

Address by Jón Atli Benediktsson, Rector of the University of Iceland, at the opening of the conference "360° Innovation". Given in Gróska Business Growth Centre on Thursday 4 May 2023, 9 am.

I wish you all a very warm welcome to the first international conference of the University of Iceland Science Park, organised in cooperation with IASP and entitled "360° Innovation".

The University of Iceland Science Park was established by the University of Iceland twenty years ago and is now jointly owned by the University and the City of Reykjavik. The mission of the science park is to build connections between the University community and industry and create a community of entrepreneurs and innovators in Iceland. In many ways, the Science Park represents a logical progression for the University of Iceland. Since it was founded in 1911, the University of Iceland has been one of the staunchest champions of the Icelandic nation and Icelandic industry, playing a key role in transforming the country into a modern, thriving democratic society which today is an important player on the world stage.

The strength and unique position of the University of Iceland Science Park lies in its proximity to universities, technology businesses and research institutes, in line with the philosophy behind science parks all over the world. The goal is to create a melting pot of innovation where start-up companies and entrepreneurs can feed off one another to maximise their potential.

The University of Iceland Science Park has flourished in recent years and the future is looking bright. Last week, a memorandum of understanding was signed regarding the construction of a new innovation and entrepreneurship centre next where we are right now. It is also being explored to construct a deep tech facility at the Science Park along with various other exciting developments on the horizon. All this will further strengthen research, entrepreneurship and innovation in Iceland.

Dear guests. This conference is an important milestone for the University of Iceland Science Park. We are aware of the fact that IASP is a global network of science parks in 78 different countries, and it is a great honour for our Science Park to host this conference. Over the next two days, eminent Icelandic and international scholars and experts will shine a spotlight on science, innovation and the development of new technology in response to the urgent challenges now facing humankind, not least in the field of sustainability and climate issues. I have no doubt that this conference will provide an invaluable opportunity for participants to share their experiences, to learn from one another, and to advance our knowledge.

Without further ado, I wish you all an enjoyable and illuminating conference.

Thank you very much.

Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Ebba Lund, CEO of the International Association of Science Parks (IASP), Sigurður Magnús Garðarsson, chair of the board of the University of Iceland Science Park, speakers, dear guests.