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**Patras Innovation Quest (Patras IQ): The Exhibition for Innovation &
Knowledge Transfer**

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Abstract

Patras IQ Innovation & Know-how Transfer Exhibition aims to foster the integration of research and innovation in industry and market to develop new competitive products and services, to trigger an entrepreneurial spirit in researchers to focus their research on more marketable results and to attract investors that could utilize local know-how and invest in products and services. Patras IQ Exhibition is addressed to researchers and students, in the productive sector, to start-ups and technologists, investors from Greece and abroad, as well as to students of primary and secondary schools. Patras IQ Exhibition has established itself as a meeting point between research and production/manufacturing, to utilize knowledge with the aim of developing innovation, promoting technology and entrepreneurship.

1. Patras IQ: The Exhibition for Innovation & Knowledge Transfer

Patras IQ Exhibition aims at the transfer of know-how from research institutions in the productive sector, the cooperation of research organizations and companies to improve their competitiveness, as well as cultivating a business culture, hosting exhibitors who utilize innovation and knowledge, but also distinguished speakers and representatives of organizations in matters of transfer of know-how and entrepreneurship

Patras IQ Exhibition is recognized as the constant meeting point of knowledge and innovation with entrepreneurship which generates multiple positive effects on sustaining the plentiful research and business potential of our country as well as on the local, regional, and national economy's development

The objectives of Patras IQ are:

1. Creating a critical competitive advantage, both in the research community and in the productive sector through the constant effort to solve problems and implement innovative ideas
2. Familiarization of the research and production sector with knowledge management and innovation development
3. Creation of dynamic mechanisms and conditions for building networks and innovative cooperative formations, and financing of innovation

4. Development and strengthening of the cooperation of the research community with the productive sector under the umbrella of a stable institution
5. Attract funding for research results
6. Reducing the flight of intellectual capital

2. The Exhibition

During Patras IQ Exhibition, which is organized annually for 3 consecutive days, researchers present to the productive sector as well as to investors mature research results that can potentially be exploited entrepreneurially and commercially.

Specifically, the 3 days Exhibition includes:

1. Exhibition of innovative research products and services, applied research presentations in booths
2. Speeches by policy makers, financial actors and innovation and start-up ecosystem representatives
3. Lectures on issues concerning technology transfer, knowledge management, IPR, and financial resources for innovative ideas
4. Business accelerator programs and other funding instruments are presented by funds and private companies
5. Workshops for academic students and start-up founders on issues concerning soft skills building and entrepreneurial operations
6. Innovative entrepreneurial ideas competitions final pitch events
7. B2B meetings and other networking events take place for developing synergies for new projects and business ventures.

Moreover, problems that the productive sector is facing are being discussed for researchers to offer feasible solutions. The purpose of these actions is to familiarize both researchers and the productive sector with the knowledge management process of turning innovative ideas into more bankable projects, to offer mechanisms and conditions for building networks and clusters for achieving cross-sector collaborations and exploring alternative ways of financing innovation.

3. Upgrading the Exhibition - The 7th Patras IQ Exhibition 2021: the first virtual exhibition of innovation & transfer of knowledge

The 7th Patras IQ Exhibition 2021 aspired to be the first virtual exhibition of innovation & transfer of knowledge with parallel digital communication, which responded to the increased needs of the new digital era aiming at the development and strengthening of the cooperation of the research community with the productive sector. Overcoming the limitations of Covid-19, exhibitors were able to communicate with a wider audience through a digital experience that took place anywhere, anytime, exceeding any potential limits that the in-person participation could raise.

Participants in the 7th Patras IQ Exhibition were educational, research and public and private bodies as well as start-ups and innovative enterprises and technocrats.

During the Exhibition, exhibitors had the opportunity to hold scheduled web meetings and communicate new products and services through a unique interactive experience. The setting up of the booths, the new approach of exhibition and the presentation of mature & innovative

scientific ideas were carried out in collaboration with the Department of Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the IT Unit of the University of Patras' Special Account for Research Grants.

In parallel with the digital exhibition, participants had the opportunity for the live streaming of oral presentations by important representatives of the scientific and business fields, public authorities as well as financial and investment organizations from Greece and abroad. Sessions in the thematic areas of technology transfer, basic & applied research funding, innovation incubators, technological developments in production, innovation support mechanisms, research-market linkage, success stories and awards took place during the 3 days phygital event.

The Exhibition was visited by financial Funds, Business Angels, Venture Capitals, representatives of the State, representatives of entities in the field of innovation and small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurs from Greece and abroad while representatives of the state, funds, banks and the business world presented possibilities for financing and developing partnerships

The sessions that were implemented and the views exchanged gave the signal of the necessary next steps that will lead to the balanced development and prosperity of society and the economy.

4. Evidence of Success & Results

The 1st Patras IQ Exhibition took place in 2012, followed by the events of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021 and proves the successful cooperation of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Development and Investments, the University of Patras, the Achaia Chamber of Commerce, the Hellenic Open University, and the Region of Western Greece.

Since its 1st organization the Exhibition has continuously been gathering more exhibitors, public opinion makers & visitors and has grown in terms of both participants & visitors. The Exhibition encountered more than 200 exhibitors, over 7000 visitors, more than 300 speakers and over 120 innovative ideas/start-ups were presented in different events to potential investors.

The 7th Phygital Innovation and Know-how Transfer Exhibition – Patras IQ 2021 hosted a total of 51 virtual exhibition stands in the Science – Research, Business and Support Sectors sections. The conference part of Patras IQ hosted 32 sessions with 140 speakers from the national as well as the European/Mediterranean ecosystem. The platform received a total of more than 14.330 visits 50.864 page views and 3.55 Pages/session. The three days of the exhibition, 4-6.12.2021, exceeded 5.000 visits and 21.005 Page Views. Hybrid sessions exceeded 3.000 views. The way Patras IQ was conducted connected us with 53 Countries in Europe, the Mediterranean Basin, and the USA.

The above numbers demonstrate that technological developments support the goals set by an organization like Patras IQ whose purpose is the interconnection and extroversion, removing any type of border

Throughout these years, the Patras IQ Exhibition has achieved the following results:

1. Cultivation of business culture in school students, pupils, and researchers
2. Development and strengthening of the cooperation of the research community with the productive sector for the transfer of innovation and advanced technology
3. Upgrading the organization from local to national character with representation of local bodies, central government bodies and Ministries, as well as research organizations and companies from other parts of the country

4. Attracting interest from internationally renowned personalities of the business and investment world who participate as speakers to transfer their know-how and experience.
5. Increasing the number of exhibitors - visitors -volunteers
6. Meetings of research teams and start-ups with Business Angels to network and claim funding Furthermore, Patras IQ Exhibition has been honored with the National Prize “European Enterprise Promotion Awards EEPA 2017” as well as with the “Education Business Awards 2016”.

5. Potential for Learning & Knowledge Transfer

Effective practice transfer must include the establishment of a strong local collaboration among the representatives of the 4 helix pillars, to encourage entrepreneurial spirit among academic students and researchers and foster start-up attempts that will answer to existing problems of the industry by creating disruptions and novel solutions, namely:

1. Research actors (universities, technological institutes, research centers etc.)
2. Entrepreneurship actors (chambers, industry representatives, incubators, accelerators etc.)
3. Policy making actors (ministries, regions, municipalities etc.)
4. Open social actors (students’ communities, start-up ecosystems, associations, clubs etc.)

Such actors must jointly initiate an attempt to create a similar structure that will encourage entrepreneurial spirit among academic students and researchers and foster start-up attempts by them preferably along, but not necessarily, with existing entrepreneurs.

The vision for Patras IQ is to transform it from a successful Knowledge Transfer Event and a meeting point of Innovation with Entrepreneurship to a Hub, where applied research will meet real economy in a daily basis, to deliver products and services of high added value that will systematically claim a share in the global market. Such a structure could effectively orient this research capacity to bankable projects that could funding sources ranging from ROPs, to angel investments, to crowdfunding etc.

6. Conclusions

Patras IQ proves every year that it is an important and interesting pool of ideas that can be transformed into business moves with the right mentoring, or lead to collaborations with business and productive organizations seeking innovation in their development processes, which gives Patras IQ National and European interest.

Patras IQ is a timeless development initiative that promotes networking events, as well as knowledge transfer and technology events, culminating in the annual Exhibition. Last years’ event marked the beginning of a period full of new challenges posed by the new technological advancements and the 4th Industrial Revolution.

The favorable timing, the new technology law, the further development of Technology Transfer Offices and the expressed need of researchers to further exploit their mature research interests, determine our next developmental steps.

7. Acknowledgments

Patras IQ Innovation & Know-how Transfer Exhibition is co-financed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Development and Investments, the University of Patras, the Achaia Chamber of Commerce, the Hellenic Open University, and the Region of Western Greece since 2016. Patras IQ Organizing Committee consists of at least one representative per the abovementioned founding members. Around 100 volunteers are engaged every year to support the organization of the exhibition.