

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

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**Monthly Cabinet Summary, March -2020**

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

**(i) International Cooperation**

- 1. UK-India Industrial Waste Challenge:** A joint mid-term review *cum* workshop on techno-scientific progress of the five (5) projects funded under "**UK-India Industrial Waste Challenge-2017**" was held on the **2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2020** at the **Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB), Mumbai**. The projects were funded jointly by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), New Delhi, Innovate UK, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The projects offer approaches to obtain high-value products using waste generated from sugar factories and paper industries as well as reduction in waste generation by process optimization. Investigators, post-doctoral fellows, and Ph.D. students from 10 Indian, and 8 UK Institutes/Universities actively participated in this review *cum* workshop. The event also saw the participation of 19 delegates from 15 Industries across India and UK.
- 2. Indo-Korea Joint Network Centre:** The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), New Delhi **announced a joint call for Proposal for Indo-Korea Joint Network Centre under International Cooperation with South Korea**. Call for Proposals is aimed at enabling Indian and Korean scientists from academia and laboratories to carry out joint research by leveraging already existing infrastructure and funding available with the partners at both sides through a linkage established by a Joint Network Centre (JNC). Joint Network Centre aims to encourage joint project implementation on focal areas of thematic and knowledge research through networking, paving way to sustainable interactions by promoting excellence and developing long term relationship based on synergy of activities. Network Centre will also provide opportunities for integrating research with education.

**(ii) Medical Biotechnology**

- 1. Research Strategy for immediate response and long-term preparedness to combat COVID-19 infection:** The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) through series of meetings developed a rapid Research Strategy for immediate response as well as long-term preparedness to combat COVID-19 infection. Laboratories of Department's eleven (11) Autonomous Institutes have been identified and engaged as part of the laboratory expansion process to augment the

diagnostic capacity in order to support ICMR's efforts for COVID-19 diagnosis. DBT and its Public Sector undertaking, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), recognizing the urgent need for accelerated development of vaccines and therapeutics against novel coronavirus have published a "**Request for Proposal (RFP) for COVID-19 Research Consortium**" to develop diagnostics, vaccines, novel therapeutics and repurposing of drugs. Under Ind-CEPI mission, DBT has strategically engaged with CEPI (Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations) on the call for '**Proven vaccine technologies, applicable for large scale manufacturing, for rapid response against novel coronavirus, 2019-nCoV**'.

2. **Rapid Response Regulatory Framework for COVID 19:** The Department has developed a rapid response regulatory framework for COVID 19 to deal with applications for development of vaccine, diagnostics, prophylactics and therapeutics. An Empowered Committee of RCGM and CDSCO was constituted to examine and recommend the applications for approval as per agreed timeframe.
  3. **Strengthening healthcare technology ecosystem in the country:** The Biomedical engineering division of the Department has announced a national call to develop medical technology innovators through a fellowship program and to support building of indigenous healthcare technology products and their deployment into public health care system of the country.
  4. **Industry consultation on Biomanufacturing hub:** Secretary, DBT along with the senior DBT and BIRAC officials held an extensive consultation with industry stakeholders for defining the strategy towards achieving \$100 billion biomanufacturing by 2024. Based on the deliberation a committee under the leadership of Dr. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw has been constituted to bring about a white paper on this.
- (iii) **Data Storage and Sharing**
1. **Indian Biological Data Centre:** The Department of Biotechnology has formulated the 'Biological Data Storage, Access and Sharing Policy of India' through extensive expert consultation with different Govt. agencies and stakeholders in conformity to the principles of National Data Sharing and accessibility policy 2012 (NDSAP-2012), Government of India. The cabinet note for approval of this Biological data policy has been submitted. The department has sanctioned a Pilot Phase-I project on 13.03.2020 for a period of two years to Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB), Faridabad for setting up Indian Biological Data Centre.
- (iv) **Societal Outreach:**
1. **The Department is supporting a project entitled "Establishment of CAU-DBT Rural Innovation Clusters for livelihood security in Aspirational Districts of North East Hill Region" in the Chandel district (Aspirational district) of Manipur.** The major objective of this project is to establish a

model center for pineapple value chain and act as technology and knowledge hub. Project will help enhancing farmers' income and bridge knowledge gap of potential entrepreneurs interested in pineapple processing. The project also focuses on skill development of rural unemployed youth of this Aspirational district in the north eastern part of the country. **Under this project**, a two days Hands' on training programme was organised on 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 which was attended by 32 farmers/entrepreneurs (24 women and 8 men) from Christian Village of Chandel district within the age group of 25-35 years. The attendees were imparted hands on training on processing and value addition of pineapple and locally available underutilised fruits into pickles and candy products. Several small processing tools such as pineapple cutting machine and ginger/turmeric washers were distributed to the small farmers for starting local processing units with objective to enhance income. Discussions were held regarding ideas and technological know-how which can be implemented during planting until the plantation bears fruit.

**(v) Biosafety and Regulations**

1. **The 180<sup>th</sup> meeting of Review Committee of Genetic Manipulation (RCGM):** Meeting was conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. During the meeting, the Committee considered 69 applications including information items submitted by the various applicants. After deliberation on each application, appropriate decision was taken by the RCGM.
2. The Department organized a **Stakeholder consultation meeting on draft document on Genome Edited Organisms: Regulatory Framework and Guidelines for Risk Assessment** on 12.03.2020.
3. **Institutional Biosafety Committees:** During the month, **52 Institutional Biosafety Committees** have been approved on Indian Biosafety Knowledge Portal i.e. IBKP portal.
4. **DGFT Cases:** The comments of the Department were communicated to DGFT on one application on fixation of input/output (I/O) norms.

**(vi) Publications & Patents**

During the month **47** research publications and **9 patents (4 granted and 5 filed)** were reported by the Autonomous Institutes of the Department.

**(vii) Technology/products developed by the Autonomous Institutes: Four (4)**

- a. Vaccine developed against epsilon toxin of *Clostridium perfringens* using peptides corresponding to immune-dominant epitopes of epsilon toxin
- b. A process for the production of nearly zero calorie sweet sugar from fruit or vegetable plants, plant parts and their extracts and residues has been developed.
- c. Process for production of levulinic acid from agri-residue waste in single-pot reactor setup has been developed
- d. A stress inducible hybrid promoter has been engineered that shows stronger activity than CaMV35S promoter in both leaf and root tissue under salicylic acid and jasmonic acid treatment.

## 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) **Rules or established policy of the Government: N/A**

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

Total No. of active files: 7869	Total No. of e-files generated during March, 2020: 83
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(vii) **Status of Public Grievances:**

No. of Public Grievances redressed during month: 49	No. of Public Grievances pending at the end of the month: 71
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(viii) **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**

(ix) **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.

(x) **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.

(xi) **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’

(xii) **Status of Government e- Marketplace (GeM):** Procurement made through GeM for the month of March, 2020 is Rs. 28,05,588/-.