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SOP for implementing the scheme allowing researchers at the BRIC - Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB) to have an equity stake in a scientific enterprise or create a spinoff while remaining in professional employment.

1. Purpose:

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the procedures for RGCB researchers to acquire equity stakes in scientific enterprises or establish spinoffs while retaining their professional responsibilities within the institute.

2. Scope:

This SOP applies to all permanently employed scientists and faculties at RGCB who have five years of regular service in BRIC institutes and are interested in pursuing entrepreneurial activities related to their research.

3. Definitions:

- Scientific Enterprise: A startup or business entity formed to commercialize research findings.
- Equity Stake: Ownership interest in a business, represented in shares.

4. Responsibilities:

- Researchers who want to engage in entrepreneurial activities: Submit applications to RGCB-Office of Technology Ventures (OTV) and comply with institutional requirements.
- Institutional Steering Committee: Evaluates and recommends the applications for approval by Competent Authority.
- Director of RGCB: Competent Authority for according approvals of the applications.

5. Procedure:

5.1 Application Process:

Step 1: Researchers wishing to participate must submit the application form (Form 1) to the Institutional Steering Committee (IPR Management Committee) through OTV.

Step 2: The application must include:

- Details of the scientific establishment or enterprise.
- A brief profile of the research and its commercialization potential.
- An outline of objectives, expected benefits to RGCB, and any relevant financial details
- An acceptance letter from the potential scientific enterprise as required.
- Confidentiality agreements as required.
- Position of the Scientist in Entity/Scientific Enterprise and extend of time to be devoted for the Scientist in Entity/Scientific Enterprise.

5.2 Evaluation Criteria:

- The Institutional Steering Committee will evaluate applications based on:

- Filling of invention disclosure or Patents in hand
- Innovation and commercialization potential of the proposed Scientific Enterprise.
- Alignment with RGCB's research goals and mission.
- Compliance with conflict of interest regulations.
- Ownership of the knowledge base.

5.3 Conflict of Interest Management:

- Researchers must disclose any potential conflicts of interest associated with their proposal.
- The committee will address these matters prior to final approval.

5.4 Approval Process:

- The committee will present their evaluation and recommendations to the Director of RGCB for final approval through OTV.
- If the Director himself/herself is the scientist seeking to create spinoff/ take equity, the DG of the BRIC will be the final approving authority in such cases.

5.5 IP and Transfer of Ownership:

- RGCB possess exclusive ownership of the Knowledge Base generated by the researchers at RGCB, hence due process will have to be followed.
- Licensing agreements will be established between the Scientist and RGCB to enable scientists / faculty to utilize IP for their startups, incorporating terms that encourage commercialization while safeguarding public interest. Both exclusive and non-exclusive licenses can be customized to meet the specific needs of the technology and market potential.
- If the Knowledge Base is co-owned or not exclusively owned by the Institute, all owners of the Knowledge Base must agree in writing to provide exclusive rights to the Entity/Scientific Enterprise.

5.6 Revenue Sharing:

- The revenue sharing between different parties is set at 60% for Scientists and 40% for RGCB. This implies that any profits generated from commercial ventures will be divided accordingly.

5.7 Incubation of faculty startup at RGCB

- Submit separate application for incubation as per the procedures of KRIBS-BioNest
- The evaluation criteria and selection process for incubatees, highlighting the focus on innovation, feasibility, and market potential will be done by KRIBS-BioNest.
- Adhere to the criteria and processes of KRIBS-BioNest to successfully graduate from the incubation program or transition of the startup out of the facility.

- Incubation charges for faculty startups will be the same as those for other incubates at KRIBS-BioNest, with the option to choose between the Kochi and Kazhakootam campuses.
- KRIBS-BioNest will facilitate linkage with funding agencies and investors that are specifically focused on supporting faculty-led startups, including options like government grants, seed funding, venture capital partnerships, private equity and incubator programs.

5.8 Time Commitment Management:

- Outline and submit to RGCB, a structured plan to allocate time effectively between RGCB duties and activities related to the scientific enterprise.
- Adhere to the guideline that external professional activities should not exceed 20% of working hours at RGCB.
- Submit monthly check-ins or time management to RGCB to ensure balance between research responsibilities and entrepreneurial endeavours.

5.9 Resource Utilization

- Scientist should submit the strategy for utilizing institutional resources responsibly, ensuring that RGCB's assets, knowledge base, and facilities are not compromised during entrepreneurial activities.
- Ensure compliance with institutional policies regarding the use of RGCB resources for external activities, including obtaining necessary approvals where applicable.
- Facility / user charges if any fixed by RGCB is to be remitted by the Scientist for the usage of the facility for the activities of the Entity/Scientific Enterprise.

6. Monitoring:

- Once an application is approved, researchers will provide regular updates to the Institutional Steering Committee through OTV regarding progress and compliance with the terms outlined in the approval.
- OTV will submit a yearly consolidated report of all such cases to the Director.

7. Reporting:

Researchers are required to submit Annual Reports summarizing:

- Progress on the development of the enterprise or spinoff.
- Any changes in the business structure or focus.
- Collaboration with RGCB and utilization of resources.
- Products Developed and its commercialization.
- Audited Annual Accounts of each Financial Year.
- Compliance to Statutory Authorities.

8. Documentation:

- All related documents such as applications, approvals, reports, and correspondence should be archived for a minimum of five years.

9. References:

- Department of Biotechnology's OM No. AI-99011/1/2023-MED-DBT-Part (3) dated 22/01/2025 on Operational Guidelines for Implementing Scientific Entrepreneurship and Research Commercialization at iBRIC.
- Department of Biotechnology's OM No. PID-14011/1/2022-MED-DBT dated 06-09-2023 on DBT Intellectual Property Guidelines- 2023.
- <https://rgcb.res.in/BioNest/>
- RGCB-Conflict of Interest Policy Document.

10. Approval:

This SOP has been reviewed and approved by:



Director, RGCB

Date of Approval: 21/03/2025

प्रोफेसर चन्द्रभास नारायणा
PROFESSOR CHANDRABHAS NARAYANA
FNASc, FASc, FRSC
निदेशक / DIRECTOR
राजीव गांधी जैव प्रौद्योगिकी केन्द्र
RAJIV GANDHI CENTRE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY
जैव प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY
भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
तिरुवनन्तपुरम - 695 014 / THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695 014