



Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser
to the Government of India



Linking Researchers and Resources

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Users/Researchers: I-STEM Portal

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1. Introduction, Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives

About I-STEM

The Indian Science, Technology, and Engineering facilities Map (I-STEM) is an interactive web portal designed to accelerate scientific progress in India. This initiative, conceived and supported by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, creates a centralized platform for sharing publicly funded R&D equipment and facilities across various institutions throughout the country.

Vision

To establish India as a global leader in equitable scientific innovation by democratizing access to advanced research infrastructure and fostering a dynamic R&D ecosystem that seamlessly connects academia, industry, and grassroots innovators.

Mission

To transform India's scientific landscape through a unified digital platform that promotes transparency, inclusivity, and accountability while ensuring the optimal utilization of publicly funded research facilities—driving self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat) and strengthening India's global innovation footprint.

Strategic Objectives

1. Universal Access & Resource Optimization
 - Double the number of publicly funded R&D equipment listed on I-STEM by 2026.
 - Ensure at least one functional research facility within 250 km in 100+ districts by 2026.
2. Accountability-Driven Excellence
 - Maintain 80%+ booking completion rates.
 - Ensure response times under 48 hours for Gold-tier institutions by 2026.
3. Industry-Startup Empowerment
 - Allocate at least 30% of lab time to external users (startups/MSMEs).
 - Double industry participation in bookings by 2026.
4. User-Centric Digital Transformation
 - Achieve 95% user satisfaction through seamless booking workflows and dedicated support.

2. User Registration

Public Users/ Researchers can register on the portal and request to book any listed equipment for their R&D work. After the relevant Operator approves the booking request, the user can contact the Operator for payment and invoicing.

Steps to register as a user on the I-STEM portal:

Steps: Visit I-STEM portal ---> Register ---> Researcher/User Registration ---> Fill the User Registration Form ---> Provide Captcha ---> Submit

Detailed Procedure:

- Visit the I-STEM portal at www.istem.gov.in.
- Click the **Register** link at the top right of the homepage.
- On the Register page, click the **Researcher/User Registration** link.
- Fill in all mandatory fields (marked with *).
- Validate your Email ID and Mobile Number using the OTPs sent.
- Under **Academic Information**, choose your User Type and Institution. If institution is not listed, select 'Other'.
- Provide Research Area details.
- Enter the CAPTCHA (case-sensitive) and click **Submit**.

Note: After registration, the user will receive login credentials by email once the I-STEM Nodal Centre activates the account. This process usually takes one working day. Only after activation, user can log in to the I-STEM portal and book equipment slots for their R&D work.

3. Login as a User

Only registered users whose accounts are activated by the I-STEM Nodal Centre can log in to the I-STEM portal.

Steps to login as a user on the I-STEM portal:

Steps: Visit I-STEM portal ---> Login ---> **Provide Login Credentials and Captcha / Registered Mobile Number and OTP** ---> Login

Detailed Procedure:

- Visit the I-STEM portal www.istem.gov.in.
- Click on the **Login** link which is available at top right of the homepage.
- User may login by using **Login Credentials** or **Mobile Number and OTP**.
- In case of login using login credentials, Captcha value should be entered in the respective fields. Please note Username is not case sensitive, but Password and Captcha are case sensitive.
- Click **Login** button.

4. Equipment Search and Equipment Slot Booking

i. User Prerequisites

- Only registered users are allowed to book the equipment slot.
- Ensure the user's profile is completed and user's account is activated by the I-STEM Nodal Centre.

ii. Equipment Search

- Equipment may be searched with/without Log in to the I-STEM portal. But, to book the equipment slot one has to login as a user.
- Log in as a user to the I-STEM portal.
- Enter the Equipment Name or its approved abbreviation (e.g., AFM) in the **Search Equipment** field located at the top left of the homepage.
- Users can use the **Advanced Search** option to refine their search results.
- Enter the Captcha; it is case sensitive.
- The search results will appear on the left side, showing the Equipment Name, Host Institute Name, and Aerial Distance (if the user's location is enabled).
- The search results will also appear on the map with location markers.

iii. Reviewing Searched Equipment Details

- After searching, click the **Equipment Name** shown in the search results.
- The Equipment Details page will display the equipment status (Up/Down).
 - a. A green bar means the equipment is Up and available for booking.
 - b. A red bar means the equipment is Down and not available for booking.
- Click **View More** on the right side under Equipment Details to open the Equipment Info page.
- Select the usage rate for the required analysis type, and then click the **Equipment Reservation** button. Ensure your User Type is updated in your profile.
- Read the Booking Terms and Conditions carefully, acknowledge the statement, and click Submit to complete your booking request.

iv. Equipment Information and Post User Query

- If clarification is needed before using the equipment, the user can use the **Post User Query** option.
- If available, click the **Download CSRF** button to download the **Customized Service Request Form (CSRF)**.
- Fill out the CSRF form completely, as it will need to be uploaded later during the booking process.
- The **Download CSRF** button appears only if the operator has uploaded a CSRF document for that equipment.
- Click the **Next** button to proceed.

v. Booking Calendar

- In the Booking Calendar, click on a date.
- After selecting a date, view Lab Facility Timing, Total Working Hours, Booked Hours, Pending Requests, Blocked Hours, and Available Hours.
- Click **Next** button.

vi. Booking Details

- Fill in **Remarks**.
- Select **Preferred Date and Time**.
- Enter **Number of Hours Required** (tentative).
- Choose **Service Type** from the dropdown.
- Click **Next** button.

vii. Service Request Form

- Provide details like Job/Project Title, Hours Required, Nature of Samples, Technical Information, etc.
- Upload reference papers, CSRF (if any) or other documents using the Choose Files button.
- For extra facilities, click Yes. Any institute provided samples (consumables, accessories, etc.) will be displayed here.
- Fill in Current Billing Information carefully, as it cannot be changed later; it will help institution custodian for the invoice generation.
- Click **Next** button.

viii. Equipment and Booking Information

- Check the **Equipment and Booking Information** section.
- Click the **Book Now** button.

Note: After booking, a unique 10-digit Facility Booking Record (FBR) number is generated. This number is sent to the user and operators via email and also as a text message to the user's registered mobile number. Initially, the FBR status will be Pending.

5. Facility Booking Record (FBR) Workflow

The **Facility Booking Record (FBR)** is a unique 10-digit number generated when a user places an equipment slot booking request.

Once generated, the FBR will be in Pending status, and an email notification will be sent to the concerned institution custodian(s), including the Operator, as well as the user. The user will also receive an SMS on the registered Mobile Number.

The FBR can be used to track the current status of the booking request, which may include statuses such as **Pending, Slot Allocated, Executed, Rejected** or **Cancelled**.

Whenever the FBR status changes, email notifications are sent to the concerned custodians and the user, and the user also receives the update via SMS on the registered Mobile Number.

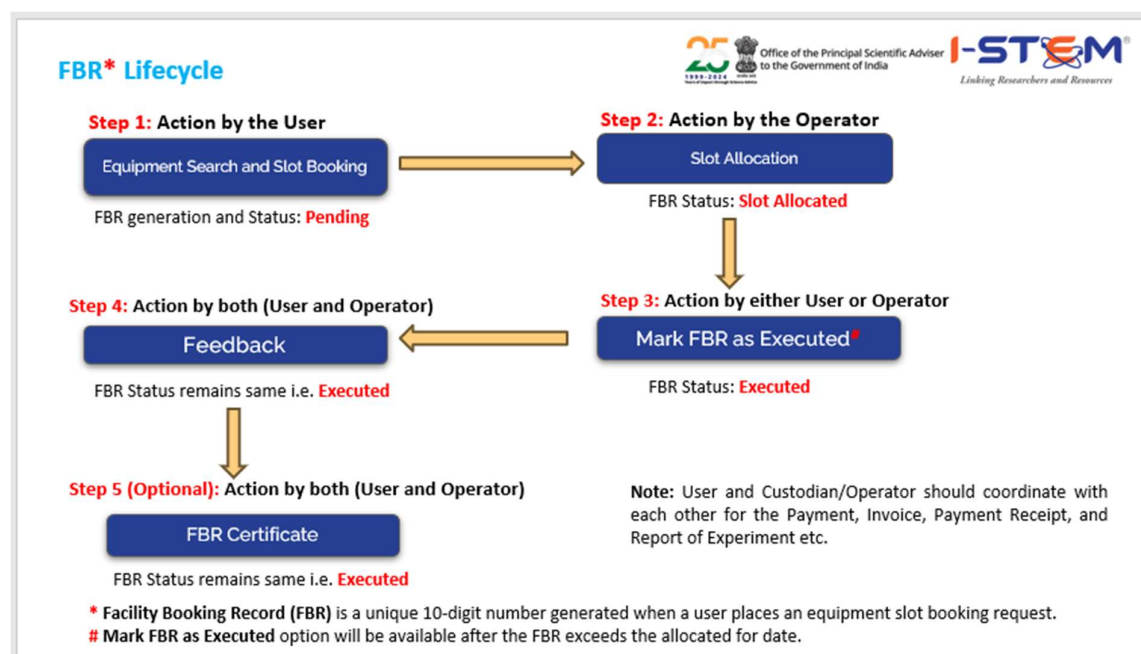
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Users/Researchers: I-STEM Portal

The I-STEM portal's role is confined to booking and facilitating access; data analysis should remain the responsibility of researchers. Therefore, the institutes should be encouraged to provide output data in user-friendly formats to support easier data analysis for users.

FBR Status Matrix:

Sl. No.	FBR Status	Action by User	Action by Operator
1	Pending	Reschedule, Cancel	Allocate, Reject
2	Slot Allocated	Mark FBR as Executed	Reschedule, Mark FBR as Executed, Reject
3	Executed	Feedback, Download FBR Certificate	Feedback, Download FBR Certificate
4	Rejected	Feedback	Reschedule
5	Cancelled	NA	NA

Note: **Mark FBR as Executed** feature available after the allocated date has passed, until completion.



Step-by-Step Process:

Step No.	Action By	Action	FBR- Status Update
1	Public User	Submit an equipment slot booking request	Pending
2	Custodian/Operator	Allocate the slot to the user	Slot Allocated
3	Either Public User or Custodian/Operator	Mark the booking request as completed (FBR Executed)	FBR Executed
4	Both Public User and Custodian/Operator	Download the FBR certificate	FBR Executed
5	Both Public User and Custodian/Operator	Provide feedback to improve the process	FBR Executed

Note: Custodian/Operator and User should coordinate with each other for Payment, Invoice, Payment Receipt, and Experiment Report (result of the work) if any.

Process Flow:

1. User books a slot →
2. Custodian/Operator allocates slot →
3. User or Custodian/Operator marks request completed →
4. User downloads the FBR certificate →
5. Both (User and Custodian/Operator) give feedback.

5.1. FBR Status: Pending (Action: Reschedule or Cancel)

Generation of FBR:

- When a user submits an equipment slot booking request, the system automatically generates a Facility Booking Record (FBR).
- The initial status of the FBR will be marked as **Pending**.

User Action:

- The User may either Reschedule or Cancel the booking request.

Escalation Procedure:

- If an FBR remains in Pending status for more than seven (7) working days, escalation will be initiated.
- An I-STEM representative will follow up with the concerned institute custodian(s) via email and/or phone call to ensure timely action.

To take action on a Pending FBR:

Steps: Visit I-STEM portal ---> Login ---> Login as User ---> View/Booking ---> Booking Requests ---> Click **Pending Request** in left side menu ---> Search FBR and click the FBR Number ---> Click Edit Service Request Form ---> Click **Reschedule/Cancel**

Detailed Procedure:

- Visit the I-STEM portal at www.istem.gov.in.
- Click the **Login** link at the top right of the homepage.
- Login as a User.
- On the home page, navigate to the **View/Booking** and click on **Booking Requests** to navigate to the **booking request page**.
- Click on the **Pending Request** in the left side menu.
- Search for the required **FBR**, then click on the **FBR Number**.
- Click **Edit Service Request Form** button under **Booking Details** section.
- Click on either the **Reschedule** or **Cancel** button. The FBR status will be updated accordingly.

To reschedule the Slot:

- To reschedule, click the **Reschedule** button.
- Fill in the required information in the pop-up and click **Update**.

To Cancel the Slot:

- To cancel a slot, click the **Cancel** button, and confirm the cancellation.

Note:

Cancelled FBR (cancelled by the user) cannot be reopened.

Rejected FBR (rejected by a custodian) can be reopened by rescheduling.

5.2. FBR Status: Slot Allocated (Action: Mark FBR as Executed)

User Action: Execution of FBR

- Once a slot is allocated, the user should contact the institution's custodian or operator for payment and invoice related to the FBR.
- If rescheduling or rejection is required, the user should request it directly to the operator.
- The user can **Mark FBR as Executed** from allocated date onwards until action taken by either the user or the operator.

Escalation Procedure:

- If an FBR exceeds **FBR allocated for date** for more than seven (7) working days, escalation will be initiated.
- An I-STEM representative will follow up with the user and concerned institute custodian(s) via email and/or phone call to ensure timely action.

To take action on a Slot Allocated FBR:

Steps: Visit I-STEM portal ---> Login ---> Login as a User ---> View/Booking ---> Booking Requests ---> Click **Allocated Booking** in left side menu ---> Search FBR and click the FBR Number ---> Click **Mark FBR as Executed**

Detailed Procedure:

- Visit the I-STEM portal at www.istem.gov.in.
- Click the **Login** link at the top right of the homepage.
- Login as a User.
- On the home page, navigate to the **View/Booking** and click on **Booking Requests** to navigate to the **booking request page**.
- Click on the **Allocated Booking** in the left side menu.
- Search for the required **FBR**, then click on the **FBR Number**.
- Click **Mark FBR as Executed**, provide the following information during that time:
 - a. FBR Allocated Date
 - b. FBR Execute Date
 - c. Grand Total Amount

Note: The **Mark FBR as Executed** action can be performed by either a Public User or an Operator. This option will be available from the **Date of Allocated for** onwards until the action is completed.

5.3. FBR Status: Executed (Action: Feedback, Download FBR Certificate)

- Once the FBR is **Executed**, the user can provide **Feedback** (only once).
- After submission, the feedback option will disappear and cannot be edited.
- The **FBR Certificate** can be viewed and downloaded in PDF format.

To take action on an Executed FBR:

Steps: Visit I-STEM portal ---> Login ---> Login as a User ---> View/Booking ---> Booking Requests ---> Click **FBR(executed)** in left side menu ---> Search FBR and click the FBR Number ---> Click **Feedback Form/FBR Certificate** button

Detailed Procedure:

- Visit the I-STEM portal at www.istem.gov.in.
- Click the **Login** link at the top right of the homepage.
- Login as a User.
- On the home page, navigate to the **View/Booking** and click on **Booking Requests** to navigate to the **booking request page**.
- Click on the **FBR(executed)** in the left side menu.
- Search for the required **FBR**, then click on the **FBR Number**.
- Click the **Feedback Form** button to submit your feedback.
- Click the **FBR Certificate** button to view and download the FBR Certificate.

Note:

The user should coordinate with the operator to obtain the **Report of Experiment**.

The I-STEM portal's role is confined to booking and facilitating access; data analysis should remain the responsibility of researchers. Therefore, the institutes should be encouraged to provide output data in user-friendly formats to support easier data analysis for users.

5.4. FBR Status: Rejected (Action: Feedback)

If the equipment slot booking request is rejected by the Operator, the FBR status will change to **Rejected**. A rejected FBR can be reopened, allowing the Operator to reschedule the slot.

Once the FBR is **Rejected**, the user can provide Feedback (only once). After submission, the feedback option will disappear and cannot be edited.

To take action on a Rejected FBR:

Steps: Visit I-STEM portal ---> Login ---> Login as a User ---> View/Booking ---> Booking Requests ---> Click **Rejected Request(s)** in left side menu ---> Search FBR and click the FBR Number ---> Click **Feedback Form** button

Detailed Procedure:

- Visit the I-STEM portal at www.istem.gov.in.
- Click the **Login** link at the top right of the homepage.
- Login as a User.
- On the home page, navigate to the **View/Booking** and click on **Booking Requests** to navigate to the **booking request page**.
- Click on the **Rejected Request(s)** in the left side menu.
- Search for the required **FBR**, then click on the **FBR Number**.
- Click the **Feedback Form** button to submit your feedback.

5.5. FBR Status: Cancelled

- If the equipment slot booking request is pending (FBR status: Pending), the user can cancel the slot, changing its status to **Cancelled**.
- Once FBR cancelled, neither the user nor any custodian, including the Operator, can take any further action.
- The user can view all cancelled booking requests.

To view Cancelled FBR:

Steps: Visit I-STEM portal ---> Login ---> Login as a User ---> View/Booking ---> Booking Requests ---> Click **Cancelled Request** in left side menu

Detailed Procedure:

- Visit the I-STEM portal at www.istem.gov.in.
- Click the **Login** link at the top right of the homepage.
- Login as a User.
- On the home page, navigate to the **View/Booking** and click on **Booking Requests** to navigate to the **booking request page**.
- Click on the **Cancelled Request** in the left side menu.

6. Disclaimer

Platform Role:

The I-STEM National Portal functions exclusively as a **facilitation platform** and does not operate as a service provider. Its principal purpose is to enable access to research infrastructure and resources. The portal does not engage in handling payments or financial transactions.

Financial Responsibility:

All financial matters—including payments, invoicing, and compliance with GST, TDS, or other statutory requirements—are to be managed independently by the host institutions. This arrangement ensures that institutions maintain full control and accountability over their financial operations.

User and Operator Coordination:

Users and operators are expected to coordinate directly with one another regarding payments, invoicing, and the reporting of experiment results. The I-STEM platform does not participate in or supervise these transactions.

Resource Facilitation and Visibility:

I-STEM will continue to enhance the visibility of available equipment, foster connections among researchers, startups, and industry partners, and support the optimization of utilization and revenue opportunities for host institutions.

Platform Charges:

The I-STEM portal is offered entirely free of charge to both institutions and users.

7. Issue Handling and Customer Support

Efficient issue resolution and timely support are vital for the seamless functioning of the I-STEM portal. To ensure effective assistance, I-STEM employs a dedicated ticketing system (Freshdesk) and provides multiple support channels to address user needs at all levels.

Support Channels:

Users may contact I-STEM support through the following channels:

- **Toll Free Helpline:** Available during working hours for immediate assistance and quick clarifications.

Toll Free No.: 1800 425 3281

- **Email Support:** For detailed queries requiring attachments such as screenshots.

Email Id: support@istem.co.in

- **Support Ticketing System (Freshdesk):** The preferred channel for structured issue logging, tracking, resolution, and escalations.
 - All issues, whether technical (e.g., login problems, booking, feedback) or operational, must be logged through the I-STEM Freshdesk system.
 - Each ticket is assigned a unique reference number to ensure tracking, accountability, and timely resolution.
 - Users are encouraged to provide complete details, including screenshots or relevant documentation, to facilitate faster and accurate support.

 **Raise a ticket here:** <https://istem.freshdesk.com/support/home>

Visit the I-STEM portal at www.istem.gov.in ---> Navigate to the **Support Hub** at the top right ---> Click **I-STEM Support**

8. QR Codes to Explore the I-STEM Stakeholder Kit & YouTube Playlists



Scan the QR Code to **Explore** the I-STEM **Stakeholder Kit**

The I-STEM Stakeholder Kit contains resources designed to help operators and users better understand I-STEM portal operations. It includes the User Handbook, Operator Handbook, brochures, one-pagers, SOPs and guidelines, videos, and PPTs (demonstrations).



Scan the QR Code to **Explore** the I-STEM **YouTube Playlists**

The I-STEM playlist contains YouTube videos that guide operators and lab management (institutes) in understanding all processes they need to follow to maintain proactive lab management and manage user requests for equipment. It also explains how users (researchers, start-ups, industry, and MSMEs) can use the I-STEM portal, including how to search for and book equipment.