



Ministry of Earth Sciences

Government of India

G20 MoES NEWSLETTER

February 2023

G20- Research and Innovation Initiative Gathering (RIIG) Inception Meeting, Kolkata, India



The Research and Innovation Initiative Gathering (RIIG) inception meeting was held in Kolkata, India, bringing together scientists and administrators from different areas to discuss the RIIG theme for 2023 "Research and Innovation for Equitable Society". The meeting was attended by 36 foreign delegates representing 20 countries and international organizations (Brazil, Indonesia, Italy, Netherlands, Russia, UAE, Argentina, Australia, United Kingdom, United States of America, France, Germany, Turkiye, Canada, European Union, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, International Solar Alliance), as well as about 40 Indian delegates and special invitees from various scientific departments and organizations of the Government of India.



The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Kiran Kumar, Former Secretary, Department of Space and member Space Commission, who emphasized the need to explore how new technologies can be helpful for society with research and innovation bringing new opportunities to every day of the citizen. Dr. S. Chandrasekhar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology (DST), the coordinating Department of RIIG during India's presidency, emphasized on the responsibility of G20 as a group in steering international cooperation in science and technology for driving sustainable transformations for the globe.

The secretaries of the scientific Ministries and Departments (M/D's) who will be hosting the series of RIIG side events which are planned in different cities of India introduced the four priority areas of RIIG – 'Materials for Sustainable Energy; Circular-bio-economy; Eco-Innovations for Energy Transition; and Scientific Challenges and Opportunities towards Achieving a Sustainable Blue Economy'.

Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr. M. Ravichandran, in his address spoke about the scientific challenges and opportunities towards achieving a sustainable blue economy. He touched upon the growing opportunities in ocean sector and the imperativeness of transitioning in to blue economy which leans on achieving the climate, sustainability and economic growth targets simultaneously, while providing 'sustainable alternatives' to the exploitative, brown economy model. He stressed on the need to ensure sustainable and equitable utilization of marine living resources which is underpinned by the 'Science, Technology and Innovation' that are critical enablers of accelerating growth particularly in blue economy sectors. He urged the G20 members to actively collaborate in developing comprehensive Blue Economy strategies while mainstreaming Marine Spatial Planning to identify and resolve conflicts within maritime sector and with the environment. Technological development for sustainable extraction of Deep Sea Resources and knowledge sharing in the segment of Ocean Renewables were identified as an area of priority for not just India but the entire G20 fraternity.

The meeting also highlighted the necessity of partnerships among G20 countries in the areas of energy generation, conversion, and storage, particularly on production of green hydrogen and green ammonia, end-to-end production of energy storage devices, and supply chain management. The importance of circular bio-economy and eco-innovations for energy transition were also discussed.



On the sidelines of the RIIG inception meeting, Indian and foreign delegates visited the Eco Park where the delegates explored the various activities such as boating and spent time exploring the lush gardens and meadows of the park. The replicas of the seven wonders of the world was the highlight of the visit and the traditional welcome and hospitality of Kolkata was appreciated by the delegates.

Overall, the G20-RIIG inception meeting was a constructive beginning towards achieving collaboration and active engagement between the partner countries on the proposed themes of RIIG. The meeting also emphasized the need for global partnerships, joint research programs, and a policy framework in tackling global environmental challenges and moving towards a sustainable future.

First Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) Meeting, Bengaluru



The First G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) meeting held at Bengaluru from 09th- 11th February 2023 concluded on a positive note, with all G20 countries committing to constructively work towards the objective of the priority areas, namely, Arresting Land Degradation; Accelerating Ecosystem Restoration and Enriching Biodiversity; Promoting a Sustainable and Climate Resilient Blue Economy; and Encouraging Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy

The meeting was led by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC). The first day began with a side event that focused on sharing best practices for ecosystem restoration of the regions impacted by forest fire and mining. This was followed by a visit to the Bannerghatta National Park and Kalkere Arboretum to showcase the forest ecosystems of Karnataka, ecosystem restoration and ecotourism models, as well as wildlife protection.



On the second day, Union Minister Shri Hardeep Puri delivered the inaugural address. Discussions focused on restoring land-based ecosystems and improving the Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as creating circular economies in sectors like steel and bio-waste. Delegates contributed actively and the proposed principles for LiFE and the Green Development Pact was discussed. A cultural event showcasing Karnataka's heritage in the evening was hugely appreciated by the delegations.

The third and last day commenced with the session focusing on the theme of 'Sustainable and Climate Resilient Blue Economy'. The Oceans and Blue Economy discussions covered a range of issues including marine litter and touched upon the sub-themes of conservation and enhancement of coastal and marine ecosystems and marine spatial planning, over three meetings and one side event. There was a notable display of enthusiasm in the discussions, as delegates from various nations expressed their support for endeavors towards sustainable use of oceanic resources, mitigating the adverse effects of pollution and littering, as well as safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity. The Indian Presidency announced a coordinated beach cleaning event to be conducted on 21st of May 2023 on the side-lines of the 'Ocean 20' dialogue to emphasize on the importance of action on marine litter and significance of community participation.

The Presidency also presented a template for a technical report on 'Accelerating the transition to Sustainable & Climate Resilient Blue Economy'. It was informed that India's Presidency will also release the 5th report on marine plastic litter in collaboration with Japan. These concrete measures will help build resilience to climate impacts, maintain carbon sequestration potential, and support coastal communities.



The first meeting of the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) was a constructive beginning towards achieving the proposed outcomes envisioned under the ECSWG. The delegates agreed to work together and engage constructively to further the development of positive, tangible actions towards achieving these targets. The deliberations held during the current meeting will be advanced further during the forthcoming 2nd ECSWG meeting, slated to take place from 27th to 29th March 2023 in Gandhinagar.