

DBT provides funding support to COVID-19 industry projects

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16 proposals have been recommended for funding support



Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) had invited applications on COVID-19 Research Consortium. The first phase of the call ended on 30th March 2020 and around 500 applications were received from academia and Industry. The multi-tiered review process is ongoing and till date 16 proposals of devices, diagnostics, vaccine candidates, therapeutics and other interventions have been recommended for receiving funding support.

A multifaceted approach is being adopted to ensure that vaccine candidates utilizing different platforms and at different stages of development are fast tracked through this Research Consortium under funding from National Biopharma Mission.

Both, repurposing of existing vaccine candidates for immediate protection of high-risk groups and novel vaccine candidate development were considered while selecting proposals under this call. Funding support has been recommended to Cadila Healthcare Ltd for advancing the development of a DNA Vaccine candidate against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. and to Bharat Biotech International Ltd for COVID-19 vaccine candidate utilising the inactivated rabies vector platform.

Furthermore, for the Phase III human clinical trials study of recombinant BCG vaccine (VPM1002) planned in high-risk population, Serum Institute of India Private Limited (SIPL) will be supported. Development of a novel vaccine evaluation platform at National Institute of Immunology to support SARS-CoV-2 vaccine development has also been approved for financial support.

Production of purified immunoglobulin G, IgG, at commercial scale from COVID-19 convalescent sera and production of high titers of equine hyper immune globulin for the treatment of COVID infected patients on large scale will be supported at Virchow Biotech Pvt Ltd. Financial support to OncoSeek Bio Pvt Ltd will be provided to create an *in vitro* Lung Organoid model.

To boost indigenous production and to scale-up the production of molecular and Rapid diagnostic tests following companies will receive financial support: Mylab Discovery Solutions Pvt Ltd, Huwel Lifesciences, Ubio Biotechnology Systems Pvt Ltd, Dhiti Life Sciences Pvt Ltd, MagGenome Technologies Pvt Ltd, Bigtec Pvt Ltd and Yaathum Biotech Pvt Ltd.

Common shared facility to manufacture diagnostic kits and ventilators will be established at Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone

(AMTZ) under National Biopharma Mission of DBT to provide scale up production capacity to different manufacturers.

Development and deployment of contactless, affordable thermopile based ultrasonic sensors for screening of COVID-19 suspects and indigenous production of novel PPE for healthcare professionals will also be supported.