MIT REAP
REGIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
ACCELERATION PROGRAM

אשדוד
ASHDOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reap Team Ashdod 2015-2017

Final report

MIT REAP is fully compatible with Ashdod's economic vision, and in particular with the values it articulates: technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship in economic development.

Our vision:

"Developing a growing economy, based on technology, entrepreneurship and innovation, through involvement of an active and caring community"

Significant milestones in the city's growth process reached while taking part in MIT REAP Ashdod

- **Stakeholder Teams** – the program offered an opportunity to build a team, some of whose members are not from Ashdod and come from a variety of sectors. This is an exceptional resource for new strategic thinking about accelerated economic development and for creating relevant new connections. We embarked on this initiative with several stakeholders: the Ashdod Municipality, Market LLC, JDC-Israel, WeWork, Brooks, Start-Up Nation Central, Shamoon College of Engineering, HP, and the Ministry of Economy. The government representative from the Ministry of Economy and the representative from HP, have since left the program. The other stakeholders formed into a cohesive group during MIT REAP and remained committed to it in terms of their partnership in the program as well as their involvement (insights and conclusions will be presented in the comprehensive report).
- **Metrics** – the program was an opportunity to define a set of metrics that can be used to assess the city's economic progress. Some of the data was collected, but it has been difficult to obtain new data, such as the Ashdod's GDP.
- **Strengths** – the program has fostered shared identification and examination of the city's unique assets: port, hospital, traditional industries and the Ashdod-based company, Elta Systems (Israel Aerospace Industries). A separate discussion was held about each one. The process enabled us to understand that Ashdod is strong in its national infrastructures – which in turn led us to make a strategic decision, on the basis of which we chose a 'must-win battle' (a flagship program) related to the smart city model.

The contribution made by taking part in the program:

- **Competitive events** – the program was a catalyst for organizing two events where prizes were awarded: one dealing with drones, and the other a hackathon on the subject of smart cities.
- **The ICAP and ECAP model** added a great deal to understanding the key to regional economic growth. The must-win battle was developed based on that model.
- **Becoming acquainted with the MIT Media Lab** – the tour of the Media Lab and the meeting with Professor Sandy Pentland introduced the group to the idea of a Living Lab. This cutting-edge concept, which is consistent with the smart city strategy, sparked excitement among the members of the group, especially those who have a technology background.
- **Tour of the University Park neighborhood that was built on the campus** – the tour trigged thinking about planning a new industrial zone in Ashdod that will contain mixed uses: retail establishments, office buildings, private residences and clean industry, including accelerators for entrepreneurs.

- **The must win battle** – establishing a **local** lab that will make it possible to research and monitor the real-time behavior of the city's residents in matters such as transportation, healthcare and financial services.

The lab's information center, whose data will come from a variety of sources, will be hosted in the cloud as an open system for entrepreneurs and researchers. In practice, the lab will be a bridge between the ICAP and the ECAP and serve entrepreneurs, startups and other companies. At the same time, it will also be used by researchers from the different universities.

The team, together with Ashdod city stake holders and government representatives, decided that the first project the city will invest and develop is the "Smart Transportation". Ashdod, as a leading city in infrastructures and innovated technologies. The primary strategy will be to position the city as pilot city for autonomic public transportation network. Ashdod city is already in the middle of a public transportation infrastructures development project – REWAY. The developed public transportation lanes will include a unique central control computerized system. This advanced project together with the city planning by quarters will allow a graduated implementation of the "Smart Transportation" Project.