#WeCanDoItTogether

e-Workshop Final Report

2020

Subject

Working Needs of Technology-Focused Companies After the COVID-19 Pandemic and How Will Technoparks Operate in the New Era?

BiLiŞiM VADiSi Technology Development Zone.

www.bilişimvadisi.com.tr

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e-Workshop Final Report

2020

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This workshop was held online for the first time in Turkey and none of the participants met in person.

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About e-Workshop

e-Workshop Introduction

The e-workshop themed "Working needs of technology-focused companies post Covid-19 pandemic and how will technoparks function in the new era?" was carried out on April 20, 2020, with the organization of Bilişim Vadisi. At the start, the Moderator of the Workshop, Prof. Dr. Halit Keskin gave a detailed informative speech on the expectations from the workshop and the functioning process of the workshop.

E-Workshop is carried out as two sessions afternoon. The e-workshop which was carried out for the first time in Türkiye was designed to represent workshops carried out in physical environments. Accordingly, table settings were made like workshops carried out in physical environments. The participants were placed to distribute the public institutions, professional associations, universities, firms, and representatives of research institutes objectively. The workshop lasted 3 hours in total, with two sessions with two different agenda topics and the evaluations in the closing. As a result of the brainstorming in the sessions, crucial outputs regarding agenda topics were produced. Evaluation and closing sessions were shared with public opinion through a YouTube live broadcast, for the first time in Türkiye. The outputs of the tables continued with the presentations of table moderators in the evaluation and closing session. Every table created for the workshop chose a moderator in themselves. In addition, there were moderators from Bilişim Vadisi and MARKA at every table.

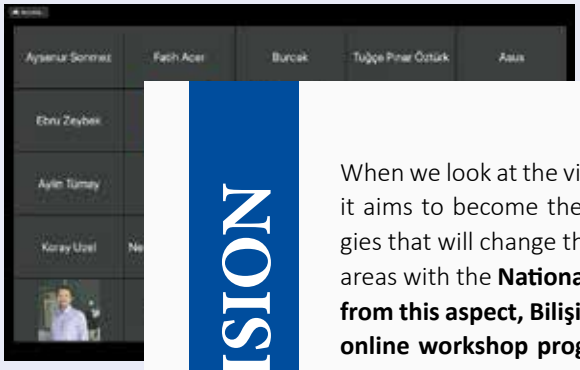
In the first session, the theme was "current situation analysis and lessons learned" and under the topic, participants made their suggestions for five questions. In the second session, "Planning for Post-Covid-19 Pandemic" participants made their suggestions for five questions.

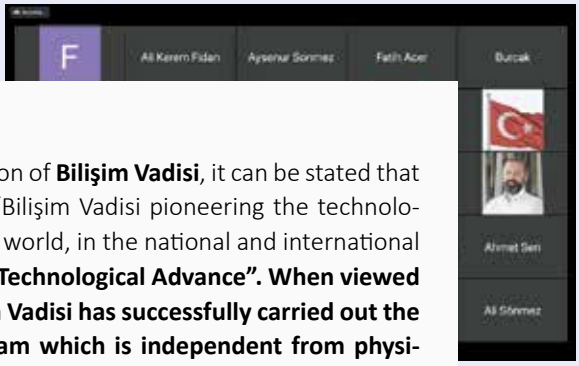
In the first e-workshop with the theme of "The working needs of technology-focused companies post Covid-19 and how will technoparks function in the new era?" outputs for the needs and functioning of technoparks and technology-oriented companies after the pandemic, which is our new normal. We hope that these outputs will be beneficial for technoparks, decision makers and technology-focused companies.

Working Needs of Technology-Focused Companies After Covid-19 Pandemic and How Will Technoparks Function in The New Era?

Organizing Institution

Bilişim Vadisi





VISION

When we look at the vision of **Bilişim Vadisi**, it can be stated that it aims to become the "Bilişim Vadisi pioneering the technologies that will change the world, in the national and international areas with the **National Technological Advance". When viewed from this aspect, Bilişim Vadisi has successfully carried out the online workshop program which is independent from physical environment and attended by experts in their respective fields, for the first time in our country. Since its foundation, Bilişim Vadisi has adopted the mission to support our country** in transition to innovation economy and in this context, taking actions in line with our country's R&D and innovativeness policies; and has been continuing its work within this direction.

About The Participant Profile

The e-workshop with the theme of "The working needs of technology-focused companies and how will technoparks function in the new era?" which was held on April 20, 2020, attracted intensive attention from our e-workshop shareholders and 99 participants contributed to the workshop by engaging in the process.

Among the participants, 35% of them were technopark managers and representatives, 12% of them were public institution managers and representatives (The Ministry of Industry and Technology, TUBITAK, MARKA, universities, chambers of industries), 31% were R&D company owners and managers, 12% were national company managers and 10% were international company managers.

The Distribution of Participants

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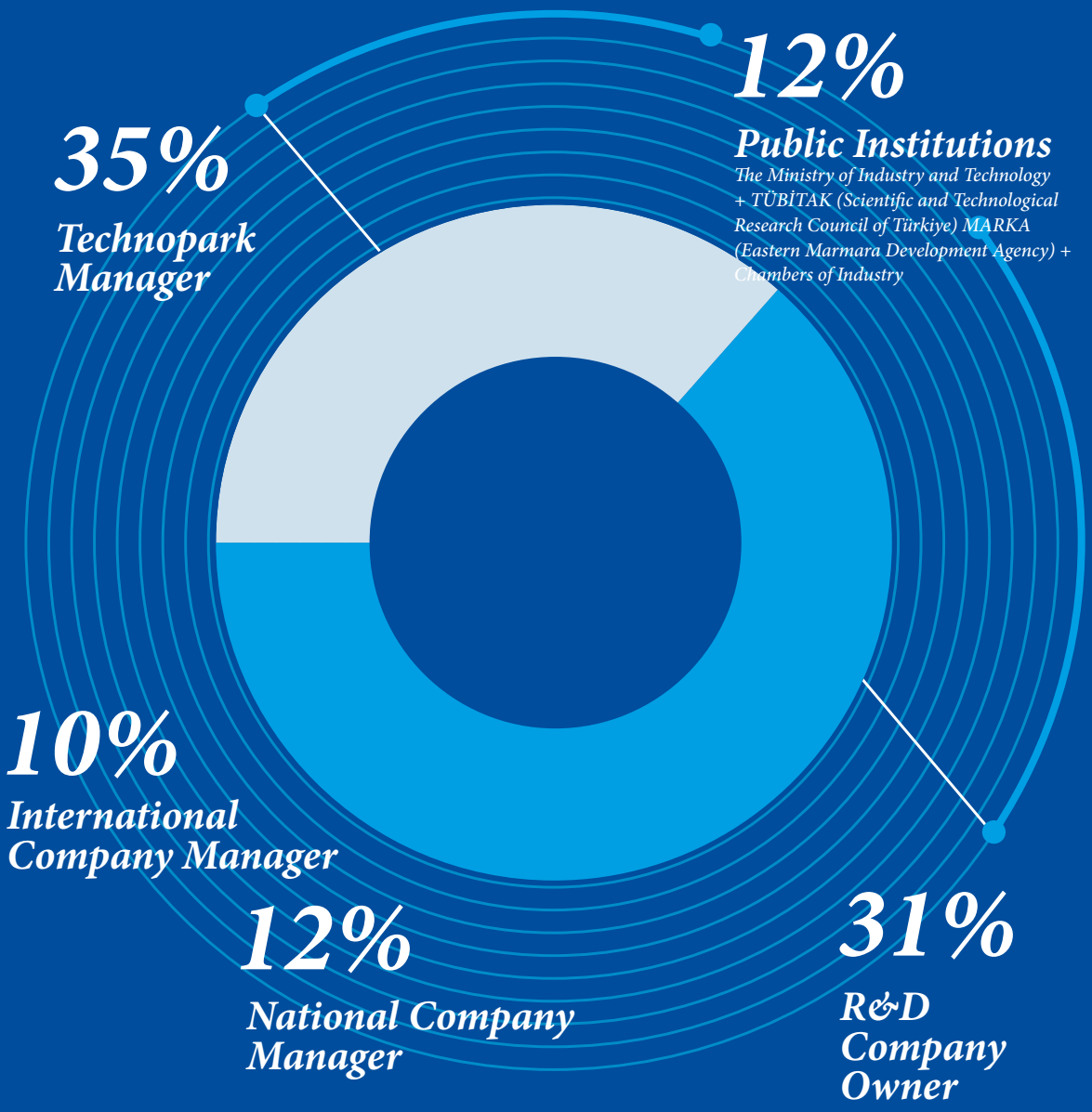
In total, 99 people participated in the workshop themed "Working needs of technology-focused companies post Covid-19 pandemic and how will technoparks function in the new era?". In general, when the participant profile is reviewed, it is observed that the participants consist of senior managers.

In the workshop, which was participated by Technopark Executive Companies General Managers, Technology Transfer Office Managers, Scholars, R&D Company Managers and Entrepreneurs, senior managers working in Public Institutions from different provinces of Türkiye, 10 working groups were created. The workshop, which was supported by Eastern Marmara Development Agency, lasted approximately 3 hours.



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e-Workshop Final Report

Working needs of technology-focused companies post Covid-19 pandemic and how will techno-parks function in the new era?

1. THE CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Working Needs of Technology-Focused Companies After Covid-19 Pandemic and How Will Technoparks Function in The New Era?

Though the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has devastating and strong effects, it can be observed that the companies with a ready technological infrastructure have accommodated themselves more rapidly. Here, software businesses take the lead. These companies which are ready to work remotely are more successful in providing business continuity during the pandemic process. Although software companies do not have problem working from home there might be problems on communicating with and reaching to the new costumers.

Energy industry can give faster reactions and create agile solutions thanks to its business continuity plans. In general, cash flow problem is considered to be critic for companies.

Ministry of National Education is coordinating the process to ensure that education activities are not disrupted. Online material use during the pandemic has been increased from 40% to 100%.

In technoparks, there have been preparations for crisis scenarios; however, like many industries they did not have any predictions for the crisis emerged because of the pandemic.

Corruption of the supply chain is seen as an important problem especially for the manufacturing companies. There may be difficulties in the supplies of raw material and some equipment. Besides,

in these companies who has to work face-to-face, risks of business interruption and spread of the disease may be present. This companies continue their manufacturing with remote working and shift working systems and protecting their employees' health with rapid cleaning and disinfection. Halt of production in ready-made clothing industry creates a problem for companies selling physical products.

EBA (education information network) livestream put into practice, education activities could be continued as in face-to-face education. Education studies in different channels through TRT are supporting these efforts.

MUSIAD (Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association) had decided to conduct the meetings online. This decision ensures that the necessary meetings are conducted without any interruption. Even if some members in Anatolia cannot comply with the digital transformation, most of the firms can.

Remote working may cause some problems in practical education and laboratory studies. Since the work-hour concept is not fully established in remote working, this may affect the employees' motivation negatively. A different world will be waiting for us after this process.

Question 2: How did the change in working conditions affect your business (for example, technological infrastructure, finance, human resources, supply, and demand)?

Technology companies quickly comply with working from home and are less affected in terms of the continuity of transactions. Despite this, at the beginning there have been problems in terms of technological infrastructure like interruptions in service providers and speed problems. For example, when the servers were wanted to be changed, there were interruptions because the staff providing support were working from home. In terms of technological infrastructure, the process can be managed productively at technoparks.

In companies which financial input is decreased, nonurgent investments are delayed and expenses are reduced. There may be serious cash flow problems. In the next phase, companies may have to use the unpaid leave method. Many companies in Türkiye are damaged in terms of finance, therefore companies in technoparks are having financial difficulties such as rent payments.

Especially in companies working on project basis, although office work is not affected, field work is affected significantly. Not being able to receive new projects causes serious effects in terms of finance. Incubator companies and companies operating in fields are affected negatively from this situation. These companies that manufacture based on R&D like this are having problems caused by foreign exchange rates and delays in supplies. Consequently, existing work can be continued. However, there might be difficulties in companies creating new projects in order to sell new products.

Providing tenancy support to commercial areas as required by the tenancy policy published by the ministry, (two-month 50% discount for tenants <500m and
two-month 25% discount for tenants >500m) is creating a positive effect in terms of finance. The decrease in time taken to arrive at the office is seen as a positive effect.

On the other hand, companies who wanted to increase their number of staff before the pandemic are delaying their plans because of the decreased customer demands. Another effect of working from home is that the work-hour concept has changed. Some staff may work for a longer time, and some staff may work for a shorter time. Infrastructure to check this situation should be created. In this process, in which businesses are financially affected, the companies that are more deeply affected may reduce their human resources. Online seminars and workshops are successfully put into use to minimize the effects of this process on the staff. In this process, sales personnel may experience serious adaptation problems since it is hard for them to work from home.

A bright side of remote work is that employees working at different places can easily communicate through internet. It is considered that this situation will pave the way for new projects to be developed.

Decreases in supply and demand may cause problems. However, the demand for supplementary food and hygiene products is heavily increasing. Businesses are especially investing in the manufacturing of imported products that cannot currently be found in Türkiye. It is predicted that after the pandemic, our external dependency will decrease, especially in important healthcare equipment.

Being in big cities does not have an advantage since customer visits cannot be made in this period. With online transactions, distances disappear. It is especially important for the consumer group to be able to use online channels effectively to overcome this process with minimum damage. In companies that customers cannot comply with, there might be tightness.

Question 3: After the Covid-19 pandemic, do you expect a change in the main fields of activity and business models of technology companies?

It is expected that the studies on using online channels more effectively to gain speed. New working models may be developed. Especially distance education and remote working will be a part of our lives. Therefore, there will be serious changes in educational infrastructure in educational institutions. On the basis of the sector, companies are using this time as a learning process and head for manufacturing new products by the constitution of a new internal legislation that will facilitate applying new business model.

Existing main activities may change slightly, but there will be important changes in business models. We predict that smaller offices will be preferred after the pandemic. Project-oriented companies will switch to a product-oriented model. They will hold fewer meetings and focus more on reaching the customers.

We may see that customer-based services will be improved. Businesses will create solutions to many issues with artificial intelligence. With the increase of technological investments, different projects can be easily put into practice. In both manufacturing and services, artificial intelligence and robotics will be present more. Companies that used the pandemic as a learning opportunity will recover faster after the crisis.

After this process, we might see project-based employment and charging systems instead of full employment. Herewith, legislative changes may be necessary.

The remote work system becoming a part of daily business life might negatively affect the airline, tourism, and automotive sectors. On a global basis, countries will continue to impose travel restrictions. And domestic manufacturing of critical products will be an obligation. With the decrease in raw material procurement and imports, companies will be more disposed to improve their competence in domestic procurement.

It is expected that future technologies like cryptocurrency will take place in the banking and finance sectors. For this reason, cybersecurity will become more important day by day. The health sector and agriculture will be among the most important sectors.

Question 4: With remote work becoming widespread, how will companies' need for technological infrastructure be shaped?

In this process, documents like formal letters and trade agreements should be converted into electronic documents. Within this scope, legal transactions should also comply with the online environment.

Working from home should be recognized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and the necessary legislative changes should be made. Follow-up mechanisms for employees working from home will be developed. As a factor facilitating working from home, it will be necessary to work on fiber infrastructure. Because remote work requires a good internet infrastructure. Alongside the infrastructure of businesses, the infrastructure of internet service providers should also be improved. In terms of cybersecurity, with the potential cyber-attacks, the awareness on this subject will increase. Measures should be taken beforehand to minimize the effects of these attacks.

Remote work products will become widespread, both in software and hardware. And as a result, the importance of cybersecurity will increase. Domestic online meeting programs will be needed in order to maintain cybersecurity. Therefore, companies should invest in video call and online meeting programs.

It will be essential to establish an infrastructure that guarantees data security by redesigning business processes, strengthening the infrastructure with the tools and systems we manufacture, and realizing server investments.

Question 5: To what extent did the current law on Technopark meet the needs of the new working conditions that emerged with the Covid-19 pandemic? Is the existing legal infrastructure regarding remote work systems enough? What steps do you expect to be taken in this regard? What are the needs (in terms of benefiting from incentives, flexible working hours, working from home, etc.)?

The companies that found flexible solutions in regard to working conditions had a relatively easy transition process. Though there were some problems in the use of infrastructure linked with national education, the density was tidied in a short time.

Flexible working models should be developed by utilizing digital work monitoring methods (projects). Exceptions in technoparks should be calculated by taking R&D project outputs and remote work & face-to-face work hours into account instead of taking turnstile times into account. Incentives granted to the companies working remotely should not be cut back.

In technoparks, obligations like clocking on for companies has been removed. This is an important and beneficial development. Companies also expect that the obligation of clock-on to be reviewed in the next period. Besides, specific to the information sector, taxing at the moment of the cash flow will empower the sector. In addition, using domestic products instead of platforms with servers abroad should be encouraged.

It is positive that technoparks benefit from state support; however, conducting interactive studies

will enhance the effectivity of this process while managing. It is very important that KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization), which was founded to support small and medium enterprises in terms of developing, expanding, and opening abroad by taking state support, to support SMEs in terms of adaptation to the digital world.

Measures taken during the pandemic should be integrated into existing laws, regulations, and plans. Updates within this scope may become permanent after the pandemic. For example, in case of working home, job security should be discoursed upon. In general terms, technoparks were caught off guard by the COVID-19 pandemic. By taking pandemics and the situations that may cause business interruptions in the future into account, new technical and legal infrastructures should be developed for technoparks. Quick solutions should be found. There could be problems with process management and decision support management. We must correctly implement the lessons learned from situations such as the pandemic in the current project management process. While technoparks are being legally developed, their administrative ecosystems should also be developed, and a collaborative working culture should be expanded.

Clustering in technoparks is beneficial in terms of functioning. Due to working from home, the clustering method should not be lifted. Every region should have a web page and a communication system. Using this common platform when communicating with company owners will speed up the process. Improvement processes should be carried out for those who are economically weak or newly established among technoparks.

Technology companies need to be prepared for such crises in the real sector. It will become more important for companies to collaborate on areas where they excel rather than working alone. Following this process, companies must become experts in their fields; working in trendy areas can prevent the emergence of a professional product.

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Working needs of technology-focused companies post Covid-19 pandemic and how will technoparks function in the new era?

2. POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC PLANNING

Question 1: Will the popularity of remote work and acceptance by several sectors and sub-units change the functioning principles of technoparks?

The process will restart for new companies and startups. The studies will focus more on information technologies. Technoparks will play an essential role.

It will be a period wherein especially operation-based activities will decrease in working methods. Technoparks will become more internet-based and digital as the way they operate is addressed. It may help to keep the companies' relationships with the technopark management offices in a more electronic environment, and the tools are re-established accordingly. It is important for these changes to be made under state control.

Supporting services, such as online services to facilitate the activities of technoparks and technology transfer offices (TTO), are currently being provided, and these services must be greatly expanded. The newly established General Directorate of Strategy and Efficiency within the Ministry of Industry and Technology is expected to make innovations in terms of processes.

If remote work becomes permanent for personnel, legislative arrangements should be made to ensure the sustainability of the incentives in accordance with this. If clock in is permanently taken off for companies in technoparks, it will become increasingly important how many attraction centers technoparks are and how well they construct the ecosystem. In this process, technoparks will be used as structures where education is provided to strengthen the ecosystem and incubation programs are implemented, rather than simply being viewed as a place where people clock in.

The establishment of legal infrastructure became obligatory. A legislation regarding the control of remote work, restructuring the follow-up and conductions of project management processes, the choice of companies and creating working conditions should be constituted. The concept, R&D at place, should be enhanced.

Companies that are active in information sector should work on a control mechanism. The sector to focus on input will increase the productivity. The benefits of working from home to output should be researched.

After this process, technoparks may be virtualized. With the legalization of technoparks, the first setup costs can be reduced. Legislation regarding this issue should be made in the labor code. In this sense, decision support systems and process management should be made obligatory. A company can benefit from technopark facilities from afar and conduct its work. Legislations regarding virtual technoparks, virtual incubator centers, virtual interviews, virtual events, and virtual fairs should be made. Remote work privileges provided to academicians can be provided at other companies. In this way, companies will not have to come to technopark. The reduce in structure investments will balance the income disadvantage caused by loss of rent.

Question 2: After the Covid-19 pandemic, do you expect a change in the existing subjects of activity of companies in Technoparks?

A change will absolutely occur after the pandemic and all companies are activating their predictions at the moment. At present, medical companies and biotechnology companies are focused on manufacturing masks with different features and antibodies to create a solution for the Covid-19 problem.

Companies including equipment and laboratories in their areas of activity will continue to be in technoparks physically. But software companies will not feel the need to be in technoparks. Therefore, new regulations will be made. A future where Virtual Technoparks are created and benefitting from rents and incentives is redesigned is waiting for us.

In this process, in-house entrepreneurship activities will increase. Conducting interdisciplinary studies will gain importance. For this, the government could encourage managements such as technoparks to work on creating a consortium with national funds.

Distance education and remote work activities may increase, there will be developments regarding these, and business models will vary. New and innovative business lines will develop such as remote consultancy, sales, logistics and distribution, and customer services by producing new products.

There will be significant changes in business plans. “How it is done” will change more instead of “what is done”. For example, companies producing hotel software will start to produce e-signature software and will shift their focus to the sectors became popular after the pandemic.

Products are being developed with common strategies; therefore, the qualifications of projects have changed. There will be rapid developments in medical software, cybersecurity, and distance education. Within this scope, suitable environments for industrial companies that produce gloves, visors, respirators, and other health technology products will emerge. We will see a greater tendency to agriculture, game industry and virtual market sectors.

Virtual office concept will emerge. By renting these virtual offices, it may be possible to both benefit from incentives and work from home. Even the software events could result in contact of people. People should keep communicating with each other in virtual technoparks. Risk management strategies should be diversified and the adaptation for future crises should be improved.

Ministry of Industry and Technology should actualize domestic servers and software to develop cloud-based applications. New applications should be developed using this cloud software. Guarantee of purchase should be imposed in software projects.

It is expected that incubator companies newly started in technoparks can use the opportunities snappily and to be active in disruptive technologies. Startups will add value in this sense, they will lead the change process.

Question 3: Will there be different criteria for choosing new enterprises for Technoparks after the Covid-19 pandemic?

Even if it is considered that criteria will not change in general, the companies that will invest in traditional technology will not be preferred. R&D and technology studies that will take place in technoparks are evaluated with arbitrators. Therefore, regardless of the sector, carrying out the R&D activities aimed at the pandemic may be a priority. For example, subjects in the agenda such as health technologies, digitalization, cybersecurity, Edenization, contribution to the exportation, and reduction of foreign dependency can be prioritized. The acceptance of the companies which are doing mass production to the technoparks should be ensured. When making choices, the ability of working together of companies should be considered. To affect employment positively, the acceptance of companies provide higher employment opportunities to the technoparks should be facilitated. The ability to remote work can also be used as a criterion in company choice.

If occupancy rates are high, sectors with higher technology should be preferred. The products should focus on innovatively instead of R&D. Online evaluation methods can be used when choosing companies. Solutions to meet these infrastructure services should be developed.

However, technoparks will determine their own priorities based on their management understandings. Within this framework, while some technoparks who determined their preferences may continue their current process, some technoparks may determine prominent sectors as a reason for preference.

Question 4: When the economic and social crises caused by the pandemic are considered, what are your considerations on the formation of Thematic Technoparks against the threats that may occur in different areas in the future? In this sense how a more effective Technopark can be created and how it will be active?

Thematic technoparks should be organized as clusters completing each other and by creating a supreme board, the developments in the world and sectoral opportunities can be shared with companies. In the meantime, Technopark contacts may be defined within the value chain context and structures that will bring the people who can interoperate and potential customers together. Specialization in Technoparks like Organized Industrial Zones will be beneficial. It must be important that companies complement each other to come together in technoparks. With this, technoparks can swiftly create a prototype with ease.

Technoparks with the most suitable themes should be created in order to cope with potential crises and every crisis. Technology funds can be created with the foundations affiliating with big companies. Using common infrastructure is an opportunity for technopark firms. Ecosystem development is crucial, creating "Virtual Technoparks" instead of coming together in a physical environment might come to the fore, and artificial intelligence technoparks- supercomputer infrastructures can be established (virtual technoparks for companies that are active in the information sector). Technoparks that work in the fields such as processing of open data and 5G should be established (common laboratory facilities).

Since technoparks are business organizations, they have commercial concerns. Therefore, occupancy rates are important. In virtual thematic technoparks, when selecting companies, it is necessary to be more selective, and choosing companies that fulfil several conditions. Significant criteria should not be the only ones considered while calculating company indices. Thematic technoparks should be free of commercial concerns. In the meantime, the acceptance of companies to thematic technoparks should be regulated alongside the physical acceptance of companies to technoparks.

Portioning the risk out by distributing thematic technoparks to at least two geographical regions may be discussed. Within this framework, it is predicted that thematic technoparks focused on agriculture and food will be active in the future. Also, it is expected that the tendency to existing technoparks and technoparks in the development process will increase. Thematic technoparks active in the fields of biotechnology, medical and smart technologies will increase by taking the scales of cities and regions into account.

According to the necessities of regional ecosystems, the thematic technoparks that will constitute on conditions that it will provide support for regional development and the strategic goals of the country can be established by local actors and centralized administration coming together. For example, Düzce is specialising in the field of health. Like this, Bingöl, Van and Ağrı can specialise in agriculture and stock raising and contribute to the development of the ecosystem. The coordination of this specialization should be provided by the Ministry. The priorities of the regions can be determined by organizing workshops. The ministry should lead technoparks to thematic fields. For example, thematic technoparks can be established in organized industrial zones. For effective studies, necessary mechanisms should be implemented. Common use and machine and equipment areas should be increased. Similarly, virtual technoparks can be created by gathering companies that do supplementary business in virtual environment.

Institutionalization training should be provided in technoparks in order to increase the number of companies that create R&D with higher quality and produce technology. Within this scope, the portal data of technoparks and technology firms can be centralized, and action can be taken in terms of matching and coordination.

Besides, unwalled incubation models exist and these models will develop more after this process. This model provides training and mentorship supports online. Thus, the obligation of technoparks to be established at industrial zones can be eliminated by activating remote supervision systems and the establishment of digital technoparks may be facilitated.

Question 5: What should be the function of the technoparks during crisis periods and how they should be designed?

Technoparks should counsel their companies and play an active role in the studies by conveying the actions they can take to competent authorities. The problems technopark companies encounter in crisis environments should be detected one by one and suitable solutions should be able to be created. Therefore, technoparks should counsel their companies, play an active role in the studies, and convey the actions they can take to competent authorities.

It is important that technopark manager companies to have action plans with their own initiative and that can be applied by themselves in the crisis processes.

Technoparks should constitute their own crisis desks, the members should be chosen among technopark members and community management platforms. And it is necessary to work interactively with these members.

Technoparks should take measures such as thermal camera and disinfection in order to enhance and control the situation of regional health controls. It is necessary to notify constantly, and risk-crisis management plans should be reviewed. Practical and enforceable solutions should be created.

Technoparks should have the qualifications to support the technological infrastructures of stakeholders. Besides, their financial structures should be strong. Technopark manager companies should implement supportive and promotion mechanisms regarding the promotion of their company. In the meantime, technopark manager companies are expected to develop their contingency plans for regional companies.

Production-possibilities should be recorded when accepting new companies into technoparks. Technopark management should keep the alternative qualification inventories of the companies in that region up to date.

With the ecosystem development, the importance of technoparks can be clearly seen again. Technoparks which involve incubator companies that develop products and services for times of crisis in themselves will review their incubation systems after this process and become stronger. Startups can create fast solution in times of crisis. New support mechanisms for startups should be developed.

In order for ensuring the maintenance of R&D, financial concerns should be stayed away from focusing on the solution. Technoparks should stay away from financial concerns and support companies. Technoparks should provide R&D solutions for companies. Afterwards, by conveying these solutions to investor companies, mass production can be actualized. The government should play an active role in incentives regarding the subjects. The ministry should think of both technoparks and companies. Virtual technoparks should exist, however companies should be in technoparks physically, with small areas.

Technopark managements should be in collaboration with the Ministry and should be supportive in providing financial sources to companies and creating solutions for active companies.

The functionality and activity of technoparks should be changed. Technoparks should be supported by different services, not by rents. Virtual technoparks and technoparks should be pulled away from their classical context, should provide different services to companies within themselves, and should be supported from different angles.

The pool of the companies in technoparks should be increased. Every company should be able to reach the equipment and information they need in technoparks. With this transformation, the competence of companies and their teams should be revealed. And companies should come together and be supportive in terms of launching a product.

In terms of management, technoparks must be given autonomy. Technoparks should do more to support local businesses and academics. In terms of management, technoparks should not be solely dependent on universities. It is critical that the right people are deployed in the right places. Technoparks must go through technical validation processes.

In addition, outside of the crisis period, technoparks are required to collaborate with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). By increasing the activities of NGOs in technoparks, new cooperation studies should be created.

Working needs of technology-focused companies post Covid-19 pandemic and how will technoparks function in the new era?

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e-Workshop Final Report

This report includes the results of the e-workshop titled "Working needs of technology-focused companies post Covid-19 pandemic and how will technoparks function in the new era?" held by Bilişim Vadisi. The assessments included in the report are reflecting the opinions of the participants.

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