

F.No.13-52/2018-ICC
Government of India
Department of Higher Education
International Cooperation Cell

Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated the 11th September, 2024

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Minutes of the Apex Committee Meeting of SPARC.

The undersigned is directed to forward herewith a copy of the Record of Discussion of the Apex Committee Meeting of SPARC held on 29th August, 2024 at 9:30 A.M in Hybrid mode under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Higher Education (HE) for information and necessary action.

2. This issues with the approval of Secretary, HE.


(Rajeev Kumar Sinha)
Under Secretary (ICC)
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To:

- i. Shri Vikram Misri, Foreign Secretary (psfs@mea.gov.in)
- ii. Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, DST (dstsec@nic.in)
- iii. Dr Rajesh S Gokhale, Secretary, DBT (secy@dbt.nic.in)
- iv. Shri Arunish Chawla, Secretary, Ministry of Culture (secy-culture@nic.in)
- v. Prof M. Jagadesh Kumar, Chairman UGC (cm.ugc@nic.in)
- vi. Prof T G Sitharam, Chairman AICTE (chairman@aicte-india.org)
- vii. Ms. Saumya Gupta, Joint Secretary (TE), MoE
- viii. Shri Sanjog Kapoor, Joint Secretary & Financial Advisor, MoE (jsfa-moe@gov.in)
- ix. Prof. V.K.Tewari, Director, IIT Kharagpur (director@iitkgp.ac.in)
- x. Prof. Rabibrata Mukherjee, Joint Coordinator (SPARC), IIT Kharagpur (rabibrata@che.iitkgp.ac.in)
- xi. Prof. Indranil Manna, Professor, IIT Kharagpur (on lien as VC, BIT, Mesra) (vc@bitmesra.ac.in, imanna@metal.iitkgp.ernet.in)
- xii. Prof. Virander S. Chauhan (viranderschauhan@gmail.com)
- xiii. Dr. S. Vaidhyasubramaniam, Dean, Planning & Development, SASTRA University (vaidhya@sastra.edu)

Copy to:

- (i) Prof. B.S. Murty, Director, IIT Hyderabad (**with a request to share with Ministry, learning under the Semiconductors research training theme -i.e para 2(iii) of the minutes**)
- (ii) PPS to Secretary (Higher Education), MoE
- (iii) PPS to JS (ICC), MoE

Minutes of the Apex Committee Meeting of SPARC

The Apex Committee meeting for the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) was held on 29th August, 2024 at 9:30 A.M. in Hybrid mode under the chairmanship of Secretary (HE). The list of participants is at **Annexure-I**.

2. During the meeting, the following decisions were taken:

- i). It has been decided that 44 PIs who have not yet submitted final SE/UC of SPARC Phase I projects will not be eligible for submission of proposals in the next SPARC Call-Phase-IV.
- ii). Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework(OOMF) report indicating progress achieved against the targets set for SPARC Phase-I including information on patents along with closure report needs to be sent by IIT KGP to IFD Division of the Ministry for closing the SPARC Phase I.
- iii). Learning from Taiwan & USA(Purdue University) under the Semiconductors research training theme should be put on record by IIT Hyderabad. The same will be send to Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) with a request to fund the projects so as to upscale the programme at larger level.
- iv). Approval for floating the Call for proposals of Phase IV having tenure of the projects - 15 months (1st January,2025-March,2026) under identified twelve themes is approved. 250 + eligible Universities (list prepared by UGC for dual/Joint degree programs), NITs & IISERs will get first priority in terms of selection for making SPARC more inclusive as their participation was lower in earlier three phases. Chair stressed upon the need for research culture to go down in line with “One Nation One Subscription” policy and ANR objectives.
- v). From the assigned SPARC budget of Rs 425.2 Cr, about 160 Cr is still remaining which will be utilized for funding Phase-IV call, out of which an amount of Rs.20 crore is allocated for exploring bilateral mechanism with Germany under SPARC, like SPARC Phase III - UKIERI.
- vi). Chair highlighted that under iCET 10 million USD is lying unutilized, which can be utilized for exploring bilateral co-funding mechanism with Germany, UK etc.
- vii). IIT KGP in partnership with UGC will conduct a workshop for the 250+eligible Universities, NITs & IISERs, keeping in the loop Ministry.
- viii). IIT KGP has been directed to share Third party Evaluation report done by DRDO (i.e September 2020) to Apex Committee members for their comments/views, so that gaps, if any can be identified. Members to convey their suggestions to the Ministry within 7-10 working days. These suggestions/recommendations will be taken into consideration while initiating the next Third Party review of SPARC Phase -II. DRDO can again be approached for the Third-party evaluation.
- ix). Based on the experience of SPARC-UKIERI calls under Phase III, it has been decided that there is no need of having separate SPARC guidelines when concluding bilateral

mechanism w.r.t co-funding of projects with interested countries, however operational part can be modified.

x). It has been decided to approve the following new rate of SPARC honorarium for SPARC Project review:

- Rate of honorarium for each reviewer for attending a meeting -@Rs. 10,000/- per day. In case the meeting is extended for two or more days, maximum honorarium of Rs 20,000/- will be paid.
- An additional honorarium of Rs 10,000/- to all the theme chairs having the additional responsibility of a) Forming the committee; b) Getting the proposals pre-screened; c) Convening the meeting and d) Compiling the results.
- An additional honorarium of Rs 5,000/- to all the theme conveners having the additional responsibility of a) Helping the Chairs in forming the committee; b) Getting the proposals pre-screened; c) Convening the meeting and d) Compiling the results and e) maintaining liaison with the Joint National Coordinator.

xi). Prof. Virander S. Chauhan, member of the Apex Committee may share list of good competent faculty working in particular discipline in Universities who may be nominated in the Screening Committee for reviewing the projects in the next phase for IIT Kharagpur consideration.

xii). IIT KGP has been authorized to remove minor ambiguity in the guidelines regarding i) inclusion of at least two students/researchers pursuing post-doc level from each side and ii) the students/researchers have to be registered as full-time students in their respective institutions.

xiii). IIT KGP has been directed to prepare a paper regarding payment to be made for the visit of an Indian students to the Foreign Institutions as currently upto \$1000 per month out-of-pocket allowances is paid to Indian students, which is on lower side and the rate was fixed during the year 2020. In this context, DST and DBT rates for the visit of an Indian students to the Foreign Institutions under their existing schemes needs to be considered and incorporated. This will be part of proposal in the next phase.

xiv). IIT KGP has been authorized to approve one visit of Indian faculty abroad by economy class (subject to a ceiling of USD2,000/-) in connection with a research project or workshop or training, in case funds are not available/ falling short under CPDA. In this regard, an undertaking will be taken from the Institution before making funding for the proposal. The provision of the same is also mentioned in the SPARC Phase-III guidelines.

xv). Existing provision for the minimum duration of stay of an International faculty can be split into two visits.

xvi). It has been decided to hike the salaries of staff working under SPARC Scheme @ 10% annually

The meeting ended with thanks to the chair and participants.

Annexure-I**List of Participants**

S.No.	Participants
1.	Shri K Sanjay Murthy, Secretary (HE), Ministry of Education, Chairman
2.	Ms. Neeta Prasad, Joint Secretary (ICC), Ministry of Education, Member Secretary
3.	Ms. Saumya Gupta, Joint Secretary (TE), Ministry of Education, Member
4.	Shri Sanjog Kapoor, JS & FA, Ministry of Education, Member
5.	Prof. T G Sitharam, Chairman, AICTE, Member
6.	Prof. Manish R. Joshi, Secretary, UGC, Nominee of Chairman UGC, Member
7.	Dr. Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Scientist 'H', Sr. Adviser, DBT, Nominee of Secretary DBT, Member
8.	Dr. Namita Gupta, Head, INSPIRE Division, DST, Nominee of Secretary DST, Member
9.	Dr. Manoj Singh Rohilla, Scientist-'F', DBT, Nominee of Secretary DBT, Member
10.	Dr. Bipin Joshi, Scientist F, INSPIRE Div., DST, Nominee of Secretary DST, Member
11.	Shri Rishi Pal, US (Coord.), MEA, Nominee of Secretary MEA, Member
12.	Prof. V.K. Tewari, Director, Director, National Coordinating (NC) Institution, Member
13.	Prof. Virander S. Chauhan, Arturo Falaschi Emeritus Scientist, ICGEB. Distinguished Visiting Professor, University of Delhi, Nominated Member (Reputed Academician from Public Sector)
14.	Dr. S. Vaidhyasubramaniam, Dean - Planning and Development, SASTRA University, Thanjavur, Nominated Member (Reputed Academician from Private Sector)
15.	Prof. Indranil Manna, Vice-chancellor of the Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Nominated Member (Reputed Academician from Public Sector)
16.	Prof. Rabibrata Mukherjee, Joint National Coordinator (SPARC), IIT Kharagpur (Special Invitee)
17.	Shri Rajeev Kumar Sinha, Under Secretary (ICC), Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.
18.	Shri Uday Kiran, Under Secretary (IFD), Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.
19.	Shri Vinod Kumar Sisodia, Section Officer (ICC), Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.
20.	Shri Atul Juyal, Liaison Officer (SPARC), Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.

