

KERALA

## Industry keen on research partnership

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Thiruvananthapuram: A novel initiative launched by the **Kerala** State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE) to promote academic partnership in industrial research has evoked good response from industries within and outside the state.

The first tripartite partnership under the programme titled Partnering Academic- Industrial Research (PAIR) was recently signed between the KSCSTE, the CSIR- National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) and Vinvish Technologies, a Thiruvananthapuram- based company specialising in opto electronics.

Director, NIIST, A. Ajayaghosh said the agreement involved the development of a hand-held Raman spectrometer for diagnostic purpose.

The KSCSTE has opened negotiations with several industries willing to join hands with R&D institutions for research. HLL Lifecare, Thiruvananthapuram; Agrigenome Labs, Kochi; Saskin Labs, Chennai; and Sami Labs, Bengaluru; have come forward to join the initiative. "Many more industries have expressed keen interest in the programme," Suresh Das, Executive Vice president, KSCSTE, told *The Hindu*.

PAIR seeks to provide an opportunity for doctoral degree aspirants in various disciplines to work on an industrially relevant programme. "While many industries struggle to find suitably qualified PhDs for recruitment, PhD holders find it difficult to land good jobs," Dr. Das says. "By promoting industry-linked research, PAIR seeks to address both the issues".

Candidates for the programme are selected through an open recruitment process to do research on a problem identified by industry. The selected research fellow works towards a PhD on a fellowship provided by the industry while the KSCSTE backs up the partnership with a contingent grant for the institution which provides infrastructure support for the researcher.

"It is envisaged that after completing the PhD programme in three to four years, the candidate will be appointed as an intern at the sponsoring industry, with the possibility of being absorbed as permanent staff subsequently," says Dr.Das.

The KSCSTE has plans to expand the programme to M.Tech and post doctoral research also.

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