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Madhya Pradesh keen on promoting agribiotech and biopharma

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Having a vision of conservation and sustainable utilization of the bioresources of the state for the socio-economic growth of the citizens with biotechnology as a major tool, the government of Madhya Pradesh has put forward a well defined biotechnology policy in 2003. The government has set up Madhya Pradesh Biotechnology Council which is authorized to oversee the implementation of the policy, which aspires to coordinate and promote biotechnology sector in realms of education, research and industry with a perspective to develop skilled manpower who can be instruments in realizing the commitments as well as being future entrepreneurs. The council endeavors to act as link between academia, research and industry.

The government of Madhya Pradesh has created a separate Department of Biodiversity and Biotechnology and, established Biotechnology Council in 2003 and Biodiversity Board in 2005. What have been the achievements of the council and the board in the state?

The Department of Biodiversity and Biotechnology was created to bring the issues of biodiversity conservation and promotion of biotechnology into sharper focus. The Biodiversity Board is engaged in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources. A Biotechnology Policy was enunciated in 2003. The Council is mandated to oversee the implementation of the policy and promote education, research and industries in biotechnology sector. Currently, the Council is focusing on sponsoring training programs for students and faculty, supporting research projects, awarding fellowships to doctoral students, and promoting awareness generation. Realizing the need of providing quality education and encouraging research in life sciences, an Institute of Life Sciences and Technology is proposed to be established in the state under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode. To promote the development of biotechnology industries, a biotechnology park is proposed to be established near Indore under the PPP mode.

What is the current status of the biotechnology industry in Madhya Pradesh?

In Madhya Pradesh, the development of biotechnology industries is in a nascent stage. There are around 30 industrial units in the state. Majority of these units are of biopesticides/ biofertilizers, some are of breweries, a few have come up in recent years in areas of contract research and bioinformatics.

What are the areas that the government is keen on promoting?

The state is endowed with rich and diverse natural resources like forests, minerals, rare and valuable herbs and medicinal plants, and abundance of agro-biodiversity. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy with 73 percent population dependent on it. The state is the largest producer of oil seeds, pulses, gram, coriander and garlic. It ranks first in production of organic agri produce. The state would be keen to promote agribiotech and biopharma industries besides bioindustries, bioservices and bioinformatics.

What kind of programs or incentive schemes the state has in place to attract investments?

The industrial promotion policy of the state provides special incentives to biotechnology industries. Some of the important incentives include double floor space index, concession in land premium, rebate in lease rent, capital investment subsidy, interest subsidy on term loans, establishment of venture capital fund, concessions of a mega project with comparatively lesser investment.

What form of support can the companies expect from the state government?

The biotechnology companies can avail the advantages provided under the industrial policy of the state government.

What kind of the infrastructure does the state has for entrepreneurs who are keen on making investments in biotechnology space?

The state is poised to grow steadily. The geographical location of the state providing access to major markets, abundant availability of natural resources, fast growth rate, peaceful labor environment and availability of skilled manpower are some of the important features, which make the state an attractive investment destination.