



RIS
Research and Information System
for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



Department of Science & Technology
Ministry of Science & Technology
Government of India

Consultation on Role of Science Attachés and Science Diplomacy: Challenges and Way Forward

26 March 2019

Conference Room - II (2nd Floor), Main Building,
India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi

CONCEPT NOTE

The idea of science diplomacy became very important in the 20th century, when underpinning of science became integral to international relations and global diplomatic negotiations. Gradually, science diplomacy became a key theme in foreign policies to harness scientific excellence, for addressing societal challenges. In the last few decades, India has emerged as one of the major players in science, technology and innovation. With the country's involvement in mega science projects and various S&T related bilateral and multilateral collaborations, the importance of science diplomacy has further got pronounced. Science diplomacy has emerged as a strategic instrument to address issues arising from internationalization of scientific research and shifting geographies of innovation, particularly for developing countries.

With the increasing significance of science diplomacy in India, RIS launched a programme on science diplomacy, supported by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. The programme envisages capacity building in science diplomacy, developing networks and strategic thinking for science diplomacy. It aims to engage with diverse stakeholders of Indian science diplomacy and foster scientific cooperation for common good. Since Attaches are a significant part of India's Science diplomacy, playing the pivotal role in catalyzing the bilateral S&T cooperation and strengthening the national R&D capacity through the same, RIS is organising a one-day Consultation Meeting - **'Role of Science Attachés in Indian Science Diplomacy: Challenges and Way Forward'** at New Delhi, on 26th March 2019, to initiate discussions among former and present science Attachés on issues related to capacity building, better preparedness for S&T related negotiations, mechanisms to increase

bilateral/multilateral collaborations and strategies to connect with the Indian S&T Diaspora, at various geographies.

Rationale

The one-day consultation meeting aims to engage with former science attaches as well as significant stakeholders, who steer the India's Science diplomacy initiatives. The meeting is a Forum for the participants to share instances, experiences, lessons and recommendations, for making the Indian science diplomacy more informed and better equipped. Also, it will help in identifying and examining challenges of Science Attachés, their roles and responsibilities amid geopolitical transformation and S&T advancements. The meeting attempts to facilitate and strengthen networks among stakeholders of Indian science diplomacy, adding value to the existing science diplomacy programme.

Session I

Role of Science Attaché and Science Diplomacy: Historical Aspects and Future Prospects

In the Indian context, diplomatic negotiations have taken into consideration the fundamentals of science and technology; diplomats are aware of the scientific interpretation for signing treaties and protocol, however there exist a deficit in connecting emerging issues of S&T to strategic decision-making. To facilitate better engagement with S&T in foreign policy and diplomacy, the Government of India created the position of 'Science Attaché/Science Counsellors in early 1970s. Some of the eminent scientists and research scholars were appointed as Science Attaches/Counselors at Indian embassies in countries, which were relevant for India's S&T cooperation. These countries were US, Japan, Russia and Germany. Science Attachés have undertaken diverse responsibilities, inter alia:

- Understanding and examining the science, technology and innovation ecosystem of the given country;
- Identifying areas of mutual interest and relevant stakeholders, - Improving the scale, scope and impact of cooperation actions;
- Building synergies between India and the country of deputation through regular interactions, networks and deliberations.

Indian Science Attachés have played a pivotal role in facilitating various multilateral S&T cooperation; in participating in big science projects like CERN, ITER and FAIR. Their active engagement in diplomatic negotiations has led to signing of strategic agreements, developing networks among science institutions, scientists and government organizations, across the globe. The session will focus on the evolving roles and responsibilities of Science Attaché, since its inception vis-à-vis the present. It will also deliberate on the future challenges and opportunities for Science Attaché emerging from globalization of Innovation, internationalization of research, trade conflicts and geopolitics.

Session II

Role of Science Attaches and Transformations in S&T Ecosystem: Global Commons, Diaspora, Resources and International Architecture

Whilst India showcases its scientific prowess and technological capabilities in sectors like IT, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, space research and others, the ambit of STI cooperation, bilateral and multilateral have grown manifolds since the last few decades. In particular, the value addition through adoption of S&T is crucial for our contribution to the global economy, as the country targets to become a \$5 trillion economy. Programmes like Make in India, Digital India, to name a few, are incentivizing adoption of sophisticated technologies in manufacturing and services, leading to change in the innovation ecosystem and the increasing importance of startups and role of small companies in developing critical applications in different sectors, opening up new avenues for S&T to play a key role in changes. While S&T is taking the centre stage in economic development, various challenges have emerged; adoption of block chain technologies, 5G and technological convergence, raise questions relating to promotional policies and governance of technologies. The pace of technological change in different domains seeks for preparedness to face them and adopt them. Another key issue is the scouting for raw materials across the world to meet our increasing needs in key sectors.

The session will discuss expectations from Science Counsellors, in deploying science diplomacy as a tool to address aforementioned challenges and opportunities, emerging from the transforming global and national S&T ecosystems.

Taking into account the above reflections, the Consultation will deliberate on the following questions/themes:

- 1) The linkage between Science Diplomacy and India's S&T Ecosystem
- 2) The role of Science Counselors in Science Diplomacy in light of new socio-economic, political and scientific developments
- 3) S&T and I Cooperation and the Global South, and,
- 4) The role of Science Counselors in using Science Diplomacy to leverage the potential of Indian S&T Diaspora