

DEVELOPMENT OF DATABASE OF EQUIPMENT SUPPORTED UNDER EXTRAMURAL R&D PROJECTS SANCTIONED DURING 2008-09 TO 2010-11 PERIOD [PHASE II]

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the Equipment Database?

This is a study initiated by the National Science and Technology Management Information System (NSTMIS), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt, of India. The study aimed at conducting a national level survey-cum-field visits for capturing the information during the last five years since 2008.

It presents a web-based database of major research equipments sponsored under both extramural sponsored research and other S&T infrastructure schemes such as Fund for Improvement of S&T Infrastructure in Universities and Higher Educational Institutions (FIST), Drugs and Pharmaceutical Research Programme (DPRP) etc.

The database, powered by the open source MySQL software, allows users to browse and search for equipment items and contact the relevant custodians [Principal Investigators/Heads of academic and research institutions who have undertaken the EMR/FIST projects] via postal address, telephone or email. The software can also be used by respective project investigators/departments to update and manage the contact and equipment information given in the database.

Why was the database created?

To provide access to; enable sharing and using science equipment among scientific community, institutions and research personnel; thereby maximising the use of sponsored equipment and prevent unnecessary expenditure on new equipment where appropriate facilities are already available.

Researchers can search the database prior to making requests for funding for new equipment.

The database would also be of immense use to the government, researchers and academicians including industry leading to policy actions, appropriate incentive structures etc for strengthening and fostering the innovation ecosystem in the country.

What are the main features?

The database, developed by TERI in consultation with the Local Project Advisory Committee headed by Mr Prabir Sengupta, Distinguished Fellow and Director, TERI, New Delhi, Dr Suneet Tuli, Dean [R&D], IIT -Delhi, Dr Parveen Arora, Head (CHORD-NSTMIS) and Mrs Namita Gupta, Scientist-F/Director, NSTMIS, New Delhi, aims to meet the major needs of research groups. The database stores and presents a wealth of information about pieces of equipment and facilities, including make, model, major specifications, equipment capability, functionality of equipment, sharing, usage data and photographs, custodian details, locations, user guides.

The Equipment Database is located at NSTMIS web site at <http://equipment-nstmis-dst.org/> allowing users with a username and password to log in and view all items. A subset of items is visible without signing in, and can therefore be seen by the public.

Each item in the Equipment Database has the following information specified on search.

Main Item Details	Contact Information	Access & Usage	Location
Equipment name, cost of equipment, date of purchase of equipment, source of supply i.e. indigenous/ imported, equipment make/ model, major specifications, capability, Photos	Project Investigator(s)/ contact name, postal address, telephone, and email	Performance of equipment, log book record to track usage of equipment	of Department Site / campus Building Room

Benefits for people looking for equipment

- The database is populated with over 1200 items of equipment collected from project investigators from various implementing institutions from across the country. These institutions consisted of universities, engineering colleges, medical colleges and hospitals, national research laboratories, scientific and industrial research organizations. By making all of this equipment information available at one central place, researchers become more aware of what is available in the database, potentially reducing the need and cost associated with purchasing of new equipment, travel or outsourcing certain experiments.
- The database also allows potential users to judge whether a particular item may be suitable for intended research/experiments. The database can also serve as an educational resource, allowing students to learn more about available items or discover new applications for them.
- Resource Sharing: The database promotes cost-effective and efficient use of public resources and facilitates a culture of sharing and presenting improved resource efficiencies; willingness to share equipment is mainly for a meaningful scientific collaboration with institutions for worthwhile and measurable outcomes or to get back the running costs for the time used, and facilitates the pooling of knowledge and skills.
- By enabling public visibility, the equipment database could also attract prospective researchers and students to join the institution, on the basis of equipment already in place.

What are the criteria for inclusion of items in the database?

The database has been populated with details of equipment valued over Rs 10 Lakhs. Individual departments are free (and encouraged) to add any equipment valued over Rs 10 Lakhs which may be made available to others.

Why is Database login necessary?

Only a subset of the items listed in the database can be viewed publicly. The database log-in grants the user access to see all items and equipment/contact details within the database.

Additional information for custodians of equipments (PIs/Heads of Institutions) and departmental administrators:

What is the role of a project investigator/heads of Departments?

Equipment owners are those individuals named as project investigators or heads of institutions on any item or facility listing. They will receive any enquiries made through the catalogue.

How can I add equipment to the Research Equipment Catalogue, and who ensures listings are kept up to date?

This should be done by respective PIs/ Heads of Departments/ institutions, who have been assigned permissions to add, edit and delete items. This job can also be delegated, if requested – contact Mr. S Vakesh. If your department/institution is not in this list, or the contact(s) need to be updated, or new administrators configured, please contact us.

Are there upper/lower limits on the value of equipment to be listed in the catalogue?

When initially populating the database, we collected information about all equipment valued over Rs 10 Lakhs across the database. If your department hosts items or facilities that you think could be useful for others, and which you may be willing to share, contact us to have the details added to the database - whatever the value.