

Accelerating Malaysian Technology Startups: Case Study of Malaysian Technology Development Corporation as the Innovator

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Abstract : Building technology start-ups from ground zero into world-class companies in form and substance present a rare opportunity for government-affiliated institutions in Malaysia. The challenge of building such start-ups becomes tougher when their core businesses involve commercialization of unproven technologies for the mass market. These simple truths, while difficult to execute, will go a long way in getting a business off the ground and flying high. Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC), a company founded to facilitate the commercial exploitation of R&D findings from research institutions and universities, and eventually help translate these findings of applications in the marketplace, is an excellent case in point. The purpose of this paper is to examine MTDC as an institution as it explores the concept of 'it takes a village to raise a child' in an effort to create and nurture start-ups into established world class Malaysian technology companies. With MTDC at the centre of Malaysia's innovative start-ups, the analysis seeks to specifically answer two questions: How has the concept been applied in MTDC? and what can we learn from this successful case? A key aim is to elucidate how MTDC's journey as a private limited company can help leverage reforms and achieve transformation, a process that might be suitable for other small, open, third world and developing countries. This paper employs a single case study, designed to acquire an in-depth understanding of how MTDC has developed and grown technology start-ups to world-class technology companies. The case study methodology is employed as the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real business context. It also explains the causal links in real-life situations where a single survey or experiment is unable to unearth. The findings show that MTDC maximises the concept of it needs a village to raise a child in totality, as MTDC itself assumes the role of the innovator to 'raise' start-up companies into world-class stature. As the innovator, MTDC creates shared value and leadership, introduces innovative programmes ahead of the curve, mobilises talents for optimum results and aggregates knowledge for personnel advancement. The success of the company's effort is attributed largely to leadership, visionary, adaptability, commitment to innovate, partnership and networking, and entrepreneurial drive. The findings of this paper are however limited by the single case study of MTDC. Future research is required to study more cases of success or/and failure where the concept of it takes a village to raise a child have been explored and applied.

Keywords : start-ups, technology transfer, commercialization, technology incubator

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