

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Hub Governing Body (HGB), IIITB COMET Foundation

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Time: 1400 hrs. to 1530 hrs.

### Members present:

1. Prof Debabrata Das: Chairman
2. Prof Uday B Desai
3. Dr Ekta Kapoor
4. Dr Kumar Sivarajan
5. Mr. Samir Kumar
6. Prof Kiran Kuchi
7. Prof R Chandrashekar
8. Prof Jyotsna Bapat
9. Dr Milind Gandhe: CEO and Member Secretary
10. Dr J B V Reddy: NM-ICPS, DST, Invitee
11. Dr Anurag Mishra: NM-ICPS, DST, Invitee
12. Prof Srinath Srinivasa: Member of the Board of Directors, IIITB COMET Foundation, Invitee
13. Mr S Piramanayagam: CFO, IIIT Bangalore, Invitee
14. Mr Vighnesh Hegde, Manager, Finance IIIT Bangalore, Invitee

1. The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting.
2. The CEO updated on the activities of the Hub during the period March 2022 till date.
3. Dr Ekta Kapoor informed the HGB that DST had cleared the funding and encouraged the TIH to ensure expenditure of funds granted by September 2022.
4. Prof Desai recommended that the TIH should explore suitable internal candidates working in the area of Advanced Communication Systems from within IIIT Bangalore for possible appointment as Chair Professors. He also recommended the TIH could explore the possibility of hiring junior faculty as Assistant or Associate Chair Professor.
5. The committee then discussed the TIH's plan for Entrepreneurship development. Prof Desai felt that hackathons are very common and do not give results commensurate to the efforts. He suggested the TIH to consider other mechanisms such as Grand Challenges to encourage Entrepreneurship. Dr Kumar suggested the TIH to invite applications from start-ups and support start-ups through equity investments.
6. The HGB discussed Selection of Proposals received under Category 1 ("Research and Development in the area of Reconfigurable Intelligent Surfaces (RIS)") in response to the CFP that the Hub had published on its website and national newspaper. The Hub had received three proposals under this category as follows:
  - a. Smart Radio Environments: Implementation and Deployment for Targeted Use-Cases by Dr. Arzad Alam Kherani, Dr. Nikhil Chander, Dr Sreejith T V (IIT Bhilai), Dr. Brijesh Lall (IIT Delhi), Prof Vimal Bhatia (IIT Indore), Prof Rajarshi Mahapatra (IIIT Naya Raipur), Dr. Soumava Mukherjee (IIT Jodhpur), Dr. Ravi Panwar (IIITDM, Jabalpur), Dr Priyanka Das, Dr Amrita Mishra (IIIT Bangalore), Dr. Samrat Mukhopadhyay (IIT Dhanbad) and Dr. Sanjeev Sharma (IIT Varanasi).

- b. RIS based Intelligent Sensor enabled Communication Network for an Industry 4.0 Cyber Physical Systems by Dr. Upama Rajan M.N. and Dr. Michael George (Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology, Kottayam, Kerala)
  - c. Design and Development of New Prototype for RIS-aided Communication by Dr. Ekant Sharma, Dr. Karun Rawat, Dr. Meenakshi Rawat (IIT Roorkee), Dr. Prem Singh, Prof. Jyotsna Bapat (IIIT Bangalore), Dr. Preetam Kumar and Dr. Sudhir Kamat (IIT Patna)
- 7. The CEO thanked Dr. Praful Deolal Mankar (IIIT Hyderabad), Prof. Neelesh Mehta (IISc Bangalore), Dr. Vinosh Babu (Qualcomm) and Dr. Nadeem Akhtar (Arista Networks) for their support to the Hub in reviewing the above proposals received.
- 8. The HGB went through the comments of the reviewers. Based on the reviewers' comments, the HGB decided to **fund the following two proposals**:
  - a. Smart Radio Environments: Implementation and Deployment for Targeted Use-Cases by Dr. Arzad Alam Kherani, Dr. Nikhil Chander, Dr Sreejith T V (IIT Bhilai), Dr. Brijesh Lall (IIT Delhi), Prof Vimal Bhatia (IIT Indore), Prof Rajarshi Mahapatra (IIIT Naya Raipur), Dr. Soumava Mukherjee (IIT Jodhpur), Dr. Ravi Panwar (IIITDM, Jabalpur), Dr Priyanka Das, Dr Amrita Mishra (IIIT Bangalore), Dr. Samrat Mukhopadhyay (IIT Dhanbad) and Dr. Sanjeev Sharma (IIT Varanasi) for a total consideration of Rs. 1124.28 lakhs (Rs. Eleven Crores Twenty-Four lakhs and Twenty-Eight Thousand only) over 4 years.
  - b. Design and Development of New Prototype for RIS-aided Communication by Dr. Ekant Sharma, Dr. Karun Rawat, Dr. Meenakshi Rawat (IIT Roorkee), Dr. Prem Singh, Prof. Jyotsna Bapat (IIIT Bangalore), Dr. Preetam Kumar and Dr. Sudhir Kamat (IIT Patna) for a total consideration of Rs. 187.82 lakhs (Rs. One Crore Eighty-Seven lakhs and Eighty-Two Thousand only) over 3 years.
- 9. The HGB was of the view that we should not lower standards while selecting projects to fund. **Hence the following project was not approved for funding.** Dr Kumar recommended that the proposing team could be mentored and encouraged to submit a new proposal, which could then be examined on its merits.
  - a. RIS based Intelligent Sensor enabled Communication Network for an Industry 4.0 Cyber Physical Systems by Dr. Upama Rajan M.N. and Dr. Michael George (Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology, Kottayam, Kerala)
- 10. The HGB then had a discussion on project tracking and monitoring.
  - a. Mr. Samir suggested that the TIH should form a Project Monitoring and Review Committee (PMRC) to monitor the progress of the respective projects.
  - b. The HGB recommended that the TIH should ask for quarterly financial reports and six-monthly technical reports from the PIs of the projects it has funded.
  - c. Mr. Samir and Dr Kumar encouraged the CEO and the CFO to do a financial due diligence on the expenses of the funded projects.
  - d. Dr Kumar suggested that the CEO should study the review processes of NSF and other international and national funding agencies and benchmark our processes against best-in-class practices.