

IKMC 2014: New Innovations & initiatives

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The conference, apart from the sessions, also included a few new initiatives and tie-ups. The Gates foundation, USAID and UKAID all feature prominently among them.

The first of the initiatives was that IKP will be partnering with USAID and Gates foundation to select and fund innovations in TB diagnostics and screening. 14 innovators will be selected from the applicants and a sum of \$1 million has been allocated for the same.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Nancy Godfrey, director of Health office, USAID, said that the number of TB cases have risen significantly, which is alarming considering that it was a curable disease.

USAID and BIRAC, with IKP have issued a second call for proposals from innovators who have interesting solutions for TB control. Apart from innovation, the criteria would be to look at cost effective, indigenous solutions with indicative target profiles to help in the fight against TB.

In another significant initiative for IKP, it will be the implementing partner for BIRAC's Biotechnology Ignition Grant Scheme. The fourth call for BIG is open now. This would be a grand focused challenge.

Dr Renu Swarup, from the ministry of Science and technology and head of BIRAC, said that it was very excited to be a part of the scheme. She added further, that finding a solution is one but there is a need to commercialize the same and ensure that it reaches the people.

The IKP has also exchanged a letter of Intent with the department of International development, UK or UKAID to partner in countries like South Asia and East Africa where the international body already has a significant presence. Ms Sabina Bindra Barnes, from UKAID said that they were very delighted to come on board.

