

Funding agencies play a constructive role

20 February 2013 | Views | By BioSpectrum Bureau

Funding agencies play a constructive role



International funding agencies play a pivotal role in promoting scientific research in India and beyond in the challenging areas of bioscience research in the human health, agriculture, green technologies and related sciences. Though it is well argued and rightly so, that India, since the last decade has increased its funding in bioscience research considerably and funding for a scientifically strong research problem is not at all an issue in India now.

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), government of India, through its various initiatives has launched funding programs for human health, animal health, agriculture, food technology and green energy for developing safe and affordable technologies and products in both basic and translational space for industries and academic institutes.

The expertise, these agencies bring in, are many folds, as they have experience in managing research projects across geographies. They bring strong project management experience which includes the identification of the right project, which has a clear unmet needs and the area of scientific problem is not to be congested so that the research program if successful will surely create the right impact. These agencies play a catalytic role in promoting scientific temper alongside the government funding agencies.

These global funding agencies also bring along hand- holding expertise in grant writing due to diligence of the research program like unmet need, the business plan, the regulatory pathway, IP strategy and the exit strategy of the program. A full 360 review process is built in the program, which is quite unique. This helps the applicant in understanding a way forward to his research program, what scientific path the researcher needs to follow and if there is any commercial exit possible in the program. The agencies provide mentorship to researcher to draw up a suitable business plan and draw up a follow on funding strategy if needed.

The other element the international agencies bring in is rigorous monitoring of project progress, which is quite helpful to researchers as the project are funded on SMART (simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) milestone. Every

tranche of the funds are linked to achieving a milestone, which are reviewed at regular intervals; this helps the researcher to manage the program effectively.

The international funding agencies play a constructive and synergistic role to the national agencies in building a strong research platform in India, which also leads to address the problems of a billion people in India as regard to food security, affordable healthcare, and green energy.