



Tec-MIT acceleration: Entrepreneurial projects in 5 regions of Mexico

The first results produced by the **MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP), Focus Mexico**, run by the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) (MIT) and Tec de Monterrey include creating tools to support the acceleration of entrepreneurial ecosystems and their projects.

The first generation of this MIT initiative comprised teams from **Chihuahua, Guadalajara, Guanajuato, Mexico City, and Querétaro**, coordinated by local Tec campuses.

*“The **objective of the program and the projects** under development is to nurture the **innovation ecosystem** with regard to the particular characteristics of each area,”* explained Juan Pablo Murra, the Tec’s Rector for Higher Education.

Michael Cusumano, Deputy Dean at the MIT Sloan School of Management, said that *“the teams’ common goal **was to create an acceleration project for startups** by improving entrepreneurial training, financing, and company outreach programs.”*

The first generation of **MIT REAP Focus Mexico** celebrated their completion of the program on the Monterrey campus, where the teams presented the **projects to be developed and implemented in their regions.**



Hugo Garza Medina, Vice President of Strategy and former Director of the Eugenio Garza Lagüera Institute of Entrepreneurship, commented on what this **stage meant to the entrepreneurs and their work** after this program.

*“These teams have already managed to work in **close collaboration with each other** and with different sectors of **government, business owners, universities, and other entrepreneurs**. This kind of tangible achievement is not easy to achieve; together, they have built something of real value.*

MIT REAP Focus México is an MIT entrepreneurial acceleration program. The initiative’s goal is to come up with and propose projects and programs involving science, technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship to promote social and economic development.

The teams received **mentoring and oversight from experts** during project development.

“The projects’ goal is to nurture the innovation ecosystem with regard to the specific characteristics of each area”. Juan Pablo Murra

Creating a network of research, acceleration, and networking hubs

During the ceremony, **Michael Cusumano** explained how the teams had been challenged to create **networking projects in their regions**.

*“Most of the **teams in the Mexico Focus group** are interested in developing **ventures concerning mobility** or even **climate technologies** to generate clean energy in their city,”* he added.

The **participants from Querétaro** focused their efforts on the eventual **creation of an academic hub** for high-impact entrepreneurship based on **sustainable mobility projects**.

For its part, the **team from Guadalajara** focused on **digital technologies and agrotechnology** with a view to accelerating these types of ventures and **tying them in to local investors**.

*“We are trying to achieve a **smarter, more sustainable city lifestyle** by fomenting joint entrepreneurial innovations with **health sciences and sustainable industries** for the improvement of our ecosystem,”* the **Mexico City team** explained.

In the **case of Guanajuato**, the team also turned to **agrotechnology and focused on Industry 4.0 and mobility** based on ties between state universities, entrepreneurs, and researchers.

Finally, the **Chihuahua team** focused on the topic of **specialized intelligence** and got things under way by setting up **meetings for startups to discuss collaborations with established companies**, angel **investors** and **professional** communities.



Growing the innovation ecosystem even more

While all five **regions expounded unique approaches** to the given challenge, Cusumano underscored that the teams' common goal was to **nurture the national innovation ecosystems** in their regions.

*“You have to remember that **REAP is what we call an acceleration program**, a regional entrepreneurial acceleration program that helps **promote ties with the current ecosystem**,”* he told CONECTA in an interview.

*“The greatest challenge these teams face is that **this program is temporary**, so it is up to them and the links their projects have established to **continue to grow the ecosystem**,”* he added.

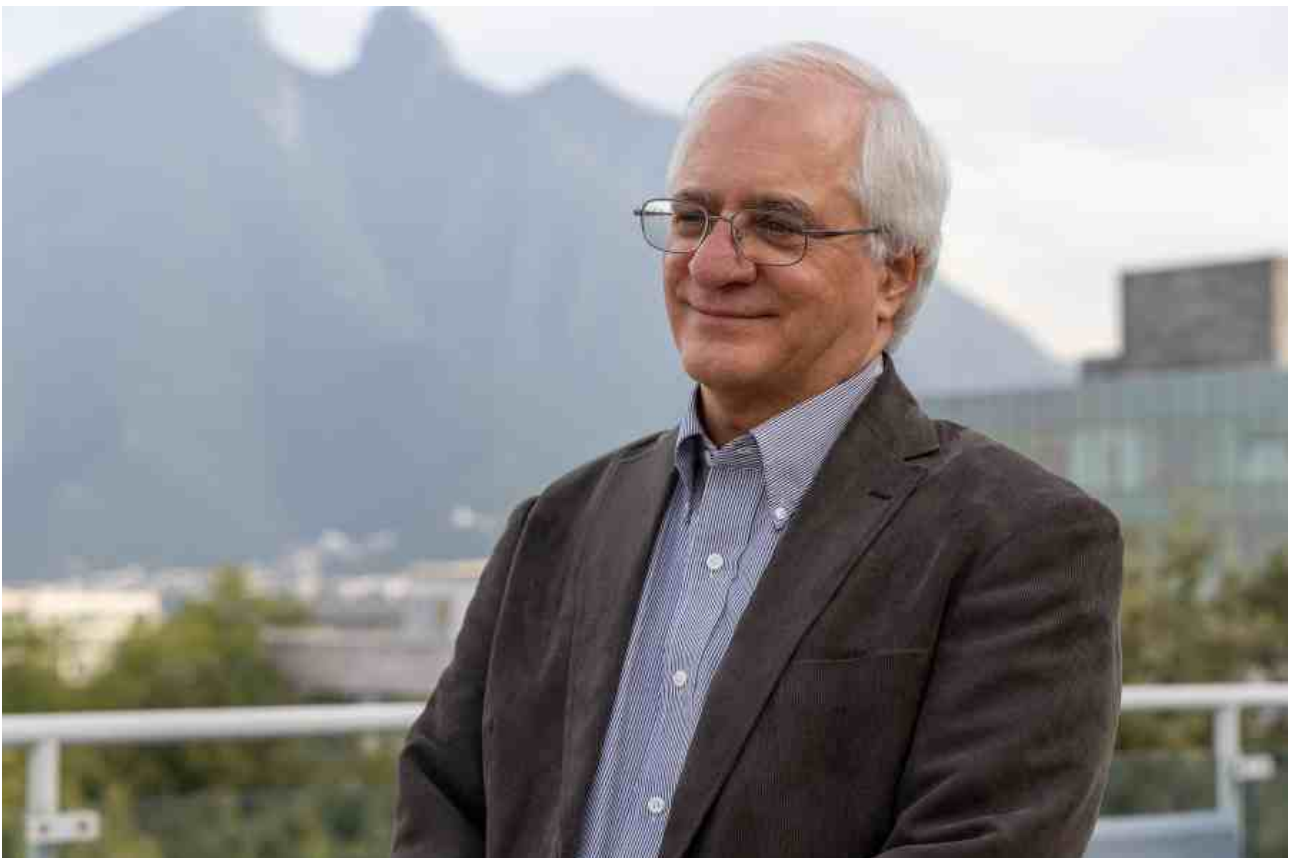
“We were looking for an opportunity to replicate the Monterrey experience in other cities, and it culminated in MIT REAP México”.- Hugo Garza

The MIT mentor observed that a bright future is predicted **for the projects developed** by the campuses, which is partly due to the **participants coming together as a united whole.**

Cusumano shared some of the **advice the teams were given to continue to grow both the scope of their projects** and the national network of innovative entrepreneurship collaborators.

*“We encouraged all the teams to **set up some sort of organization** to serve as the backbone of their project: a sort of business development center or platform to **keep channels open with their network of contacts.**”*

*“The idea is to keep on developing different **ways of participating in the local economy** and to find ways of making more rapid progress in the development of new businesses,”* he said.



Progress of MIT Reap Mexico

Michael Cusumano recalled that MIT REAP came into being in 2012; therefore, it has run **about a dozen programs** and worked with around **eighty teams from all over the world**.

*“Our data show us that these eighty teams have **largely been successful** with about three-quarters of the projects coming to fruition,”* he explained.

According to Garza Medina, the **Mexico MIT REAP** program was conceptualized **five years ago as a way of bringing different stakeholders** in the entrepreneurship ecosystem together to draw up a proposal for their cities.

During the **first program in Monterrey**, the then director of the Institute of Entrepreneurship **highlighted the success that the program had achieved** in terms of building **networks among key stakeholders** such as entrepreneurs and investors.

*“Many ideas and **projects that have crystallized and been very successful** to date came out of this process. The best example is the **Venture Café**, which is a franchise we brought from Boston,”* he recalled.

*“In this program, we were looking for an **opportunity to replicate the Monterrey experience in other cities** throughout the country. That’s how the idea that culminated in **MIT REAP focusing on different cities** in Mexico came about,”* concluded Garza Medina.

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