

Update on the SInC-related Meeting in Odisha under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary on 1st October, 2013

The State of Odisha is yet to form the State Innovation Council. The proposal has been under consideration of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of the State. **The Dept. of Science & Technology is the nodal-designate Dept. Mr. J.K. Mahopatra, the Chief Secretary** consented to chair the meeting to have a clearer and a more comprehensive perspective of the objective and the ambit of the proposed Council. Mr. Chandrajit Banerjee, DG, CII is the NInC Mentor. The Meeting was attended by Mr. Anjan Das, ED, CII on his behalf, and by Ms Veena Upadhyaya, Expert, NInC. At the State level, the Meeting was attended by Mr. I. Srinivas, Development Commissioner and ACS; Pr. Secretaries/ Secretaries of the Departments of Health, IT, Employment and Technical Education, and Agriculture, and representatives of the Depts. Of Commerce and Industry. The Director, IIT, Bhubaneswar, the scientists from the local CSIR organization, and the representative of the National Institute of Science, Education and Research (NISER) also participated.

2. **The CS** in his opening remarks said that the term 'innovation' is much wider than the scope of R&D, and has a vast ambit. Any new process or system intended to achieve betterment of the quality of life of the common man qualifies to be called 'innovation'. Viewed in its entirety, innovation is arguably the growth-engine of the State's economy, and inclusive innovation leads to social well-being of all sections of society.

3. Continuing with the tone set by the CS, **Ms Veena Upadhyaya, Expert, NInC** underlined the role of the State Govt. in creation of the innovation eco-system at the macro level by way of reforms in the education sector to produce employable graduates, promotion of entrepreneurship and employment, and improvement in the quality of life through better delivery of services to the citizens. I dilated on the rationale of the thrust on innovation-driven governance; the genesis of the 'Decade of Innovation'; mandate of the NInC; the emphasis laid on democratizing and federalizing innovation-driven approach by setting up of the Sectoral Innovation Councils and State Innovation Councils in the Budget Speech by the then FM on 28th February, 2011; Thirteenth Finance Commission's recommendations for creation of District innovation Fund (DIF); and the Twelfth Five Year Plan document. The uniqueness of the platform of SInC as a repository of the best minds at the State level bringing together the policy-makers, academicians, scientists and intellectuals together for the betterment of society at large was highlighted. It was suggested that the CS as the apex coordinator of the State's administration may chair the SInC. Organic links be established between the SInC and the District level Innovation Committees or DInCs as we may call them, and sectoral sub-committees be formed for advising innovative initiatives in sectors identified by the SInC as per the people's needs. In case of Odisha, it may be in areas relating to water harvesting, waste management, and fish-processing. The recommended approach merits to be institutionalized in the planning and budgetary process. The details of the national level initiatives were briefly stated as also some significant initiatives taken by some of the States in this direction.

4. **Mr. Anjan Das, ED, CII** made a suggestion to consider launching of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) as proposed by the CII in one of the recent interactive meetings in Bihar, and name it as Odisha Centre for Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness (OCIEC), a PPP vehicle for any or all of the six initiatives namely, Industrial R&D Fund; Post-Doctoral Fellowship Scheme for industrial R&D; Technology Acquisition Assistance Fund; Technology Demonstration Scheme; Technopreneurs Start-ups' Support Scheme; and Intellectual Property Credit Guarantee Scheme. The details were spelt out by him. He cited the example of the SPV set up in the PPP mode at the national level namely, Global Innovation and Technology Alliance (GITA) jointly set up by the DST, GOI and the CII.

5. During the discussion that followed, the following key points were made:

(i) The Director, IIT, Bhubaneswar made a number of important points as stated below:

(a) There is a strong and urgent need for industry-academia interaction. He said the IIT, BBSR will be happy to allot land to industry to set up laboratory for the industry and academia to work jointly on specified areas. Tata Steel was going to set up a lab on the IIT premises shortly.

(b) He encouraged the interdisciplinary dialogue in his Institute. The concept of Junket labs was also implemented for spurring out-of-the-box thinking.

(c) One should not expect overnight and spectacular results but take small and decisive steps in this direction. **(The Director, IIT, Bhubaneswar)**

(ii) The CSIR-800 Mission was launched with focus on inclusive innovation. The Technology Incubation Centre (TIC) at Koraput aims at acting as a catalyst, and as a point for providing financial assistance and mentoring. The Centres opened by the CSIR are known as '*Grameen Vigyan Kendras*' on the pattern of *Krishi Vigyan Kendras in agriculture sectors*. The reclamation of the wasteland, and research on the alternative building materials in Koraput region due to the excess of sandy soil, have emerged as priority areas of public concern. The field of harnessing renewable energy sources also merits an innovation-driven approach. The CSIR is also engaged in innovations in Minerology.

(CSIR Scientists)

(iii) The AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, which is two years old and will be starting MD and MS courses from the year 2014, will be happy to team up with the Health sector of the State in innovation-driven initiatives in low-cost healthcare and medicare.

(Brigadier Mohanty, AIIMS, BBSR)

(iv) There is a tremendous scope for innovation-driven initiatives in the field of agriculture, particularly in the areas of water conservation and water harvesting.

(Mr. Rajeev Srivastava, Principal Secretary, Agriculture)

(v) Recalling the tremendous role played by the innovation-driven initiatives in the field of rural telecommunication under the leadership of Dr. Sam Pitroda, the need for a strong institutional mechanism for sustaining the innovation-led growth in the State was underlined. It will be imperative to ensure that the zest for the nurturing of the innovation remains undiminished and is pursued with consistency on an ongoing basis.

(Mr. I. Srinivas, Development Commissioner and ACS)

6. The **Chief Secretary** concluded the deliberations with the following observations:

(a) The State will constitute the SInC within a period of one month.

(b) The State Govt. will cast the net wider and associate a cross-section of expertise with the SInC.

(c) The SInC will identify the low-hanging fruits i.e the short-term goals, and the components for the Innovation Action Plan for the XII Five Year Plan period.

(d) The State will be happy to consider the creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) in a PPP mode as suggested by the ED, CII, for catalyzing a close alliance between the industry and R&D and premier technical institutions. The State will endeavor to implement the mechanism within the next two months.

The CS followed up the meeting with a further round of discussions with the ED, CII.

7. The meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

Veena Upadhyaya
Expert, NInC
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