

ICIM2008 / 5th International Conference on Innovation and Management

Conference Report

1. International Conference on Innovation and Management

On December 10-11 Maastricht hosted the 5th International Conference on Innovation and Management (ICIM). ICIM 2008 has been a joint initiative of UNU-MERIT, Wuhan University of Technology (China) and Yamaguchi University (Japan).



Whereas in previous editions the conferences were successfully held either in Wuhan or Yamaguchi, it has now been the first time that UNU-MERIT hosted the ICIM. More specifically, the conference was organised by UNU-MERIT's research group "Innovation, global business strategies and host country development" (with the help of Maastricht University Congress Bureau) and supported by the partner institutions.

Close to 150 delegates from all across the world arrived to Maastricht, to *Kasteel Vaeshartelt*, the official venue of the conference. The magnificent ambiance of the castle provided a stimulating environment for exchange of results of academic research as well as new ideas.

2. First Day of ICIM2008

The first plenary session was opened by Professor Geert Duysters. He introduced the plenary speakers - Dr. Jo Ritzen (President of Maastricht University), Professor Dr. Deng Mingran (Dean of the School of Management, Wuhan University of Technology) and Professor Dr. Ken Kaminishi (Dean of the Graduate School of Innovation & Technology Management, Yamaguchi University).



In his speech the special guest of the conference, President of the Maastricht University Dr. Jo Ritzen, elaborated on the international nature of the Maastricht University and its openness to the international flows of knowledge and ideas. He strongly emphasised the profile of Maastricht University as "the University of Innovation". He furthermore accentuated the

university's high position in international academic rankings and depicted the university as an institute that prepares students for the globalised labour market. Dr. Ritzen thanked everyone for coming to Maastricht and closed his speech with a key phrase "You are at the right place to talk about innovation".

Professors Deng Mingran and Ken Kaminishi welcomed the participants and noted the important role of innovation in the context of Asian economies. Professor Deng Mingran delivered the key message that China is shifting from an investment-driven towards an innovation-driven economic growth. Professor Ken Kaminishi noted the international nature of the city of Maastricht and its importance for Europe as well as the honour for the Asian delegates to be here.

The keynote speech of Dr. Subhas C. Misra (Harvard University, USA) and Dr. Dorothea Seebode (Senior Director Sustainability, Philips Research) followed the opening session. Dr. Misra comprehensively described the development of the global software sector and the rise of the agile software practices and its implications for the modern-day management. Dr. Seebode portrayed the ideas of sustainability and development of sustainability-friendly products at Philips, the Dutch national industrial champion.



At the sessions running parallel in four locations, participants had an opportunity to discuss their research in-depth.

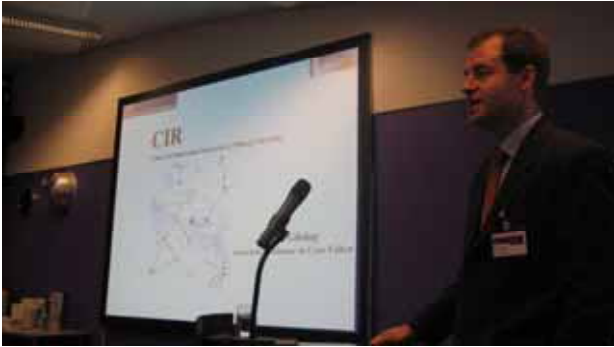
At the end of the first day, Prof. Geert Duysters announced important news that the Catholic University of São Paulo decided to join the institutional partnership of UNU-MERIT, Wuhan University of Technology and Yamaguchi University and is prepared to host ICIM2009 conference. This news was warmly welcomed by the participants of whom many already expressed their interest in attending this conference.



The gala dinner ended the first day and gave participants the opportunity to share their ideas and views in an informal environment.

3. Second Day of ICIM2008

The second day started with a plenary session. First, Prof. Dr. Ard-Pieter De Man (Professor at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Principal Consultant at Atos Consulting) delivered a presentation on challenges for implementing open innovation paradigm in companies. In the presentation he shared both academic and consultancy/management views on this issue. Next, as a logical continuation of this topic, Prof. Dr. Victor Gilsing (Associate Professor at Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Tilburg University) discussed at length the issue of optimal network embeddedness. Parallel sessions followed these speeches.



Overall the conference included twenty parallel sessions (five sessions running parallel in four locations), each of them dedicated to a particular topic. The titles of the sessions reflected the topical issues in the modern academic and business practices of innovation and management. The sessions covered topics like 'Clusters and regional innovation systems', 'Social innovation and innovation for low-income markets',

'Intellectual property right and the management of knowledge', 'Innovation for sustainable development', 'Innovation within multinational corporations', 'Networks as sources of technology and management of collaborative innovations', 'Organisational innovation', 'Human resource management issues and innovation', 'Key and emerging technologies in the 21st century', 'Innovation in logistics', 'R&D management and Technological, industrial and product innovation.'

Considering the ever increasing interest of western scholars in the emerging Chinese economy, a special parallel session was devoted to the innovation and management in China. The strong contingent of Chinese eminent researchers provided insights in the modern managerial practices of the *Rising Dragon*.

The global financial crisis occupied a central place in several discussions as the scholars sought to rethink the managerial techniques and the role of innovation in the time of crisis.

At the closing session, Professor Arnaldo de Hoyos Guevara delivered a speech on the nature of the Brazilian emerging economy and invited everyone to attend ICIM2009, which is to be held in São Paulo in December 2009.



Finally, the host of the conference Professor Geert Duysters summarised the outcomes of the conference and thanked all the participants for their efforts.

4. Academic Consortium: Looking Forward

It is worth mentioning that the institutional cooperation of the consortium of UNU-MERIT, Wuhan University of Technology and Yamaguchi University is not limited only to the organisation of ICIM conferences. Another example of this successful partnership is the increased exchange-possibility for students and researchers. For example, in 2007 PhD researcher Ms. Tina Saebi spent a month of doing field work in Wuhan. Here, she conducted interviews with local Chinese companies. Similarly, a PhD researcher from Wuhan Ms.

Qinqin Dong spent several months at UNU-MERIT. Both visits resulted in academic publications.

At the Executive Committee Meeting between the representatives of the partner institutions, Prof. Geert Duysters strongly emphasised the positive effects of this mutually beneficial cooperation.



He welcomed a new partner in the programme: the Catholic University of Sao Paulo (Brazil). He noted the increasing interest of European scholars in the rise of emerging economies (and multinational companies from these countries). Professor Geert Duysters highlighted that scholars can understand the complex nature of this phenomenon only if local

partners from these emerging economies are involved in the research initiatives. The partnership between UNU-MERIT, Wuhan University of Technology, Yamaguchi University and Catholic University of Sao Paulo represents an excellent example of such cooperation. Prof. Geert Duysters outlined future activities within the framework of this partnership; *inter alia*, these activities are the continuation of ICIM conferences, enhanced academic exchange and joint publications and research projects, encompassing a variety of issues but always with the 'innovation component' in them.

By Sergey Filippov