

CASE STUDY

Leuven (BL) – Gwalior (IN)

IURC – Asia & Australasia



JUNE 30- 2023

Thematic Network(s): Innovative Sustainable, & Carbon Neutral Ecosystems & Strategic Sectors

Thematic Cluster(s): Business start-up support

Cross-cutting challenge(s): Digital transition-Smart City

Topic keywords: Start-ups, economic development, growth, entrepreneurship

Start-ups

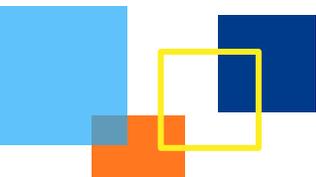
Leuven is working with Gwalior to strengthen the capacity of start-ups inspiring them to become a genuine force of change and economic development for the city and India, while promoting the development of partnerships with businesses in Europe.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gwalior is a major city in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh and is considered as an alternative centre of growth to New Delhi. As part of the support by the Gwalior Municipal Corporation (GMC) for start-ups, the city and other key stakeholders have created a dedicated space to support them, promote their work and encourage them to thrive. The incubation provides entrepreneurs a requisite ecosystem where they are able to replicate their business ideas, assistance in designing and organizing training & research activities and also expertise to grow.

Leuven is the capital and largest city of the province of Flemish Brabant in Belgium. It is located about 25 kilometres east of Brussels. It was the 2020 European Capital of innovation Leuven and is internationally known as a top region for research and education with Europe's most innovative University, KU Leuven and IMEC, one of the world's best R&D Centres on nanotechnology, digital technology & IoT. Leuven's innovation ecosystem, and its intentional efforts to nurture and grow that ecosystem through networks like Leuven MindGate and Leuven 2030, has drawn talent and resources from all over the world. In Leuven's networks, each strand of the quadruple helix (government, knowledge institutions, companies, and citizens) is formally represented in those networks' decision-making bodies. As a result, stakeholders have been able to develop closer ties, build trust, and define common goals. Leuven is a top destination in health, high-tech, and creativity, it has raised the region's profile and helped local companies secure funding. A major asset of Leuven's ecosystem is KU Leuven, which continually draws talent and resources to the city. In 2019, KU Leuven once again placed first in the Reuters ranking of Europe's most innovative universities, for the fourth year in a row. The Leuven start-ups ecosystem boasts a growing number of creative thinkers, companies, and incubators. Furthermore, various accelerator-programs notably Startit@KBC and imec iStart help to nurture new generations of start-ups.

As part of the IUC programme (2016-2021), Gwalior cooperated with Leuven on the conservation of cultural heritage through capacity building and technical advice. The common values and interests of the two cities as well as their ties from the historical cooperation, created an ideal platform for collaboration on the very fitting topic of start-up promotion. Start-ups can play a key role in promoting economic prosperity, increasing employment, driving innovation, encouraging entrepreneurship, and supporting competition. Joint actions can lead to mutual benefits for both cities.



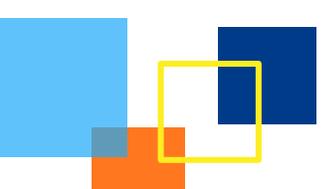


leuven



GWALIOR
Smart City

KU LEUVEN



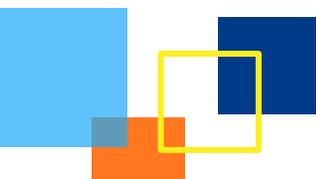
MAIN CHALLENGE AND SOLUTION

Promotion of start-ups is a key priority for Gwalior Municipal Corporation (GMC) and Gwalior Smart City Development Corporation Limited (GSCDCL). Both organisations have very efficiently leveraged the opportunity to collaborate with Leuven as part of IURC. As a follow up to the exchange visit of city experts to Leuven in May 2022 the following actions were taken:

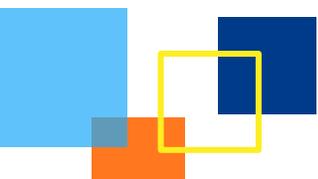
- GMC and GSCDCL organized various focused workshops from May to July 2022 in different incubator facilities in Gwalior in order to bring together key stakeholders, discuss practical issues (e.g., local laws, scale up, finance), plan the way forward, etc.
- GMC and GSCDCL organized a mega event in Gwalior Smart City on Sept. 30th, 2022, to mobilize suitable actors such as - industries, industrial associations, small scale finance to link them with relevant start-ups and incubators.
- GMC and GSCDCL established in July 2022 G.Incubate (https://twitter.com/g_incubate) as an independent body to nurture early-level start-ups by offering them infrastructural, management, and networking aid. The objective of the centre is to serve as a catalyst between the government bodies, private sector, and institutions - to mobilize the different components of the innovative ecosystem, define/oversee and organize the different projects and activities derived from the innovation and entrepreneurship strategy with different stakeholders. Various sectors are promoted, including agriculture and allied fields, biotechnology, building materials/construction technology, environmental sustainability, education, food processing, solid waste management, etc. The centre provides various facilities like co-working space, conference rooms, office supplies, canteen facility and high-speed internet services.

Some of these companies have progressed and reached some initial key milestones, such as operationalization of ideas, funding attainment, recognition of the idea's validity, development of products, online presence, and revenue creation. However, the start-ups face a number of obstacles. Some of the key challenges are related to low budgets, limited networking, cost optimisation, human resources constraints, legal issues, branding and marketing, R&D support, accessibility to the European markets, lack of mentoring, etc.

Early in the cooperation it was recognised that initiatives related to mentoring, advise, capacity building, strategy formulation, networking, and funding are priorities for the development of start-ups in Gwalior. Consequently, collaboration with Leuven on some of the above areas could lead to mutual benefits, as Belgian and other European companies could also learn about the Indian conditions, explore cooperation opportunities, and further support the global start-up ecosystem. Therefore, during 2022 and 2023:

- The city of Leuven experts regularly provided advise and shared best practices on funding, activities, and start-up ecosystem operations.
 - A large Leuven delegation actively participated in a two-part exchange visit to Gwalior in January and February 2023, which included in person meetings on the above issues.
 - The city of Leuven co-funded with IURC in May 2023 the participation of 3 Gwalior start-up representatives and 1 mentor their participation at the and& Connect (<https://www.andleuven.com/>) event in Leuven to promote innovation, connectiveness, and inspiration.
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IURC played a catalyst role to bridge information gaps and assist knowledge exchange between the two cities.

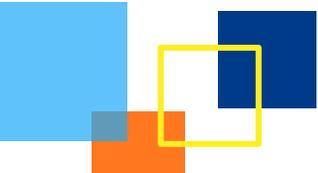


“The collaboration between the cities of Leuven and Gwalior under the IURC program has been a very enriching experience, not only from the point of view of “learning from each other”, but also in the discovery that both cities face similar challenges and solutions”

(Geert Robberechts, Director India House in Leuven)

“The cooperation between Gwalior and Leuven is one of the unique examples where city governments, Universities, start ups from both sides came together to help enable an equitable environment for those working on ground to foster growth and opportunities in various potential areas of business start-up collaboration”

(Shishir Shrivastava , Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Gwalior Municipal Corporation)

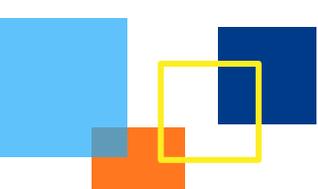


RESULTS AND IMPACT

By the end of the IURC project it is expected that start-up ecosystem in Gwalior will be stronger in terms of becoming institutionalized and more involved with international developments, while having a better understanding of requirements to grow and competitive conditions. Furthermore, the two cities will be better connected, and companies will have a mutual understanding of the needs and challenges of each country as well as the opportunities for business-to-business cooperation.

Overall, the IURC project has lead/is expected to lead to:

1. Establishment of an independent start-up body in Gwalior (i.e., G.Incube).
2. Strong long-term ties between the cities of Gwalior and Leuven.
3. Cooperation network between start-ups that goes beyond the IURC project.
4. Innovative/replicable approach for start-up ecosystems across Indian and EU cities.
5. Establishment of an effective and long-term framework of business support within cities.
6. Openness to international opportunities.





ढोल-नगाड़ों की धुन पर थिरका बेल्जियम से आया प्रतिनिधि मंडल



ग्वालियर। ग्वालियर में मौजूद ऐंशसिक्त विरासत को देखने एवं नए स्टार्टअप को प्रोत्साहित करने के उद्देश्य से बेल्जियम की ल्यूबिन सिटी का 6 सदस्यीय दल मंगलवार को निगम मुख्यालय पहुंचा। यहाँ निगमायुक्त किशोर कान्याल एवं सिटी प्लानर फवन सिंघल सहित अन्य अधिकारियों ने दल का स्वागत किया। निगमायुक्त ने विभिन्न विषयों पर चर्चा की। इसके बाद दल के सदस्य स्मार्ट सिटी सीईओ नीतू माथुर से मिलने कन्दोल कमाण्ड सेंटर पहुंचे जहाँ ढोल नगाड़ों से उनका स्वागत किया गया। इसके बाद दल के सदस्यों ने शहर की ऐतिहासिक विरासतों के देखा और वोट क्लब में वोटिंग का लुकफ उठाया।

मंगलवार सुबह रेलवे स्टेशन पर पहुंचे दल का स्वागत नोडल अधिकारी शिशिर श्रीवास्तव ने किया। दल के सदस्य निगम मुख्यालय पहुंचे जहाँ निगमायुक्त किशोर कान्याल ने विभिन्न मुद्दों पर चर्चा की। यूरोपियन दल में ल्यूबिन सिटी के डिप्टी मेयर लॉरिन वडेटा, मेट्टी वननु, सीईओ सिटी ऑफ ल्यूबिन, फेटीसिया स्कुल्मेस्टर्स, ल्यूबिन शहर के आर्थिक विभाग की प्रमुख जेन पेसेन, सीईओ ल्यूबिन माइंडगेट, मार्टिन टॉर्फ्स, प्रमुख पुर्न छत्र विभाग के ल्यूबिन, गीट रोबेरेजर्स, निदेशक, इंडिया हाउस ल्यूबिन शामिल हैं। दल के सदस्य मोतीमहल स्थित कन्दोल कमाण्ड सेंटर पहुंचे। उन्होंने एकीकृत कन्दोल कमाण्ड सेंटर का उद्घाटन कर विस्तार से जानकारी ली। स्मार्ट सिटी सीईओ श्रीनीती नीतू माथुर ने ग्वालियर स्मार्ट सिटी द्वारा शहर में चल रहे विकास कार्यों और खासतौर से हेरिटेज संरक्षण में स्मार्ट सिटी द्वारा किये जा रहे प्रयासों को सदस्यों से साझा किया। वहीं ल्यूबिन से आये प्रतिनिधि मंडल ने भी अपने शहर के विकास कार्यों की जानकारी शेर की। बैठक में बेल्जियम की ल्यूबिन सिटी की डिप्टी मेयर लॉरिन वडेटा ने जानकारी साझा करते हुए बताया कि ल्यूबिन सिटी और ग्वालियर सिटी में काफी समानता है, दोनों ही शहर अपनी ऐतिहासिक विरासत के लिए पहचाने जाते हैं।

नगर निगम एवं स्मार्ट सिटी अधिकारियों ने किया स्वागत

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM
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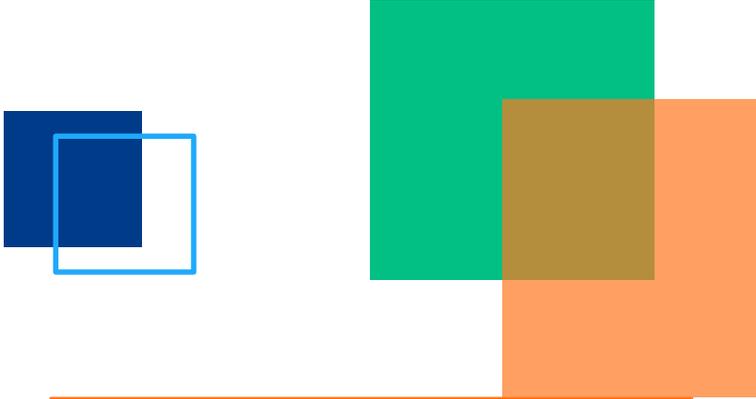
LEBRATIONS, HONOR



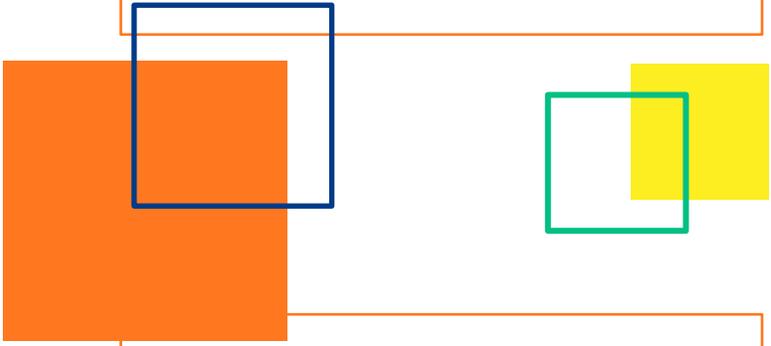
60 new startups presents their products in the presence of European delegation in Gwalior Global Investor Summit 2023

Gwalior Global Investors Summit 2023 held at the auditorium of Bal Bhavan was attended by the European delegation, Lubin City's Deputy Mayor Lalin Vadera, Gertui Vanlu, CEO City of Lubin, Patricia Schoolmasters, Head of the Economic Department of Lubin City, Jan Pesen, CEO Leuven Mindgate, Martin Torfs, Head Alumni Department KU Lubin, Geert Robrecht, Director, India House Lubin. Representatives of 11 industrial institutes of the city and representatives of Chamber of Commerce and CAT were present in the Global Summit. More than 60 new startups participated in the summit and many suggestions were given to new startups by experts from four different disciplines. In the Global Summit Assistant Director of MSME, Government of India Rajeev Kumar, Senior Chartered Accountant Ashish Parikh, Motivational Speaker and Member of NITI Aayog Dr. Vinod Tiwari and experts related to agriculture, Municipal Commissioner Kishore Kanyal, Smart City CEO Neetu Mathur, Nodal Officer Shishir Srivastava were present on this occasion. The guests were welcomed by Municipal Corporation Commissioner Kishore Kanyal. Kishore Kanyal said that organizing the investor meet in Gwalior is a big opportunity, new startups have a big challenge to establish themselves, we linkup new startup investors and industries through the incubation center. After the program, the stall set up by the new startup in Bal Bhavan was observed by all the guests and after getting information regarding the startup, they also gave their suggestions. During this, an MoU was signed between Swiphix Technology and Vyom Vista, a company related to the application and data analysis of drones.

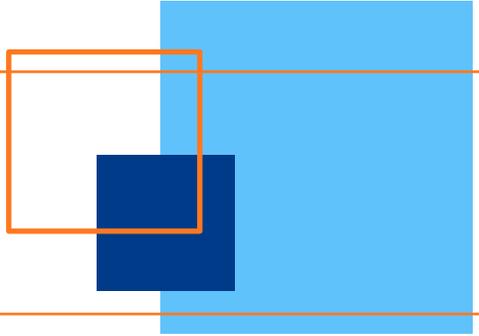
LESSONS LEARNED



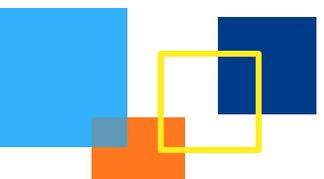
The cooperation emphasized the significance of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing complex challenges and creating innovative solutions.



Connecting people and start-ups, inspiration, sharing information, and coaching are essential ingredients of a successful outcome.



Participation in the &Connect event in Leuven helped broaden the Indian start-up network and provided potential avenues for future projects and growth.



It is important to leverage the rapid advancements in technology responsibly and ethically.

THE IURC PROGRAMME

The International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) programme enables cities in different global regions to link up and share solutions to common problems. It is part of a long-term strategy by the European Union to foster sustainable urban development in cooperation with the public and private sectors, as well as representatives of research and innovation, community groups and citizens. Through engaging in IURC, cities will have the chance to share and exchange knowledge with their international counterparts, building a greener, more prosperous future.

The IURC programme is an opportunity for local governments to learn from each other, set ambitious targets, forge lasting partnerships, test new solutions, and boost their city's international profile. Its activities will support the achievement of policy objectives as well as major international agreements on urban development and climate change, such as the EU Urban Agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement.

Author:

Acknowledgments:

Links to related outputs:

<https://www.iurc.eu/2022/05/07/leuven-representative-meet-in-gwalior/>
<https://www.iurc.eu/2022/07/04/gwalior-delegates-visit-leuven/>