

## DBT's BIRAC approves Bio-incubator at Banaras Hindu University under Bio-NEST programme

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New Delhi, January 02: Department of Biotechnology's Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has approved the setting up of a bio-incubator at Banaras Hindu University under its 'Bioincubators Nurturing Entrepreneurship for Scaling Technologies' (Bio-NEST) programme. The facility will be set up at a cost of Rs. six crore.



BIRAC had initiated the Bio-Nest programme as part of an effort to promote the biotech innovation ecosystem in the country. Enterprising ideas in the biotech sector need incubation support of a different kind from the IT sector. They need a landing space to test their ideas, run their operations, have access to high end instrumentations and locate in a place where they connect with other start ups and mentors.

The incubators set up under Bio-NEST programme meet all these requirements. They provide incubation space to start ups and entrepreneurs and enable interactions between the industry and the academia for efficient exchange of knowledge and facilitate technical and business mentorship. Among other things, they are equipped to help the startups in terms of intellectual property and technology management, and mobilization of resources. They act as a networking platform.

On January 16, 2016, Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi had announced a 'Startup India Action Plan'. This envisages to have at least 2,000 startups in the country by 2020. To make this happen, there is a need to create bio-incubation spaces that are world class and that can provide cutting edge access to the best environs for propelling innovative ideas towards product commercialization. The Bio-NEST programme is designed to help this process.

The growing biotech startup ecosystem would require either scaling of existing bioincubation space in current biotech hubs or creation of new bio-incubation space at nascent hubs that have the potential to become bigger biotech hubs in the next decade. Further, the creation of new bio- incubation space should be cognizant about the differential needs of varied nature of biotech startups- especially those that are medtech (including medical electronics hardware), biopharma, agri-biotech and biomaterials.

Besides supporting establishment of new incubators under the control of State Government biotechnology councils or science and technology councils and at academic and research institutes, Hospitals and other such organizations, the Bio-NEST programme also offer assistance to strengthening and updating already existing incubators.

Keywords: startups, intellectual property, technology management, resource mobilization, networking platform