

## Minutes of the IRDC meeting held on September 14, 2010

**Members Present:** Drs. K. Muralidhar (Chairman), N. Verma (Convener), A. Kushari (co-convenor), M. Sharma, B. Basu, S. Banerjee, T.V. Prabhakar, B.V. Phani, D. Philip, Utpal Das, Avinash K. Agarwal, A. Bandyopadhyay, A. Garg, S.N. Tripathi, Sandeep Verma, Kumar Ravi Priya, Satyajit Banerjee, J. Subramaniam, Ms. Rashmi Parihar, Mr. K. S. Rao, Dr(s) Siddhartha Panda (special invitee), Ashok Kumar (special invitee), Raj Ganesh Pala (special invitee).

1. Convener welcomed all IRDC members, including special invitees, to the meeting.
2. Dean, R&D informed the members that further to the Director's suggestion, the IRDC will deliberate and identify a few thrust areas which the Institute will like to additionally support. This matter will come up for discussion in the next IRDC meeting.
3. Prof. Mukesh Sharma, Coordinator of CESE presented an overview of the Center, including various activities currently underway. The activities include research projects, conferences, community service, and students-participation in the product-development. The research projects, mostly experimental, are related to CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration, removal of toxic compounds such as arsenic and fluorides from wastewater, development of cryogels and also that of biosensors. The focus of the Center is technology development, specifically remediation and sensors.

The coordinator informed the members that a total of approximately Rs. 15 crores were received via the MPLADS project. Approx. Rs. 9 crores was spent on the construction of the building. Majority of the remaining fund, accrued over three years, was spent on purchasing various research equipment such as ion-chromatography, ICP-MS, AAS, BET area analyzer, nanoball mill, incubator, UV-VIS, and millipore ultra-pure water preparation unit. The coordinator briefly described the salient features and capabilities of the equipment.

The theme associated with the individual laboratories at the Center, viz. sample preparation, trace analysis, environmental remediation, and biotechnology, was elaborated. On the matter related to the supporting staff, the members were informed that one senior research scientist is currently employed in the Center through Institute support.

Professor Sharma also informed the members that considering scope of joint research activities, the present (Solar) Energy Group of the institute has been invited to participate in the research activities of the Center.

During the presentation, a few members raised concern on the functioning of the Center. In particular, they were of the following opinion:

- (a) There are only a few faculty who are engaged or involved in the research activities at the Center. In fact the number is dismal.
- (b) Significant (laboratory) space in the Center is unutilized (unoccupied).

- (c) Some of the projects started in or through the Center are not truly in line with the themes of Environment as such and have only peripheral relevance.
- (d) There is in general ignorance in the Institute about the facilities that are available in the Center and their accessibility for use.
- (e) The meetings held to oversee the progress of the Center are infrequent.

After discussions, the IRDC members suggested the following recommendations for smooth functioning of the Center that would enhance its reputation and bring in a greater deal of participation:

- (a) The core committee should be re-constituted to include a few faculty members in the Institute, other than those who are also the IRDC members, as experts and/or observers.
- (b) The meeting should be held at least once in a month.
- (c) The core committee should define the goals and the objectives of the Center, on short as well as long term basis. Such information should be available on the website of the Center.
- (d) The participation of the faculty in the Center should be higher and the present strength should continuously increase.
- (e) The Center should update its website giving the list of equipment installed, their features and the contact/resource person.
- (f) The Center should ensure that safety norms are strictly adhered to, especially in handling bioactive or biohazardous materials.

After the meeting, the Dean, R&D informed the members that SIDBI has expressed desire to assist the Center in matters related to patents-filing, technology-transfer, and product-commercialization. The IRDC members welcomed the suggestion.

The members were taken on a tour of various laboratories at the CESE.

Prepared by



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Forwarded by



Dean: R&D