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The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar is collaborating with IIT Mandi and PGIMER, Chandigarh to establish a Bio-X Consortium, which will address all big challenges in the fields of healthcare and medicine. All three institutes are signing a 3-way MoU to join hands with a common goal of disease prevention and affordable health care in India. The consortium is the brainchild of Prof. S.K Das, Director of IIT Ropar who initiated this project along with the Director of IIT Mandi, Prof. Timothy A. Gonsalves and PGIMER, Chandigarh to facilitate and encourage collaboration between engineering and technological experts and develop low cost diagnostics and therapy for prevalent diseases which have been affecting a large number of population in India.

Bio-X consortium is poised to tackle the complex challenges in medicine with an interdisciplinary outlook. Based on the common strengths of the collaborating institutes, current focus areas of the consortium include (but not limited to): Biomedical Imaging, Biomechanics, Biomedical Nanotechnology, Biomedical Instrumentation and Cancer Diagnostics & Therapy.

The directors of IIT Ropar and Mandi have agreed to support the consortium by providing the required seed money in form of grants, contributing to 10% of the total project cost. The seed funding will be given to projects with significant potential to initiate preliminary study opportunities and also at a later stage attract additional external funding.

Currently 3 out of the 6 projects presented during initial discussions have been awarded seed grants totaling to Rs. 48 lacs. The three projects are in the field of Developing low cost low magnetic field MRI; Determination of Mechanical and Biological Osteoporotic Bone; & Surface modified upconversion nanoparticles for theranostic applications in cancer. All three projects are progressing smoothly with preliminary work/experiments underway and are expecting to apply for extramural funding within one year.

Speaking about the collaboration, Prof. S.K. Das, Director of IIT Ropar said, "This consortium is a result of months of discussions and meetings between the institutes. We aimed to develop a conglomerate or a system, where we could

encourage the technological talent and experts to develop affordable medical devices and diagnostic therapies for the various wide spread diseases in India. The success of this consortium will bring a revolution in medical technology and we will enable us to provide low cost healthcare & diagnostics to the large population of India. "