



IASP

International Association of Science Parks
and Areas of Innovation

33rd IASP World Conference on
Science Parks and Areas of Innovation 2016

Russia, Moscow

**Open University Skolkovo as an instrument to attract
talented people to the Innovation Ecosystem of Russia**

Plenary session

Global talent: the coveted treasure

Author:

Andrey Egorov (aegorov@sk.ru)

Skolkovo Foundation, Russia

Hosted by:



Open University Skolkovo as an instrument to attract talented people to the Innovation Ecosystem of Russia

Executive Summary

Recent decade clearly showed the beginning of a new cycle of world competition between countries – competition based on technological innovations and many countries begun to create innovation centers – local “Silicon Valleys”. They hope to reproduce American model and become leaders in launching new markets and developing new trends. Everyone goes its own way making different stakes on models and priority areas. But the main point in the success of all these territories is human capital. How to attract the best? What motivates them? What instruments of involvement allow tightening them to your ‘land’? How to make sustainable model so talents will attract talents? There is no direct answer. Silicon Valley is a history and at the same time is undoubtable place which attracts best global minds. What other countries should do to create conditions and let their locals stay and foreigners come? In my presentation I would like to share my experience in creating a program for talent attraction in innovation ecosystem – Open University Skolkovo.

Introduction.

Skolkovo Innovations Center was launched as a project to create Russian ‘Silicon Valley’ in 2010. There are few basic tasks: to build a new city from the greenfield few kilometers out of Moscow, to attract technological start-ups (in 5 priority areas: energy efficiency, strategic computer technologies, biomedicine, nuclear technologies and space technologies) and give them opportunities for development, and to create a culture of entrepreneurship in Russia. Construction of the city is a technical task for the country which managed to build cities even near Polar Circle. But creating a new culture is more difficult task. During last century all attempts to be independent and to do own business were destroyed in Russia. Nowadays young people intend to be officials or work as employee for a large national company than to be on yourself and bare all entrepreneurial risks. Most of them have never thought this way because it wasn’t taught in school and there are so little success stories and heroes to follow.

Challenges.

In our case success of the Skolkovo Innovation Center depends on networks of innovators and technological entrepreneurs, on enthusiasm about technologies of various types of Skolkovo stakeholders. There some challenges for human capital in innovations development field in Russia:

One major problem of innovative development is insufficiently disseminated positive interest in businesses built on innovations and in “useful” technologies. The problem is reflected in low level of students applying for technical and natural sciences in Russian universities.

Secondly, the problem of low integration of Russia into global knowledge exchange processes, its isolation from global technological development agenda.

The third problem is lack of communication within Russian technological and academic community and business with almost complete absence of multidisciplinary communication.

The fourth problem is low or no culture of entrepreneurship and innovative creation, lack of professionals with urban design and planning competencies for development of Skolkovo Innovation Center itself, and, probably, low level of understanding of the challenge of creating a modern comfortable city.

All mentioned challenges show the problem of absence of human capital for innovation center. Having in mind these problems and one Grand Challenge (to create the culture on innovations and entrepreneurship in Russia) we launched Open University Skolkovo (OpUS) which is a Skolkovo Foundation program designed to attract talented young people with science and technology skills and displaying entrepreneurial talent, recruit them and allow them to develop within the innovation ecosystem in Russia. OpUS was created the same time with launching the project of Skolkovo Innovation City to provide human capital to the future city. As Skolkovo is supposed to be the world hub for innovation it should be competitive on global level. That’s why it’s important to attract the best young people to the ecosystem.

What is OpUS?

Open University Skolkovo is not usual classical university. Actually it doesn’t have the legal right to provide educational services and issue diploma. But it’s a way for those who want to be integrated into the innovation ecosystem to find their way and build career within. By inviting students from leading Russian technological universities and research centers OpUS provides different programs on entrepreneurship, innovation, project management, foresight thinking, global vision and global challenges, presentation skills etc. in different formats: lectures, interactive games, clubs, seasonal schools, group works, pitch sessions etc. Students, postgraduates and young academics from top universities, research centers and institutes, technological startups staff, entrepreneurs, innovators and engineers are participants of OpUS events.

We hope that OpUS also can become a platform for discussions of issues related to development of Skolkovo and its unique ecosystem, involving leading international experts and thinkers. OpUS could help resolve the challenge of innovation city creation by informal mechanisms for spreading new ideas, interdisciplinary cooperation - the best source of new technologies and products.

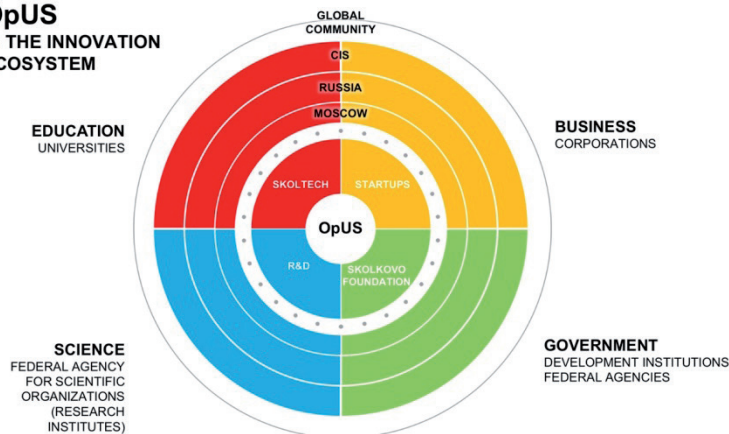
From institutional part OpUS provides a platform for regular interaction between all the participants of Russia's innovation ecosystem. At the core of this interaction is the idea of bringing together talented individuals, technological and business experts and leaders in promising areas of scientific research, as well as using the most advanced event formats available to stimulate entrepreneurial activity and help generate innovative ideas.

The main KPI's for OpUS are startup companies that are made by OpUS participants, or their integration as students, employees, trainees, researches in the elements of Skolkovo ecosystem.

The main principals of OpUS are:

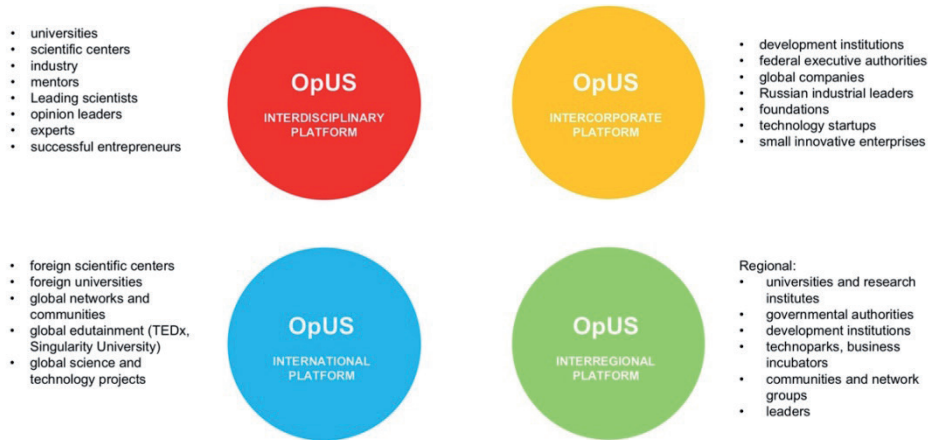
- **INTERDISCIPLINARY.** Global technological leaders and thinkers, successful entrepreneurs, experts and mentors help to work with the participants.
- **EDUCATIONAL.** Students, graduates and professors from leading universities in Russia (including Skoltech), researchers from leading research institutes and academic centers in Russia. Collaboration with universities and academic centers abroad.
- **INTER-CORPORATE.** Technological corporations, government bodies and innovation centers: RUSNANO, RVC, the Russian Ministry of Education, Federal Agency for Scientific Organizations, Skolkovo partner companies: Microsoft, Intel, Autodesk, AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Bayer, RENOVA Group etc.
- **INTER-REGIONAL / INTERNATIONAL.** Joint events with local partners supporting and developing innovations, involvement in global networks: TEDx, Singularity University etc.

**OpUS
IN THE INNOVATION
ECOSYSTEM**



OpUS is a platform for regular communication among all entities of the Russian innovation ecosystem

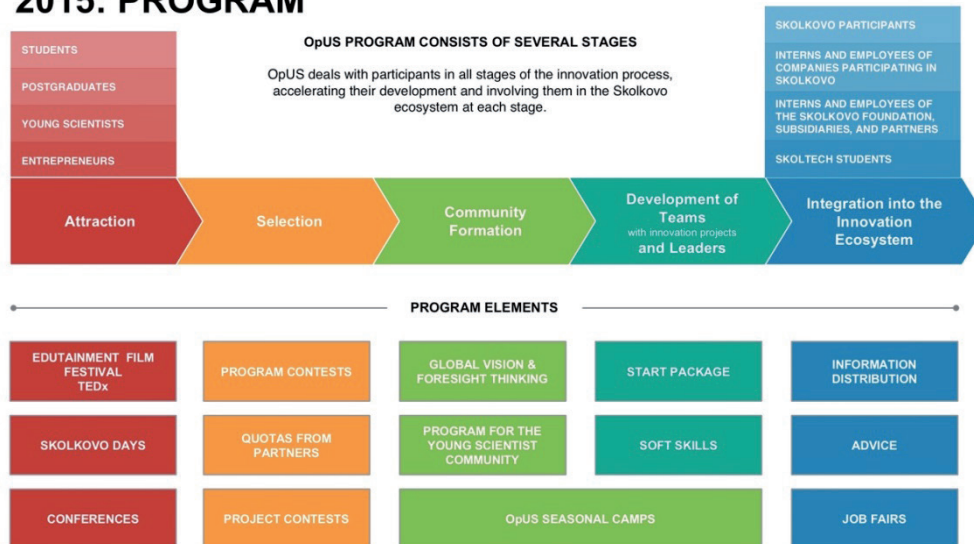
The basis of communication is to bring together talented people, experts in technology and business, and leaders in promising scientific studies and apply the most advanced formats of events encouraging entrepreneurship and helping create innovative ideas.



Stages and formats.

OpUS works with participants at every stage of the innovation process, accelerating their development and integrating them into the Skolkovo innovation ecosystem during each phase. The OpUS program consists of several units: students can take part (enter/leave) depending on whether they have the skills that participants are expected to show in both the individual sections of the program and the program as a whole.

2015: PROGRAM



As one of the many examples of OpUS formats is OpUS Winter Camp 2015 as a project designed to form communities of young talents (scientists, students, entrepreneurs) capable of consistently influencing the development strategy for science and technology in Russia and CIS. The participants of the camp came together to discuss projects and challenges greater than those that a single person or even one team can handle on its own. At the end they made a list of Global Challenges they would like to resolve using their technological ideas. The result of the Camp was the Global Challenges program launched in autumn 2015.