

NEST Cluster

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A project for establishment of North Eastern Science & Technology Cluster (NEST) for promoting research, innovation and skill development was sanctioned at a cost of ₹22.98 crore on 4th July, 2025 for funding under Schemes of North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and for implementation by the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati for a duration of five years.

The project is designed to operate through four thematic verticals, selected based on emerging technologies, regional needs, and future growth potential:

- i. Innovation Hub on Grassroot Technologies;
- ii. Technology Hub for Semiconductor and Artificial Intelligence;
- iii. Centre of Excellence for Innovation in Bamboo-Based Technology, Entrepreneurial Promotion & Skill Development; and
- iv. Skill Development and Innovation Centre on Biodegradable and Ecofriendly Plastics

The specific objectives of the NEST clusters include:

- i. Empowerment of young people in the North Eastern Region (NER) with emphasis on SC, ST, women, and Divyangjan to consider self-employment or entrepreneurship among the career options.
- ii. Promotion of new enterprises by handholding from ideation to commercialization, capacity building of existing MSMEs and inculcating entrepreneurial culture in the NER in priority areas.
- iii. Providing assistance to the training of youth and institutions through Hub and Spoke model throughout NER by providing Research and Innovation support for creation/ strengthening of infrastructure and support for conducting training-cum-enterprise ecosystem.
- iv. Strengthening the existing grassroot practices through scientific interventions by their standardization and certification and using approach of industry 4.0 to make efficient product and process commercialization.

The key components of the Project include:

- Training Programs for technology creation and start-ups;
- Incubation and Tinkering Laboratories;
- Technology transfer, commercialization and product marketing support; and
- Development of enabling infrastructure for research, innovation and skill development.

The NEST cluster essentially works as a hub and spoke model to connect academia, industry, research and Govt. agencies to promote R&D interventions to reach the common man through skill development and entrepreneur development of rural youth and women. Institutions so far identified to act as 'Spokes' include: North East Cane & Bamboo Development Council, Assam; North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology, Arunachal Pradesh; Eight National Institutes of Technology (NITs) at Agartala, Meghalaya, Manipur, Silchar, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim as well as Indian

Institute of Management, Shillong; Indian Institute of Information Technology, Guwahati; Tezpur University, Assam; Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, North East Institute of Science and Technology, Jorhat; Indian Institute of Information Technology, Senapati, Manipur; and Central Institute of Technology, Kokrajhar.

This information was given by the Minister of State of Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region Dr. Sukanta Majumdar in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha today.

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