

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE STATE INNOVATION COUNCIL

Date: 31/10/2013

Venue: Conference Hall, Mannan Bhawan.

Time: 3:00 pm.

List of Attendees: Enclosed.

Chairperson: Chief Secretary to the Government of Sikkim

1. Opening Remarks & Introduction by Chief Secretary, Government of Sikkim:

In her opening remarks the Chief Secretary to the Government of Sikkim Smt. R. Ongmu and also the chairman of the Sikkim State Innovation Council welcomed Mr. Kiran Karnik and Mrs. Veena Upadhaya, experts on Innovation Council. She expressed her gratitude to Dr. Sam Pitroda, Chairman, National Innovation Council for taking time out from his busy schedule and attending the first meeting of the Sikkim State Innovation Council through Video Conference. She also welcomed the members of the State Innovation Council and urged them to take Innovation from their departments and reach out to the citizens of Sikkim.

The Chief Secretary also highlighted some of the innovation missions of the Government of Sikkim like Sikkim Organic Mission, Chief Ministers Annual Total Comprehensive health Check-up (CATCH), Rural Housing Mission and so on. She also highlighted the innovations taken in the education sector and agricultural sector.

At the outset the Chief Secretary, Government of Sikkim stated that guidance from the members of the National Innovation Council is required for showcasing the innovations in the state of Sikkim in an appropriate manner.

2. Address by Dr. Sam Pitroda on Video Conference.

Dr. Sam Pitroda in his address to the members of the Sikkim State Innovation Council congratulated the Government of Sikkim for formation of the State Innovation Council with members from different departments of the Government. He suggested inclusion of Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), young bright students from colleges/Universities, and local entrepreneurs in the Innovation Council.

He mentioned that Sikkim is an important state and people in the country have a lot to learn from the people of Sikkim on how to live a quality life. He stated that the environment of Sikkim is the best in the country. He urged the Sikkim State Innovation Council to come up with innovative ideas in sectors like Education, Governance, Health, and Agriculture. He said it is time that we stop trying to address and resolve the 21st century issues and challenges with a 19th century mindset.

He said the technology is a great enabler but one must bear in mind that one size does not fit all. The information technology and biotechnology offer unique advantages in the State and that Innovative people should stand for Innovation. Innovation in the state can create better opportunities, better life and better future if ideas are formulated properly. Interaction between the Innovation Councils at the National and State Level should be more frequent.

The following are the issues raised by the members of the Sikkim State Innovation Council during the meeting with Dr. Sam Pitroda.

ISSUES	ACTION TO BE TAKEN
<p>1. Secretary, DIT:</p> <p>(a) Sikkim is facing problems implementing e-Governance applications because of poor internet connectivity in the State.</p> <p>(b) Connectivity to be established upto the GPU level for proper implementation of e-Governance projects but the hilly topography and remote location of some areas are a hindrance in establishing connectivity. The Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCIL) has completed OPGW connectivity in the South District but the West District is yet to be covered.</p> <p>(c) The State Government has signed an agreement with the BBNL on establishing connectivity in the State but so far nothing has been done from their end. Setting up of Wi-Fi connectivity in Sikkim as an alternate for connectivity is also a problem because of poor line of sight.</p>	<p>(a) A paper on Problems faced by Sikkim regarding connectivity issues to be forwarded by the Department of Information Technology, Government of Sikkim to the office of the Chairman, National Innovation Council.</p> <p>(b) The office of the Chairman, National Innovation Council will take up the issue of connectivity with the office of Power grid Corporation of India Ltd. (PGCIL) and BSNL and request the PGCIL for permitting the usage of transmission towers of PGCIL in Sikkim for alternate connectivity. A reference on the subject giving complete details on the subject be made to the Office of the Chairman, NInC.</p> <p>(c) Dr. Sam Pitroda suggested that Wi-Max tower to be set up in atleast all the district headquarters of Sikkim.</p>

2. Principal Secretary, HRD Department.

(a) Edu-Sat Programme in Sikkim could not be implemented because of poor connectivity.

Sikkim is a small state comprising of 54 senior secondary schools. The Department in the process of setting up of a central hub for coaching to the students but again the process is hampered by poor connectivity.

(b) Methodology tools for learning Science & Mathematics.

(c) Principal Secretary/HRD Department stated that the HRD Department, Government of Sikkim will also try to implement the idea of innovation clubs at school level.

3. Secretary/Food Security & Agriculture:

(a) It takes three days of travel to and fro Delhi from Sikkim for Government officials to attend a simple meeting. If Video Conferencing can be done with the Union Ministries, then it will save a lot of time for the Government of Sikkim and such system is more convenient.

(d) Dr. Sam Pitroda informed that Dr. Sujata Ramadorai, Prof., TIFR, and a Member of the National Innovation Council (NInC) is developing a national portal on learning mathematics and it is in all languages of India. The precise requirement may be sent to the Office of the NInC to enable them to take up the case with Pof. Sujatha Ramdorai.

(e) Dr. Sam Pitroda suggested that the Principal Secretary/HRD Department along with his officers to visit the state of Karnataka and learn about the ways of implementing Innovative Clubs at school levels.

(f) Dr. Sam Pitroda welcomed the idea. It requires a cultural change. It should be encouraged both by the State and Central Governments.

4. Development Commissioner cum Secretary, Department of Planning:

- a. Office of the Chairman, B.S.N.L be set up in Sikkim for setting up better connectivity in the state of Sikkim for improving the Internet Connectivity.
- b. Connectivity is a major drawback in the state of Sikkim for implementing e-Governance projects and I.T related tools.
- c. Capacity & Skill Development to be given to the technical youths of Sikkim for Software Development so that the development can be done within the state of Sikkim instead of outsourcing it to Multi-National Companies.

5. Additional Director/ Science & Technology.

- a. The Department of Science & Technology has constituted an Intellectual property rights cell in Schools & Colleges.
- b. The Department has imparted training on Bio-Technology teaching methods to the teachers.
- c. The Department has set up DNA clubs at School level.
- d. Training has been imparted to the unemployed women in Sikkim on Tissue & Mushroom culture.
- e. Documentation of Traditional Knowledge in human healing is being drafted.
- f. Bio-Diversity mapping in Sikkim has been done by the department through remote sensing. A total of 200 medicinal plants and 30 species of wild orchids have been found so far.

(g)The office of the Chairman, National Innovation Council will take up with the Chairman, B.S.N.L for setting up an office of the Chief General Manager in Sikkim for better service and connectivity on receipt of the proposal containing justification as part of the White Paper on the State's e-connectivity issues.

Dr. Sam Pitroda said that the State should draw benefit from the software's available through cloud computing.

(h) Dr. Sam Pitroda informed that a National Portal on Bio-Diversity has been developed. He said that collaboration with Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) located in Bengaluru, and headed by Mr. Darshan Shankar would be useful.

3. Presentation on Initiatives/Innovations taken up by Sikkim-Secretary/DIT

Shri Rajesh Verma, Secretary, Department of Information Technology gave a presentation on the various innovative missions of the Government of Sikkim. He mentioned that the India's First Cyber Village was launched at Melli Dara GPU, South Sikkim on October 2nd 2013 by His Excellency the Governor of Sikkim. He highlighted the services included in the Cyber Village and its implementation.

A Video Conference meeting was done with the Panchayat of the Melli Dara GPU from Melli Dara Village Administrative Centre. Mr. Ganesh Rai, former Panchayat Member of Melli Dara presented the Cyber Village project which was well appreciated by Mr. Kiran Karnik and Mrs. Veena Upadhyaya.

Action Taken:

A copy of the presentation was mailed to Mrs. Veena Upadhaya for uploading in the portal of National Innovation Council.

4. Address by Mr. Kiran Karnik, NInC Mentor for Sikkim, SInC.

At the outset Mr. Kiran Karnik thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He highlighted the importance of National Innovation Council and its federalization through the setting up of the Sectoral and State Innovation Councils and the benefits of this approach to the society at large.. He stated that in Government innovations-driven increase efficiency.

He further observed that the term 'innovation' has a wide scope and includes any new process and methodology. He urged the State Government of Sikkim to create an innovation eco-system in the State. Innovations do not necessarily flow from the educated sections; these can emanate from any creative and imaginative mind.

Suggestions from Mr. Kiran Karnik

- (a) The Government of Sikkim may create Innovation Scholarships where special talents may be recognized.
- (b) Innovation fair/Workshops/Exhibitions to be organized often where participants can range from School/College students to entrepreneurs to farmers.
- (c) He highlighted the concept of Tod, Phod, Jod where students dis-assemble, reassemble and repurpose the daily use gadgets which spurs their creative spirit, and adds a new dimension to their learning.
- (d) He drew attention to the two-day workshop on innovation organised by the State Govt. of Rajasthan where several stakeholders from the world of academics, research, industry and government had participated, and the innovative products had been exhibited with a significant degree of success. The State of Sikkim could also think of organising similar workshop.

5. Address by Ms. Veena Upadhaya, Expert SInC

(5.1) At the outset Mrs. Veena Upadhaya, Expert, National Innovation Council (NInC) thanked the Chief Secretary, Government of Sikkim and Secretary, DIT for organizing the meeting of the State Innovation Council. She informed that this was the first meeting of of the SInC where Dr. Sam Pitroda was present through Video Conference. She said that there were two objectives of the interaction with the SInC of Sikkim by the NInC Mentor Mr. Kiran Karnik and her with the Chief Secretary and her colleagues. These were namely the identification of the low-hanging fruits i.e innovation-driven initiatives that can be accomplished within the next 4-6 months; and formulation of the Innovation Action Plan (IAP) or the Roadmap for the Twelfth Five Year Plan period. She said that 28 State Innovation Councils have been set up so far. The SInCs of Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar, Haryana and Punjab have covered a lot of ground. Karnataka is particularly in the vanguard in so far as fostering innovation in education field is concerned. The said State proposes to set up Innovation Clubs in all the colleges and Innovation Centres in the Universities.

(5.2) Taking note of the various innovations launched by the State Government as informed by the Chief Secretary, and as presented at length by the Secretary, Department of Information Technology, the Expert, NInC said that while a number of systemic reforms had been introduced and a innovation-driven initiatives taken, the formation of the platform of the State Innovation Council will go a long way in creation of the innovation eco-system in the State. She enumerated the multiple useful functions that the SInC is expected to perform as follows:

(i) The key function of the SInC will be creation of innovation eco-system. Disaggregating the concept of innovation eco-system, Ms Veena Upadhaya said that it requires performance of five tasks namely, creation of policy framework at the macro level; provision of platforms for collaboration among various institutions; ICT connectivity; fostering innovation in the field of education; and setting up a system of incentives and rewards for innovation.

(ii) The SInC will be a platform of convergence where all the multi-sectoral and cross-sectoral innovations will be collated and consolidated. The diffused and discursive efforts can thus be systematized and converged, and become imbibed in the system. This platform will give the requisite breadth and depth to the concerns for innovation. It will allow a comprehensive and a sort of 360 degree approach to the subject and not leave it confined to limited sectors.

(iii) It will lead to the institutionalisation and internalisation of the culture of innovation in the planning and budgetary process of the State, and become an integral part, rather than an extrapolation to the planning process across the sectors.

(iv) The SInC will be an intermediate tier between the NInC/national level entity and the District Innovation Fund (DIF) which has been created following the recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission. Under this Scheme, an amount of Rs. 1 crore has been earmarked for each district in the country for innovative works. The SInC may be the natural choice for formulation of guidelines for the innovation-based projects and for mentoring and steering the selection of projects to be funded by the DIF.

(v) The SInC is intended to be a quasi-governmental forum. It is in this background that Dr. Pitroda had urged the State Govt. to induct non-governmental representatives. She called upon the State Govt. to associate representatives of academic institutions e.g. Directors of NIT, engineering Colleges, Medical Institutions, industry, and progressive agriculturists/horticulturists, depending on the sectors identified for innovation agenda as per the needs of the people of the State.

(vi) The platform of SInC can create a climate conducive to overcoming of the risk-aversion. Innovation naturally involves taking a degree of risk, and it becomes imperative to promote an element of risk-friendliness among the civil-servants and decision-makers at large through this forum.

(vii) This forum will also help in revisiting the regulatory regimes and promotional mechanisms with a view to facilitating their being innovation-friendly.

(5.3) She further suggested that Departments of Science & Technology and of Human Resource Development Department may be designated as the nodal Departments of the SInC as they are the engines of innovation, while the Dept. of IT remains the overarching facilitating Dept. The State Innovation Council may also consider setting up some Sectoral sub-committees in areas where the State has already set up Missions and as are accorded high priority, and associate the best brains in the country with these sub-committees for the good of the State.

5.4 The Expert, NInC dwelt on the national level initiatives taken by the NInC. She suggested that the State of Sikkim may take up documentation of the existing innovative practices; opening of the web portal on state's innovations and best practices at the national and global levels; start the initiatives like Tod-Fod-Jod and State Innovation Scholarships to reward the problem-solving innovations; and selection of an industrial cluster for improvement of the quality and productivity, say bamboo furniture unit (as done in Tripura) or furniture, the typically exotic local ornate furniture (as also done in Kerala's pilot project).

The components of the Innovation Action plan could be namely, skill-development through a larger number of polytechnics/ITIs; mobile science labs for the school children; establishment of Innovation Fund for the start-ups in industry and service sectors; setting up of Technology Incubation Centres (TICs) in the Science and Technology Departments of the Universities and Technology Institutes and building up of the expertise in Taxonomy, and traditional knowledge about the enormously rich biodiversity of the State, and linking it up with the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) set up in the CSIR, DST. She said that she had been informed by Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, former DG, CSIR, and at present Member, NInC that TKDL is acknowledged as a reference point for grant of intellectual property rights by the Patent Offices the world over, as also by the US Patent Office.

6. Decisions Taken

(i) Human Resource Development and Science & Technology Departments may be designated as the Nodal Departments of SINC, with Dept. of IT continuing as the over-all Facilitating Dept. as they are almost the neural pillars of innovation.

(ii) Sectoral Sub-Committees may be formed in the SInC in areas out of the areas identified for Missions. Renowned experts on a country-wide basis may be associated with these sub-committees for innovation-based recommendations.

(iii) The innovation-based initiatives to be taken in the short term as suggested in paragraph 5.4 above by the Expert, National Innovation Council will be considered by the State Govt.

(iv) The Innovation Action Plan (IAP) for the Twelfth Five Year Plan will be prepared by January 10, 2014. The components as suggested in the paragraph 5.4 above will be taken into account while formulating the IAP.

(v) The Secretary, Dept. of HRD may visit Karnataka SInC to see how innovation is being fostered in the schools and colleges there. Likewise, Secretary, Dept. of S&T/Director/Addl. Director, Council of S&T may visit TKDL, CSIR, DST, GOI, Delhi to study the methodology of linkage between State level bio-diversity and traditional knowledge with TKDL.

Vote of Thanks by Member Secretary, SInC

The meeting concluded with Vote of thanks to the Chair, the NInC mentor, and the Expert, NInC from the Member-Secretary, Sikkim State Innovation Council.