

## Cooperation of Renewable Uzbekistan with the CIS Countries in the Field of Higher Education (2017-2021)

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**Abstract---** This article analyzes the role and further expansion of international cooperation in the development of higher education in the updated Uzbekistan on the basis of the “Action Strategy” adopted in 2017. The main attention is paid to highlighting the comprehensive cooperation of Uzbekistan with the CIS countries, Russia and Belarus in the field of higher education and in the training of highly qualified personnel. The activity of branches of leading foreign universities established in this field has been studied. The issues of training modern personnel and scientific cooperation for the needs of Uzbekistan on the basis of joint programs and roadmaps with leading foreign universities were also highlighted.

**Keywords---** Independence, Higher Education System, Globalization, Reform, International Cooperation, CIS Countries, Quality of Higher Education, Foreign Branches, Joint Programs, Teaching Staff, Scientific Cooperation.

### I. Introduction

Large-scale reforms implemented in Uzbekistan during the years of independence created the necessary conditions for strengthening national statehood and sovereignty, for our people to live a decent life, and to realize the potential of human capital. As a result of reforms covering all aspects of education, the foundations of a modern continuous education system were created in the country. At the same time, a deep analysis of Uzbekistan’s path of development required the development and implementation of a new approach and principles to all aspects of its life, including the development of the educational system.

In recent years, the international relations of Uzbekistan in the field of education are rapidly expanding and gaining global importance. Especially in recent years, in Uzbekistan, bold steps have been taken to raise the higher education system to a new stage of development, to master the achievements of world higher education and to bring the quality of education up to the level of world standards.

It is known that a new era in the history of Uzbekistan began in the last quarter of 2016. After the death of the first President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev won the extraordinary election held on December 4, 2016. Based on the decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the “Strategy of Actions on five priority directions of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan” was adopted in order to solve the problems that have arisen in the society for many years and are waiting for their solution and to implement the priority directions for the modernization of Uzbekistan and the liberalization of all spheres of life [1]. In the fourth direction of the strategy of actions called “Development of the social sphere”, the task was set to further expand international cooperation in order to further improve all links of the continuous education system of Uzbekistan based on the requirements of the times and raise the quality of education to a higher level.

### II. Methods and Level of Study

Systematization, selection and classification, comparative analysis of facts and conclusions, as well as historicity and generalization methods were used in the research to highlight foreign cooperation in the field of higher education in Uzbekistan.

Regarding the subject, progress of reforms in the field of higher education in Uzbekistan and international cooperation L. Allaev (Allaev, L 2000), Sh. Kurbanov, E. Seytkhalilov (Kurbanov, Sethalilov 2001), D. Vasieva (Vasieva D. 2008), T. Majidov, D. Gosh, K. Roziyev (Majidov, Ghosh, Ruziev. 2010), K. Roziyev, D. Rustamov (Ruziev K., and Rustamov D. 2016), K. Roziyev, U. Burkhanov (Ruziev K. and Burkhanov U. 2016), F. Akramova (Akramova F. 2018), Z. Abdugarimova (Abdugarimova Z. 2019), S.M. Yun (Sergey M. Yun 2019) R. It was analyzed in treatises and articles by Siddikov (Siddikov R. 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022) and others.

### III. Research Results

In the years of independence, the system of higher education, which was considered an important link of continuous education in the Republic of Uzbekistan, was modernized based on the needs of the country. As a result of the implementation of the National Personnel Training Program adopted in Uzbekistan in 1997, the material and technical base of higher education was strengthened, and modern forms and technologies of training were

introduced into the system. Also, certain results were achieved regarding the introduction of international standards for the training of highly qualified specialists, improvement of specialization areas, and international cooperation in this field with the CIS and developed countries of the world.

By the 2016-2017 academic year, 21 universities, 37 institutes, 2 academies, 11 branches of local and 7 foreign higher educational institutions, a total of 78 higher educational institutions were operating in the republic [2].

As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoev noted, “the number of higher education institutions in our country increased 2.5 times during the years of independence. Today, more than 230,000 students are studying in our higher educational institutions.... Thousands of representatives of our talented youth are studying in prestigious universities of the world. In our country, 7 percent of the state budget compared to the GDP is directed to the field of education [3].

However, objectively evaluating the progress achieved in the field of education and personnel training, it should be noted that despite the formation of a modern comprehensive continuous education system in Uzbekistan during the past period, the higher education system could not fully adapt to the fundamental changes in the country’s economy during the years of independence. In particular, its material and technical base and the quality of personnel have lagged behind the requirements of the time. Limitation of admission to higher educational institutions by quotas created a gap between the labor market’s need for highly qualified personnel and its supply.

As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted, “Unfortunately, the quality of education in most higher educational institutions does not meet international criteria and the requirements of the real economy. In most cases, many graduates who started working in production have to be retrained” [4].

Focusing on the problems of personnel training, he said, “We are accepting many programs, but are there enough initiative and patriotic, highly qualified personnel to implement them?” Are the specialists being trained in higher education institutions able to fulfill the huge tasks set before us? Do the knowledge and skills of the teachers and professors who teach them meet the requirements of the time? Unfortunately, these questions are not easy to answer. “We will have to develop a program for the further development of the system of higher educational institutions for 2017-2021 and implement it”.

On April 20, 2017, the Decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to further develop the higher education system” was adopted in order to eliminate the above-mentioned deficiencies in the higher education system [5].

According to the adopted decision, one of the priority tasks was to establish cooperation and exchange of experience with higher education institutions of foreign countries in all fields, wide introduction of the most modern pedagogical technologies based on international educational standards.

To fully ensure the effective solution of the tasks defined in the decision, to increase and fundamentally improve the quality of higher education, to strengthen and modernize their material and technical base, the comprehensive development program of the higher education system for 2017-2021 was approved in order to equip modern educational and scientific laboratories with information and communication technologies. Also, in further development of higher education, special attention was paid to its internationalization and activation of mutually beneficial international relations of Uzbekistan in this field. For example, during the past period, establishment and further expansion of effective cooperation with the CIS and developed countries of the world in the field of higher education and training of highly qualified personnel was considered a special priority.

At this point, the works aimed at strengthening the cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian sphere between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation deserve special attention. For example, young people from Uzbekistan are very interested in studying in Russian higher education institutions. In 2018, the number of students studying in this country from Uzbekistan was more than 20 thousand (8.6 percent of foreign students in Russia). It should be noted that the interest of Uzbek applicants to study in the branches of Russian universities in Tashkent, including M. Lomonosov Moscow State University, I. Gubkin Russian State University of Oil and Gas, and G. Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, is increasing year by year. In 2018, the number of students studying at these higher education institutions exceeded two thousand. In 2018, cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia in the field of higher education reached a new level. The National Technological Research University of the Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys was initially established in order to provide the economy and social sphere with highly qualified personnel and to introduce advanced foreign experience in the field of higher education in Uzbekistan, which is being renewed based on the needs of the country. Also, an agreement was reached on the opening of branches of the 1st Moscow State Medical University named after I. Sechenov, Moscow University of Architecture, Russian Technological University [6].

In recent years, cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia in all fields has reached a new level. In particular, cooperation in the field of higher education and personnel training and science development is expanding.

The first Uzbek-Russian educational forum “For a new economy - new personnel” was held in Uzbekistan in October 2018 at the initiative of a number of leading higher education institutions of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan in order to raise mutual strategic cooperation in the higher education system between the two countries to a new level.

The international forum was held on October 18, 2018 in the city of Tashkent, in which the administrations of the Presidents of the two countries, heads of government, the Minister of Higher and Secondary Special Education of Uzbekistan and the Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and rectors of more than 80 prestigious higher education institutions of Russia participated. At the high-level conference, it was agreed to further expand mutually beneficial relations aimed at the development of higher education between the newly renewed Uzbekistan and Russia. Including - opening branches of Russian universities in Uzbekistan; expanding academic exchange; conducting joint scientific and innovation forums; implementation of scientific research projects; The establishment of information exchange between HEIs has been identified as a priority.

At this prestigious conference, joint diplomas with the leading higher education institutions of Russia will provide a basis for training students on the basis of “Double degree” programs, organizing branches of faculties and departments, improving the qualifications of teachers, conducting targeted scientific research, exchanging educational and scientific literature, establishing new cooperative relations. Also, 114 contracts and agreements were signed and it was agreed to establish branches of several prestigious higher education institutions of the Russian Federation directly in Uzbekistan. In particular, it was agreed to open 6 branches and 2 faculties of the Russian Higher Education Institutions in Uzbekistan, to introduce 52 joint educational programs. For example, Tashkent Technical University signed cooperation agreements with 4 Russian Higher Education Institutions within the framework of the forum [7].

Based on the scope of the issues discussed after the conference, in order to further expand higher education and the training of highly qualified personnel, as well as to develop the legal and regulatory basis for the operation of branches of Russian higher educational institutions, between the Governments of Uzbekistan and Russia, “Organization of branches of higher education institutions of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Uzbekistan and on their operation” agreement was signed [8].

The government of Uzbekistan considers the social sector as an important link of the continuous education system, which is a priority direction, and the rapid development of the higher education and personnel training system as a priority task, and in 2019, in the establishment of branches of foreign higher educational institutions, first of all, by further expanding relations with the ally and strategic partner, the Russian Federation, according to a mutual agreement acted consistently. The intergovernmental agreement on the establishment and operation of branches of higher education institutions of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Uzbekistan entered into force on March 1, 2019.

Two months later, at the meeting of the Uzbekistan-Russia intergovernmental joint commission on economic cooperation, an agreement was signed on the mutual recognition of documents related to education, qualifications and scientific degrees [9]. The signed agreement ensured equal opportunities for the citizens of Uzbekistan and Russia to get education and raised the integration of the educational systems of the two countries to a new level. As stated in the agreement, “Higher education obtained in the Russian Federation, approved by a bachelor’s degree of at least four years of study, and obtained in the Republic of Uzbekistan, higher education, which is confirmed by a bachelor’s degree of at least four years of study, is recognized accordingly and gives their holders the right to continue studying in the educational programs of higher education (master’s degree) in the Russian Federation and in the educational programs of higher education (master’s degree) in the Republic of Uzbekistan” [10]. Adoption of this document has opened wide opportunities for Russian higher education institutions to operate in Uzbekistan and train Uzbek youth to become highly qualified specialists based on modern knowledge. In 2017-2021, the action strategy for the five priority areas of the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2019 “Year of active investments and social development” is specified in item 220 of the State Program, specific measures for the organization of branches of HEIs of foreign countries and joint educational programs. In Uzbekistan, the Moscow Institute of Energy, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, as well as the Tashkent Institute of Chemical Technology, the Russian State University of Chemical Technology named after D. Mendeleev, it is planned to establish joint educational programs (joint faculties) at Tashkent State Agrarian University with Astrakhan State Technical University [11].

In general, in 2019, cooperation in the field of higher education with Uzbekistan and the CIS countries and former allied republics developed rapidly. The following activities were carried out:

- On January 8, the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to establish a joint Uzbek-Belarusian faculty of information technologies within the Tashkent University of Information Technologies named after Muhammad al-Khorazmi” was adopted.

- On February 11, the Decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the establishment of the branch of the Federal State Autonomous Higher Education Institution of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Tashkent” was adopted.
- On March 26, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan decided to establish an international faculty at the Nukus branch of the Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute in cooperation with St. Petersburg State Pediatric Medical University and Koryo University.
- On May 8, the Decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the establishment of a branch of the federal state budget higher education institution “Russian State University of Physical Education, Sports, Youth and Tourism” in the city of Samarkand” was adopted.
- On June 4, the Decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the establishment of a branch of the federal state budget higher education institution of the national research university “MEI” in Tashkent” was adopted.
- On June 7, the Decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the establishment of a branch of the Federal state budget higher educational institution “D.I. Mendeleev Russian University of Chemistry and Technology” in the city of Tashkent” was adopted.
- On July 19, the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the organization of the branch of Astrakhan State Technical University in Tashkent region” was adopted.
- On November 20, the Decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the establishment of the Belarus-Uzbekistan joint interdisciplinary practical technical qualification institute in Tashkent” was adopted. In the first quarter of 2019, a mutual cooperation agreement was signed between the National Technical University of Ukraine “Dnepropetrovsk Polytechnic” and the Navoi Mining Institute, and the “Road Map” aimed at the implementation of academic and scientific activities between these higher education institutions was also approved [12].

The branches of the above higher educational institutions started their work from the 2019-2020 academic year and accepted the first students. The tasks of the branch of the federal state budget higher educational institution of the national research university “Moscow Energy Institute (MEI)” established in the city of Tashkent have been defined as follows:

- Training of qualified engineers and technicians for the energy sector of our country;
- Development of modern educational programs and teaching methods;
- Conducting scientific and innovative researches related to the field;
- Development of relations with leading foreign educational institutions in the field of education and science and technology;
- Improving the qualifications of experts in this field as needed.

In the 2019/2020 academic year, the Moscow Institute of Energy admitted 150 students to the branch, including 30% of students from the state order (budget) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the rest of the students’ expenses were covered by grants from industrial enterprises. Undergraduate courses “Heat energy and thermal engineering” (thermal power plants) - 50 students, “Electric energy and electrical engineering” (hydroelectric power plants, electric power systems and networks) - 100 students were selected [13]. Taking into account that the need for personnel in the field of energy is increasing every year, in the 2020-2021 academic year, the admission quota to the Moscow Institute of Energy was doubled, 250 students were admitted to the full-time department and 50 to the part-time department. 225 students were educated on the basis of grants and 75 were educated from the budget. Also, 75 students were trained in economics, management, electronics and nanoelectronics [14].

The Republic of Uzbekistan decided to develop nuclear energy in order to fully meet its needs for electricity. “Moscow Engineering-Physical Institute” branch of the Russian National Nuclear Research Institute was established in Uzbekistan to solve the issue of staffing this new field in the future. The initial admission of students in the academic year 2019-2020 was carried out in the following four undergraduate programs:

- Nuclear energy;
- Nuclear physics and technologies;
- Heat energy and heat engineering;
- Electric power and electrical engineering.

100 students with the highest scores were admitted to study on the basis of a state grant and had the opportunity to receive free education. All graduates of the branch receive a Russian-style diploma recognized in Uzbekistan, and after completing their studies, they are provided with a permanent job in the system of the “Uzatom” agency.

Further improvement of the training of highly qualified specialists in the field of world politics and economy, international relations and diplomacy, international law and foreign trade, and in order to implement the agreements reached during the visit of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin to the Republic of Uzbekistan in October 2018, the first branch of the Federal State Autonomous Higher Education Institution “Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation” was established in Uzbekistan in the city of Tashkent abroad [15].

The following are the main directions of the branch’s activities:

Training of highly qualified specialists who are in high demand and who represent and actively promote the interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the international arena, who can solve important political, economic, legal and other tasks, in higher education programs;

Development of the system of training specialists and scientific personnel based on the principle of integrity and continuity of education and science, as well as ensuring its harmonious integration into the world educational and scientific community;

Development and implementation of new educational programs and forms aimed at improving the personnel training system in the fields of international political, diplomatic, legal, economic and trade relations;

Support for the development of pedagogical potential, active introduction of modern highly effective pedagogical methods and educational technologies;

Development and strengthening of long-term relations with leading educational institutions and scientific research centers of foreign countries in the fields of education and science;

Support comprehensive cooperation relations with the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (hereinafter - UWED) in the field of training of highly qualified specialists;

Strengthening the international reputation of the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan and promoting it as a regional education.

From September 2019, the branch of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations started training 88 students in the direction of “Business-informatics” and “Jurisprudence” [16].

PQ-4352 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 7, 2019 “On the establishment of a branch of the Federal state budget higher education institution “D.I. Mendeleev University of Chemistry and Technology named after D.I. in Tashkent” in order to train highly qualified personnel important for the chemical industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In accordance with the decision, a branch of the Russian University of Chemical Technology named after D.I. Mendeleev started operating in Tashkent from the 2019-2020 academic year. Taking into account the need for personnel, in agreement with the university, the Branch carries out training, retraining and professional development of all levels of specialists in the fields of bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Undergraduate studies at the branch are conducted in the following areas of study:

Chemical technology;

Technosphere security;

Materials science and materials technology;

Technology of artistic processing of materials.

The university has the highest rating among chemical and technological universities in Russia and is a higher education institution included in the list of the best higher education institutions in the CIS [17].

316 pedagogues from the CIS countries were involved in the educational process in 2017-2019 during the implementation of advanced foreign experience in the higher education system of Uzbekistan. This, in turn, had a positive effect on the introduction of advanced pedagogical and information technologies to higher educational institutions and the increase in the quality of education.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev “On approval of the concept of development of the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030” is a strategically important step in the development and promotion of the higher education system of Uzbekistan to a new level of quality [18].

In the implementation of the concept of the development of the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, the main attention was paid to raising the field to the level of international requirements and integrating it into the world educational space. Foreign cooperation in the implementation of the assigned tasks was defined as a priority direction. Specific and large-scale tasks were set for turning Uzbekistan’s higher education system into a “hub” implementing international education programs in Central Asia, and a “Roadmap” was developed for their implementation. In this place, cooperation with Russia and the CIS countries on the basis of joint programs and the establishment of branches of leading universities in higher education and training of highly qualified personnel was further expanded.

In recent years, cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Belarus in all areas, including in the field of education, has reached a new level. It is not for nothing that there are constant dialogues

between our countries in the field of improvement of educational programs, exchange of students, pedagogues, young scientists and researchers. In Uzbekistan, there are joint educational programs with 25 Belarusian universities. Cooperation with Belarusian universities in this regard has great prospects [19].

During the official visit of the head of our state to the Republic of Belarus on August 1, 2019, as part of the extended bilateral negotiations, agreements on mutual recognition of documents related to education, many documents related to scientific and technical, IT fields, and interregional cooperation were signed [20]. The first higher educational institution of the Republic of Belarus started its activity in accordance with the decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on November 20, 2019 “On the establishment of the joint institute of interdisciplinary practical technical qualification in Tashkent – Uzbekistan”. The Institute was established in order to further improve the training of highly qualified engineering and technical personnel for the sectors of the republic’s economy, and to expand international cooperation in the field of higher education [21].

The institute began to train personnel in accordance with international educational standards capable of solving the most important scientific and production tasks of the republic’s industrial sectors, including on the basis of joint educational programs for bachelor’s and master’s specialties. Also, the institute develops and implements modern educational programs and forms of higher and professional education, and has begun to introduce advanced pedagogical and information technologies, the latest achievements of science and technology into the educational process. The founder of the institute is Tashkent State Technical University named after Islam Karimov, participants in the organization of the activity are the National Technical University of Belarus and the Republican Institute of Vocational Education (Belarus). The educational process of the Belarus-Uzbekistan joint interdisciplinary practical technical qualification institute is carried out on the basis of educational programs approved by the founder and participants, taking into account the requirements of the educational standards of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Belarus. Classes are held in Russian. Graduates are awarded a diploma of higher education of the established BDTU standard and it is recognized as a document of higher education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The 2-2 format admission of students to the fields of biotechnology, technological processes, production automation and management, informatics and information technologies of the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU) was a prelude to mutual cooperation. At the same time, the establishment of an agreement with this higher educational institution on the training of highly qualified personnel in the areas of mechanical engineering and mechanics has raised mutual relations in the field of education to a new level. Its main goal is to improve the training of highly qualified engineers and technicians for the industrial sectors of the country, to develop the forms of higher and vocational education, to introduce advanced pedagogical and information technologies, the latest achievements of science and technology into the educational process. In addition, creation of joint educational programs with BSTU, publication of textbooks, training manuals and materials on relevant areas of undergraduate education and master’s specialties, improving the quality and level of educational and methodological work, it was agreed to work together on a number of issues, such as achieving the harmony of education and science. Today, mutual cooperation in this regard continues successfully [20].

International cooperation in the field of higher education and training of highly qualified personnel was consistently continued in Uzbekistan in 2020. On May 27, an interregional conference of rectors of universities of Russia and Uzbekistan, organized online due to the pandemic, was held. This conference served as an important stage in the preparation of the Uzbekistan-Russia educational forum. As a result of the negotiations held in the last three years, 8 branches of the prestigious universities of the Russian Federation in the fundamental direction were opened in the country.

Thus, the number of branches of Russian higher education institutions in our country has reached 11. 2180 talented young men and women were admitted to these branches for the 2020/2021 academic year. Personnel training in 34 higher educational institutions of Uzbekistan is carried out in cooperation with 48 higher educational institutions of Russia on the basis of joint educational programs. In the 2020/2021 academic year alone, 4,100 students studied at branches of prestigious higher educational institutions of the Russian Federation in bachelor’s and 450 master’s programs. In the last two years, the scope of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russian higher education institutions has significantly expanded. If until 2018, about 70 universities of the two countries cooperated, in 2020, this number increased to 115. In 2018, 128 cooperation agreements and 46 roadmaps were approved, and in 2020, 242 agreements were signed, 63 roadmaps were implemented [21].

In the 2020-2021 academic year, 35,500 Uzbek students studied at Russian universities. On the basis of grants from the federal budget of the Russian Federation, 228 places were given to Uzbek students in 2019, and 405 places were allocated in the 2020-2021 academic year. They are studying in areas such as mechanical engineering, energy, including atomic energy, information technology, construction, medicine, geology, chemistry, and biotechnology, which are important for the country’s development [22].

Also, Russia and Uzbekistan are implementing effective cooperation in the field of science. As a result, joint scientific articles indexed in the international scientific and technical database were prepared. In 2016, the number of co-authored articles was 85, and in 2019, this number increased to 140. Professors and teachers of the two countries carry out scientific cooperation in the fields of physics, chemistry, materials science, spectroscopy, astronomy and astrophysics [23].

#### IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that during the years of independence, relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the CIS countries in the cultural and humanitarian sphere, including in the field of education, developed rapidly. In particular, cooperation with the Russian Federation in the field of higher education and personnel training developed rapidly, and in the first years of independence, branches of Russian higher education institutions began their activities. Active development of political and economic relations between Uzbekistan and Russia during the President of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev created a very favorable environment for expanding cooperation in the field of higher education [24].

Also, higher education in Russia has become the most attractive place for Uzbek students compared to the former Union republics. The widespread use of the Russian language in the countries of Central Asia, high-quality higher education, the similarity of educational programs and requirements, and the ease of adaptation have led to an increase in the share of Uzbek students in the Russian Federation every year. It should be noted that the expansion of cooperation in the field of higher education with the CIS countries and Russia in the modernization of higher education based on the needs of the times and the training of highly qualified personnel for all fields is important in meeting Uzbekistan's need for high-potential personnel and in its innovative development.

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