

**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Science and Technology**  
**Department of Biotechnology**

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**Monthly Cabinet Summary, February -2021**

**I. Important policy decisions taken and major achievements during the month:**

**(i) Celebration of 35<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day of DBT**

Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, New Delhi celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 through virtual mode. On the occasion, BRITE awards were conferred under following categories.

- a. Har Gobind Khorana-Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (15 awards)
- b. S. Ramachandran-National Bioscience Award for Career Development (10 awards)
- c. Janaki Ammal-Natioanl Women Bioscientist Award (3 awards; 1 under Senior category and 2 under Young category)
- d. Tata Innovative Fellowship (5 awards)
- e. Biotech Product, Process Development and Commercialisation Award (5 awards)

**(ii) Biotech - PRIDE (Promotion of Research and Innovation through Data Exchange) Policy:**

As per the direction of Cabinet Secretariat, the comments of Department of Expenditure, Department of Legal Affairs and Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade are being sought on the Cabinet Note on Biotech-PRIDE Policy.

**(iii) Himalayan Bioresource Mission**

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Hon'ble Minister of Science & Technology, MoH&FW and Earth Sciences launched the "Himalayan Bioresources Mission" on the occasion of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Day of DBT-ILS (18<sup>th</sup> February 2021). This mission's major emphasis will be on the development of rich bioresources of Himalaya and their sustainable utilization.

**(iv) Measures taken by DBT to address COVID-19**

**a. Mission COVID Suraksha – The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission**

"Mission COVID Suraksha – The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission" is being implemented by BIRAC. Under the Mission, various review meetings were conducted. A total of 2 Vaccine candidates, 3 facilities and 8 clinical trial sites have been recommended for support.

**b. Partnerships for Accelerating Clinical Trials (PACT) initiative**

DBT through BIRAC and CDSA has initiated the Partnerships for Accelerating Clinical Trials (PACT) and is working closely to strengthen capacities for facilitating phase III clinical trials of COVID vaccines in friendly nations in association with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The 2<sup>nd</sup> series of the training commenced on 05<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and four sessions of GCP (Good Clinical Practices) have been

held in February 2021; which saw participation from more than 200 attendees from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bhutan, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Somalia and Vietnam.

**c. National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI)**

The Department participated in the Meeting of the Standing Technical Sub-Committee (STSC) of NTAGI, held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to discuss the list of priority research studies regarding COVID-19 vaccines and review the dosing interval of the Covishield vaccine.

**d. Testing/Diagnostics**

The City /Regional clusters have been established in a Hub and Spoke model to scale-up testing of COVID-19 samples in government institutions across the country. The Hubs are Government laboratories approved by respective Ministries /Departments (DBT, DST, CSIR, DAE, DRDO, ICAR etc) as per ICMR guidelines. So far 21 City /Regional clusters have been established and over 29.89 lakh samples have been tested. To further enable testing access to rural India, the I-lab (infectious disease lab)- mobile lab for Covid testing launched by Hon'ble Minister on 18<sup>th</sup> Jun, 2020 has performed about 14858 tests in the Faridabad region. DBT has provided manpower support to all the hubs to continue testing.

**(v) BioSafety**

a. The Department reviewed 30 applications in 199<sup>th</sup> and 33 applications in 200<sup>th</sup> meetings of Review Committee of Genetic Manipulation (RCGM) on 04<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021, respectively. These applications include Import/Export/Transfer/ Receive, information items and Pre-clinical toxicity studies for Biopharma, and Import/Export/Transfer/Receive and Event selection Trial for Agriculture. After deliberation on each application, appropriate decision was taken by the RCGM.

b. During the month, 26 Institutional Biosafety Committees were constituted on IBKP portal.

**(vi) Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Cases:** The comments of the Department were communicated to DGFT on request 17 applications of SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies) items.

**(vii) New projects funded based on RFP in any specific area**

**a. BIOTECH URJIT (University Research Joint Industry Translational) CLUSTER**

Department has invited proposals to create Biotechnology URJIT (University Research Joint Industry Translational) Cluster in the country. 19 LoIs were received against the call, last date to submit the full proposal is 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**(viii) Societal outreach of DBT**

a. During the celebration of 35<sup>th</sup> DBT Foundation Day on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2021, a webinar on “**35 years of Biotechnology Growth in India - An exciting journey**”, an e-book-**DBT fight against COVID: From Virus to Vaccine** and an e-compendium from the **Animal Biotechnology and Aquaculture** division of the Department were launched.

b. The Webinar entitled “**Development of Covid 19 Vaccine – India a Global Hub**” was organized jointly by the DBT and IIC on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.

- c. During the launch of “Himalayan Bioresources Mission” on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021, a series of brainstorming sessions were organised to define the programme for each of the verticals.

**d. First Hub: Facilitation of Innovation and Regulations for Start-Ups And Innovators**

FIRST HUB is a facilitation unit set up by DBT at BIRAC to address the queries of Innovators. With regards to prevailing situation around globe, FIRST HUB sessions are being held every alternate Friday during a month to solve the queries of innovators. For the month of February, sessions for COVID-19 were conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021 and over 6 queries clarified. Representatives from CDSCO, ICMR, NIB, GeM, KIHT, BIS, DBT and BIRAC were available to take queries on Regulatory Pathways, Funding Opportunities, Public Procurement, IVD testing and validation, Standards and Specifications, Manufacturing and testing infrastructure support.

- e. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Webinars in the series of IBSC awareness programme for researchers was hosted through Video Conferencing on 11th and 25th Feb 2021, respectively.

**(ix) International Cooperation**

- a. An introductory meeting on India-Sweden Joint Innovation Partnership (JIP) was held on 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 with Ambassador Mr. Tanmaya Lal,
- b. The 13<sup>th</sup> Joint Steering Committee on Science and Technology Cooperation meeting between the European Union (EU) and India was held virtually on 12th February 2021. Mr Jean-Eric Paquet, Director-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission (EC) represented the EU; Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, DST and Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, DBT represented India.
- c. The joint Selection panel meeting between DBT and Medical Research Council and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), UK under the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for evaluation of the 30 proposals under “UK-India COVID-19 Partnership Initiative” was held on 23-24 February, 2021 virtually.

**(x) Publications & Patents**

There have been **76** research publications and 8 patents filed/granted by the Autonomous Institutes of the Department.

**(xi) Technology developed/Commercialized through R&D projects supported by DBT as well as AIs of DBT: 1**

- a. Dr. Minhaj Sirajuddin Assistant Investigator/Scientist E at InStem, Bangalore has developed an intracellular fluorescence based sensor to detect microfilaments inside cells red tyrosination sensor.. This technology has been licensed (non-exclusive) to a Canadian company, Applied Biological Materials, Inc.
- b. Covid-Anosmia Checker Technology from DBT-RGCB, Thiruvananthapuram transferred to INSTIGATOR E-SUPPORTING SERVICES PRIVATE LTD
- c. DBT-RGCB, Thiruvananthapuram Transferred the technology Uttroside B to the multi-national company, Q Biomed and received First milestone payment from QBiomed Received Orphan Drug Designation to Uttroside B

**II. Compliance Report on Important Matters/Issues**

(i) **Important policy matters held up on account of prolonged inter-ministerial consultations: N/A**

(ii) **Compliance of Cabinet/Cabinet Committee decisions: N/A**

No. of COS decisions pending for compliance	Proposed action plan/timelines for compliance of COS decisions	Remarks
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(iii) **No. of cases of ‘sanction for prosecution’ pending for more than three months: Nil**

(iv) **Particulars of cases in which there has been a departure from the Transaction of Business: Nil**

(v) **Status of implementation of e-governance:**

Total No. of active files: 12493	Total No. of e-files generated during January, 2021: 412
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(vi) **Status of Public Grievances:**

No. of Public Grievances redressed during month:63	No. of Public Grievances pending at the end of the month: 10
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(vii) **Information on the specific steps taken by the Ministry/ Department for utilization of the Space, Technology based tools and application in Governance and Development: Nil**

(viii) **a. Confirmation that the incumbency details of all posts in the Ministry/Department and its organizations falling under the purview of the ACC have been updated on AVMS:** It is confirmed that the incumbency details of all the posts in the Ministry/Department (both Autonomous institutes and PSUs under DBT) falling under the purview of the ACC have been updated on AVMS.

**b. Status regarding compliance of the directions of ACC. A paragraph on Cases in which the ACC directions have not been compiled with distinct heading:** It is confirmed that the directions of ACC are complied with.

**c. Status of cases where recommendations from PESB have been received but the proposals are yet to be submitted to the ACC Secretariat:** It is stated that the same may be treated as ‘Nil’

(ix) **Status of Government e- Marketplace (GeM):**

Procurement made by the department through GeM for the month of February, 2021 is Rs. 11,80,112/-.