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Innovative Ideas Management Policy at King Faisal University

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Introduction:

The management of innovative ideas is one of the primary pillars for building an effective institutional innovation ecosystem within the university, as ideas represent the starting point for developing solutions, projects, and initiatives with scientific, economic, and societal value. Stemming from King Faisal University's (KFU) direction toward consolidating institutional innovation and enhancing the transformation of knowledge into impact, this policy is established to regulate the reception, evaluation, development, and investment of innovative ideas within a clear, fair, and transparent institutional framework. This framework ensures the protection of rights, links ideas to the needs of the university, society, and industry, and supports the transformation of promising ideas into applications, products, services, or startup and spinout companies, in alignment with the university's strategy and the targets of Saudi Vision 2030.

International benchmarking practices in innovation management emphasize that idea management is not a separate procedure, but rather part of an integrated system that links strategy, governance, processes, resources, measurement, and continuous improvement. Furthermore, the existence of an organized institutional pathway for ideas contributes to raising the quality of initiatives, protecting intellectual property, reducing duplication, and enhancing the efficiency of directing resources toward the highest-value and most impactful ideas. This policy is established to institutionalize this approach within the university, ensuring the transition of an idea from the initial concept to evaluation and development, and then to application, protection, or investment based on clear institutional foundations.

Article 1: Policy Name:

This document shall be titled "Innovative Ideas Management Policy at King Faisal University," hereinafter referred to as the "Policy."

Article 2: Regulatory and Strategic Reference

This Policy is based on the regulations, bylaws, and decisions applicable at King Faisal University (KFU), as well as relevant institutional policies and documents, particularly the Institutional Innovation Policy, the Intellectual Property Policy, and regulations related to scientific research, innovation, technology transfer, investment, and partnerships. It also draws upon the University's strategic directions aimed at consolidating institutional innovation and maximizing the impact of knowledge and research and innovation outputs.

Furthermore, the preparation of this Policy has taken into account best benchmarking practices in innovation management, including general principles of innovation management, opportunity and idea management, protection of intellectual property, and linking ideas with institutional, societal, and industrial needs. This is intended to enhance the University's efficiency in receiving, evaluating, and developing promising ideas and transforming them into sustainable value and impact.

Article 3: Policy Objectives

This Policy aims to regulate the reception, evaluation, development, and investment of innovative ideas at King Faisal University (KFU), ensuring a clear, fair, and transparent institutional pathway for transforming promising ideas into prototypes, applied projects, products, services, or startup and spinout companies.

Specifically, the Policy aims to achieve the following:

1. Regulating the management of innovative ideas within a clear and governed institutional framework.
2. Providing a fair and transparent pathway for receiving, screening, evaluating, and making decisions regarding ideas.
3. Enhancing the quality of evaluation and development, and directing resources toward the highest-value and most impactful ideas.
4. Protecting the rights of idea owners and the University, and safeguarding associated confidentiality and intellectual property.
5. Linking ideas to the needs of the University, society, and industry, as well as their strategic priorities.
6. Accelerating the transition of promising ideas into prototypes, projects, products, services, or startup and spinout companies.
7. Supporting intellectual property protection, commercial transformation, and technology transfer associated with accepted ideas.
8. Preventing duplication and waste in supporting innovative ideas and initiatives.
9. Defining the responsibilities of relevant entities and parties throughout all stages of idea management.

Article 4: Scope of Application

This Policy applies to all innovative ideas, proposals, and projects submitted to the University through approved channels, platforms, or forms, specifically including submissions from:

- Faculty members
- Researchers
- Students
- employees
- Research teams

- Relevant colleges, centers, and units
- External partners
- Spinout or hosted companies when submitting a joint idea with the University.
- Participants in open innovation events, challenges, or approved innovation programs.

Article 5: Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings assigned to each, unless the context requires otherwise:

Word / Term	Meaning / Definition
Innovation	The development, adoption, or application of a fundamentally new or improved idea, solution, product, service, process, or business model, achieving an identifiable or measurable added value.
Institutional Innovation	A structured and sustainable approach adopted by the University to integrate innovation into its strategy, culture, processes, resources, and outputs, ensuring its transformation into an integrated institutional practice.
Creativity	The ability to produce original and meaningful ideas, concepts, or approaches to address a problem, capitalize on an opportunity, or develop an existing reality.
Invention	A new intellectual or technical output characterized by novelty and practical or industrial applicability, which may be subject to legal protection under intellectual property laws.
Innovative Idea	A concept or proposal for a new solution or an existing development that can produce a scientific, economic, social, or industrial impact.
Idea Owner	The person or team who submitted the idea according to the approved forms.
Initial Screening	The stage in which the completeness of the idea's data, its relevance to the University's jurisdictions, and its initial evaluability are verified.
Technical Evaluation	The study of the scientific and technical aspects of the idea and the extent of its feasibility for implementation.
Commercial Evaluation	The study of the market, economic feasibility, and investment or licensing opportunities.

Prototype	An initial version of the product, service, or solution used to test and develop the idea.
Incubation	Providing technical, administrative, and advisory support to the idea owner with the aim of developing it.
Acceleration	An intensive program to transition the idea or project from the development stage to the market or investment stage.

Article 6: Policy Principles

In implementing this Policy, the University shall adhere to the following principles:

1. Fairness in receiving and treating ideas.
2. Transparency in screening, evaluation, and decision-making.
3. Confidentiality in handling information and data associated with the idea.
4. Protection of intellectual property and rights associated with ideas and outputs.
5. Prioritizing ideas with the highest value, impact, and feasibility.
6. Non-infringement or prejudice to the rights of idea owners.
7. Aligning support with the idea's readiness, needs, and appropriate pathway.
8. Documentation of all stages of handling the idea and the associated decisions.
9. Alignment with University priorities, strategic directions, and the needs of society and industry.
10. Disclosure and management of conflicts of interest in accordance with approved regulations.
11. Continuous improvement of idea management mechanisms based on results, feedback, and lessons learned.

Article 7: Policy Statement

King Faisal University (KFU) is committed to managing innovative ideas through approved channels and clear institutional pathways that ensure fairness, transparency, confidentiality, and the protection of rights. The University links the evaluation of an idea to its value, impact, feasibility, and strategic alignment, enabling the development of promising ideas and their transformation into prototypes, projects, products, services, or startup and spinout companies.

Accordingly, the University is committed to the following:

1. Providing clear and approved mechanisms for receiving, screening, and evaluating ideas.
2. Ensuring that all ideas are treated with fairness, objectivity, and confidentiality according to written criteria.
3. Referring ideas with potential for protection to the competent authority prior to any external disclosure.
4. Linking the support provided for ideas to their readiness, value, and expected impact.
5. Providing appropriate pathways for the development, incubation, acceleration, or commercial transformation of the idea.
6. Documenting decisions and procedures related to ideas and following up on their implementation.

This shall be carried out according to the following steps:

First: Initial Screening

The Innovation Zone, or its delegated entity, shall conduct the initial screening of ideas within the periods and procedures specified by the approved executive manuals. This includes verifying the following:

1. Completeness of the required data and attachments.
2. Clarity of the problem or opportunity and the proposed solution.
3. Relevance of the idea to the University’s priorities or its related fields.
4. Initial evaluability of the idea.
5. Absence of any apparent regulatory violations.
6. Non-conflict of the idea with existing rights of the University or third parties.

7. Possibility of referring the idea directly to the appropriate pathway, including the intellectual property protection pathway when necessary.

After the initial screening, the application may be returned to the owner for data completion, initially rejected with a statement of reason, or referred to the evaluation committee.

Second: Ideas Evaluation Committee

One or more committees for evaluating innovative ideas shall be formed by a decision of the authorized official. Depending on the nature of the idea, the committee shall include representatives from relevant entities, including, where appropriate:

- The Innovation Zone.
- The Science Park.
- The relevant scientific entity or field.
- The entity specialized in technology transfer or intellectual property.
- Legal Affairs, when necessary.
- Financial, investment, or industrial entities, when necessary.

Each committee member must disclose any conflict of interest before participating in the evaluation activities. Experts, referees, or consultants from within or outside the University may be sought as required by the nature of the idea.

Third: Evaluation Criteria

Ideas shall be evaluated according to written criteria, specifically including:

1. Degree of innovation and novelty.
2. Clarity of the problem or opportunity addressed by the idea.
3. Feasibility of the solution for application and implementation.
4. Intellectual property protectability.
5. Market size or societal and institutional need.
6. Economic or operational feasibility.

7. Potential for prototype development.
8. Availability of a team capable of implementation or development.
9. Extent of alignment with University priorities and directions.
10. Expected scientific, economic, social, or industrial impact.
11. Technical, regulatory, financial, or reputational risks associated with the idea.

Fourth: Classification of Ideas and Their Pathways

After the evaluation process, ideas are classified into one of the following categories:

- Incomplete Idea
- Returned to the owner for development
- Promising Idea
- Granted initial advisory support
- Idea Suitable for Incubation
- Referred to an incubation program
- Idea Suitable for Acceleration
- Referred to an acceleration program
- Idea Suitable for Intellectual Property Protection
- Referred to the competent entity for protection studies
- Idea Suitable for Commercial Transformation
- Referred to the Science Park or Technology Transfer to develop an investment plan
- Idea Unsuitable for Support
- Rejection of the application with a statement of reasons

Fifth: Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

- All entities involved in receiving, screening, evaluating, or developing innovative ideas are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of the information, data, and documents associated with them, and it is not permissible to circulate or use them outside the purposes specified by regulations or procedures.
- The mere submission of an idea does not result in the transfer of its ownership to the University, unless it is the result of research work funded by the

University, linked to its resources, or subject to its approved intellectual property regulations and policies. In all cases, ideas with potential for protection shall be referred to the competent entity to study intellectual property rights before any external disclosure, publication, or unauthorized communication.

Sixth: Supporting Accepted Ideas

Accepted ideas may be supported through one or more of the following pathways:

- Advisory support.
- Technical support.
- Prototype development support.
- Feasibility study support.
- Intellectual property protection support.
- Entering the idea into an incubator or accelerator.
- Linking it with an industrial partner.
- Nominating it for internal or external funding.
- Supporting the establishment of a spinout or startup company.

Seventh: Obligations of the Idea Owner

The idea owner is committed to the following:

- Providing correct and complete information.
- Cooperating with evaluation and development teams.
- No unauthorized disclosure of the idea or its outputs.
- Respecting the rights of the University and third parties.
- Submitting progress reports upon request.
- Using support for its designated purpose.
- Disclosing any actual or potential conflict of interest.
- Not using the University's name, logos, or facilities without approved consent.

Seventh: Closing the Idea or Stopping Its Support

The idea may be closed or its support discontinued in the following cases:

- Proved lack of feasibility.
- The owner's non-compliance with development requirements.
- Existence of a regulatory or ethical violation.
- Conflict with existing intellectual property rights.
- Failure to achieve substantial progress within the specified period.
- Providing incorrect or misleading data.

The decision to close or discontinue support must be reasoned and documented, and grievance, re-submission, or review mechanisms may be regulated in the approved executive manuals.

Article 8: Institutional Governance for Innovation

Responsibilities for implementing this Policy are distributed among the relevant entities at the University as follows:

Entity	Roles
Innovation and Business Development Sector	General supervision of policy implementation, development, and follow-up.
Innovation Zone	Receiving ideas, managing initial screening, and coordinating between relevant entities.
Ideas Evaluation Committee	Evaluating ideas and issuing appropriate recommendations regarding them.
Science Park	Supporting incubation, acceleration, and commercial or applied transformation pathways for accepted ideas.
Entity Specialized in Technology Transfer or Intellectual Property	Studying intellectual property protection, rights, and investment related to the idea.

Specialized Scientific or Academic Entities	Providing technical and specialized opinions according to the nature of the idea.
Legal Affairs and Financial or Investment Entities when needed	Supporting evaluation or support regarding regulatory, financial, or investment aspects.

Article 9: Performance Indicators

The competent entity is committed to linking the implementation of this Policy with appropriate performance indicators, including as appropriate:

1. Number of ideas received.
2. Average time for initial screening and evaluation.
3. Number of ideas referred to various support pathways.
4. Number of ideas referred to intellectual property protection.
5. Number of ideas transformed into prototypes, projects, products, services, or companies.
6. Percentage of ideas linked to University priorities or the needs of society and industry.
7. Level of satisfaction of idea owners and relevant entities with the idea management pathway.

Article 10: Inquiries and Grievances

The entity supervising the management of innovative ideas, or its delegate, shall be responsible for receiving inquiries and grievances related to the implementation of this Policy. These shall be handled with confidentiality and impartiality, and in accordance with the procedures and timelines specified in the approved executive manuals. Matters may be referred to the relevant regulatory or administrative entities as necessary, depending on the nature of the subject.

Article 11: Review and Update

This Policy shall be reviewed every two years, or when needed, based on changes in regulations, strategic priorities, performance indicator results, or lessons learned from implementation, and proposed amendments shall be submitted to the authorized official for approval. The review should also include an assessment of the effectiveness of governance, the efficiency of operations, the maturity of the innovation culture, and the extent of the Policy's alignment with technical, regulatory, and economic changes.

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