apply for suitable grants from the government.

The Singapore government offers over 25 grants to Small & Medium enterprises (SMEs). Examples of areas where the SMEs can seek support include technology adoption, building in-house R&D capabilities, efficiency improvement, expansion to international markets and workforce training. A number of different agencies are involved, such as Spring Singapore, IE Singapore, the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), Building and Construction Authority (BCA), Singapore Tourism Board (STB), Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) and more.

The BGP seeks to bring the different government grants for businesses into one portal, making it significantly more convenient for businesses to find and apply for the grants they need. Previously they would have needed to visit multiple websites to find the right grant meeting their requirement.

Users need a CorpPass account to log in to the portal. CorpPass is a single corporate digital identity for businesses and other entities (such as non-profit organisations and associations) to transact with Government agencies online. It was introduced by GovTech last year to remove the need for users to handle multiple login IDs. By December 2017, CorpPass will be the required login for over 100 government digital services.

Access to BGP is divided into three tiers, Viewer, Preparer and Acceptor. While a Viewer can only view and monitor, the Preparer can view, edit and submit the grant applications. In addition to the above rights, the Acceptor can accept the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer on behalf of the company.

<http://www.opengovasia.com>

Smart Nation and Digital Government

Since the Smart Nation initiative was launched in late 2014, progress has been made in applying digital and smart solutions to provide better services for our citizens and businesses. Companies have also

responded with innovative products. To enable the Government to be more integrated and responsive in our strategy and processes for Smart Nation and Digital Government (SNDG), the following organisational changes will take effect from 1 May 2017.

The Smart Nation and Digital Government Office (SNDGO) will be formed under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) comprising staff from the Digital Government Directorate of the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Government Technology Policy department in the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI), and the Smart Nation Programme Office (SNPO) in the PMO. The Government Technology Agency (GovTech), a statutory board under MCI, will be placed under the PMO as the implementing agency of SNDGO. Collectively, the SNDGO and GovTech will form the Smart Nation and Digital Government Group (SNDGG) in the Prime Minister's Office.

<https://www.tech.gov.sg>

SRI LANKA

Hybrid solar and wind energy park

Sri Lanka's Cabinet of Ministers has approved plans to build a hybrid renewable energy park including 240MW of wind and 800MW of solar at Punarin. The approval is in line with the government's plans to add significant amounts of new electricity capacity via renewable energy sources. The Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority (SLSEA) has identified the northern regions of the country as a suitable area to build wind power and solar power plants.

In March, the Cabinet announced Sri Lanka would also go ahead with an international tender to set up a 100MW floating solar plant on the Maduru Oya Reservoir in the eastern part of the island. Since then, it has approved an amendment proposal relating to grant relief on loan interests for residential solar PV, and elected to allocate LKR350 million (US\$2.29 million) in the 2017 budget to implement a green building policy. Before March this year, the island's solar progress had been more or less muted, but today's announcement

shows clear intent to push forward with renewables infrastructure.

<https://www.pv-tech.org>

VIET NAM

Tax breaks for high-tech transfers

Firms engaged in technology transfer in Viet Nam are expected to receive tax incentives according to a recent draft amendment of the Law on Technological Transfer. Tax incentives will be applicable on the import of machinery, equipment, materials, and means of transport that are not manufactured in Viet Nam, and used for research and development (R&D) activities, technological innovations, and technology transfer within Viet Nam. The amendment is expected to take effect on July 1, 2017.

High technology is defined as technology, which is beneficial in R&D and can create high-quality products with high added value. It can also be applicable for production or service sectors in terms of modernizing the existing sectors. Proposal includes that items mentioned will be exempted from import taxes to increase transfer. Businesses will also receive tax incentives in cases where production is expanded with the introduction of new technology. Individuals and entities investing in high technology in Vietnam or supporting firms involved in innovations are also eligible for tax incentives. The government has also proposed support in the form of capital and loans from the National Technological Innovation Fund and other credit institutions.

<http://www.vietnam-briefing.com>

SME support law approved

More than 83 per cent of members in Vietnam's National Assembly voted to approve a Law on Support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The support will include access to credit, tax incentives, production space, technology application and transfer, market expansion, provision of information, consultancy and legal aid, and personnel development.

The law sets out SME principles, contents and resources, as well as the responsibilities of related agencies, organizations and

individuals. It also covers micro-enterprises and operations with fewer than 200 salaried employees. To be covered, they must show total investment capital not exceeding 100 billion dong (Bt149 million) or total revenue from the previous year not exceeding 300 billion dong.

The law requires that support provided respects market rules and is in line with international treaties to which Vietnam is a signatory. The support given must be transparent in terms of content. The law will take effect next January 1. SMEs account for around 97 per cent of the firms in Vietnam.

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com>

Vietnam Innovation Golden Book 2017

The book was published by the Vietnam Fatherland Front (VFF) Central Committee, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA). It is a collection of 72 outstanding science-technology projects and solutions selected from 141 works recommended by ministries, localities and VUSTA member organisations.

President of the VFF Central Committee Tran Thanh Man said the book includes valuable initiatives to support the community, dealing with healthcare improvement, environmental protection, and socio-economic development in disadvantaged border, sea and island areas. Also at the ceremony, the VFF leader launched an emulation movement to promote innovation, enhance productivity, product quality for international integration among society, especially intellectuals, entrepreneurs, and workers at home and abroad.

Addressing the event, PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc affirmed that the Vietnamese Party and State always encourage reforms and innovations, particularly in scientific and technological development. The Government has made due investment in science and technology and creates the best possible conditions for scientists to uphold their talents and creativity, he said.

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn>