Research Development Innovation (RDI) funding for industry-backed projects to start by the end of this month: Dr Jitendra Singh

Technology Development Board (TDB) and the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) approved as the first Second-Level Fund Managers (SLFMs) under the RDI Fund, a ₹1 lakh crore initiative to catalyse private sector-led research and innovation

Union Minister for S&T chairs Science Secretaries' meeting to review innovation funding and reforms

Science ministries push thematic clustering of Startups at review meeting chaired by Dr. Jitendra Singh

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As a follow up to the announcement made by PM Shri Narendra Modi on November 3, 2025, the Research Development Innovation (RDI) funding for industry-backed projects will start by the end of this month, with the funding framework having entered into the execution phase, and two public sector institutions poised to start funding industry-backed projects.

This was disclosed following a review of the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund scheme at a meeting chaired by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh.

During the meeting, Dr. Jitendra Singh was briefed on the progress of the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) scheme, which was approved by the Union Cabinet on July 1 last year and formally rolled out on November 3 with the launch of its implementation guidelines, notice inviting applications and a dedicated digital portal by the Prime Minister. Officials informed the Minister that the scheme is aimed at supporting high-risk, high-impact research and strengthening linkages between laboratories, startups and industry.

The Department of Science & Technology (DST) has approved the Technology Development Board (TDB) and the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) as the first Second-Level Fund Managers (SLFMs) under the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund, a ₹1 lakh crore initiative to catalyse private sector-led research and innovation.

Under the approved implementation framework, TDB will act as the Second-Level Fund Manager for projects spanning all RDI sunrise and strategic sectors, while BIRAC will oversee initiatives in biotechnology and allied domains. Both organisations are expected to issue their first calls for proposals by the end of January 2026, facilitating early deployment of RDI Fund resources to innovation-driven ventures that have progressed beyond TRL-4.

The last date to receive applications from other Second Level Fund Managers is 31 January 2026. The other fund managers may be Alternate Investment Fund structure (AIF), Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), Non-Banking Finance Corporation (NBFC) and Focused Research Organization (FRO).

Dr. Jitendra Singh was informed that after the formal rollout of the RDI scheme, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) received a significant number of queries from stakeholders seeking clarification on the implementation guidelines. These were examined and addressed, following which the online portal was operationalised to receive applications for Second Level Fund Managers. As provided in the Cabinet note, the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) and the Technology Development Board (TDB) were invited on a nomination basis to take up this role.

The Minister was further briefed that the Empowered Group of Secretaries, at its meeting held on January 12, approved BIRAC and TDB as Second Level Fund Managers in line with the decision of the Executive Council of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF). Both organisations will receive ₹2,000 crore each in the first quarter, taking the initial allocation under the scheme to ₹4,000 crore, and are expected to issue calls for project proposals from Startups, companies and industry before the end of January.

Chairing the review, Dr. Jitendra Singh stressed the need for timely execution of the RDI scheme and close coordination among science departments. He emphasised that public funding for research and innovation must translate into measurable outcomes for industry and society, and took stock of steps being taken to streamline processes, including revisions to the implementation guidelines based on stakeholder feedback, to ensure transparency and ease of participation.

Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasised the need for closer coordination among science departments and timely implementation of flagship initiatives, including the RDI scheme. He underlined that public investment in research must translate into tangible outcomes for industry and society, and align with national development priorities. The Minister also reviewed measures being taken to streamline procedures, including revisions to the implementation guidelines based on stakeholder feedback, to ensure transparency and ease of participation.

During the discussions, Dr. Jitendra Singh noted that strengthening private sector participation in research and development remains a key objective of the RDI framework. He said the scheme is intended to support translational research and facilitate stronger linkages between public research institutions, startups and industry, enabling scientific outputs to move more effectively towards commercial and societal application.

The meeting was attended by Secretaries and senior officers from science ministries and departments. The proceedings commenced with welcome remarks by Prof. Ajay K. Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, followed by the opening remarks by Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh.

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