

“India–EU Ideathon on Marine Plastic Pollution” concluded in Bhubaneswar with selection of three winning teams

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 10 DEC 2025 7:26PM by PIB Delhi

The India–European Union (EU) Ideathon on “Combating Marine Plastic Pollution,” organised under the India–EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) Working Group 2 on Green and Clean Energy Technologies, concluded with its final ceremony on 10 December 2025 at the Bhubaneswar City Knowledge Innovation Cluster (BCKIC) Foundation, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT-DU), Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The event marked the culmination of a collaborative initiative jointly organised by Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (OPSA) to the Government of India and the Delegation of the European Union to India.

Dr. Parvinder Maini, Scientific Secretary, OPSA, delivered the keynote address and commended the collective efforts of Indian and European institutions in nurturing early-stage innovations for marine plastic mitigation. She said, “The Ideathon has demonstrated how coordinated scientific cooperation between India and the European Union can generate impactful and scalable solutions. The young innovators who participated have shown remarkable commitment to addressing the pressing global challenge of plastic pollution through creativity, scientific rigour, and community-oriented thinking.”



Ms. Signe Ratso, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission, addressed the gathering and reaffirmed the EU’s commitment to strengthening collaborative research under the TTC mechanism. She said, “We are very pleased that India and the EU are strongly committed to working together in these areas for the preservation of river and marine ecosystems as well as human health.”



Dr. Rakesh Kaur, Adviser/Scientist ‘G’, OPSA, in her opening remarks, noted that the Ideathon had enabled the convergence of scientific expertise, innovation, and early-stage entrepreneurial thinking from both regions. The ceremony commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Hafsa Ahmad, Scientist ‘D’, OPSA.

Mr. Kinchit Bihani, Research & Innovation Adviser, Delegation of the EU to India, and his team presented the Ideathon highlights, outlining the series of activities including design-thinking workshops, mentoring sessions, and pitch training that supported the participants throughout the Ideathon. Ms. Nienke Buisman, Head, International Cooperation Unit, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission, in her closing remarks, commended the high quality of the ideas presented and emphasised that the initiative had reinforced the strength of the India–EU partnership under the TTC framework, particularly in advancing green and clean technologies through collaborative innovation.



The shortlisted teams shared their final pitches and presented well-defined solutions across the following three challenge tracks, evaluated by Indian and European jury panels:

- Challenge 1: identifying and tracking marine plastics;
- Challenge 2: developing effective and scalable removal technologies; and
- Challenge 3: raising awareness and mobilising communities for prevention.

The jury comprised Dr. Pravakar Mishra, Former Scientist ‘G’, National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES); Prof. E.V. Ramasamy, Professor Emeritus, School of Environmental Sciences, MG University; Dr. K. Ramu, Scientist ‘F’, NCCR, MoES; Dr. Vesna Kuralt, Project Manager, REMEDIES; and Mateo Ignasi, Project Manager, AEBAM (Spanish Marine Litter Association).

After deliberations, the top three winning teams - Ocean Resilience India from Challenge 1, Nautilus Nexus from Challenge 2, and TrashTrek App from Challenge 3 - were announced. Each winning team received a cash award of INR 5,00,000, supported by the Mphasis F1 Foundation, which promotes

technology-driven social impact and sustainability initiatives. Winners will receive incubation support for further development of their solutions. Certificates were also presented to the winners and the shortlisted finalist teams.



Over fifty participants joined from across India and the European Union- including Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Slovenia, Cyprus and Latvia, representing officials, researchers, start-ups, industry stakeholders and civil society organisations. The India-EU Ideathon reaffirmed the shared commitment of India and the European Union to advancing sustainable, innovative and community-centric technologies to combat marine plastic pollution. The TTC Working Group 2 will continue to take forward Indo-EU scientific collaboration in green and clean energy technologies by building upon the outcomes of the Ideathon and supporting future joint initiatives.

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(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2201803) आगंतुक पटल : 695
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