

AICTE - Carleton University Jointly Announced International Acceleration program to Support 100 Women Led Student Tech Start-ups Over a Period of Five Years.

On 20th February, in the midst of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's India visit, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) a statutory body for technical education under the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ottawa-based Carleton University, Canada jointly announced International Acceleration program to **support 100 women-led tech start-ups from both countries** over a period of five years in the presence of Mr. Navdeep Bains, Hon'ble Minister of Innovation, Canada during India - Canada Business Meet at Bombay Stock Exchange, Mumbai. Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, AICTE and Prof. Karen Schwartz, Acting Associate Vice President (Research and International) Carleton University, Canada were present and briefed about the program.

The Canada-India Acceleration Program (CIAP) is formulated as part of MoU signed between AICTE and Carleton University to support and promote international collaborations between India and Canada, while designing collaborative programmes in the area of start-up and innovation development in technical institutes and higher education in India. AICTE has already placed similar kind of international start-up exchange program with South Korea and a team of five Indian Tech Start-ups visited South Korea last year and the South Korean Start-up teams will visit to India in the month of April 2018.

In all, 50 Canadian and 50 Indian women tech start-ups will be supported over the next five years. The first cohort of 10 women led tech start-ups from India will visit to Carleton University, Canada during the month of August 2018. The selection of suitable tech start-ups representing 2nd tier and 3rd tier cities of India from AICTE's network of more than 10000 technical institutions will be made. Through this acceleration program, start-up ecosystem exposure visits and meetings with Canadian ecosystem enablers will be facilitated to give start-ups an opportunity to explore innovative and emerging market opportunities in Canada while accessing the acceleration facilities at Canada India Centre of Excellence (CICE) at Carleton University. Similarly, the first cohort of 10 Canadian start-ups is expected to visit India during the end of the year.

To support this program, Carleton University, in partnership with other Canadian stakeholders has committed a fund of C\$850,000 (~Rs. 4.25 Crore). Similarly, in response to a call by AICTE to major start-up ecosystem enablers in India to join and support such international Start-up Exchange initiatives, willingness has been ascertained from national agencies such as Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of NITI Aayog, National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and commitment from lead incubators of country such as KIIT TBI, LEAF - GLS University Incubator, NRI Start-up India to support in large scale.

AICTE and Carleton University are confident that this program carries great significance for both India and Canada and this engagement will go a long way in creating new avenues of growth, better collaboration and help develop strong entrepreneurial culture in India and help creating jobs for the youth.