

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

Union HRD Minister launches the web portal of the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) in New Delhi

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New Delhi**

The Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar launched the web portal of the Scheme “**Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)**” in New Delhi today. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that SPARC scheme aims at improving the research ecosystem of India’s higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world. He informed that under this Scheme, 600 joint research proposals will be awarded for 2 years to facilitate strong research collaboration between Indian research groups with the best in class faculty and renowned research groups in the leading universities of the world, in areas that are at the cutting edge of science or with direct social relevance to the mankind, specifically India.

The minister further informed that the Government in August 2018 had sanctioned the scheme “Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)” at a total cost of Rs.418 Cr for implementation up to 31.3.2020 and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur is the National Coordinating Institute to implement the SPARC programme. Details may be viewed at www.sparc.iitkgp.ac.in.

- Salient Features of SPARC are :

This scheme will improve research ecosystem of India’s higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions [overall top-100 or category-wise top-100 in NIRF (including such Private Institutions which are recognized under 12(B) of UGC Act)] and the best institutions in the world (top-500 overall and top-200 subject-wise institutions listed in QS World University Ranking) from 28 selected nations [Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Kingdom(UK), United States of America(USA)] to jointly solve problems of national and international relevance. As per the criteria mentioned above, 254 top Indian Institutes and 478 top ranked global Institutes have been already identified.

- a) A set of 5 Thrust Areas (Fundamental Research, Emergent Areas of Impact, Convergence, Action-Oriented Research and Innovation-Driven) and sub-theme areas in each thrust area has been identified for collaboration under SPARC based on emergent relevance and importance for the nation.

- b) Each Thrust Area will have a Section Chair. The role of Section Chair of each Thrust Area is to review shortlist and recommend the potential joint-proposals submitted under SPARC scheme.
- c) A set of Nodal Institutions (NI), from India, for each participating foreign country has been identified. The role of a NI is to help, handhold and coordinate with willing Participating Indian (PI) Institutions to forge alliance with the Institutions of concerned participating foreign country, for academic and research collaboration. 25 such reputed Institutions have been notified as Nodal Institutions.
- d) SPARC proposes to enable productive academic cooperation by supporting the following critical components that can catalyze impact making research : i) Visits and long-term stay of top international faculty/researchers in Indian institutions to pursue teaching and research , ii) Visits by Indian students for training and experimentation in premier laboratories worldwide , iii) Joint development of niche courses, world-class books and monographs, translatable patents, demonstrable technologies or action oriented research outcomes and products , iv) Publication , Dissemination and Visibility through a high profile annual international conference in India .
- e) This Scheme is expected to have a major impact in providing the best international expertise to address major national problems, expose Indian academicians to the best collaborators abroad, enable international faculty to stay in India for a longer duration, provide Indian students an opportunity to work in the world class laboratories, to develop strong bilateral relationships in research, and improve the international ranking of Indian Institutes.

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