

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Task Force on Basic Plant Biology, Agriculture and Frontier Areas - Reconstitution

Secretary, DBT has Reconstituted Task Force on Plant Biotechnology as “**Basic Plant Biology, Agriculture and Frontier Areas**”. The composition of the reconstituted Committee is as follows:

1. **Prof. Arjula Ramachandra Reddy** - **Chairman**
Emeritus Professor,
School of Life Sciences
University of Hyderabad,
Gachibowli
Hyderabad- 500 046 A.P.
2. **Prof. J.P. Khurana** - **Co-chairman**
Head,
Deptt. of Plant Molecular Biology,
University of Delhi South Campus,
New Delhi- 110021
3. **Dr. G.L. Kaul,** - **Member**
Ex Vice Chancellor,
(Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat)
Flat 201, Sobha Coral,
Jakkur, Bangalore -560064
4. **Prof. Nikhil Chrungoo** - **Member**
Deptt. of Botany,
North Eastern Hill University,
Shillong, Meghalaya – 793022
5. **Prof. Usha Vijayaraghavan** - **Member**
Department of Molecular and Cell Biology,
Indian Institute of Science,
Bangalore - 560 012
6. **Dr. Vidya Gupta** - **Member**
Chief Scientist and Chair
Biochemical Sciences Division
National Chemical Laboratory
Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pashan,
Pune - 411008 (M.S.)

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| 7. | <p>Dr. R. Raina Sr. Scientist/Professor (Medicinal Plants/Plant Breeding) Deptt. of Forest Products, Dr. YSP University of Horticulture & Forestry, Solan - 173230, Himachal Pradesh</p> | - | Member |
| 8. | <p>Prof. D. Sudhakar Professor and Head Department of Plant Biotechnology Centre for Plant Molecular Biology & Biotechnology Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Coimbatore 641 003</p> | - | Member |
| 9. | <p>Dr. Sanjay Kapoor Associate Professor Department of Plant Molecular Biology University of Delhi South Campus Benito Juarez Road, New Delhi 110021</p> | - | Member |
| 10. | <p>Dr. Modhumita Dasgupta Scientist E, Division of Plant Biotechnology Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding P.B.No. 1061, Coimbatore – 641002</p> | - | Member |
| 11. | <p>Prof. Supriya Chakraborty Associate Professor, School of Life Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi -110067</p> | - | Member |
| 12. | <p>Dr. Ravi Maruthachalam Assistant Professor (Biology) School of Biology, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), CET Campus, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 016 Kerala</p> | - | Member |
| 13. | <p>Dr. K.S. Charak Adviser, DBT</p> | - | Member |
| 14. | <p>Dr. Meenakshi Munshi Director, DBT</p> | - | Member Secretary |

Terms of Reference:

- i. This Task Force (TF) will consider new projects and review progress of ongoing and completed projects in priority areas of Plant Biology and Agriculture including basic research; programme on fruits & vegetables, horticultural crops, cash crops, genomics and functional genomics, metabolomics studies; identification of useful genes, QTLs & validation of their function; all other projects which address basic relevant questions which have far reaching implications towards translational research etc.
- ii. The Task Force will be an independent expert group and will have the financial ceiling of Rs. 5.00 Crores for recommending the proposals for funding. Projects costing more than Rs. 5.00 Crores will be referred to the Apex Committee on Agriculture Biotechnology with the Task Force recommendations for final decision towards financial support by DBT.
- iii. The Committee will also recommend on-the spot evaluation/site visit as and when required.
- iv. The TF will also serve as an advisory group for the formulation of research and development policy/roadmap for DBT in the national context.
- v. The composition of the TF may be changed wholly or partially and new members may be included as and when deemed necessary for achieving the primary objective of the programme.
- vi. The TF will work in accordance with the guidelines for implementation of R&D programme adopted/ revised by the Department from time to time.
- vii. Committee members will be covered by the Policy on Conflicts of Interest and are required to declare any interests that could give rise to a conflict of interest with their role prior to commencement of the meeting. Members should also not offer advice to members of the scientific community on the DBT's/ TF policy and practices.
- viii. Global norms of potential conflict of interest will be followed, with members rescuing themselves in cases involving collaborators and colleagues, among other possibilities.
- ix. Project proposals coming from members, as Co-ordinator/ PIs/Co-PIs/Co-Is will be sent to another appropriate committee for consideration.

The Task Force will function as per following procedural guidelines:

- i. Submission of proposals will be only through online. As far as possible entire review process and decision making will be done electronically.
- ii. Normally Project Investigators will not be called for presentations to meetings unless specified by the TF. Members are expected to bring their laptops to meetings. If they are unable to do so, this should be informed to the DBT in advance so that alternative arrangements can be made.
- iii. The Chair and/or Co-Chair will, with the help of the DBT secretariat, allot projects to members for them to lead as primary, secondary and tertiary discussants.
- iv. While outside reviews will be solicited and presented by the DBT secretariat. The referee will be one component of the review process, which can proceed even if referee reports do not come in on time. The main discussion and decision-making process of projects during the meeting will be driven by identified primary, secondary and tertiary discussant members. The committee shall, in their minutes, provide written comments extensively justifying the decision made.
- v. Meetings for project consideration and progress review will be separated from meetings for other issues such as mentoring or policy matters.

- vi. Mentoring of research programmes will be undertaken as a separate activity and not conflated with review of PI-driven projects. Such mentoring will be intended to be done to support and encourage research in marginal situations such as universities, science colleges, medical/dental colleges, pharmacy colleges and veterinary colleges as well as in underprivileged areas of the country. Mentoring will not be undertaken for researchers from major national research institutions.
 - vii. Meeting schedules will be decided by extensive consultation, using e-aids such as www.doodle.com (which will be set up by chair, co-chair or member-secretary). Use of Tele- and Video- conferencing tools such as WebEx and GoTo Meetings will be encouraged. It will be the responsibility of DBT to ensure that accesses to these facilities are available at the meeting venue.
 - viii. The Department of Biotechnology will meet the expenditure towards TA/DA; sitting fee and other expenditure as per Government of India norms for organizing the TF and any other related meetings.
 - ix. The duration of the TF will be for a period of three years from the date of its 1st meeting or till further orders.
3. This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.

(Dr. Meenakshi Munshi)
Director/Scientist – ‘F’
Ph.2436 1035
Email: meenakshi29@dbt.nic.in

To,

1. The Chairman
2. All Committee Members

Copy of information to:

PPS to SBT