

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY OF
THE
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
AND
THE MERAKA INSTITUTE**

This is a Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as an "MOU") by and between the International Commission of Science & Technology of the Dominican Republic (hereinafter referred to as "CIACT") and the Meraka Institute (hereinafter referred to as "MI").

WHEREAS, CIACT recognizes the importance of interaction and collaboration in attaining their respective objectives; and

WHEREAS, CIACT is aware of the existence of cooperation areas in which there is an ample field of actions to be implemented, with the aim of achieving higher quality levels in studies and in doing research on issues of mutual interest; and

WHEREAS, the major objective of MI is to facilitate national economic and social development through human capital development and needs-based research and innovation, leading to products and services based on Information and Communication Technology.; and

WHEREAS, such cooperation from MI would impact on the continuity and effectiveness of the education of Dominican elementary and secondary students; and

WHEREAS, collaboration and sharing between CIACT and MI is in the best interests of the Dominican Republic educational system and would contribute with MI to enhance their skills and develop new ones;

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

I. Interagency collaboration

The International Commission of Science & Technology of the Dominican Republic and the Meraka Institute agree to promote collaboration and foster technical cooperation in the following topics:

- a. Human capital development and ensuring continued development, growth and sustainability.
- b. Innovation in ICT leading to applications that address development challenges faced by the second economy.
- c. Advanced technical research enabling.

- d. Working together to identify areas of common interest and concern in elementary and secondary education;
- e. Developing and promoting an ongoing relationship between the staff of CIIACT and MI;
- f. Assisting each agency in communicating with public elementary and secondary schools under the jurisdiction of the other agency;
- g. Collaborating on such selected projects pertaining to identified areas of common interest as may be mutually agreed upon by the parties; and
- h. Maximizing resources with the goal of improving teaching and learning of students at the Dominican Republic.

II. Forms of cooperation

The technical cooperation that will be established between CIIACT and MI may assume one or more of the following forms:

- Exchange of scholarly or research documents and educational information.
- Exchange of specialists in the areas of cooperation.
- Organizing and conducting conferences, seminars and workshops.
- Joint studies and research on issues of mutual interest.
- Joint publications of interest to both parties.
- Scholarships and training courses, as well as organization of courses, visiting programs and internships.
- Any other form of cooperation jointly agreed upon.

III. Digital Doorway

CIIACT and MI agree to collaborate in the development and implementation of the Digital Doorway project, designed to make a fundamental difference to computer literacy and associated skills through an innovative approach with the installation in rural communities of a System of minimally invasive education (MIE). MIE differs fundamentally from other ICT provision interventions in that it holds that everyone has the inherent cognitive ability to teach themselves, provided computers can be made easily accessible to potential learners and an environment can be created in which they can learn through experimenting.

IV. Wireless Dominican Republic

CIIACT and MI agree to collaborate in the development and implementation of a project similar to Wireless Africa, about researching ways and means to develop sustainable information and communications technology in developing countries. The focus is to address the challenges of closing the digital divide that exists within and between developing countries.

V. National Accessibility Portal

CIACT and MI agree to collaborate in the development and implementation of the National Accessibility Portal project, which aims to enhance the development and independence of persons with disabilities. This will be achieved through the creation of a highly innovative and efficient information and communication system. The goal is that the project enables people with different disabilities to access information and services, and to interact and communicate irrespective of age, gender, language and level of literacy.

VI. ICT in education

CIACT and MI agree to collaborate in the development and implementation of the ICT in Education project, which includes human language technologies, “smart” devices, wireless and handheld devices, merging media devices and high-performance computing concepts and facilities. It focuses specifically on the application of these technologies in an educational context and environment and should thus be seen as a tool or platform to support education to accelerate teaching and learning goals, particularly in the context of a developing world.

Some of the research topics include:

the application of mobile technologies in collaborative formal and informal learning environments;

the application of gaming and blended media environments to support formal and informal learning activities;

designing innovative, graphical learning environments for children;

assessment and evaluation techniques for measuring learning outcomes resulting from ICT interventions in the educational domain;

the use of multi-modal technologies in child-computer interaction environments;

designing and developing physical/tangible learning objects (“intelligent e-toys”); and

alternative learning devices and technologies to support education in a developing world context.

VII. Human Language Technology

CIACT and MI agree to collaborate in the development and implementation of the Human Language Technology project. This project makes it easier for people to interact with machines. Is a collaborative research effort involving researchers from the Meraka Institute and other collaborators, and it studies how this technology can be applied, and

adapted to benefit a developing country and pursues basic and directed research relevant to the local context.

VIII. Open Source Centre

CIACT and MI agree to collaborate in the development and implementation of the Open Source Centre project. Open source software is software that is developed collaboratively by developers across the globe and the project starts with a wide campaign aimed at raising the awareness of open source software (OSS), primarily amongst non-specialist IT users. The message of the campaign is that of choice: the advantages of OSS aside, there is an overwhelming number of people who do not even know that this option exists and is accessible to them.

IX. Information Sharing

CIACT and MI agree to share information on how elementary and secondary educational systems are organized and governed and to exchange functional information directories for each agency.

XII. Additional areas of collaboration

CIACT and SED agree to jointly study the possibility of developing and implementing other areas of collaboration in the future, upon mutual agreement, including but not limited to the following areas:

- a. Promoting communication between schools in New York and the Dominican Republic through instructional technology and telecommunications networks;
- b. Examining ways in which to share testing and assessment strategies;
- c. Promoting curriculum and instructional materials exchange in grades Kindergarten through 12, or the equivalent;
- d. Conducting a curriculum contrastive analysis and an alignment of courses between the educational systems of New York and the Dominican Republic;
- e. Planning joint staff development and teacher preparation activities; and exchanges of educational personnel between New York and the Dominican Republic;
- f. Exploring ways to facilitate the transition of services and ensure continuity of the education of migrating students with disabilities; and
- g. Any other form of cooperation jointly agreed upon.

XIII. Financing

CIACT and MI will jointly determine the financing of the forms of cooperation defined in this agreement, as well as the terms, conditions and implementation procedures of each project. Having mutually agreed, both parties may proceed in requesting financing to

entities identified as donors for the execution of programs, projects and actions such as those resulting from the forms of cooperation defined in this agreement.

XIV. Unlimited areas of cooperation

This MOU recognizes the possibility of extending the scope of cooperation to any field that CIIACT and MI deem convenient in areas that are considered of mutual interest.

XV. Meetings

CIIACT and MI will celebrate annual meetings that will take place alternately in their headquarters in both countries in order to evaluate the results of the cooperation that took place, analyze and approve proposals for implementation, review priorities, as well as to consider other forms of future cooperation. Furthermore, at the request of one of the parties and mutually agreed, additional meetings may take place depending on the needs of the development of the cooperation.

XVI. Period

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be for the period from September 13, 2006 through August 13, 2008, maintaining the parties option to renew it at the end of the period, unless it has been revoked.

XVII. Ending

Each party may have this agreement revoked by notifying the other party in writing, at least five months before expiration date and without unreasonably affecting the programs and projects in execution, unless CIIACT and MI expressly agree to the contrary.

XVIII. General terms

Both parties may freely disseminate the results of the actions, projects or programs.

Signed on this _____ day of _____, 2006.

By: _____

By: _____

José Santana
Ambassador – Executive Director

Date: _____

Date: _____