Drivers and Barriers for University-Industry Interactions in Turkish Aerospace Industry

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Workshop on University-Industry Interaction
November 26-27, 2015
METU-Technopolis, Ankara
Outline

• Introduction
• Major players in the Turkish Aerospace Industry
• Universities offering formal Aerospace Engineering Education
• Drivers for promoting university-industry collaboration
• Barriers for university-industry interaction
  o University induced
  o Industry induced
• Recommendations for enhancing university-industry collaboration
Introduction

• Activities in the Aerospace Industry in Turkey has shown a noticeable shift from production under license (1980s) to system integration (1990s) and finally to indigenous designs (2000s) especially in the last decade.

• Projects (often ambitious) led almost exclusively by the Undersecretariat of Defense Industries have surfaced the need for highly qualified research personnel and in great numbers.

• Aerospace is one of the high-priority technology fields in Turkey.
Major players in the Turkish Aerospace Industry

- **Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI):** started as a facility for license production of components and complete products, but is now a major design and manufacturing organization for fixed and rotary wing aircraft, satellites.

- **HAVELSAN:** an IT and systems company providing global solutions in the areas of defense and IT sectors.

- **ASELSAN:** designs and develops indigenous systems in the fields of defense electronics by using high-end technologies.

- **ROKETSAN:** company designing, developing and manufacturing rockets and missiles.
Major players in the Turkish Aerospace Industry

- **Turkish Engine Industries (TEI):** is tasked with establishment, operation and maintenance of a modern aircraft engine industry in Turkey, on R&D, design, manufacturing, maintenance, repair, overhaul, modification and modernization of aircraft engines and other gas turbine engines.

- **DGCA:** civil aviation authority in Turkey.

- **Turkish Technic:** responsible for the maintenance of the airplanes operated by the Turkish Airlines.
Universities with Aerospace Engineering Education

• Until very recently there were only two universities offering formal Aerospace Engineering Education:
  o Middle East Technical University
  o Istanbul Technical University

• More recently, five additional universities started offering Aerospace Engineering Education:
  o Turkish Air League University
  o Istanbul Medeniyet University
  o Ondokuz Mayıs University
  o Necmettin Erbakan University
  o Gaziantep University
Drivers for promoting university-industry collaboration

- Legislation allowing part-time or extended-time employment of academic personnel in the industry:
  - Consultancy,
  - Possibility of spending sabbatical leave in companies located in Technopoleis,
  - Exemptions offered by Law for Technology Development Zones (law no. 4691) and Law for Support of Research and Development Activities (law no. 5746),
  - Legislation allows academicians to establish their own companies or to be stakeholders in companies located within Technopoleis.
Drivers for promoting university-industry collaboration

- Short or long term training and/or education of industry personnel by universities:
  - METU Continuing Education Center offers the Certificate Program for Defense Technologies since 2011,
  - Graduate programs with/without thesis offered to industry personnel,
  - Graduate students employed in the industry can follow M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs offered by universities. The thesis work is not necessarily related to job function.
Drivers for promoting university-industry collaboration

• Joint M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs:
  o M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs targeted specifically for defense industry personnel (SAYP). Funded by Undersecretariat of Defense Industries. Requires one signatory university and a signatory defense company,
  o M.Sc. And Ph.D. support projects funded by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Industry (San-Tez). Requires one university and one industry partner (not necessarily defense).
Drivers for promoting university-industry collaboration

• Multi-national, multi-disciplinary research projects
  o EU funded projects bring together universities, research establishments and universities.
Barriers for university-industry interaction-university induced

- University research being too theoretical with limited practical applicability and not serving to the needs of the industry and the society.
- Conservative education systems.
- Scattered education and research efforts without clear targets.
- Lack of a research and technology plan.
- Universities trailing the industry in terms of innovative thinking.
- Insufficient ability or initiative to plan for the future, address and eventually guide the needs of the industry and the society.
Barriers for university-industry interaction-university induced

• Not being sure where the university research stands in the **Technology Readiness Level** scale.

• Reluctance in relations with the industry.

• Higher education system not encouraging innovative, active academia.

• Unrealistically high number of universities and programs that have to share research funding.

• Numbers count, not quality!
Barriers for university-industry interaction-industry induced

- Lack of innovative, competency enhancing policies.
- Impatience in transforming research and development to commercialized products. Overseeing the fact that R&D is a long term undertaking.
- Different timescales of university and industry.
- Premature diversification of activities before specializing in priority fields.
- Lack of a research and technology plan, lack of a plan for future enabling Technologies.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Distrust in the academia.
- Distrust between rival companies.
Recommendations for enhancing university-industry collaboration

• Using available mechanisms more effectively and efficiently.
• Encouraging participation in international conferences related to aerospace (AIAA, SAE, EUCASS, etc.).
• Participate in international projects as a Turkish Consortium (led by major universities and/or companies) rather than individually, reducing scatter.
• Increase the number of national aerospace conferences (AIAC, UHUK, UHAT, etc.).
• Rival companies and universities should learn to collaborate for the sake of the greater good.
Thank you for your attention!