

Technology research and business start-ups

An analysis of the impact of ITRI's Open Laboratory project

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The Open Laboratory is one of the major channels through which Taiwan's Industrial Technology Research Institute promotes its business relationships with industry. Its missions include: setting up collaboration research projects that develop innovative and competitive technologies and products for firms; running an Incubation Centre, which assists entrepreneurs in launching new technology-based industries; and fostering new e-business companies through the operation of an e-Lab. Four years after opening, the Open Laboratory has proved to be a successful experiment, greatly benefiting the development of Taiwan's high-tech industry.

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Why this analysis?

Over the past two decades, the high-tech industry has been the driving force behind Taiwan's continued economic development. The government of Taiwan has continuously invested large amounts of funds and resources in technology-based industries in the hope that Taiwan's high-tech industries will continue to develop and improve Taiwan's international competitiveness.

The Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) is the largest industrial technology research institute in Taiwan. Since its establishment in 1973, ITRI has had considerable success in the implementation of government-sponsored technology projects, self-produced R&D and technology introduction. ITRI has ensured that these

findings have had an impact on industry. This it has done through technology transfers and licensing agreements with private firms, the establishment of spin-off companies, and the provision of industrial contract services, technical services, courses and training. ITRI has directly and indirectly brought about the rapid development of Taiwan's high-tech industries, while simultaneously upgrading and transforming the technologies of traditional industry.

Traditionally, ITRI never deliberately focused on small- and medium-sized hi-tech firms; and interaction between ITRI and technology transfer recipients tended to be limited. With the completion, however, of its new R&D premises, the Research Building Complex, commissioned by the Ministry of Economics Affairs (MoEA) under a government-sponsored technology project,