

## Ethical 6G: Identifying Elements of Ethical Framework for 6G and Creating Opportunities for India and Australia

### Background and Rationale

Increasing technological penetration has also resulted in increased cybercrimes. Cyberspace is now being considered a zone of modern warfare, and thus cyber security is akin to national security. However, no multilateral rules prescribe any minimum standards that can guide countries in securing their cyberspace. Further, few leading countries are disproportionately shaping international discourse on the issue.

It is widely believed that the deployment of 'reliable' telecommunication networks is necessary for secure and resilient cyberspace. Today, many countries are deploying the 5<sup>th</sup> Generation (5G) telecommunication technology. Movements in the 6th Generation (6G) telecommunication technology development have begun, but it is concentrated in a few leading countries. Countries like India and Australia are jointly aspiring to be forebearers in the advancement of 6G technology.

Development and deployment of 6G technology may bring in unanticipated challenges. Hence, such development should not be severed from building safe, secure and accessible cyberspace. In this regard, developing an ethical framework for this is imperative. This will be critical from the perspective of a safe, secure and accessible cyberspace and the perspective of trade and investment in the digital sphere.

Recently, India and Australia have agreed to increase bilateral cooperation in the digital economy, including cyber governance, cyber security, and cyber and critical technologies, focusing on capacity building and innovation. The India-Australia

partnership has a common objective to develop an open, secure, free, accessible, stable, peaceful, and interoperable cyberspace and technologies that adhere to international law.

Therefore, this one-and-a-half-year project is being undertaken under the Australia-India Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership. The purpose of the Partnership is to shape international discourse on cyber and critical technologies. It aims to deepen institutional linkages between Australian and Indian researchers, businesses and government on cyber and critical technology issues. It will further support India and potentially other countries in the Indo-Pacific to improve their cyber resilience and foster best practices in critical technology development.

### Objectives

- To actualise practical cooperation and collaboration between India and Australia on evolving 6G telecommunication technology;
- To influence international discourse to achieve an open, secure, free, rules-based Indo-Pacific region;
- To strengthen understanding of the ethical framework for 6G technology development and deployment;
- To create an enabling environment in India and Australia for their contributions to the 6G standard making process; and
- To create opportunities for Indian and Australian firms to invest in 6G networks and related equipment making and propagate 6G deployment in the Indo-Pacific region.

Partnership with

  
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## Research Agenda

- Understanding 6G technology, recent developments and trends, as well as challenges of its ethical use;
- Understanding strategic issues in the Indo-Pacific and strategic opportunities for India and Australia to invest in 6G technology development and deployment;
- Understanding standard making process for 6G and the requirements in creating an enabling environment that could lead to enhanced standard making interventions by India and Australia; and
- Identifying and examining the elements of an ethical framework to ensure the ethical use of 6G technology and assessing capacity-building needs.

## Methodology

- The project will involve primary research (multi-stakeholder consultations, key informant interviews, expert consultations, etc.) and secondary research in India and Australia. There will be four research reports as per the research agenda.
- Based on research findings, physical and online events would be organised with participation from Indian-Australian government representatives, regulators, experts, policymakers, civil society organisations, intergovernmental organisations, standard bodies associations, market players, etc. Opeds,

briefing papers, and policy briefs based on the research findings will be written and widely disseminated via e-forums and social media.

- The project will also endeavour to form a network of research organisations, mainly from India and Australia, which will help gather research inputs and amplify research outputs. Capacity building needs to achieve the project objectives will also be a part of the research.

## Envisaged Outcomes

- Strengthened India-Australia strategic partnership and cooperation in cyber and critical telecommunication technologies, specifically those related to 6G;
- Enhanced cooperative environment between Quad and Quad Plus countries in the Indo-Pacific region to cyber and critical technologies;
- Increased collaboration between India-Australia businesses in 6G, including cyber security, Internet of Things, quantum computing, etc;
- Prioritised market access to Indian and Australian businesses in Australia and India, respectively, with respect to 6G network equipment and digital services; and
- Increased confidence in the digital markets in India and Australia.

## Project Duration

18 Months (March 2022-August 2023)

