



Thu, 14/02/2019 - 06:08

News stories

EU - India to jointly fund seven research and innovation projects to the tune of EUR 40 million to tackle urgent water challenges



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New Delhi, 14 February, 2019: The Delegation of the European Union to India, the Department of Science & Technology and the Department of Biotechnology today presented the seven projects that have been selected under the EU - India Joint Call on Research and Innovation for Water. The selected projects will develop new and/or adapt the most suitable existing innovative and affordable solutions for Indian conditions, both in urban and rural areas, thus providing some key solutions to the urgent water challenges.

The EU, through its research and innovation programme 'Horizon 2020' and the Government of India (DST and DBT) will invest a total of up to EUR 40 million (INR 323 crores) on **seven projects**, which have an average duration of 4 years. The key focus areas of these projects are: improving the quality of drinking water, waste water management and real time monitoring and control systems are, which have been selected through a competitive peer-reviewed process. In total, 130 entities will be part of these seven projects, ranging from universities, research labs, private sector and municipalities. Amongst others, *IIT Bombay, IIT Guwahati, IIT Bhubaneswar, IIT Roorkee, IIT Delhi, CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) and TERI* are some of the institutes that will be collaborating in these projects with leading universities and institutes from Europe. European and Indian businesses and SMEs are also participating to test the manufacturing of water treatment technologies and systems.

Besides supporting India's **Ganga Rejuvenation** initiative, the projects will also support transfer of European technologies to India, which would require them to be tested, demonstrated, and customized to suit Indian needs at an affordable cost. The cooperation will also lead to increased scientific excellence while ensuring that at the end of the project, the technology can be deployed and be of benefit to the entire Indian population.

Uneven distribution of water resources triggered by climate change, extreme water-related events

(floods and droughts) and increasing demand due to population growth and economic development, as well as water pollution add additional stress to water, the environment and food security. *"Many of these water challenges are common to India and the EU. India and Europe have, in the past, collaborated intensively on water, enriching each other's technological and scientific knowledge and management capacities to cope with stress on water resources. The selected research and innovation projects will/or aim at further addressing these key water issues together with India and in doing so, will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals to which both Europe and India are committed,"* said **Mr Tomasz Kozlowski**, Ambassador of the European Union to India.

It was thus logical, taking into account European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas' commitment to further encourage international, open-to-the-world activities under the EU's Research & Innovation programme "Horizon 2020", that water became a priority area for cooperation between Europe and India.

Project participants from both Europe and India participate in today's launch event and presented their action plans.

The seven selected projects are:

- India-H2O: bio-mimetic and phyto-technologies designed for low-cost purification and recycling of water.
- LOTUS: Low-cost innovative technology for water quality monitoring and water resources management for urban and rural water systems in India.
- PANI WATER: Photo-irradiation and adsorption based novel innovations for water-treatment.
- PAVITR: Potential and validation of sustainable natural & advance technologies for water & wastewater treatment, monitoring and safe water reuse in India.
- PAVITRA GANGA: Unlocking wastewater treatment, water re-use and resource recovery opportunities for urban and peri-urban areas in India.
- SAEASWATI 2.0: Identifying best available technologies for decentralized wastewater treatment and resource recovery for India.
- SPRING: Strategic planning for water resources and implementation of novel biotechnical treatment solutions and good practices.

Prior to the launch event, the India-European Water Partnership (IEWP) met on 13 February 2019 to ensure full synergy between the policy dialogue between India and the EU on water and how research and innovation efforts could facilitate the implementation of the issues identified.

BACKGROUND

India-EU Water Partnership

In 2016, India and the EU launched a [Water Partnership](#) to strengthen cooperation on water between the EU and India. Priorities of the partnership include the sustainable development of river basins, water governance, data management (water accounting), groundwater use, and water use in irrigation, including solar pumping. The partnership aims to enable the exchange of views on regulatory approaches, including procurement, governance, best practices, business solutions, and research and innovation. To this end, the partnership facilitates technical exchanges through study visits on water issues and in the organisation of the Indo-European Water Forum.

[Joint declaration on an India-EU water partnership, 30 March 2016](#)

What is 'Horizon '2020'?

'Horizon 2020' is the EU's funding instrument for research and innovation actions among the EU Member States and countries associated to the programme and all other partners in the world. It has a budget of about € 80 bn. for the seven-year period from 2014 to 2020 and consists of three pillars:

1. Pillar 1 focuses on "Excellent Science" and includes the European Research Council (ERC), researcher's mobility known as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), 'Future and Emerging Technologies' and large European research infrastructures.
2. Pillar 2 "Industrial Leadership" aims at improving Europe's industrial capacity and competitiveness through academia and industry partnership.
3. Pillar 3 "Societal Challenges" funds R&I aiming at finding solutions to social and economic problems.

'Horizon 2020' funds research, technological development, and innovation, with the aim of delivering economic growth faster and delivering solutions. Participation by SMEs is strongly encouraged. For more information, see

Horizon 2020 is open to participation from India: for specific conditions and opportunities: see country page:

EU and India have a good track record on R&I cooperation on Water

Under the EU Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP7), Indians participated in 9 collaborative research projects representing in total about EUR 82 million funded by the EU. In addition, a coordinated call was organised with Government of India (DST and DBT) in which India and EU funded 5 projects (NAWATECH, SARASWATI, SWINGS, ECO-INDIA and WATER4INDIA) to the tune of EUR 44 million. Cooperation through these projects has allowed development of appropriate waste water treatment systems, recycling and reuse strategies as well as water reclamation in various part of India. This cooperation has also strengthened the research capacity on water while supporting deployment of technologies. The EU Member States individually or through the FP7 INNO INDIGO project, have also selected water as a topic for cooperation.

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