

Government of West Bengal
Department of Biotechnology
Statement of Activities

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
DURING 2009-2010

This year the annual budget allocation is Rs.8.00 crores. The department has been undertaking the following works/projects/schemes to promote biotechnology in the State of West Bengal.

National Institute of Bio-Medical Genomics:

In the past year the Government of India has given the approval and sanction of a part of expenditure for setting up of “National Institute for Bio-medical Genomics” (an autonomous institution under Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India). The space for the set up was shown to the DBT at Kalyani by the Health and Family Welfare Department of this State, out of which it has chosen about 10,000 sq.ft for the afore-mentioned purpose. The construction of infrastructure has already started in full swing.

BIOTECH PARK, KHARAGPUR:

100.32 acres of land has been acquired near Kharagpur in the district of West Medinipur for setting up a Biotech Park in association (collaboration) with Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. The Biotechnology Department is now looking for a private partner to develop this park on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. The physical possession of the land is being taken. A notice for EoI (expression of interest) has been floated to select a private partner for the development of this Biotech Park.

PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENT:

As a continuation of the previous years’ schemes, one scheme has been granted the second installment as the organization has submitted the utilization certificate late. As for this year, the Departmental Technical Committee has provisionally approved only one scheme, “Fluorosis in Birbhum district of West Bengal and its remedial measure: A bio-mathematical approach” amounting to around Rs.46 lakhs (two-years duration). After formal approval, subject to submission, of a few documents the amount may be released soon. Few other novel research proposals like “Development and validation of PCR-based diagnostic test for rapid detection of emergent pathogens” etc have been submitted. The departmental technical committee will sit shortly to assess these new proposals.

In June, 2009, the Department participated in a 3(three) day-long, International seminar, “Bangalore Bio-2009” in Bangalore, Karnataka. It is perhaps the biggest of its kind held in India. Hundreds of biotech companies, investors and scientists from India and abroad participated in the said conference. It has been made possible by the Department to arrange meetings of 4 (four) biotech-based companies and so also the functionaries of ABLE (Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises) with the Hon’ble Minister-in-Charge and all of them showed much interest in coming to West Bengal as they feel the talent-pool in West Bengal is of a very high quality in case of biotechnology. The follow up actions are being taken.

Efforts are on regarding setting up of a bio-incubator which is a *sine qua non* for any biotech based industry to be attracted to come to any state. For this, the Department is trying to set up a

common facility centre and so also training of manpower, so that these projects take of very soon.

It is a pleasure to state that the “West Bengal Biotech Development Corporation Limited” has recently been duly incorporated as a public limited company as per the Companies Act., 1956. It is now possible for this Department to handle the commercial and promotional aspects of Biotech Parks, different projects, schemes etc.

Mission for bio-diversity conservation and Bio-industrial Development in West Bengal.

The Department of Bio-Technology is earnestly trying to create an environment to augment the biotechnology by generating all out efforts in every sphere of human activities in this state like in agriculture, modern medicine and health care, pollution control, biodiversity conservation and bio-industrial development with the endeavour to ensure scientific and technological empowerment of the people of this state by utilizing the fullest natural as well as human potentialities which would result in the holistic societal development of West Bengal.

With this end in view, all the District Magistrates have been requested to draw up an action plan for the next five years to *i)* improve the quality of life through the application of appropriate method of biotechnology, *ii)* to optimally focus on resources for R & D in biotechnology, *iii)* to encourage and facilitate introduction of biotechnology at the grass-root level to strengthen the economy of the state, *iv)* to encourage agro-based biotechnological activities for the promotion of village level industries in the state, *v)* to develop competent human resources at different levels in the field of biotechnology, *vi)* to support employment generating schemes in the field of biotechnology and the allied ones. *vii)* To generate a wide range of publicity among the rural as well as the urban people for the intensive awareness about biotechnology. The department has been on the way to publish several booklets/leaflets in this regard very soon. *viii)* This Department has planned to undertake a lot of field visits in different districts in North Bengal and in South Bengal where different Biotech projects have been undergoing and so also to generate general awareness about the same. As suggested by the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Information Technology and Biotechnology, the Department has been arranging wide publicity in Bengali to promote rural or societal biotechnology and consequent employment generation. It is going to **publish a comprehensive booklet in Bengali in regard to various items of rural biotechnology that can be taken up by the marginal farmers, other individuals, co-operative societies and NGOs to promote the same in remote areas.** A unique lac cultivation project using an unconventional host plant (*Semialata Flaminga*) in Chandrakona-I block in West Medinipur has generated considerable enthusiasm among the local people as a source of alternative income.