

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) is made and entered into on this day **[21/09/2026]**, for the purpose of establishing collaboration under the **I-STEM Catalyst Center Program**.

Issued by:

Indian Science, Technology and Engineering facilities Map (I-STEM)

(an initiative of the Government of India, hereinafter referred to as “**I-STEM**”, which expression shall, unless repugnant to the context, include its successors and authorized representatives)

With:

Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (GITAM) (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru, located at **Off-Campus, GITAM University, NH-207, Doddaballapur Taluk, Bengaluru Rural**, hereinafter referred to as “**Catalyst Center / Host Institution**”, which expression shall, unless repugnant to the context, include its successors and authorized representatives.

1. Purpose of the Agreement

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlines a collaborative agreement between **I-STEM** and **[Host Institution]**, under which the institution agrees to function as an **I-STEM Catalyst Center**.

The objective of this agreement is to support scientific outreach, skill development, innovation, research collaboration, and ecosystem building at the regional level, in alignment with I-STEM’s national mission.

This MoU is a **mutual understanding and operational agreement** and does not constitute a legal or financial contract. This MoU constitutes an operational and governance framework, enforceable for programme continuity and representation purposes, without creating financial or legal liabilities.

2. Scope of Collaboration

- The Host Institution shall act as a regional node of I-STEM and support outreach, engagement, infrastructure discovery, and ecosystem facilitation aligned with I-STEM’s national mission.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Host Institution

The Host Institution, acting as an I-STEM Catalyst Center and Regional Nodal Point, agrees to undertake the following responsibilities:

All activities shall comply with applicable data protection and participant consent norms.

A. Regional Nodal & Ecosystem Role

Function as a regional nodal center of I-STEM, supporting outreach, coordination, and ecosystem building within its geographic region.

Act as a first-point facilitation interface for students, researchers, startups, MSMEs, and industry users engaging with the I-STEM platform and ecosystem.

B. Research Infrastructure Discovery & Access Support

Assist students, researchers, startups, MSMEs, and industry users in identifying suitable nearby R&D laboratories, facilities, equipment, and expertise listed on the I-STEM platform.

Guide users on:

- Appropriate facility and infrastructure selection
- Access and engagement pathways
- Institutional protocols, policies, and procedures

Facilitate regional awareness of publicly funded R&D infrastructure and promote its optimal and responsible utilization.

C. Industry, MSME & Startup Engagement

Support industry, MSMEs, and startups in:

- Identifying R&D infrastructure relevant to testing, validation, certification, prototyping, and research collaboration.
- Understanding applicable access models, including academic collaboration, paid access, or host-institution-mediated engagement where relevant.

Actively promote industry–academia–startup linkage, positioning I-STEM as a facilitative national platform.

D. Operator Orientation & Capacity Building

Conduct operator orientation and familiarization programmes (non-certification and non-employment linked) for:

- Institutional operators
- Researchers and first-time users

Such programmes shall focus on:

- Equipment workflows and operational understanding
- Safety and compliance protocols
- Access procedures and scheduling processes
- Responsible and ethical usage practices

These programmes are orientation-based only and shall not be construed as formal skill training, certification, or employment-linked activities.

E. Awareness, Outreach & Engagement Programmes

Conduct awareness programmes, orientation sessions, and outreach activities to promote:

- I-STEM platform usage
- Research infrastructure sharing
- Regional research, innovation, and entrepreneurship capacity

Target groups may include:

- Students
- Faculty members and researchers
- Startups and MSMEs
- Industry professionals
- Local innovation and research communities

F. Planning, Reporting & Documentation

Constitute a nodal implementation team comprising a Coordinator, Operator, and Documentation Lead. Prepare and submit quarterly activity plans to I-STEM for review and alignment prior to execution. Execute approved activities in accordance with I-STEM SOPs, guidelines, and timelines.

Maintain complete and accurate documentation, including:

- Activity reports
- Photographic records
- Attendance and participation details
- Outcome and impact summaries

Ensure adherence to I-STEM branding, communication, and visibility guidelines at all times.

G. I-STEM Ambassador Role & Continuity

- Designate one or more I-STEM Ambassadors to represent the institution and coordinate Catalyst Center activities. Ensure minimum engagement and active participation of the Ambassador(s) in I-STEM-related initiatives.
- The Host Institution shall ensure continuity of the I-STEM Ambassador role and nominate a replacement within sixty (60) days in case of inactivity, resignation, or non-performance.
- Such representation may include speaking, presenting, outreach, and facilitation activities undertaken on behalf of I-STEM, strictly in accordance with I-STEM communication, branding, and positioning guidelines.
- The Host Institution shall not make any financial, legal, or policy commitments on behalf of I-STEM unless expressly authorized in writing.

H. Performance, Accountability & Continuity

Cooperate fully with monitoring, review, and feedback processes instituted by I-STEM.

Accept that failure to meet minimum activity, engagement, or documentation deliverables may result in corrective actions or discontinuation as per applicable clauses of this MoU.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of I-STEM

I-STEM will:

1. Recognize the institution as an **I-STEM Catalyst Center**.
2. Provide standard operating guidelines, toolkits, formats, and templates.
3. Offer opportunities for national-level visibility and amplification of Catalyst activities.
4. Review quarterly plans, submissions, and documentation, and provide feedback where required.

Note: I-STEM does not provide any financial assistance, grants, or funding under this agreement.

5. Performance Review and Compliance

1. A formal performance review shall be conducted at the end of three (3) months from onboarding to assess activity execution, documentation quality, engagement levels, and overall alignment with I-STEM objectives. Corrective actions may be recommended based on this review.

6. Initial Six-Month Demonstration Period

1. From the date of onboarding, the Host Institution will be provided for an **initial period of six (6) months to showcase, establish, and demonstrate the functioning of its Catalyst Center**.
2. During this period, the institution is expected to:
 - a. Execute planned Catalyst activities
 - b. Share quarterly plans and reports
 - c. Submit complete documentation as per SOP
3. Performance during this six-month period will be reviewed by I-STEM to assess continuation as a Catalyst Center.
4. If, at the end of the six (6) month demonstration period, the Host Institution has failed to meet minimum activity, documentation, or engagement deliverables as defined by I-STEM guidelines, I-STEM may discontinue the Catalyst Center designation without further notice.
5. In case of exceptional circumstances, including natural disasters or force majeure events, scheduled activities may be rescheduled with prior communication to I-STEM.

7. Communication and Reporting

1. The Institution will share brief activity updates or reports related to the Catalyst Centre with the I-STEM coordination team at mutually convenient intervals. Open communication will be maintained to exchange feedback, ideas, and suggestions for improvement.

8. Drop-Out / Discontinuation Clause

If the Host Institution or Catalyst Center:

- Fails to share quarterly plans with I-STEM
- Does not conduct planned activities
- Repeatedly submits incomplete or poor-quality documentation
- Does not comply with I-STEM guidelines or responsibilities

I-STEM reserves the right to discontinue and drop the institution from the Catalyst Center network.

Upon discontinuation:

- The institution must stop using the I-STEM name, logo, and Catalyst Center designation
- No claims or obligations shall arise on either side

9. Financial Understanding

This agreement does **not** involve any financial commitment from I-STEM.

All expenses related to Catalyst Center activities shall be managed by the Host Institution unless otherwise communicated in writing.

10. Duration and Continuity

This MoU will remain valid as long as the Host Institution continues to meet the responsibilities outlined herein.

Either Party may choose to discontinue the collaboration with prior communication.

11. Mutual Understanding

Both Parties agree to work in good faith to strengthen STEM outreach, innovation, and research accessibility across India through the I-STEM Catalyst Center framework.

12. Signatures

For I-STEM

Name:

Designation:

Signature:

Date:

For Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (GITAM) (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru

Name:

Designation:

Signature:

Date:

ANNEXURE–A

Quarterly Planner, KPIs & Expected Outcomes

(Applicable to I-STEM Catalyst Centers)

This Annexure forms an integral part of the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** executed between **Indian Science, Technology and Engineering Facilities Map (I-STEM)** and the **Host Institution**, and shall be read in conjunction with **Clauses 3, 5, 6, and 8** of the MoU.

A. Purpose of Annexure–A

The purpose of this Annexure is to:

1. Define the **minimum quarterly expectations and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** for all I-STEM Catalyst Centers.
2. Establish a **uniform framework** for quarterly planning, execution, and reporting.
3. Enable a **transparent and objective evaluation mechanism** for:
 - a. The **3-month performance review**, and
 - b. The **6-month demonstration period assessment**.

This Annexure is for **operational governance only** and does **not create any financial obligation** on I-STEM.

B. Quarterly Planner – Mandatory Requirement

1. Each Catalyst Center shall submit a Quarterly Planner to I-STEM before the start of every quarter.
2. The Planner shall outline planned activities, timelines, and expected outcomes.
3. Failure to submit the Quarterly Planner may be treated as non-compliance under the MoU and may attract corrective action under Clause 8.

C. Minimum Quarterly KPIs (Baseline Expectations)

The KPIs below represent **minimum expected activity levels** per quarter. Institutions may exceed these benchmarks.

C1. Outreach & Awareness Programmes

Indicator	Minimum Expectation (Per Quarter)
Awareness / orientation programmes	Minimum 3
Total participants reached	Minimum 450
I-STEM platform demonstration sessions	Minimum 3

C2. Research Infrastructure Discovery & Facilitation

Indicator	Minimum Expectation
Users guided to identify R&D facilities	Minimum 10 users
Laboratories / facilities mapped	Minimum 5 facilities
Documented facilitation cases	Minimum 5 cases

Note: Facilitation includes guidance, linkage, and advisory support. Successful booking or utilisation is **not mandatory**.

C3. Industry, MSME & Startup Engagement

Indicator	Minimum Expectation
Industry / MSME / startup interactions	Minimum 5
Industry-academia linkage efforts	Minimum 1 documented attempt
R&D infrastructure use-cases discussed	Minimum 2

C4. Operator Orientation & Capacity Building

Indicator	Minimum Expectation
Orientation / familiarization programmes	Minimum 5
Focus areas	Equipment workflows, safety, access SOPs
Documentation	Agenda, attendance, photographs

Clarification: These are **orientation-based** programmes only and are **not skill certification or employment-linked**.

C5. Representation & Visibility (On Behalf of I-STEM)

Indicator	Minimum Expectation
Regional events where I-STEM is represented	Minimum 1 event
Mode of representation	Talk / panel / presentation / outreach
Branding & communication compliance	Mandatory

Important: No financial, legal, or policy commitments may be made on behalf of I-STEM.

C6. Planning, Reporting & Governance

Indicator	Requirement
Quarterly Planner submission	Before start of quarter
Quarterly Report submission	Within 15 days of quarter end
Documentation completeness	100%
I-STEM Ambassador engagement	Active and responsive

D. Quarterly Planner – Prescribed Format

The Quarterly Planner shall be submitted in **Word or PDF format** using the structure below:

I-STEM Catalyst Center – Quarterly Planner

Institution Name:

Quarter & Year:

I-STEM Ambassador(s):

Nodal Coordinator & Contact Details:

Section 1: Planned Activities

Activity Category	Title / Theme	Target Group	Tentative Date	Expected Outcome
Awareness Programme				
Infrastructure Facilitation				
Industry / MSME Engagement				
Operator Orientation				
Event Representation				

Section 2: Expected Quantitative Outcomes

Metric	Expected Number
Participants to be reached	
Users guided to R&D facilities	
Labs / facilities mapped	
Industry / MSME interactions	

Section 3: Regional Focus

- **Priority sectors / domains targeted:**
- **Regional challenges or ecosystem gaps addressed (if any):**

Section 4: Declaration

We confirm that the above activities are planned in alignment with I-STEM objectives and that complete documentation shall be submitted post-execution in accordance with I-STEM SOPs.

Name & Signature:

Designation:

Date:

E. Performance Review & Evaluation

1. The **3-month performance review** shall assess:
 - a. Execution against the approved Quarterly Planner
 - b. Quality and completeness of documentation
 - c. Level of ecosystem engagement
2. Performance under this Annexure shall inform the **6-month demonstration period evaluation** under Clause 6 of the MoU.
3. Repeated failure to meet minimum expectations may result in **corrective action or discontinuation** under Clause 8 of the MoU.

F. Interpretation

This Annexure promotes **consistency, seriousness, and measurable regional impact**, while allowing flexibility based on **local context, capacity, and institutional strengths**.

VALUE-ADDED GOVERNANCE SECTIONS

(For strengthening review, sustainability, and continuous improvement)

G. KPI Weightage & Scoring Framework (Internal Review Guidance)

KPI Category	Weightage
Outreach & Awareness	25%
Infrastructure Facilitation	20%
Industry / MSME Engagement	15%
Operator Orientation	15%
Representation & Visibility	10%

Planning, Reporting & Governance	15%
Total	100%

Performance Bands

- **85–100%** – Outstanding
- **70–84%** – Satisfactory
- **50–69%** – Needs Improvement
- **Below 50%** – Non-compliant / Review Required

(Indicative framework only; non-contractual.)

H. Sustainability & Continuity Indicators

Annual qualitative indicators may include:

- Continuity of I-STEM Ambassador role
- Growth in regional partner institutions
- Increase in repeat I-STEM platform users
- Maturity of industry–academia collaborations
- Quality of impact stories and testimonials

These reflect the **long-term ecosystem value** of Catalyst Centers.

I. Ethics, Compliance & Safeguards

All Catalyst activities shall adhere to:

- **Participant consent and data privacy norms**
- **Institutional safety and conduct protocols**
- **I-STEM branding and representation guidelines**

Any reputational or compliance risk must be **immediately reported** to I-STEM.

G. Continuous Improvement Mechanism

1. At the end of each quarter, the Catalyst Center shall conduct an **internal reflection** on:
 - a. What worked well
 - b. What needs improvement
 - c. What can be scaled
2. Key learnings may be shared with I-STEM to support:

- a. Best practice documentation
- b. Cross-Catalyst learning
- c. National-level process refinement