

Thailand National Science and Technology Fair 2008

AIST has signed comprehensive agreements respectively with NSTDA (National Science and Technology Development Agency) and TISTR (Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research), and has strengthened the ties through such events as collaborative workshops. As part of the collaboration with the two Thai research organizations, AIST participated in Thailand National Science and Technology Fair 2008 which was held from August 8 to 22, 2008. The fair which is held in August every year, is a large-scale event attended by about a million people, mainly student groups from elementary schools to universities, and AIST has participated every year since 2005.

Within the NSTDA area, AIST exhibited therapeutic robots, “Paro,” a CIGS solar cell, and a thermoelectric generation module, with the help of NSTDA staff. We also presented an overview of

the collaborative research with NSTDA with panels on such topics as biofuels and the Biomass Asia project.

Many people visited the fair every day, and our interactive demonstrations of Paro and others especially attracted many visitors and were eagerly received. Moreover, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and H.E. Wutipong Chaisang, then Minister of Science and Technology, visited the AIST booth. These exhibits highlighted the presence of AIST and proclaimed its collaboration with Thailand.



Paro, popular also in Thailand

Japan-Russia Investment Forum

The 3rd Japan-Russia Investment Forum hosted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) of Japan and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) of Russian Federation was held from September 4 to 6 in Sankt Peterburg, Russia. At the sectorial session “Cooperation in Innovation Area: Information and Communication Technology,



Keynote address by METI Vice-Minister Takaichi

Industry-Academia Collaboration”, AIST Vice-President/Innovation Architect Junji Itoh gave a lecture titled “AIST Innovation Strategy”. He presented the overview on AIST, its mission as an innovation hub, and its

collaborative efforts with industry, academia and government, citing actual examples.

This forum was organized based on an agreement reached at a meeting in November, 2005 between H.E. Toshihiro Nikai, METI Minister, and H.E. German Oskarovich Gref, then MEDT Minister of Russia. The first forum was held in September, 2006 in Sankt Peterburg, and the second in February, 2007 in Tokyo, and representatives of the governments and businesses of both Japan and Russia have assembled. The forums have played important roles for information exchange and personal interactions. Each event attracted over 500 participants. Ms. Sanae Takaichi, METI Vice-Minister, representing Japan attended this third forum.

At the attached exhibition room, AIST exhibited panels of its research results and the therapeutic robot, “Paro”.

INSITE08 Held in South Africa

International Science, Innovation & Technology Expo (INSITE08) hosted by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of South Africa was held from September 15 to 17, 2008 in Johannesburg.

The exposition is held every two years, and this was its third event. AIST, upon the request of the Embassy of South Africa in Japan, participated for the first time, and exhibited mainly two collaborative projects concerning mineral resources of South Africa, and the therapeutic robot, “Paro”.

Many junior high school, high school and university students visited the AIST booth. VIPs including H.E. Mosibudi Aaron Mangena, Minister of Science and Technology of South Africa, and the Japanese Ambassador to South Africa came to our booth, and the Minister held Paro and showed great interest in the research of AIST.

Furthermore, using this opportunity, with the help of the Embassy of South Africa of Japan, AIST representatives visited the DST Hydrogen Group and other notable research organizations of South Africa, namely National Mineral Research Organisation (MINTEK), University of Witwatersrand, Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), and Council for Geoscience (CGS). They surveyed the research institutions and discussed widely on such topics as the possibilities of research collaboration and training for young researchers.



DST Minister Mangena holding “Paro” at AIST booth

Sudanese Minister of Science and Technology to AIST Tsukuba

On October 9, 2008, Dr. Ibrahim Ahmed Omar, Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of Sudan, visited AIST Tsukuba, accompanied by Mr. Hamza Elamin Baau, Sudanese Ambassador to Japan, Dr. Eis Ibrahim El Gaali, Senior Research Scientist, and Mr. Abdalla Mohammed Ali Alawad, Special Secretary to the Minister.

On the day of the visit, they received welcoming greetings from AIST Senior Vice-President Akira Ono, and were given an overview of AIST by the International Affairs Department. Research Coordinator Yoshiro Owadano gave an overview of the research of AIST in the fields of environment and energy which was followed by an exchange of views.

Minister Omar explained that, under the Ministry of Science and Technology, there are 10 research centers concerning such fields as agriculture, livestock, industry, and energy, and various efforts are underway. Especially in the field of energy, there is a

strong interest in renewable energy such as solar energy which they have in abundance, windpower and biodiesel. Much interest was shown in the MEGA-SOLAR photovoltaic system of AIST.

This visit by the minister is expected to trigger a wide range of research collaboration including personal exchange.



Minister Ibrahim Ahmed Omar
(second from left)

5th Workshop with VAST, Vietnam

The 5th Workshop with Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), a core research institution of Vietnam, with which AIST has signed a comprehensive agreement, was held from November 3 to 4 in Ho Chi Minh City.

From the Vietnamese side, several dozens of representatives participated including VAST President Chau Van Minh, Vice-President Nguyen Khoa Son, and directors of research institutes. From the Japanese side, 26 people participated including AIST Senior Vice-President Akira Ono and 15 other researchers, and 10 members of the Dyeing Wastewater Treatment Project, funded by New Energy and Technology Development Organization (NEDO) representing industry, university and NEDO. At this workshop, sessions were divided into “biomass”, “IT”, “environment (wastewater treatment)”, “GEO Grid and geology”, for research reports, exchange of views and discussions on future plans. At the same time, the NEDO Project Promotion Committee was held, and there was intensive discussion, with a tour at the wastewater treatment installations of the dyeing

factory in Ho Chi Minh City.

At the end, the priority collaborative themes of the future were presented in each session, and there were active exchange of concrete ideas for areas that seek outside funds to reinforce the research collaboration. It was agreed that the next 6th workshop will be held in 2010.



Opening ceremony of the 5th VAST-AIST Workshop
Front row, third from left to right: Mr. Shoji Kukita, Director General for Asian Region, NEDO, VAST President Minh, AIST Senior Vice-President Ono, VAST Vice-President Son

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