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# ITEC: 56 YEARS YOUNG

# Still Going Strong

The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) reflects India's global vision of forming international partnerships in all sectors of development and has raised India's profile as a development partner across a wide interface of sectors, says former Ambassador Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty



**S**ince Independence, India's foreign policy has been guided by solidarity with other developing nations, based not just on shared ideologies but also on strong economic foundations. To fulfil this objective, a comprehensive

programme - the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation - better known by its acronym ITEC, was launched by the Indian government in 1964, to provide assistance in technical and economic sectors to newly-independent countries and developing nations.

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi (holding the green flag) launches the second Bhairab and Titas railway bridges in 2017. These bridges have been built with an end-to-end immigration facility between Dhaka (Bangladesh) and Kolkata (India). External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S Jaishankar (second from right) was also present



The ITEC programme was predicated on the belief that “it was necessary to establish relations of mutual concern and inter-dependence based not only on commonly-held ideals and aspirations but also on solid economic foundations. Technical and economic cooperation was considered to be one of the essential functions of an integrated and imaginative foreign policy”. ITEC, fully-funded by the Indian government, is an integral part of India’s foreign policy and represents an important arm of India’s soft power diplomacy, a phrase that came into the

international diplomatic vocabulary years later in the 1980s.

### **THE REGIONAL TIES**

ITEC is demand-driven and relies on innovative technological cooperation to fulfil the needs of developing countries. More than USD 2 billion has been spent on this programme since it began, benefiting thousands of students and professionals from around 160 countries.

The ITEC Programme is essentially bilateral in nature. However, in recent years, ITEC resources have

Thirty participants from twenty countries visited the Indian Parliament during Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation’s (ITEC) Capacity Building Program on International Economic Issues and Development Policy in 2019

**“WHEN INDIAN TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (ITEC) BEGAN IN 1964, ITS VISION WAS TO SHARE OUR RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES WITH OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, IN ORDER TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVOLUTION OF A WORLD COMMUNITY BASED ON COOPERATION AND INTERDEPENDENCE.”**

**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister of India

**Right:** Foreign students who visited India under the ITEC scholarship programme;  
**Bottom:** Participants during the practical session of the 3rd Special International Training Course at the National Institute of Wind Energy, Chennai, in 2019. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy facilitated the event under ITEC



also been used for cooperation programmes conceived in regional and inter-regional context, such as UN Economic Commission for Africa, Commonwealth Secretariat, UNIDO, Group of 77 and G-15. ITEC's fundamental paradigm is bilateral cooperation but it has regional dimensions that have developed programmes with organisations

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) and India-Africa Forum Summit.

The ITEC Programme has evolved and grown over the years. Under ITEC and its sister programme SCAAP (Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme), 161 countries in Asia, Africa, East Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean as well as Pacific and Small Island countries are invited to share the Indian developmental experience. The shared experiences have covered



areas like civilian and military sectors, projects, consultancy and feasibility studies, sending Indian experts in different domains, study tours for partner country officials and students, supply of equipment as gifts or donation requested and disaster relief. Disaster Relief is a vital component of ITEC and it focusses on food security and medical assistance for humanitarian relief.

## TRAINING MODULES

Training in digital technologies is a special feature that India offers in the domain of capacity building, under ITEC. Professionals from developing countries are offered unique training courses, both civilian

and defence, in different centres of excellence in India. In the civilian sector, the training offered includes a wide and diverse spectrum of disciplines ranging from IT, rural development and parliamentary practices to entrepreneurship, marine and aeronautical engineering etc. In defence, the training covers fields like security and strategic studies, defence management, marine and aeronautical engineering, logistics and management, etc. Over 12,000 scholarships for study in short and long-term courses in India's leading institutions are offered annually under ITEC. Partner countries are free to choose their personnel and the courses that are relevant for their

## Training under ITEC

(a) **Civilian Training Programme:** For Civilian Training Programme, around 12,000 scholarships are being offered to ITEC/SCAAP partner countries to attend the various training courses in India. The premiere institutions of India offer more than 300 short-term, medium-term and long-term courses during the year. The training programme is demand-driven and subjects selected are of interest to developing countries for their working professionals. The wide and diverse spectrum of skills and disciplines offered ranges from IT to rural development, parliamentary practices to entrepreneurship, marine to aeronautical engineering and so on.

(b) **Defence Training:** This covers training of personnel belonging to all the three wings of Defence Services - Army, Air Force and 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 of by some select developed countries on self-financing basis.



National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM), Pune, under the aegis of ITEC conducted an international training titled 'Role and Functions of Central Bank' in August 2019

## COMPONENTS OF THE ITEC/SCAAP PROGRAMME

- Training (civilian and defence) in India of nominees from ITEC partner countries
- Projects and related activities such as feasibility studies and consultancy services
- Deputation of Indian experts abroad
- Study tours
- Gifts/Donations of equipment at the request of ITEC partner countries

development needs. ITEC programmes are often moulded to suit the specific requirements of partner countries. Indian professionals are deputed upon request in a variety of sectors for teaching and imparting skills. Many among those who have studied or received training in India, have progressed to occupying important political, bureaucratic and military positions in their countries, thereby contributing to their countries' development and fostering closer ties with India.

As a result of different activities under this programme, there is now

a visible and growing awareness among other countries about India's competence as a provider of technical know-how and expertise as well as training opportunities, consultancy services and feasibility studies. These programmes have generated immense goodwill and substantive cooperation among the developing countries.

### LINES OF CREDIT

An important dimension of ITEC is the Lines of Credit (LoC), extended on soft terms to partner countries, for essential imports of goods and services, social welfare and

ITEC Day is celebrated annually on September 15 in all partner countries, bringing together ITEC trainees and students via their alumni networks and friendship societies



Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiling the foundation stone of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Centre of Excellence at the IT Centre of the Mongolian University of Science and Technology located in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia



**Top:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar (eighth from right) welcomes a delegation of Mongolian governors led by L Oyun-Erdene, chief cabinet secretary, Government of Mongolia. Their visit inaugurated the new ITEC Executive Program for Leadership and Policy training; **Bottom:** Under the ITEC program, National Academy of Customs Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN), Mumbai, conducted a five-day 'Exposure Visit of Senior Maldives Customs Officers' in January 2020

infrastructure projects. India's South Asian neighbours have received around 70 per cent of the grants under LoC. Indian companies taking part in ITEC programmes have established themselves in partner countries for contributing to infrastructural projects, independent of ITEC or LoC.

The ITEC-LoC partnership fosters friendship and solidarity, and is marked by national ownership of the partner country, since it is voluntary

and devoid of any pre-conditions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many foreign trainees and students were unable to return home and arrangements were made for their continued stay.

The growth of ITEC led to the Ministry of External Affairs to bring the management of ITEC and LoC under a new entity, called the Development Partnership Administration in 2011, for streamlining its work under a single vertical management structure. Today, ITEC/LoC has matured into a crucial pillar of India's development outreach and diplomacy, imbued with the civilisation heritage of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or the world is my family.



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