

MIT Skoltech Program

MIT, the [Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology \(Skoltech\)](#), and the Skolkovo Foundation have been collaborating since 2011 to develop Skoltech, a private graduate research university on the outskirts of Moscow. The collaboration has evolved over a sequence of phases. In the first phase, the partners worked together to design and develop Skoltech as a unique, world-class research university, embodying many of MIT's principles and values. In the second phase, which began in 2016, the [MIT Skoltech Program](#) worked collaboratively to continue to develop Skoltech and the Skolkovo ecosystem through a targeted set of joint activities between MIT and Skoltech. The third phase of the collaboration, beginning in 2019 and extending for five years, focuses on joint research projects between individual faculty members at both institutions. Other important features of the program include new entrepreneurship and innovation programs, continued collaboration with MISTI to connect MIT and Skoltech students, and a joint annual conference.

MIT's decision to continue the MIT Skoltech Program into a third phase drew on the input of several sources, including the MIT Skoltech Faculty Coordinating Committee, the faculty-led International Advisory Committee, and the Senior Risk Group, a group of senior MIT administrators charged with evaluating certain proposed MIT engagements with entities, including those in Russia.

Research and Outreach Activities

Collaborative research will continue to be a core element of the relationship between MIT and Skoltech. In December 2019, a call for proposals for new research projects as part of the Next Generation Program (NGP) was issued, as well as a call for proposals for pilot grant projects. Both calls for proposals focused on the five Skoltech thematic program areas—life sciences and biomedicine, cutting-edge engineering and advanced materials, data science, energy efficiency, and advanced studies—as well as other strategic areas.

The pilot grants support innovative research projects that include collaboration with Skoltech faculty and have the potential to benefit the development of Skoltech or the mission of the Skolkovo Foundation. The call for proposals resulted in 28 submissions, and 10 awards are expected to be made.

The NGP covers a range of academic and institution development activities and seeks to establish and promote mutually beneficial long-term bilateral collaboration in research, education, and innovation between Skoltech faculty members and their MIT counterparts through the largely research-driven projects. This year eight joint NGP projects, each involving one MIT principal investigator (PI) and one Skoltech PI, were awarded for a three-year period, as well as one joint entrepreneurship and innovation project for a two-year period.

Outreach and Collaboration

In addition to accomplishing the transition from the second phase to the third phase of the collaboration, more than 20 MIT faculty together with researchers, students, and staff from across the Institute participated in the collaboration to continue advancing the development of Skoltech and weighed in on deliberations for the continuation of the collaboration.

Program Governance

The MIT Faculty Coordinating Committee has overseen and facilitated MIT's planning and execution of the cooperative activities. Committee members are Richard Lester—Japan Steel Industry Professor, associate provost for international activities, and chair; Bruce Tidor—professor of biological engineering and computer science and vice chair; Brian Anthony—director of the Master of Engineering in Manufacturing Program; Munther Dahleh—William A. Coolidge Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and director of the Institute for Data, Systems, and Society; Douglas Hart—professor of mechanical engineering; Phillip A. Sharp—Institute Professor, Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research; and Carl V. Thompson—Stavros Salapatas Professor of Materials Science and Engineering. Program staff consisted of Deliana Ernst, assistant director; Natalia Billings, administrative assistant; and Chrissy Mullin, financial administrator. The program is headquartered in Building E19.

The program has been responsible for managing MIT's activities with respect to the relationship with Skoltech. In addition to managing grant processes, this includes organization of joint activities and advising Skoltech on matters related to administration and research.

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