

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme of Government of India

The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme was instituted by a decision of the Indian Cabinet on 15 September 1964 as a bilateral programme of assistance of the Government of India. Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, who also served as the External Affairs Minister, was the main architect of the ITEC programme.

After their independence, the most important task before the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America was the promotion of social and economic advancement of their people which had been retarded and in most cases reversed during the years of colonial rule. Skilled manpower and experts, financial resources and transfer of technology were the bottlenecks to be overcome. To meet the challenges of socio-economic development, cooperative efforts of the developing countries were as important as assistance from developed countries and international organizations. India has made substantial progress and gained useful experience in industrial and technological development after it regained its freedom in 1947. The ITEC Programme of the Ministry of External Affairs was an earnest attempt by India to share the fruits of its socio-economic development and technological achievement with other developing countries.

The ITEC Programme has been envisaged essentially as a bilateral programme. However, there have been instances when ITEC resources have been used for financing technical cooperation programmes conceived in regional and inter-regional context such as Economic Commission for Africa, Industrial Development Unit of Commonwealth Secretariat, UNIDO, Group of 77 and G-15. In more recent years, its activities have also been associated with regional and multilateral organizations and cooperation groupings like Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral

Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), African Union (AU), Afro-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), Pan African Parliament, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), World Trade Organization (WTO) and Indian Ocean Rim – Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR–ARC).

The ITEC Programme, fully-funded by the Government of India, has evolved and grown over the years. Under ITEC and its corollary SCAAP (Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme), 158 countries in Asia, East Europe (including former USSR), Central Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean as well as Pacific and Small Island countries are invited to share in the Indian developmental experience in various fields. As a result of various activities under ITEC programme, there is now a visible and growing awareness among other countries about the competence of India as a provider of technical know-how and expertise as well as training opportunities, consultancy services and feasibility studies. Over the years, the technical and economic assistance programme of Ministry of External Affairs has generated immense goodwill and substantive cooperation among the developing countries.

The ITEC/SCAAP Programme has the following components:

- i. Training (civilian and defence) in India of nominees from ITEC partner countries;
- ii. Projects and project related activities such as feasibility studies and consultancy services;
- iii. Deputation of Indian experts abroad;
- iv. Study Tours;
- v. Gifting/Donation of equipment at the request of ITEC partner countries; and
- vi. Aid for Disaster Relief.

o **Training**

Training or capacity building is one of the major activities under ITEC. The professionals and people

from developing countries are offered unique training courses, both civilian and defence, in different centres of excellence in India which empower them with not just professional skills, but prepare them for an increasingly globalized world.

(a) Civilian Training Programme: It is fully sponsored by the Government of India. 42 institutions conduct around 200 short-term, medium-term and long-term courses every year. The training programme is demand-driven and subjects selected are of interest to developing countries for their working professionals on a wide and diverse range of skills and disciplines. The courses have been divided into seven broad categories for easy identification. Government Courses, IT and Telecommunication, Management, SME/Rural Development, Specialized Courses, Technical Courses, Environment and Renewable Energy Courses. The most sought after courses are in the field of Information Technology and Linguistics (English). Training is imparted to Government officials in areas such as Finance & Accounts, Audit, Banking, Education Planning & Administration, Parliamentary Studies, Crime Records, Management, Environment, etc. Every year, around 5000 slots are allocated to ITEC partner countries to attend the various civilian training courses in India. An encouraging trend of senior level participants from within and outside Government joining ITEC courses has been noticed—a clear affirmation that ITEC courses have come to be recognized as useful tools for capacity building, empowerment and upgrading of skills.

(b) Defence Training: This covers training to personnel belonging to all the three wings of Defence Services, viz. Army, Air Force & Navy, nominated by the ITEC partner countries in prestigious institutions like National Defence College, Defence Services Staff College, etc. The facility is also extended and availed by some select developed countries. The training field covers Security and Strategic Studies, Defence

Management, Marine and Aeronautical Engineering, Logistics and Management, etc.

- **Project-related Cooperation**

India assists ITEC partner countries, on the basis of mutually agreed projects, to establish useful infrastructure facilities with technology and skills appropriate to their resources and needs. Through project assistance, India also demonstrates the skills, technologies and human resource capabilities, which it has acquired in the course of its own development. A number of bilateral projects are undertaken, notably in the fields of Archaeological Conservation, Information Technology (IT) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Feasibility studies and consultancy services, at the request of ITEC partner countries, are carried out under the Programme. Results of these studies are handed over to the Governments concerned.

- **Deputation of Indian Experts**

Indian experts are deputed to friendly countries on their request to assist in developmental activities. Some of the fields covered are Creative Arts, Pest Management, Military training, IT, Audit, various disciplines of Medicine, English teaching, Telecommunications, Agricultural research etc. Indian experiences and expertise in the fields of small and medium scale industries, agriculture and financial management are particularly relevant to the developing countries.

- **Study Tours**

Study tours in India are undertaken at the specific request of ITEC partner countries. Specific areas of interest are identified and a two to three weeks programme is arranged during which the delegates are taken to important institutions, training centres, etc. in different parts of India.

- **Gifts/Donation of Equipments**

The Government of India, under the ITEC Programme, provides gifts/donations of equipment to ITEC partner countries to assist in their developmental efforts. These gifts/donations are usually in response to requests of these friendly countries and the commitments made by Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister etc.

- **Aid for Disaster Relief**

Under this Programme, India supplies humanitarian aid like food grains, medicines, woollen blankets and similar other items to countries struck by natural disasters.

ITEC is the flagship programme of the Indian Government's technical cooperation effort, not only because of its magnitude and wide geographical coverage but also for innovative forms of technical cooperation in which it has assisted. It is about cooperation and partnership for mutual benefit. It is response-oriented and addresses the needs of developing countries. Thus, the ITEC Programme constitutes an integral part of India's South-South Cooperation effort which has been a traditional pillar of the country's foreign policy and diplomacy.