

A page from India's story to make a desi COVID-19 vaccine: DBT-THSTI steps up to become DBT's nodal centre for COVID-19 vaccine development support



Team from CEPI at THSTI in August, 2019. L-R: Gunnstein Norheim, Dawn O Connell, Gagandeep Kang, Richard Wilder, Melanie Saville, Amrita Sekhar, Arun Kumar, Debra Yeskey. Source: THSTI Image Repository

The DBT's Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (DBT-THSTI), Faridabad was enabled as a key component of the Ind-CEPI programme of Department of Biotechnology in 2019 to establish a translational assay laboratory and develop Biosafety Level-3 facilities to support the development of vaccines against emerging infectious diseases.

The early preparatory work led to THSTI being able to rapidly ramp up the establishment of assays and model systems to support vaccine developers in India to advance their programmes. THSTI is now working in collaboration with companies involved in vaccine development such as Mynvax and Zydus Cadila for evaluation of samples from their pre-clinical studies to for neutralising antibodies titres against live virus are being determined by micro- and plaque reducing neutralisation assays. The vaccine candidates which induce appropriate immune response and neutralising antibodies titres would be further evaluated in hamster and transgenic Ace2 mice model of infection and challenge.

At the time of writing this report, THSTI was also in discussion with several other vaccine companies to support them for pre-clinical and clinical studies.

Link: <https://thsti.res.in/index.php>

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Contact person:

Dr. Siuli Mitra (smitra@thsti.res.in)