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*Grants of up to Rs One Crore; winning ideas to be incubated under the aegis of Atal Innovation Mission*

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of the NITI Aayog today announced to launch the Atal New India Challenges, which came into being following Prime Minister's clarion call to bring innovations and technologies relevant to the people.

The launch event saw the presence of Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Shri SS Ahluwalia, Minister of State, Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog and Shri Ramanathan Ramanan, Mission Director, AIM.

Applicants showing capability, intent, and potential to productize technologies will be awarded grants up to Rs. One crore. This grant support will be supplemented by mentoring, handholding, incubating and other support as needed at various stages of commercialisation, while generating wider deployment.

Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog, Dr Rajiv Kumar highlighted the need to ensure inclusive and innovative solutions. He said, "India has accelerated its growth potential by leveraging technology in various spheres. This initiative will focus our efforts towards solving problems in core areas, which would have a direct impact on improving lives of our citizens and will also generate employment. The topics placed in different phases are aligned with India's needs and through the support of innovation, we are ready to make a giant leap towards a New India."

Partnering with the Ministries of Road Transport and Highways, Housing and Urban Affairs, Agriculture and Family Welfare, Drinking Water & Sanitation and the Railway Board, AIM will attempt to harness the potential of India's innovators.

Union Minister, Shri Nitin Gadkari spoke of the need approach policy and economic activity with a scientific outlook. He added that innovative policies will help fulfil the Prime Minister's dream of a New India.

Union Minister of State, Shri SS Ahluwalia, stressed on the need to identify affordable solutions to problems of groundwater recharge and ensuring every citizen has access to safe drinking water.

CEO, NITI Aayog, Shri Amitabh Kant emphasised the need to identify unique technological solutions to problems unique to India. He said, "Bringing more innovations to the service of Indian citizens will require more individuals and entities to innovate for Indian needs, and take innovative products to market through several mechanisms, such as startups, government schemes, or other deployment mechanisms."

He also highlighted the fact that the challenges are being issued after rigorous consultations and discussions with the partner ministries.

Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission, Shri Ramanathan Ramanan, said, “ these innovations will be deployed to make lives of all Indian citizens better. This programme will bring a technological revolution in the lives of the common man, solving India’s technological challenges locally.”

It should be noted that these grants will not be mutually exclusive - multiple grants may be given in a focus area, based on the Selection Committee’s perception of potential. Furthermore, the winning grantees will be supported with mentoring, go-to-market strategies by leading incubators, accelerators and experts, technical support, and other means.

The programme is currently accepting applications at <http://aim.gov.in/atal-new-india-challenge.php> and the last date for applications is June 10, 2018.

Under the Atal New India Challenge, which shall be run in collaboration with five ministries, AIM will invite prospective innovators/MSMEs/start-ups to design market-ready products, using cutting edge technologies or prototypes across 17 identified focus areas, namely,

1. Climate-smart agriculture
2. Fog vision system for road and rail
3. Prevention of Rail failure using emerging technologies
4. Predictive maintenance of Rolling Stock
5. Alternate fuel based transportation
6. Smart Mobility
7. Electric Mobility
8. Safe transport
9. Instant Portable Water Quality Testing
10. Affordable Desalination / Recycling Technology
11. Waste management recycling / reuse
12. Garbage composition devices
13. Quality of compost
14. Decentralized composting
15. Mixing blades for composting
16. Waste in public spaces
17. Dissuading public littering

The programme is open to Indian companies registered under the Companies Act 1956/2013, primarily a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) as defined in the MSMED Act, 2006. It is also open to Start-Ups, as defined by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Government or private R&D organizations (other than a Railway R&D organization), academic institutions, academicians, or even individual innovators are encouraged to apply, provided they partner with entities with appropriate manufacturing capabilities.

Grants shall be awarded in up to 3 tranches within 12 – 18 months, contingent on achieving milestones and up to a total of 50 grants in fiscal year 2018 – 19 may be given out. The grants will not be mutually exclusive - several grants may be given in a focus area.

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