

F. No. 16-56/2009-DL
Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Higher Education

New Delhi, the 28th May, 2009

Subject: Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Empowered Committee of Experts (Project Approval Board) of the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) - regarding.

A copy of the Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Empowered Committee of Experts (Project Approval Board) of the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (ICT), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, held on 21st, May, 2009 at 3.30 p.m. under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, in Conference Room No.112-C Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi is sent herewith for information and necessary action.



(Dr. D.K. Paliwal)
Deputy Educational Adviser (DL)
Tele: 23385489

Encl: As above.

All members of the Project Approval Board of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) [As per list enclosed].

Copy, along with a copy of Minutes, to: Sr. PPS to Secretary (HE) & Chairperson, PAB and JS(DL)/Member Secretary, PAB - for information.

Copy, along with a copy of Minutes, also to:

1. Shri Amitabh Bhattacharya,
Principal Adviser (Education),
Planning Commission,
New Delhi.

(Fax No.23096623)

2. Shri Furqan Qamar,
Adviser (Education),
Planning Commission,
New Delhi. **(Fax No.23096548)**

3. Shri R. Chandrashekhar,
Special Secretary,
Department of Information Technology,
Electronics Niketan,
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi **(Fax No.24363079)**

4. Shri N. Ravi Shanker,
Joint Secretary,
Department of Information Technology,
Electronics Niketan,
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi. **(Fax No.24363099)**

5. Shri Subodh Kumar,
Additional Secretary,
Department of Telecommunications,
Sanchar Bhawan,
New Delhi. **(Fax No.23350495)**

6. Prof. Ajay Chakraborty,
Dean (CE),
Indian Institute of Technology,
Kharagpur. **(Fax No.91-3222-82000)**

7. Shri R.K. Shevgaonkar,
Dy. Director,
Indian Institute of Technology,
Bombay. **(FaxNo.91-22-5723546)**

8. Prof. K. Mangala Sunder,
Professor, Chemistry and
NPTEL Coordinator,
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras,
Chennai **(Fax No.91-44-225780)**

9. Shri A. Bhaskaranarayana,
Scientific Secretary,
Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO),
Antariksh Bhawan,
New BEL Road,
Bangalore - 560094. **(FAX No.080-23415229)**

10. Ms. Shakila Shamsu,
Joint Adviser (Edn.),
Planning Commission,
Yojana Bhawan, New Delhi.

11. Shri Dr. C. Murali Krishan Kumar,
Planning Commission,
Yojna Bhawan, New Delhi

- ✓ 12. Shri Mithun Dutta,
System Administrator,
E-Gyankosh,
Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi. **He is requested to upload the
Minutes sent herewith on the SAKSHAT Portal immediately.**

Project Approval Board of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

List of Members

1. Secretary,
Department of Higher Education,
Chairperson
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi. Chairperson
2. Additional Secretary, & Financial Adviser,
Department of Higher Education.
Ministry of Human Resource Development,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
3. Secretary,
Planning Commission
Yojana Bhawan,
New Delhi. Fax No : 23096575)
4. Secretary,
Department of Telecommunications
Sanchar Bhawan,
New Delhi. (Fax No.23711514)
5. Secretary,
Department of Information Technology
Ministry of Communication and Information Technology,
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi. (Fax No.24363134)
6. Secretary,
Department of Space,
Lok Nayak Bhawan,
New Delhi. (Fax No. 080-2345328)
7. Dr. A. Mukhopadhyay
Adviser/Scientist 'G', SERC Division,
M/o Science & Technology, D/o Science & Technology,
Technology Bhawan,
New Delhi - 110 016. (Fax No.26602193)

8. Director,
Indian Institute of Technology,
Powai
Mumbai-400076 (Fax No. 91-22-25723546)
9. Director,
Indian Institute of Technology,
Roorkee-247667
Uttrakhand) (Fax No.91-1332-273560)
10. Director,
Indian Institute of Technology,
North Guwahati (Fax No.91-361-2690762)
Guwahati-781039(Assam) (Fax No.91-361-2692321)
11. Director,
Indian Institute of Technology,
P O Kharagpur-721302 (Fax No.91-3222-282000)
12. Director,
Indian Institute of Technology,
PO IIT,
Chennai -600036 (Fax No.91-44-22578003)
13. Director,
Indian Institute of Technology (Fax No.91-512-2597790)
Kanpur-208016 (U.P) (Fax No.91-512-2590260)
14. Director,
Indian Institute of Science,
Bangalore-560 012
Karnataka (Fax No.91-80-23600936)
15. Director,
Indian Institute of Technology,
Hauz Khas,
New Delhi-110 016 (Fax No.91-11-26582659)
16. Prof. V.N. Rajashekhar Pillai,
Vice-Chancellor,
Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU),
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi
17. Prof. Pramod Tandon,
Vice-Chancellor,
North Eastern Hill University (NEHU),
Shillong

18. Prof. H.P. Kincha,
Vice-Chancellor,
Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belgaum
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MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE PROJECT APPROVAL BOARD (PAB) OF THE NATIONAL MISSION ON EDUCATION THROUGH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) HELD ON 21ST MAY, 2009 AT 3.30 P.M IN CONFERENCE ROOM NO.112-C WING, SHASTRI BHAVAN, NEW DELHI UNDER THE CHAIRPERSON OF SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The fifth meeting of the Project Approval Board (PAB) of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was held at 3.30 P.M on 21st May, 2009 in Conference Room No. 112-C Wing Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, Department of Higher Education.

2. The list of Participants is at Annexure-I.

3. Initiating the discussions, Secy(HE) and Chairman, PAB emphasized the urgency of moving fast for the development of ultra low cost access cum computing device, as envisaged under the Mission. He also referred to the canard being spread in the international media that India had debunked \$10 laptop project and placed order on OLPC to supply 2,50,000 machines. Advisor, Planning Commission, Prof. Furkan Qamar mentioned that the said news item had drawn attention of Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and after ascertaining from various concerned Ministries, he had just submitted a note that there was no truth in the report. JS(DL) corrected him by saying that there was no truth in the report so far as placing any order or debunking the efforts for \$10 laptop were concerned, but it was a fact that concerted efforts were on in the MHRD under the Mission to realize this dream. Secretary (HE) desired that in order to lay down minimum technical requirements for the ultra low cost access cum computing device and parameters for acceptance of such devices as also to guide the efforts of inviting Expression of Interest from interested organizations / firms / institutions, an expert committee should be constituted and for this purpose he invited suggestions regarding the names of the experts. However, Adviser, Planning Commission wanted this suggestion to be deferred to the

next PAB meeting wherein a suitable background note should be circulated on this issue. Even though many members of PAB were inclined to constitute the expert committee which could be expanded later, on the insistence of Advisor, Planning Commission, the issue of constitution of the committee was deferred to the next meeting of the PAB. Thereafter, agenda items were taken up for discussion.

Item No.1: Minutes of the fourth meeting of Project Approval Board held on 20.4.2009 were confirmed. Representative of Planning Commission, Ms. Shakiia Shamshu, Joint Adviser, Planning Commission, however, suggested that the Standing Committee may get and recommend a good proposal for the physically challenged persons for consideration of PAB. PAB accepted the suggestion and advised Convener, Standing Committee to take necessary action. PAB also noted the Action Taken as indicated in Annexure II.

Broad discussions were held on the observations of the 4th PAB meeting. It was noted that the 4th Standing Committee meeting minutes recommending the approval of 4 projects was received by the PAB members following suggestion in the previous PAB. The standing committee had noted that its members totaling 30 or more had been chosen from different disciplines and domains contrary to the impression that the Standing Committee had less representation from outside of IITs. It was pointed out only 8 out of 28 members were from of IITs and the Standing Committee has representations from central universities, state universities, reputed private institution, Government agencies and industry as was approved by the PAB vide its order no 16-24/2009-DL dated 19th March, New Delhi issued by the Department of Higher Education, Distance Learning division. These members come from all specialties such as Economics, Visual Communication, Nuclear Physics, Library Education, Multimedia and representation from a PSU (Bharat Electronics Limited) apart from Science and Engineering. Also the standing committee has, in view of time- bound nature of the National Mission and the availability of cross-expertise already demonstrated in the country by different institutions, chose to request all its

members to review projects and discuss them in the SC meeting on the basis of 9 parameters, also discussed at length by PAB. In respect of the planning commission representative's suggestion that the project should highlight its importance, the chairman PAB had desired the following 3 criteria namely

- 1) time frame of completion of the project
- 2) outcome of the project
- 3) overall benefit which will accrue to the Mission.

The Standing Committee [SC] had itself proposed the following 9 criteria for recommending any project;

- 1) Feasibility of the proposed activity.
- 2) Uniqueness/novelty/innovation of the proposal.
- 3) Scope of inter institute collaboration and development.
- 4) The organization of the programme to be carried out
- 5) The details of the outline work as outlined by the Principal Investigator.
- 6) Sufficiency of funds as requested by the PI.
- 7) Social impact/reach/spread of the outcomes of the proposal.
- 8) Contribution of the proposal to minimizing the digital divide in our country.
- 9) Any other matter which is likely to affect the execution of the project.

Hence the SC had in its wisdom exercised its due diligence in the selection of projects in the interim period between March 3, 2009 (1st PAB meeting) and April 20, 2009 (4th PAB meeting). In this context, Planning Commission representative Mrs Shakila Shamsu had earlier proposed two additional experts to be added to the SC and they have also been added and orders have been communicated. Despite the fact that the PAB had earlier empowered the standing committee (vide Agenda No.4, minutes of the 2nd meeting of the PAB 20th March) to examine and scrutinize all proposals received for financial assistance/support under the Mission, and make its recommendations based on the deliberations and opinions expressed by the co-opted domain experts, the standing committee had chosen to recommend

the proposals for pilot schemes only. It was observed by the members of the Standing Committee who were present in the PAB that it is not desirable for the mission with a finite time frame for execution of the project to benefit all section of the society, to wait indefinitely for all domain experts to submit their full review taking their own time before any formal sanction of the proposals.

It was also mentioned by the Mission Director that the Standing Committee in its 5th meeting held on May 16th and May 21st (in parts)(instead of May 13th and 14th as was circulated by the Ministry earlier) had given its observation on all the 164 projects in its 4th meeting on 20th April. The Standing Committee had recommended that pilot projects be sanctioned by PAB on four projects. These four project proposals have been mentioned at Item No.3 of the agenda of the 5th meeting of the PAB. The Mission Director requested permission by the Chairman and the PAB to consider the sanction. However, with a view to give more time to the PAB members to study and give their comments, it was decided to consider it in the next PAB meeting.

Item No.2: Shri Prem Kalra, Convener, Due Diligence Committee circulated a Discussion Note for due diligence in the PAB meeting. Prof. S.V. Raghavan, Professor, IIT, Madras also made a brief presentation before the PAB, highlighting the work so far done by the Due Diligence Committee. Dr. Furqan Qamar, Adviser (Education), Planning Commission suggested to undertake a baseline survey of the colleges especially other than those which appear in the list of 6000 colleges recognized by UGC and 1000 polytechnics to assess their suitability for providing them connectivity vis-à-vis their need and present level of capability. He further suggested that critical information regarding size, location of the colleges, etc. may be obtained from the Education Secretaries of States/UTs. After some deliberations on the matter, it was decided by PAB that members of PAB may go through the Discussion Note circulated in the meeting and the same shall be discussed in the next meeting of the PAB scheduled for 29.05.2009.

Item No.3: Dr. Prem Kalra, Convener, Standing Committee circulated Minutes of the 5th Standing Committee meeting held on 16.5.2009 and 21.5.2009, including recommendations of the Standing Committee. Dr. Kalra apprised the PAB of the methodology adopted by the Standing Committee to examine the proposals. Director (Finance), Department of Higher Education opined that recommendations of the Standing Committee are sketchy and suggested that these should contain sufficient details and reasoning. Prof. R.K. Shevgaonkar from IIT, Bombay suggested that the Standing Committee while making their recommendations in respect of any proposal should invariably submit the review/appraisal of the proposal for consideration of PAB.

Item No.4: Standing Committee report on the status of all 160 proposals was circulated. The Standing Committee recommendations included a set of norms for payment of honorarium to the faculty members/experts. Regarding grant of honorarium, Advisor, Science & Technology Dr. Mukhopadhyay opposed grant of honorarium to Govt Servants for work done for the Mission. He was of the opinion that honorarium was not required for Faculty members of Govt. Institutions. After intense deliberations, the Standing Committee's recommendations for grant of honorarium to all those who contribute to content development was approved so as to get the IPR over the contributions made by the experts and to incentivise the activity which is expected to grow into a national movement. It was decided that the honorarium in no case shall exceed 10% of the cost of the project and no one individual would get more than 20% of his or her annual salary as honorarium for the whole year. This was, however, subject to provisions made under General Financial Rules.

Item No.5: PAB considered the concerns expressed by AS&FA (HRD). It was explained by Prof. Kalra, Convener of the standing Committee that the standing Committee was broad based and did not have representation from IITs alone. IITs were submitting projects not for teaching their own students but for the rest of the Country. As a standard practice, when ever the project

submitted by an Institution was being considered, the Standing Committee members from that Institute abstained. The aim is not to exclude all those institutions which are represented on the Standing Committee or the PAB, because in that case, all the IITs and other premier institutions would have to be debarred from submitting project proposals and other institutions would have to do the content generation activities without the support from the premier institutions and quality of final product could be a casualty. It was felt that withdrawal of members of the Standing Committee from the deliberations when a project concerning their institute was being considered, was a good practice and would be adequate to demonstrate transparency and fair play and that there was no conflict of interest.

Prof. Kalra pointed out that there was no laxity on the part of the Standing Committee in ascertaining reasonableness of cost estimates and duration of projects, as the members of the Standing Committee were highly reputed experts in their own fields and had successfully carried out various projects sanctioned by DIT / DST etc. earlier. He mentioned that opinion of various domain experts had also been obtained on the project proposals and it was due to paucity of time that the Standing Committee recorded its minutes with brevity. He lamented that the integrity of the Standing Committee members / experts appeared to have been doubted in the letter.

It was pointed out that members of the Standing Committee were in regular touch with each other through e-mails even if some of them could not make it convenient to attend the Standing Committee meetings in person.

It was pointed out that all the e-mail exchanges as well as deliberations were available and many of them had also been hosted on the Sakshat portal for any one to see. However, as a measure of abundant caution and heightened levels of transparency, they would be made available to all the members of the PAB in near future.

Member Secretary, PAB pointed out that the annexure to the letter under consideration had wrong totals which seemed to question the wisdom of the PAB itself that PAB had sanctioned higher amounts than what had been recommended by the Standing Committee. AS & FA (HRD) said that the totals may be wrong but the project wise details showed the correct position. A perusal of the project wise list established that PAB, in fact, had sanctioned lesser amounts for the projects than what had been recommended by the Standing Committee.

Chairman, PAB said that it was the duty of IFD to keep questioning the procedures and no offence was meant to anyone. He mentioned that everyone connected with the Mission was striving for highest levels of excellence and transparency and all of us should keep on imbibing good practices where ever we come across them.

Director, IIT Delhi drew the attention of the house regarding thin attendance of Directors of IITs and other members and felt that this might have been due to short notice period for the PAB meetings. Member Secretary, PAB informed him that the Standing Committee had deliberated about a similar issue and decided to fix 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month as its meeting date so that the members could plan their engagements accordingly. Secretary (HE) and Chairman, PAB, after consultation with the PAB members decided that normally, PAB meeting would be held on the 4th Friday of every month and expected that all the members would find it convenient to attend the meetings regularly.

Adviser, Planning Commission re-iterated the need for a base line survey of all the educational institutions in the country which would help us in providing connectivity also. The suggestion was welcomed. The Standing Committee should be looking into organizing this activity by inviting suitable projects from experts in this area.

Advisor, Planning Commission suggested that fund earmarking for e-content generation in various disciplines should be in the proportion of the student population in that discipline. This suggestion was opposed by various members who indicated that e-content generation activity was number neutral. Once an e-content got generated, it could serve any number of students. Member Secretary, PAB pointed out that such a distribution was not needed as the Mission envisaged generation of e-content for all disciplines, irrespective of the number of students in that discipline. Chairman, PAB mentioned that some disciplines would be more amenable to ICT based delivery mechanism and e-content generation in some disciplines could be more resource intensive. After deliberations, the PAB did not agree to this suggestion. However, it was resolved that efforts would be made to generate e-content for all disciplines to the extent required.

Advisor, Planning Commission suggested that there should be three Standing Committees – one each for three distinct types of content generation projects viz., (i) research projects on hardware / devices, (ii) research projects in software / authoring tools, and (iii) e-content development. The Chairman, PAB mentioned that the very purpose of having a Standing Committee was to ensure uniformity in considering projects for various activities of the Mission and to take a holistic view from the Mission perspective, as various domain experts could adopt different norms for the projects in those domains. This level playing field could be disturbed by having three Standing Committees. Moreover, the broad based Standing Committee, with the inputs from the domain experts was capable enough to maintain high standards in selection of projects. Many members also felt that it would not be in the interest of the Mission to have regimentation among various categories of projects. The PAB did not agree to this suggestion.

Advisor, Planning Commission suggested earmarking of resources for the three distinct sets of projects indicated by him earlier and also suggested that the discipline of Social Sciences may also be given priority, while considering proposals for e-content. It was felt that the Mission Document

has already laid down resource requirements for each type of project activity and its yearly phasing. It would not be possible to alter this allocation of resources. However, within the limits fixed for each component of the Mission, different sub-components could be allocated resources, but that would require adequate number of project proposals in those areas. PAB was informed by the Convener, standing Committee that instead of waiting for good project proposals in a given area, the Standing Committee had started requesting eminent experts in those areas to jointly submit project proposals. As the expert community in the country would find it exciting to work on these projects, resource allocation requirements would become more clear. The Action Research Mode of implementation of the Mission envisages that we keep following a learning curve and it is through the experts in those areas that the sub-components of the Mission would find the most optimum direction.

Adviser, Planning Commission emphasized the need for evolution of a comprehensive set of norms for selection, monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of the projects sanctioned under this Mission by drawing on similar norms prevalent in other Ministries and wanted that till such time these norms got evolved, no project should be sanctioned. While the PAB agreed, in the interest of heightened levels of transparency, to have a Committee of representatives of various Ministries and experts to work out the comprehensive norms within two weeks, the suggestion not to sanction further projects was not agreed to.

After deliberating the matter, PAB, accepting the points raised by Adviser (Education), Planning Commission and decided to set up a Committee, comprising (i) Dr. Furqan Qamar, Adviser, Planning Commission as Convener (ii) Shri A. Mukhopadhyay, Adviser, DST (iii) Prof. R.K. Shivgaonkar, IIT, Bombay (iv) Prof. Surendra Prasad, Director, IIT, Delhi or his nominee (v) Prof. Z. H. Khan, Jamia Milia Islamia (vi) Prof. Karmeshu, JNU (vii) Dr. Pradeep Kaul, CEC and (viii) Shri N. Ravi Shankar, Joint Secretary, DIT and (ix) Shri N.K. Sinha, JS, Department of Higher Education

or his nominee, to prepare comprehensive guidelines for assessment of projects submitted by various applicant(s)/agencies/institutions etc. for assistance under the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology. The Committee may also devise parameters for monitoring the progress of the implementation of approved projects and evolve yardsticks and guidelines for evaluating the outcome and output of the sanctioned projects, being implemented. The Committee may complete its task within two weeks and submit the same to the PAB for its consideration. It was also decided that Dr. Furqan Qamar, Adviser (Education), Planning Commission shall be the Convener of the Committee and shall call the first meeting of the Committee to decide the overall scope of the Committee so that the project assessment, monitoring and outcome evaluation guidelines got prepared within the next 2 weeks.

Summing up the discussion, Chairperson, PAB said that suggestions of the members are welcome and the steps needed for further improvements in carrying forward the Mission activities must be taken.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

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List of Participants

1. Secretary,
Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Human Resource Development
New Delhi (in Chair)
2. Shri S.K. Ray,
Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser,
Ministry of Human Resource Development
New Delhi
3. Shri S. Mohan,
Director (Finance),
Ministry of Human Resource Development,
New Delhi
4. Dr. Furqan Qamar,
Adviser (Education),
Planning Commission, New Delhi
5. Ms. Shakila Shamsu,
Joint Adviser (Edn),
Planning Commission, New Delhi
6. Shri N. Ravi Shanker,
Joint Secretary,
Department of Information Technology,
New Delhi.
7. Dr. C. Murali Krishan Kumar,
Planning Commission,
Yojna Bhawan, New Delhi
8. Prof. S. Prasad,
Director,
Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi
9. Dr. Prem K. Kalra,
Professor,
Indian Institute of Technology,
Kanpur
10. Shri S.C. Saxena,
Director,
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

11. Dr. A. Mukhopadhyay,
Adviser, Department of Science & Technology,
New Delhi
12. Prof. S.V. Raghavan,
Professor, IIT, Madras,
Chennai
13. Prof. K. Mangala Sunder,
Professor, Chemistry and
NPTEL Coordinator,
Indian Institute of Technology,
Madras, Chennai.
14. Prof. R.K. Shevgaonkar,
Dy. Director, EE Department,
IIT, Bombay
15. Shri Raghu Raman,
Amrita University
16. Dr. B.K. Murthy,
Director, (SCF),
Department of IT, New Delhi
17. Shri N.K. Sinha,
Joint Secretary (DL) and
Member Secretary, PAB,
Department of Higher Education,
Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi
18. Dr. D.K. Paiwal,
Deputy Educational Adviser (DL),
Department of Higher Education, MHRD, New Delhi
19. Shri Harvinder Singh,
Deputy Secretary (PAE),
Department of Higher Education, MHRD, New Delhi
20. Shri Raj Kumar,
Under Secretary (DL),
Department of Higher Education, MHRD, New Delhi