

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh says, an amount of Rs. 2177 crore is allocated for implementation of O-SMART scheme during a period of 5 years i.e 2021-22 to 2025-26.

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Union Minister of State, PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, M/o Earth Sciences; MoS, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said that an amount of Rs. 2177 crore is allocated for implementation of O-SMART scheme during a period of 5 years i.e 2021-22 to 2025-26. Rs. 382.08 crore was released during the year 2021-22 and Rs. 176.35 crore is so far concurred for expenditure during current year.

In a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the Ocean Services, Modelling, Applications, Resources and Technology (O-SMART) Scheme of Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is implemented through various institutes of Ministry.

To achieve the objectives of the scheme, following steps are being taken by the Ministry:

- The proposed technology development and R & D activities related to schemes are being assigned to relevant institutes of the Ministry for timely execution.
- Various ocean observational platforms viz., Argo floats, XBT/XCTDs, Wave Rider Buoys, Automatic Weather Stations, Drifters, Moored Buoys, Tide Gauges, Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers, were deployed and existing ones were maintained to obtain continuous data sets for initializing models and assimilation. Process Specific Observations were also undertaken to improve the model outputs.
- Operational services on Tsunami Early Warnings, Storm Surges, Potential Fishing Zones, Ocean State Forecast, Harmful Algal Blooms, Coral Reefs, Multi Hazard Vulnerability, Coastal Vulnerability Indices, High Wave Alerts, Oil Spill, Search and Rescue operations etc were generated using the data and models operational in house and was provided on day-to-day basis to various stake holders and end users.
- Coastal surveys and deep-sea cruises are conducted of as per the requirement of the program using the fleet of research vessels maintained by the Ministry.
- Public awareness campaign and related activities are conducted on regular basis to disseminate technology and policies.

The Minister further said that the Ministry is following applicable guidelines for assessment of environmental impact for developing underwater vehicles and technologies. The underwater vehicles developed under the scheme are environmentally safe and do not cause any appreciable effects. The deep sea mining machine is developed and deployed as per the guidelines laid down by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and the impact is monitored between, during and after the deployment as per the guidelines of ISA.

Dr. Singh said that O-SMART is a continuing central sector scheme mandated for technology development for oceanic application, services (forecast and advisories) and R & D activities in the marine as well as coastal environment. The research outputs obtained from this scheme are presented on regular basis in the form of annual reports and submitted to the Parliament and also posted in the Ministry's website. Moreover, several developed technologies are transferred to industry and scientific outcomes are published in peer reviewed journals.

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