

OASTCs OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES

Ocean and Atmospheric Science and Technology Cells

Brief Background

The Ministry of Earth Sciences supports basic and applied research in ocean and atmospheric science & technology in universities through establishment of Ocean and Atmospheric Science and Technology Cells (OASTCs). This includes establishment of locale-specific OASTCs catering to the entire spectrum of ocean-related research, and setting up of Centre of Excellence (CoE) in a particular field of ocean or atmospheric science & technology to pursue mission-mode projects. Criterion for setting up a CoE would be prior experience of work with OASTC or handling projects of the scientific Ministry & core competence in a specialised field.

The Programme

The Ministry through its erstwhile Department of Ocean Development has created an interface with academic institutions/universities at various levels and; (a) Encourages research in newly emerging areas of Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences to generate specialist Manpower; (b) Sets up Centres of Excellence in Ocean and Atmospheric Science & Technology related specialities; (c) Awards fellowships to young scientists, augmenting the manpower resources, assists capacity building and improves the scope for further research in marine sciences; and (d) Provides for creation of a MoES Chair to encourage team-building around an individual who is an authority in specific area of marine sciences.

As part of the national endeavour to involve the diverse talent in a dynamic programme to comprehend the coupled ocean-earth-atmosphere environment, promotion of research and development activities in marine and atmospheric sciences have been encouraged by the constitution of 9 OASTCs in different institutions of the country that take up projects submitted by universities, national laboratories and Indian Institutes of Technology, etc., including private bodies located in their vicinity. R&D projects of relevance are selected by the Ministry after they are scrutinised by experts in the field. Assistance provided includes grants for manpower, purchasing equipment, holding exhibitions, organising seminars, symposia, conferences, workshops, etc., and for bringing out publications/patents.

Proposals in prescribed format are invited by the Management Boards of the OASTCs through advertisements in local papers and can also be submitted via format available on the website <http://dod.nic.in/>. For establishment of CoE or publishing monographs, publications, etc. the Ministry may be contacted while research proposals are to be submitted to the Research Coordinators of OASTCs/CoE.

Implicit in this funding for extramural research is the need for capacity building and creation of effective structures for mutual assistance where needed. Thus capacity building and assistance forms an important facet of the Marine Research and Capacity Building Programme.

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