



## **NITI Aayog Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) virtually launches India Australia Circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE) in association with Australia's national science agency, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)**

The Concept of I-ACE originated during the virtual summit between the Hon PM of India Shri Narendra Modi and Hon PM Australia Scott Morrison held on June 4th, 2020. This summit focused both the nations to work together on exploring Innovative ways of boosting the circular economy.

Hence, a 2-day hackathon on circular economy named "India Australia Circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE)" has been conceptualized and jointly being organized by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog in association with CSIRO, Australia.

I-ACE will focus on identification and development of innovative technology solutions by bright-minded students, startups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of both nations for fostering sustainable circular economy with the aim of increasing the long-term health and resilience of our planet.

Mr. R. Ramanan, Mission Director Atal Innovation Mission and Additional Secretary NITI Aayog in inaugural address said that we are looking at how we can address the circular economy challenge that can create possible solutions for not only eliminating waste but also for reusing waste.

Dr Paul Bertsch, Chief of the Division of Land and Water at CSIRO said, Australia and India appraised India's and Australia's strong productive bilateral Partnership over a decade and highlighted that there are significant potential and benefits through our collaborations across a broad range of areas. He also highlighted by coming together, we can align research and development efforts to achieve more at a very challenging time in history of mankind.

Adding to Dr Paul Bertsch, Dr Heinz Schandl, senior science leader at CSIRO Land and Water said, The hackathon will help both the nations advance circular economy and in the long run a circular economy model will prove superior to businesses and will provide more jobs and higher economic growth. It will also reduce cost, drive innovation and will have various significant environmental benefits.

He also said that Australia and India have everything it needs to launch a circular economy strategy that will address fundamental environmental issues and foster economic development.

Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog highlighted the importance of Circular Economy and said, combining Australia's Research and Development base with India's scale and record of frugal innovations establishes the foundation of productive partnership between the two nations.

He also said producing, consuming and disposing products has started to effect planet and our way of life. The need of the hour is to adopt a disruptive way of doing thing which is based on sustainability and moving towards circular economy. The circular economy would be the true response.

Gracing this occasion, Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog said, it is a very important initiative to make our economy less resource intensive and to ensure our economic growth is ecologically compatible and contribute to the climate change situation. As both nations build their economies, it is the right moment to make circular and sustainable economy, the model of economic growth going forward.



Mr. R. Ramanan explained the format of I-ACE and introduced four key themes for the hackathon as follows:

1. Innovation in packaging reducing packaging waste
2. Innovation in food supply chains avoiding waste
3. Creating opportunities for plastics waste reduction
4. Recycling critical energy metals and e-waste

Shortlisted students and startups/MSMEs will be called for the hackathon on 7 and 8 December 2020 wherein two winners (one student and one startup/MSME) per theme from each country will be announced at the award ceremony on 11 December 2020.

The winning Indian student and startup/MSME teams will be awarded a prize of 2 lakhs and 5 lakhs respectively, coupled with post hackathon product development opportunities. The winning Australian student teams will be awarded a prize of AUD\$3,500 and the winning Australian SMEs and start-up teams will be awarded a prize of AUD\$9,500.

Mr. R. Ramanan in his concluding remarks encouraged students, startups and MSMEs of both the nations to come forward and apply for this hackathon and pave the way towards the creation of a vibrant and sustainable circular economy.

The last date for application submissions is 6 November 2020.