Ministry of Science & Technology

Department of Biotechnology launches Programme for “Strengthening Clinical Trial Research Capacity in Neighbouring Countries”

The programme will help neighbouring countries and LMICs to build capacities for Covid-19 vaccine trials: Secretary, DBT

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The Department of Biotechnology, Government of India through the Ind-CEPI mission (**India Centric Epidemic Preparedness**)for Rapid Vaccine Development and Supporting Indian Vaccine Development which is aligned with the **Global Initiative of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations** (CEPI), aims to strengthen the development of vaccines and associated competencies/technologies for the diseases of epidemic potential in India. One of the key focus areas of the mission is to support capacity building and regional networking with LMICs(Lowand Middle Income Countries).

In the current COVID19 Pandemic situation it is important to build capacities for clinical trials of vaccine. Keeping with the principles outlined by our Science Diplomacy initiatives, DBT hasinitiated the First phase of the **“Training program to strengthen clinical trial research capacity for neighbouring countries”** in partnership with Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The objective of these trainings would be to support researchers and investigator teams for enhancing and strengthening their clinical trial capabilities for conducting clinical trials in compliance with ICH-GCP (International Conference on Harmonisation - Good clinical practice). Through,this training program and knowledgesharing efforts, Govt of India is fulfilling its commitment of building various technical capacities in its neighbouring countries. Efforts to network with South Asia, ASEAN and African regions for this purpose would be aided through Ind-CEPI.

The First online orientation to this training program was conducted on 22nd Sep 2020.Speaking on the occasion **Dr Renu Swarup, Secretary, DBT and Chairperson, BIRAC** said that building clinical trial capacity in our neighbouring countries and all LMICs is a priority for the Department and this initiative is a step in the right direction under the Ind-CEPI mission.This will help our participating countries to build capacities for vaccine trials and for conducting Phase III trials for COVID 19 vaccines.

The training program which will extend for about 6-8 weeks will see participation of investigators, epidemiologists, clinicians and representatives from different departments fromNepal, Maldives, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Srilanka, Bhutan and Afghanistan. Senior Representatives from all these countries attended the “Orientation to the training program” held on 22ndSeptember, 2020. This was also attended by Senior representative from MEA, DBT, BIRAC and CDSA.

DBT, under the Ministry of Science & Technology, promotes the use and application of biotechnology in the areas of agriculture, healthcare, animal sciences, environment and industry.

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) is a not-for-profit Section 8, Schedule B, Public Sector Enterprise, set up by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India as an Interface Agency to strengthen and empower the emerging Biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.

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