

SERB-DST partners with Intel India to launch first-of-its-kind initiative to advance deep tech-based research in India

The Indian research community will soon be able to pursue industry-relevant research opportunities in the areas of deep technologies that are novel, transformative, and can have a ground-breaking impact on a national scale.

The opportunities will be offered by the first-of-its-kind research initiative called ‘Fund for Industrial Research Engagement (FIRE)’ launched by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a statutory body of Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, in collaboration with Intel India on June 29, 2021.

It will increase research opportunities in the space of Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning (ML), platform systems, circuits & architecture, Internet of Things (IoT), materials & devices, security, and so on from edge to cloud.

“It is our vision to promote research in the upcoming critical areas of science and engineering with Public-Private Partnerships as elaborated in the draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2021,” said DST Secretary Prof Ashutosh Sharma, speaking at the launch.

SERB-FIRE is a novel initiative to bring together industry and academia on a common platform to exchange ground-breaking ideas and co-promote innovative research. I believe this collaboration will open many new doors for exploration in scientific research, which could make India a key player in technology-based solutions,” he added.

Prof Sandeep Verma, Secretary, SERB, emphasized that SERB-FIRE promises to bring support for strong ideations, especially in futuristic S&T thematic areas, and aims to bring expertise in academia and industry together with a new model of cooperation.

“SERB-Intel collaboration will be an excellent opportunity for the scientists to join hands with Intel and together create a stimulating atmosphere for research in science and engineering. There is a synergy that could be built upon through this programme which would be governed by industry-specific problems,” Prof Verma said.

The FIRE program is a joint government and industry initiative with a co-funding mechanism to promote innovative technology solutions and strengthen academic research through collaboration with key research and development (R&D) organizations in India. Having been conceived in collaboration with Intel India, it is also being extended to other industry members, which would increase its impact and reach.

Jitendra Chaddah, Country Manager, Global Supply Chain, Intel India, pointed out that FIRE is a one-of-its-kind collaborative initiative that aims to transform the culture of research in India and strengthen the technology ecosystem. This is a critical program that will lead to impactful research outcomes in key technology areas like AI, ML, cloud, edge, and security at the national and global scale.”

The program intends to select highly impactful research projects in every cycle (typically once or twice a year), which have breakthrough potential at a national or global level. It will support the best researchers in academia with funding, mentoring, and industry connect.

As the next step, the FIRE program will share a Request for Proposal (RFP) and invite the Indian research community to submit research proposals.

