



Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Comprehensive Initiative on Technology Evaluation (CITE)

Connecting to Accelerate Global Development

The Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) is a partnership between USAID and seven world-class universities to create a constellation of Development Labs. This network harnesses the ingenuity and passion of university students, researchers, faculty, and their innovative partners to incubate, catalyze and scale science and tech-based solutions to the world's most challenging development problems.

Through support to the university-led Development Labs, HESN taps into a global pool of expertise to accelerate innovation through the discovery, creation, testing and scaling of efficient, cost-effective, accessible and sustainable solutions to global development challenges.

With \$137 million over 5 years from USAID, and leveraging nearly equal investments from the institutions, the universities form a collaborative and vibrant network that extends beyond 100 partner institutions in academia, civil society and government across 38 countries.

The Challenge

How do we connect evaluation of technologies for development to the broader community to accelerate development impact? How do we empower donors and consumers with valuable information when making purchasing decisions?

The Innovative Approach

MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning is leading the Comprehensive Initiative on Technology Evaluation (CITE). This Development Lab is all about creating parameters for improved evaluation methodologies for technologies to determine "what works" among competing technological solutions that can benefit developing countries. This is done through Technology Evaluation Reports that describe the pros and cons of various technologies, like a Consumer Reports for development. These Evaluation Reports will be disseminated among donors and other development partners to encourage investment in the most suitable technological solutions.

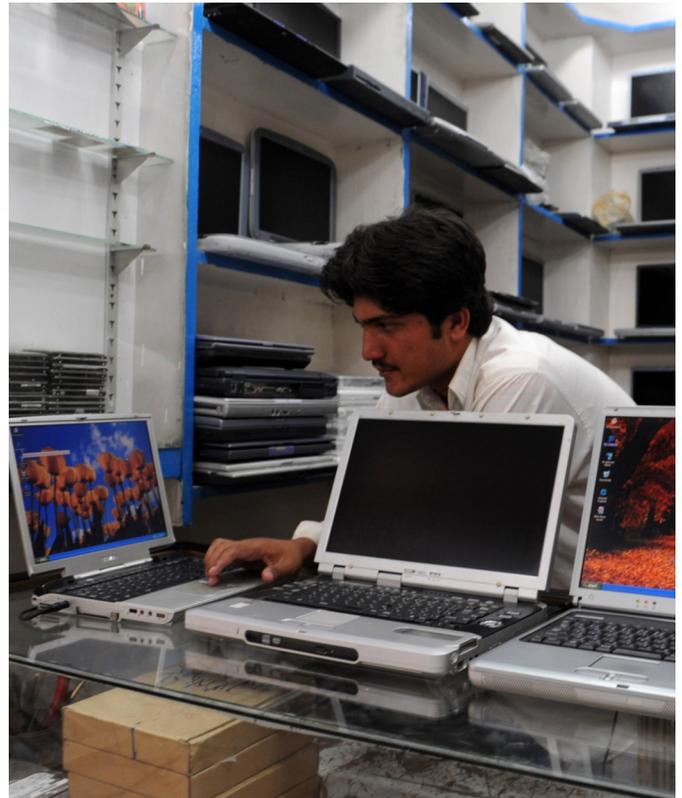




CITE is designed to fill a major gap. At the moment, there is an abundance of technological solutions, and yet there's very little assessment as to what works. Most of these technologies, whether in the field of health diagnostics, reliable lighting systems, or clean water, have not undergone rigorous evaluations.

The CITE Lab will create the "technology evaluation protocols" that will use comparative analysis to produce the Technology Evaluation Reports. There will be Bi-Annual DevTech Conferences that will gather innovators so that they can share new technologies and evaluation methodologies that show success. CITE's evaluations will also identify "Product Design Challenges", with the goal of identifying the most intractable development issues, while encouraging innovators to concentrate on them.

Finally, the CITE Fellows Program will train future development evaluation professionals on the methodologies developed by the Lab. Recently, CITE conducted its first field evaluation by looking at solar lanterns in Uganda, with the goal of understanding how consumers and development practitioners choose among available models. MIT researchers traveled to Uganda to field test solar lanterns and how people use them. Another Cambridge-based team analyzed 11 different solar lantern models and tested them based on what local consumers said they needed.



As a result of the CITE Lab work, USAID and the larger development community will have access to the Technology Evaluation Reports, a new, user friendly analytical tool that will promote the smart use of technology in development. Researchers and students will be encouraged to examine more closely technological solutions to ascertain the suitability of specific devices. By focusing on this key aspect of innovation, CITE will give practitioners tools for choosing among competing technologies, help break down lingering resistance against them, while fostering a more cost-effective use of resources.

For more information

- www.usaid.gov/hesn
- <http://d-lab.mit.edu/cite>
- https://twitter.com/dlab_mit