

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 766
ANSWERED ON 08/02/2024

Parameters to evaluate proposals for SATHI Centres

766 Shri Sujeet Kumar:

Will the Minister of **Science and Technology** be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the criteria and parameters being used to evaluate the 12 proposals for Sophisticated Analytical and Technical Help Institutes (SATHI) recently announced by the Department of Science and Technology;
- (b) whether Government plans to address potential challenges or concerns raised during the evaluation process to ensure the transparency and fairness of the selection;
- (c) if so, details thereof; and
- (d) the details of plans for assessments once the centres are operational to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the scientific community?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR THE
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)

(a) to (c): During evaluation stages, twelve (12) deemed qualified clusters were invited to present their respective Sophisticated Analytical and Technical Help Institutes (SATHI) proposals. The following are the different criteria's and parameters duly identified by Experts Committee (EC) which were followed to evaluate these 12 proposals: -

- (i) willingness of the nodal organisation and its co-opted partners to collaborate and form a cluster,
- (ii) participation and alignment to establish Section-8 company,
- (iii) the availability of dedicated space consolidated under one roof by lead organization,
- (iv) prior experience of the lead organization or partner organizations within the cluster in managing shared equipment/facilities as central facilities,
- (v) a well-structured plan for skill development and capacity building, involving research scholars, post-doctoral fellows, startups, MSMEs, and incubators,

(vi) contribution of fund i.e a minimum of 25% of the total cost of the recommended budget or more,

(vii) critical on the spot-visit reports of respective clusters to reach a meaningful consensus to build a SATHI facility.

Apart from it the Expert Committee also thoughtfully considered and assessed various factors, encompassing the institute or university's academic performance, including its Institutes of Eminence (IOE) status, National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranking, quality of research publications, the breadth of Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM) disciplines, the presence of supportive infrastructure, anticipated future research endeavours, and the institution's overall contributions towards research & development.

Certain emphasis was given to proposals, where the Vice Chancellor or Director of the lead organization presented alongside other partners, demonstrating the formation of a robust cluster. Additionally, attention was provided to institute/university that had received previous infrastructure support of DST, through various programs like Fund for Improvement of S&T Infrastructure (FIST), Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence (PURSE), Sophisticated Analytical Instrument Facilities (SAIF), etc. along with their current evaluation report or status. The entire selection process meticulously adhered to the ethical norms and conflict of interest policy of DST.

In a nutshell, the Government has established an effective and robust system under SATHI to evaluate proposals with due diligence by following all criteria and norms meant under SATHI Scheme. Accordingly, the evaluation of SATHI proposals was carried out with utmost fairness and transparent mechanism.

(d) DST has effective monitoring system in place for the SATHI centres. An Expert Panel comprising eminent scientists and academicians regularly monitors the activities of SATHI Centres. The technical and financial progress is reviewed by the Expert Panel to ensure they continue to meet the needs of scientific community.

Various factors such as utilisation and professional management of facilities, generation of revenue, different research activities, capacity building etc. are monitored during the review process.
