

Minutes of the Consultative Meeting on Dehradun Research and Academic Consortium (DRAC)



28th April, 2018

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A consultative meeting to discuss the formation of Dehradun Research and Academic Consortium (DRAC) was held at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun on Saturday the 28th April, 2018. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Akhilesh Gupta, Advisor and Head SPLICE / Climate Change Programme of DST, Govt. of India and attended by over 65 Senior officials from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and Department of Science & Technology (DST); Vice Chancellors of Universities in Uttarakhand; Heads and senior professionals from various national and state level research and educational institutions based in Uttarakhand and a few eminent scholars (**Annexure – 1**).

The summary of discussion and decisions are as under-

1. The meeting started with the welcome address by Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director, WII. He said that the overwhelming response to the initiative of setting up of an institutional consortium as reflected by the presence of over 60 academics/ professionals in the first meeting was an ample reflection of their interest, concern and commitment to work together to take the science into a higher trajectory of excellence. He said that there was an urgent need to strengthen the connect between science and society and to effectively leverage the strengths of the scientific institutions and individuals in this endeavor. In his opening remarks Shri M. S. Negi, Additional Director General Forests (Wildlife), MoEF&CC welcomed the initiative and wished the meeting a grand success. Professor S.P. Singh, INSA Senior Scientist and Former Vice-Chancellor, HNB Garhwal University and eminent scholar gave a brief overview of the need for such a consortium, its goals and proposed objectives. Earlier, a brief background note on the subject had been circulated to the participants (**Annexure - 2**). Dr. Akhilesh Gupta, in his keynote address highlighted the need for upscaling the

scientific outputs in the country through inter-institutional collaborations, sharing financial and human resources, extending research and development infrastructure, and building research and academic institutional clusters.

2. Following the presentations by Prof. Singh and Dr. Akhilesh Gupta, the participants were requested to briefly respond to the proposal of forming such a consortium, its proposed title, goal and objectives. A gist of responses from the participants is given below :

- i. Most of the participants agreed that a consortium for research and academics in Dehradun was very much needed. Many participants stressed that such a consortium should also cater to the needs of students and educational institutions located in the interior areas of Uttarakhand.
- ii. While several participants agreed to the present title (DRAC), others suggested slight modifications viz., Consortium of the Academic and Research, Dehradun (CARD), Doon Research and Academic Consortium, Uttarakhand Research and Academic Consortium, and Platform for Research and Integrated Development of Ecosystems (PRIDE). After detailed discussion, the house was of the opinion that we may stick to the proposed name, i.e., DRAC (Doon or Dehradun) but the scope of the consortium may include institutions in other parts of Uttarakhand as well.
- iii. Though, the vision, goal and objectives of the Consortium may be kept very broad, it should begin with simple activities by capturing on 'low hanging fruits'. It should include all areas of research and education including medical and technology. However, the Himalayan Ecosystem may be chosen as a special key theme for the consortium.
- iv. The Consortium should connect with students (both lower and higher education), and on women professionals.

3. It was decided to bring out the minutes of the meeting within a week. Thereafter, a detailed Concept Note outlining need, approach, vision, implementation strategy, structure for governance, proposed activities of the consortium, etc may be prepared and circulated among the partnering institutions for suggestions. It was also decided to begin the process of enrolling institutions that wish to become members of the consortium. Later on, individuals may also be enrolled as member of proposed DRAC Society.
4. It was proposed to get the Consortium formally launched in the July 2018 for which Hon'ble Union Minister of Science & Technology, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India and Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand may be invited to grace the occasion. In order to operationalise the functioning of the Consortium, the following 'Core Committee' / office bearers were nominated:

Patron : Prof. S.P. Singh, INSA Senior Scientist

Founder President : Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director WII

Vice Presidents : Dr. R. Dobhal (DG, UCOST); Dr. C.S. Nautiyal (VC, Doon University); Dr. L.M.S. Palni (VC, Graphic Era University)

Coordinators : Dr. P.P. Dhyani (VC, SGRR University) & Dr. G.S. Rawat (Dean, WII Dehradun).

It was also decided that the WII will be the Registered Office of the Consortium and the above mentioned office bearers would work out further modalities and governance of the Consortium (Academic, Administrative and Financial), bye laws etc. The above core committee is tentative and may be finalized later after convening a meeting of the core committee. The committee may also identify other members of the consortium depending on their interest and suitability and finalise a governance structure for the consortium. The core committee may also finalise the Byelaws for the registration of DRAC society.

5. Dr. Akhilesh Gupta indicated that DST would consider providing a “Seed fund” for the operationalization of the Consortium. He requested the office bearers to send the detailed proposal to DST after completing necessary formalities for consideration.

6. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair and all the participants by Dr. V.B. Mathur. He said that both the membership and activities of the Consortium would be inclusive and urged the members to provide the benefit of their wisdom and experience in achieving the aims and objectives of the consortium in a time-bound manner.

Glimpses of Event

