



Industry-Academia Collaborative Mission for Accelerating Discovery Research to Early Development for Biopharmaceuticals

Innovate in India (i3)

“I see startups, technology and innovation as exciting and effective instruments for India’s transformation” Prime Minister Narendra Modi

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In a bid to create a globally competitive biopharmaceutical industry that addresses the country’s major concerns around barriers to affordable healthcare, ***innovate in India (i3)*** program was launched, by the Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forest & Climate Change Dr. Harsh Vardhan, on 30th June 2017 in New Delhi.

The 250 million USD program of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology, is a first- of-its-kind mission that brings together industry and academia to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the biopharmaceutical sector. This flagship program of the GOI in collaboration with World Bank, will be implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a Public Sector Enterprise, set up by DBT.

The Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan stated “This Mission is anticipated to be a game changer for the Indian Bio-pharmaceutical industry. It aspires to create an enabling ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the sector”. The programme will specifically focus on the development of new vaccines, bio-therapeutics, diagnostics and medical devices to better address the rising burden of diseases in the country. It will also bring isolated Centres of excellence together, enhance regional capabilities and strengthen the current bio-clusters network in terms of capacities as well as quantity and quality of output.

Expanding on the scope of the program Dr. K. VijayRaghavan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology & Chairman BIRAC shared, that “This endeavor will help nurture next- generation technical skills; promote entrepreneurship; and support institutions in adoption of global innovations, technologies, and licensing models. It will provide young entrepreneurs the confidence as well as the systemic support to pursue their aspirations in biotechnological innovation, and transform India into a global hub for cutting-edge biotechnology research and development”.

The oversight to the program would be provided by the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee comprising of members from various Ministries; and would be supported by Program Technical Advisory Group comprising of global and national leaders from industry and academia. The program thereby stands unique in its approach as it becomes a cradle to innovate, co-create and co-facilitate scientific discoveries and offers young entrepreneurs an avenue to engage with the best in the industry.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Renu Swarup, Senior Adviser DBT & MD, BIRAC shared, “We undertook an extensive landscaping study to identify critical gaps impeding growth and innovation in the Biopharma sector. Taking cognizance of these gaps, i3 is focussed on targeted measures to develop platform technologies for product validation, link disparate institutions to strengthen clinical trial networks, promote partial de-risking for novel products, and build capacities in emerging areas such as translational bioinformatics, bioethics etc.” With an aim to provide a level playing field for new entrants, the program would open calls for research proposals beginning August and roll-out in October this year.

The Mission was launched in the presence of Dr. K. VijayRaghavan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology; Junaid Ahmad, Country Director, World Bank India; dignitaries from the concerned Ministries: Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, DG- ICMR; Dr. J.P Prakash; Secretary Department of Pharmaceuticals, Dr. GN Singh DCGI and

DBT officials.

The program launch occasion was also graced by the presence of eminent scientists from academia and representatives from the Indian industry. It promises to boost the growth curve for domestic biopharma in India by accelerating the translation of research concepts into viable products, enabling sustainable networks for collaboration between industry and academia, and supporting entrepreneurial ecosystem amongst many others.

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