

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13
17 October 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Science Centres Letter

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Bushby

QUESTION No.: SI-116

Senator BUSHBY – “On 13 August 2012, a letter from Questacon addressed to “Colleagues and Friends” stated that the organisation had “led the development of several initiatives to build capability in the science sector internationally, including a specific focus on developing science centres in Southern Africa and South East Asia”. What are the full details of these initiatives, and what has been their total financial cost?”

ANSWER

1. Science centre capability development initiatives in Southern Africa

Background

The 6th Science Centre World Congress in 2011 called for the establishment of science centres in every African country, especially those lacking scientific capacity, and linking them with academic institutions. Along with other organisations at the Congress, Questacon signed the Cape Town Declaration, committing international support for the development of science centres in Africa.

In partnership with the Centre for the Public Awareness of Science at the Australian National University, Questacon is planning for a Science Circus Africa tour to four countries in southern Africa to raise awareness of the Cape Town Declaration’s objectives and help build science centre capability in these countries.

Proposed initiative

The proposed Science Circus tour will visit four African countries in the second half of 2013. The broad concept of this project is a Shell Questacon Science Circus style tour of Malawi, Botswana, Zambia and some parts of South Africa. Working with the local partners, the Circus will spend approximately one week in each of two cities in each of the four countries, over a 10 weeks period.

Seed funding of \$50,000 was obtained from DIISRTE. The Australian National University’s Centre for the Public Awareness of Science (CPAS), has been engaged via a direct source procurement (for this amount) to plan the tour and seek support from non-government sources. \$60,000 has been invested in training workshop support kits for this initiative.

The planning phase will be completed in January 2013, with the finalisation of a comprehensive planning dossier. An indicative budget for the tour is estimated at \$150,000 per country. The tour is funding-dependent and efforts are now underway to secure financial support from industry partners.

2. Science centre capability initiatives in South East Asia

Questacon is currently working on the following capability development initiatives in South East Asia.

Indonesia

a. Science centre capacity development initiative

The trilateral (Australia, USA and Indonesia) science centre capacity development and inquiry-based learning initiative will be a joint undertaking between Questacon, ANU-CPAS, the Exploratorium (USA) and Pusat Peragaan IPTEK (PP- IPTEK), the Science and Technology Centre of Indonesia, Jakarta, an Indonesian Government institution.

Questacon has been invited to provide support to PP-IPTEK—and the provincial science centres that it supports—with a science centre capacity building program.

The pilot phase of this initiative will take place in Jakarta on 19-30 November 2012. A workshop for 25 Indonesian national and regional science centre professionals will be delivered by Questacon and CPAS with support from the Exploratorium. It will focus on science centres, their operation, management, exhibit development, science shows and outreach activities.

The planning and implementation of the workshop was allocated \$70,000; another \$25,000 was used to cover local cost for the workshop and \$15,900 was allocated to training workshop support kits for this initiative.

b. Secondary science educator capacity development initiative

Questacon is supporting a pilot project in partnership with the Australian Academy of Science (AAS) and the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Quality Improvement of Teachers and Education Personnel in Science (SEAMEO QITEP).

SEAMEO-QITEP in Bandung, in its collaboration with the AAS, has sought Australian support in implementing a systematic approach to improving science education in Indonesia. Questacon is assisting the AAS with the inquiry-based learning elements of its ongoing work in Indonesia, and has provided \$25,000 seed funding for a pilot program in science curriculum development.

Questacon provided \$25,000 seed funding. AusAID has committed a further \$125,000.

A pilot workshop will be held in Bandung in March 2013 followed by a three-month trial in ten local high schools, and a review and evaluation process. The pilot project will be run by SEAMEO QITEP in collaboration with the Australian Academy of Science (*Science by Doing* program) and with support from Questacon and the Exploratorium Teacher Institute.

Vietnam – Fascinating Science on the Move Tour to Vietnam, April 2013

Australia's Embassy in Hanoi is currently planning events to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Australia.

Questacon is working in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to tour of the *Fascinating Science on the Move* exhibition to Vietnam in April 2013. The visit will comprise a three-town tour of Hanoi, Danang and Ho Chi Minh City, with a complementary program of public science shows and a capacity-building workshops for local science communicators and educators.

The tour will be staffed by science communicators from Questacon and Scitech, the West Australian science centre.

The budget for this initiative is estimated at \$100,000, to be co-funded by Questacon, DIISRTE and DFAT Vietnam. Additional in-kind support (exhibition venue) is being provided by RMIT and local universities. (The Questacon/DIISRTE contribution is \$60,000).

The Questacon program in Vietnam will help catalyse growth of science centre or science communication sectors and strengthen linkages in science and technology education between the two countries.

Japan – Science Circus exhibition tour to northern Honshu, April-May 2014

This project will commemorate Questacon's 25th Anniversary Year and recognise Japan's contribution to the establishment of Questacon as Australian National Science and Technology Centre.

Questacon will take a touring exhibition to Japan, focusing on the recovery areas of northern Japan, as an expression of friendship and gratitude for Japan's role in Questacon's establishment. The tour will be conducted as a collaborative endeavour between Questacon and the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan) in Tokyo. This tour is dependent on funding, with an estimated budget of \$500,000 which would include gifting of the exhibition at the end of the tour.

3. Travelling exhibitions and incoming delegations

Questacon is also building capability within the science centre sector through sale and hire of travelling exhibitions to science centres in Asia, and by hosting visiting delegations from science centres and museums. Recent examples include

- Brunei's Oil and Discovery Centre has hired Questacon's *Measure Island* travelling exhibition for a 5-month tour from October 2012 to February 2013.
- The National Science Museum of Thailand's has purchased Questacon's *Earthquest* exhibition and a copy of the *Science on the Move* travelling exhibition, adding significantly to their public exhibition capacity.
- Three staff from the China Science and Technology Museum (CSTM) are completing an internship with Questacon between 1-11 November 2012. The CSTM staff will spend one week on the road with the Shell Questacon Science Circus in north Queensland and two days at Questacon in Canberra to learn more about managing and coordinating outreach programs.
- Two staff from the Gwacheon National Science Museum, South Korea spent several days at Questacon in October 2012 studying exhibition and design.

Project expenditure to date

Project/Item	Funding (excl GST)	Allocation
Science Circus Africa		
Preliminary project planning	\$50,000	ANU CPAS
25 workshop support kits	\$60,000	To recipient countries
capability development workshop		
Indonesia initiatives		
Planning and implementation of Science Centre capability development workshop (PP-IPTEK)	\$70,000	ANU CPAS
Local costs for PP-IPTEK worksho	\$25,000	PP-IPTEK
25 workshop support kits for Indonesia capability development	\$15,900	Exhibition Studios, Adelaide
Seed funding for development of secondary science curriculum unit.	\$25,000	Australian Academy of Science
Vietnam – Fascinating Science on the Move tour	\$100,000	Co-funded between DIISRTE, DFAT and Questacon
TOTAL	\$345,900	