

Indian Science Technology and Engineering facilities Map (I-STEM) Portal

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Source: *PIB & Ministry of Science & Technology*

Recently Prime Minister has launched the I-STEM portal during the Indian Science congress event in Bengaluru.

What is it and who initiated it?

Initiated by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the GoI as an important national program to **build a unique 'One Nation One Research Web Portal' for scientific community**, the Indian Science Technology and Engineering facilities Map (I-STEM): Linking Researchers and Resources, will hold the database of all the R&D facilities established in institutions around the country, and enable their sharing in a transparent manner. The IP protected Portal has been **built by and is managed by, Nanoscience Centre of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.**

Key features of the portal

- **All academic institutions, national research labs, and aided/affiliated institutions with R&D facilities funded by agencies of the GoI, will be required to list them on the I-STEM Portal.**
- In addition, this will also serve to **provide a live inventory of R&D facilities in academia, national labs, and industry, whether created with public and private investment.**
- It is required that the funding agencies in R&D (in science, technology, engineering, medicine, and agriculture), make sure that all institutions list their

public-funded facilities on the I-STEM portal and ensure that they are made available to users (Internal and External).

- The I-STEM Portal is **designed to be the gateway for users/researchers to locate the specific type of facility they need for their R&D work** and to identify the one that is either located closest to them or available the soonest. Once a researcher locates the desired facility through I-STEM, s/he can make an online reservation for using it, paying for it through a secure payment gateway.
- The Portal will thus provide **comprehensive data on the sharing of facilities** and, thereby, on the active participation of institutions in the I-STEM project.
- **The portal also supports a panel of experts in various fields of science, engineering, and technology** so that researchers can seek their advice to achieve greater success in their R&D projects.

Who can access the portal?

- Not just public and private academic institutions, but the industry will also be able to share their R&D lab equipment as well as scientific products/equipment accessories.
- Furthermore, the industry will also be able to access needed facilities through I-STEM for their R&D. This will enable start-ups to leverage public and private investment to pursue their innovative ideas, and come up with successful products and services.

Significance of the portal

- I-STEM is expected to **greatly enhance the utilization of R&D equipment nationwide**, thereby reducing duplication and saving precious public funds through a reduction in the capital budget for R&D, and releasing funds that can provide support to a much larger number of researchers,

especially those in smaller and more remote institutions.

- I-STEM is also expected to **enhance collaboration among academics and between industry and academia.**
- The I-STEM project will also likely result in the creation of skilled manpower at various levels, enhancing job opportunities, and in the building of a better R&D ecosystem in the country, in public as well as private organizations.
- Thus, the I-STEM initiative is aimed at and is **expected to lead to, greater R&D productivity, innovation, especially among start-ups, resulting in the growth of industry and the national economy.**