

***Government of West Bengal***  
***Department of Biotechnology***  
**Statement of Activities**

**Overall performance during 2007-2008**

The Department of Biotechnology, Government of West Bengal, was established during late 2006. The budgetary allocation under Plan head of expenditure made for 2007-2008 was Rs.6 crores and for 2008-2009 it was Rs.7 crores. Needless to say that there had not been any Plan expenditure made prior to this period.

Overall performance during 2007-2008

Promotion of Biotechnology

The objectives of promotion of biotechnology are to increase the acceptability of the technology and improve its impact on society. Meeting was held with the zilla sabhadhipatis and District Magistrates of all the districts of the state in April 2007 to spread general awareness for the optimum utilization of biotechnology and to encourage and facilitate introduction of biotechnology at the grass-root level to strengthen the economy of the state.

The Department website has been launched for dissemination of biotechnology information and e-governance. The Biotechnology Policy 2002 is available in the said website [www.biotechbengal.gov.in](http://www.biotechbengal.gov.in) for comments by multiple stakeholders. A publicity brochure for the Department has been published with the aim to promote the field of biotechnology and attract investments in the biotech sector in West Bengal.

It has been decided in meetings chaired by the Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal during June and August 2007 to take up cultivation of Jatropha on waste land as a source of biofuel in the State. The Department of Biotechnology has been nominated the Nodal Agency for this project.

Secretary Department of Biotechnology was part of the official Biotechnology Mission to BIO 2007 in partnership with the CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) at Boston, USA during May 2007. Business meetings were held with companies like Millennium Pharmaceuticals Ltd., Genzyme, Novartis and Biogen Idec.

The Department also participated in the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) Agriculture Knowledge Series on Agricultural Biotechnology: Opportunities and Challenges at Kolkata in August 2007 and in the ASSOCHAM 5th. Knowledge Millennium Summit held during September 2007 in New Delhi. Effective presentations were made from the Department to project the strengths of West Bengal in the biotech sector. Different research institutes based in the state participated in the exhibition under the banner of the Department which was a Partner State at the Millennium Summit.

A one-day seminar was arranged in July 2007 for awareness generation on the biosafety regulations relating to development, field trials and commercialization of transgenic crops in West Bengal. Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL) along with Department of Biotechnology, Government of West Bengal and Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal organized the event with funding from Department of Biotechnology and Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India. Representatives from concerned departments and agencies of Government of West Bengal, different research and development (R&D) institutes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and media personnel participated in the lively discussion.

### ***Support to Scientific institutions / professional bodies***

#### **National Institute of Bio-Medical Genomics (NIBMG)**

It has been decided in a meeting held in the Prime Minister's Office in November 2007 to establish National Institute of Bio-Medical Genomics., an autonomous institute of Department of Biotechnology, Government of India in the state of West Bengal during 11th Five Year Plan. The Planning Commission, Government of India has indicated their willingness to support the proposal. The Department of Biotechnology in association with the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal will extend all possible help in the establishment of this institute in West Bengal. It has been proposed that the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), which also has been awarded to the state, should be located in the same area as NIBMG to leverage the maximum advantage from the two institutes.

### ***Scientific Research in Biotechnology: Assistance to scientific bodies***

Eight project proposals for partial assistance to scientific bodies in West Bengal to fund scientific R&D in biotechnology were sanctioned, mainly in the areas of bioinformatics, biofuels and overall societal development.

The eight scientific research and promotional projects are as follows :

1. Performance and emission test along with durability test for different Tree Borne Oils (TBOs) in agricultural diesel generator set.
2. Study of anemia among rural women of some districts of West Bengal with a view to use biotechnological methods.
3. Upgradation of infrastructure for DOEACC bioinformatics O/A/B level scheme.
4. Promotion of Lac Cultivation – an Income Alternative for the Forest Fringe Dwellers of Ayodhya Hill, Purulia, West Bengal.
5. Collection and Identification of Mycorrhizal Edible Macro fungi from the Forest of South Bankura District (Block Raipur and Ranibandh) and Development of their in situ Propagation System.
6. Molecular documentation of Eastern Himalayan Rhododendrons based on RAPD markers.
7. Establishment of a Resource Centre for Hardening of Tissue Cultured Plantlets at the Women's Technology Park, Sagar, Sundarban, WB.
8. Biotchnological studies in Tea Demonstration & Field trials of new tea plant genotypes at Nagar Berubari, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal.

### ***Biotechnology Park at Kharagpur***

The Department of Biotechnology, Government of West Bengal is setting up a Biotech Park at Kharagpur in association with Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur and West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. Land acquisition has started for the project and 100 acres has been acquired. Rs.5 crores has been sanctioned towards a part of the said acquisition of land. A delegation was received in November 2007 from the University of California, Berkeley (UCB), U.S.A. The meeting was chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the representatives expressed the wish to be a partner in the Biotechnology Park at Kharagpur.