



GFCC STUDY TRIPS

A Firsthand Look Inside

The Innovation Ecosystems Shaping Global Competitiveness

The best way to prepare
for the future is to

SHAPE IT

Whether you lead regional economic strategy, scout investment and technology opportunities for a corporation, shape policy as a minister or economic development official, or rethink your university's role in the local innovation ecosystem — GFCC Study Trips put you in direct conversation with peers doing that same work, inside the ecosystems they've built.

Gain practical insights, build meaningful relationships, and deepen your understanding on what enables innovation ecosystems to thrive.

Study trips take participants inside the labs, hubs, and facilities that power leading innovation ecosystems across the globe — not as observers, but in direct dialogue with leaders from government, academia, and industry driving them.

Immerse yourself in Innovation Ecosystems across the world



Innovation leaders rarely get the chance to see firsthand how the world's most successful ecosystems actually work.

Study Trips help leaders:

-  Discover what makes an ecosystem work – and bring those best practices home
-  Build relationships and strategic partnerships across university, business, and government to accelerate innovation
-  Get firsthand access to the labs and facilities driving leading ecosystems
-  Build connections with university presidents, CEOs and corporate innovation leaders; government and economic development leaders, researchers, and investors.

Hosted in partnership with a GFCC member, the immersion runs two to four days and explores the questions every innovation leader must answer: how to attract talent and investment, how to structure academia-business partnerships that work, how to accelerate commercialization and start-up creation, and how to align the roles of university, government, and industry to power innovation ecosystems.

What we have discovered so far



San Diego

2026

From a Navy town to an innovation powerhouse: participants traced how university-anchored spinouts and a \$5B venture market built one of the country's deepest research-to-industry pipelines, with visits to Qualcomm Institute, Illumina, and the DIII-D National Fusion Facility.

UC San Diego



Participants visit the DIII-D National Fusion Facility, the largest magnetic fusion research facility in the United States, operated by General Atomics for the U.S. Department of Energy.



Global thought leader Pradeep K. Khosla, Chancellor of UC San Diego, talks to GFCC members from 10 countries including high level leaders from university, industry, and government.

Lisbon

2025

Through creativity and collaboration, Lisbon turned quality of life and an adventurous, exploration-era spirit into a magnet for international talent – seen firsthand at the Beato Innovation District, Diverge, Siemens Tech Hub, the Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown, and others.



UNIVERSIDADE
CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA



Leaders from the GFCC network exchange with local leaders at the Unicorn Factory, a municipally-backed initiative designed to accelerate, incubate and scale start-up businesses in Lisbon.



Prof. Miguel Athayde Marques, Vice-President, Universidade Católica Portuguesa and Professor of Management, Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics, a leader from the Champalimaud foundation; **Dr. Michinari Hamaguchi**, Director General of SCARDA, AMED; and **Prof. Hidetoshi Tahara**, Vice-President Start-up Ecosystem, Hiroshima University, visit the Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown, a biomedical research center that co-locates clinicians and researchers.

Birmingham

2024

A former manufacturing powerhouse, the city's reinvention centers on the creation of the Birmingham Innovation Precinct (BIP), a university-anchored hub for science, technology, and enterprise built through public-private partnership.



Next Stop: Tsukuba

TO BE HOSTED IN 2027

Tsukuba Global Innovation Promotion Agency (TGI) and the University of Tsukuba



筑波大学 *University of Tsukuba*



Tsukuba Global Innovation Promotion Agency

The GFCC heads to Japan's nationally planned science city to study how a research-intensive region built for scientific excellence can evolve to drive commercialization, industry creation, and global partnerships.

WHY THE GFCC?

GFCC brings together leaders from business, government, universities and national competitiveness organizations across **more than 30 countries** committed to advancing global competitiveness strategies, innovation, productivity and prosperity. That network gives participants exclusive access to institutions, facilities and decision-makers in a highly trusted peer-to-peer environment.

Leadership in Place-Making Innovation Study trips are the field component of the URLF (University and Research Leadership Forum) initiative on Leadership in Place-Making Innovation.

This initiative examines how universities, industry and government work together to drive regional economic transformation, each acting as a catalyst of place-making innovation.

Experience an innovation ecosystem firsthand

Study Trips are an **exclusive benefit** of GFCC membership.

Not a member? Talk to us about joining the GFCC and participating in an upcoming tour.

Apply now



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www.thegfcc.org