

Technopark@iitk to Enhance the Competitiveness of MSMEs in the changed Economic Scenario

Amidst COVID19, the industry world over is grappling with imminent economic slowdown and the looming recession. In India, MSMEs form the backbone of the Indian economy and have taken the hardest hit in the current ongoing situation. The fact that Kanpur has a huge MSME base and these MSMEs are engines of growth for regional economy, Technopark@iitk has designed an **Affiliate Membership Model**. The main purpose of this model is to provide an opportunity to MSMEs to leverage IIT Kanpur's R&D strengths.

The primary goals of the Affiliate Membership Model are (1) to provide support to MSMEs for improving product quality and (2) to assist them in skill and technology upgradation.

"We have long been contemplating of reaching out to MSMEs since the very day we had our first outreach event on 6th April 2019. The event saw a huge participation from MSMEs based in Kanpur. During the discussions, we realized that MSMEs are keen to seek expertise from IITK but setting up an R&D base in Technopark may not be a financially feasible option for them. And Technopark too would like to reach out to a large base of MSMEs and not restrict itself to a few numbers," informed Prof. Avinash Kumar Agarwal, Professor In-charge, Technopark@iitk.

Some of the main offerings of this program are access to state-of-the-art research infrastructure, access to intellectual resources, opportunity to work with IITK students, opportunity to participate in Special Interest Group (SIG) meets and industry events organized by Technopark@iitk, opportunity to network and enhance their brand's visibility and opportunity to license and commercialize IITK IPs (a database of 600+ patents). The affiliate member can also avail office desk for 30 days in a year in Technopark@iitk to have close interactions with IITK.

Kunal Kasera, Founder, TruFarm Co. (Re-Engineering Food Systems startup) is one of the firsts to take an annual Affiliate Membership with Technopark@iitk. "Our partnership with IITK Technopark has brought immense strength to our Engineering and R&D Departments. Being from a commerce background I had initially struggled to understand how technical aspects of a machinery works. Now, I have a reliable partner with whom I cannot only clear my own doubts regarding engineering and machinery but also propel various R&D activities to create proprietary TECHNOLOGY which otherwise would have been impossible or highly capital intensive," said he. Kunal is already in discussions with professors to work on a novel research project.

Technopark@iitk is keen to push this model as it sees value in it. As informed by Ms Reema Mittal, COO Technopark@iitk, the research park plans to increase its reach in the coming months. It is already in interactions with TiE-UP and IIA and would like to reach out to various government ministries and departments including MSME Ministry to push this model for wider adoption.