

COSTI Workshop for the Creation of a science center in Sri Lanka

WHAT IS A SCIENCE CENTER?

Developing a master plan

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CORE COMPONENTS OF A PLAN

- Mission, vision, audience
- Building brief and program of spaces and services
- Content program
- 10 year Business Plan
- Governance
- Marketing and Outreach

Appendices could include

- Policies
- Data
- Organizational structure

WHAT TYPE OF SCIENCE CENTER?

Three broad types exist:

- **Iconic**: large, architectural building, one centralized organization
- **Satellite**: several around the country, some centralization of resource development
- **Distributed**: throughout the country, using existing buildings, one or more sources for resources

Iconic model has been selected

Questions:

- How does this model fulfill the nation's needs?
- Is this easier to achieve?
- How can it be sustained long term?

ICONIC SCIENCE CENTER

Advantages:

- Major profile from architecture can attract political support
- May attract donor
- Raises aspirations
- An exhibit in its own right
- More attractive to tourists
- Mainly turnkey projects

Constraints:

- Requires very substantial initial investment
- Requires substantial operating costs
- May be intimidating for some potential visitors

SATELLITE SCIENCE CENTER

Advantages:

- Serves more of the population
- Can cater for regional differences in content, language or approach
- Creates a network of professionals
- May be easier to begin, as less initial investment required
- May be easier to support long term
- Can be turnkey or locally led

Constraints

- Less immediate high profile impact
- Less attractive for tourists
- Consistent standards may be harder to achieve

DISTRIBUTED SCIENCE CENTER

Advantages:

- Low barrier to starting
- Can spread throughout country
- Creates wide spread network of professionals
- Integrates the community, ease of access
- Local construction where needed

Constraints:

- Low profile
- Continual need to keep partners integrated
- Consistent standards may be difficult to achieve

TARGET AUDIENCE

Three broad factors to consider:

- Residents and tourists: what is the estimated proportion?
- Single or repeat visits: how important is attracting visitors back on a regular basis?
- Education and entertainment: what are the priorities?

The goal is to create an increasing number of citizens to value and enjoy science and technology

Sometimes described as education and entertainment or learning and leisure.

Is it a choice?

MISSION AND VISION

The Mission is to

“Coordinate with thinking, monitor with empathy.”

“I will restructure the education and knowledge systems suitably, so that Sri Lanka becomes a key hub for knowledge and learning in the world.”

Mahinda Chintana

Vision for the Future “

Vision is to create a center that will celebrate our **technical heritage** while stimulating, empowering and inspiring our people to drive Sri Lankan growth and prosperity through an understanding of science, technology and **innovation**.

One of the three missions of the National STI strategy is to **prepare our people for a knowledge society through improved scientific literacy**.

MISSION AND VISION

- ***prepare our people for a knowledge society by instilling pride in our technological achievements,***
- ***imparting knowledge for informed decision making, and***
- ***inspiring innovation for a prosperous nation***
- ***through science, technology and innovation***



INCREASING INTEREST



INCREASING NUMBERS



ADVOCACY PYRAMID

APPROACH: from inspiration to action



APPROACH: what activities are easy entry points for visitors?

Several factors need to be considered:

- Visibility
- Physical access
- Parent child interaction
- Family group
- School practice
- Familiarity with similar institutions
- Staff

To reduce barriers to entry, cultural differences need to be explored

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS

- Defining the building brief
- Surveys and front end research
- Setting the scene for the visit
- Encouraging social interaction
- Diversifying the offer
- Reducing written materials
- Providing ongoing opportunities

Feedback from the public throughout the development phase is crucial to long term success.

CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

The building project itself is part of the educational mission:

- Related student projects for master planning
- Integration of local crafts
- Training of local people in new construction techniques and maintenance

It can also serve as a model and training opportunity post opening.

The science center is an opportunity for a wide range of capacity building, not just in science and technology:

- marketing
- customer service
- finance
- catering

DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS PLAN

The Business Plan needs to consider the long term operations and renewal as well as the immediate construction and fit-out for opening.

Some factors that need integrating:

- Renewal of exhibits
- Change of exhibits
- Marketing and public relations pre-opening
- Programming costs including outreach
- Transitional costs
- Cost of goods

IT' S THE MISSION THAT COUNTS

The Mission gives a framework for decisions.

Awareness of audience needs can clarify choices

Business planning ensures a sound operating model

Getting to opening is just the first step

Creating a long living organization with lasting impact is the goal.