

Press Release on the 407th Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change

Posted On: 25 MAR 2026 6:48PM by PIB Delhi

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita, M.P., Rajya Sabha presented/laid on the Table its 407th Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Department of Biotechnology, in both the Houses of Parliament on the 25th March, 2026. The Committee considered and adopted the draft Report in its meeting held on 24th March, 2026. The Recommendations/observations made by the Committee in this Report are enclosed.

2. The entire Report is also available on <https://sansad.in/rs>.

407th Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Department of Biotechnology.

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS-AT A GLANCE

COMPARATIVE BUDGET ANALYSIS

The Committee notes the fluctuating trends in budget allocation and utilization. In FY 2024-25, the Department was allocated ₹2,275.70 crore at the B.E. stage, which was increased to ₹2,460.13 crore at the R.E. stage. Despite this increase, the actual expenditure stood at only ₹1,998.00 crore, indicating a significant underutilization of approximately 19% of the revised estimates. In contrast, for FY 2025-26, the initial B.E. of ₹3,446.64 crore was reduced by 17.8% to ₹2,830.45 crore at the R.E. stage. The Department utilized 96.23% of this reduced R.E. (₹2,723.68 crore) by 9th February 2026, demonstrating a much-improved capacity to spend the funds ultimately allocated to it. The Committee recommends that the Department should undertake a realistic assessment of its financial requirements at the B.E. stage itself, based on historical expenditure patterns, project pipelines, and absorptive capacity. Furthermore, the institutional mechanisms that led to improved utilization in FY 2025-26 should be documented and institutionalized to ensure consistent performance. The Department should also engage with the Ministry of Finance to minimize steep cuts at the R.E. stage, as such reductions can disrupt program implementation despite high utilization efficiency.

(Para

2.4)

The Committee observes that the overall fund utilization by the Department during FY 2025-26 stands at a commendable 96.23% of the R.E. allocation. The performance under the major Central Sector Scheme, 'Bio-RIDE', is also robust, with the Department utilizing 94.88% (₹1,629.11 crore) of its R.E. allocation of ₹1,717 crore. This marks a significant improvement in financial management compared to the previous fiscal year. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the

significant improvement in fund utilization by the Department in FY 2025-26, particularly under the flagship Bio-RIDE scheme. This enhanced performance indicates that corrective measures are yielding positive results. However, given the substantial increase in the overall budget over the past two years and the critical importance of the programs, the Committee strongly recommends that the Department should maintain this momentum. It must continue its rigorous monitoring and proactive management to ensure that the funds allocated in the Budget Estimates (B.E.) for 2026-27 are utilized with equal efficiency, thereby maximizing the impact of its programs and achieving desired outcomes in a timely manner.

(Para 2.10)

The Committee notes that the overall B.E. allocation of the Department increased from ₹2,581 crore in 2022-23 to ₹2,683.86 crore in 2023-24, before marginally declining to ₹2,275.70 crore in 2024-25, and then substantially increasing to ₹3,446.64 crore in 2025-26. The allocation remained almost the same at ₹3,446 in FY 2026-27. A similar trend is observed in the allocation for the Central Sector Scheme, Bio-RIDE, which saw a significant jump in 2025-26 after remaining relatively stable in the preceding years. In contrast, the allocation for Autonomous Institutions shows a continuous upward trend throughout the period from 2022-23 to 2025-26. Given the substantial and increasing allocation to the flagship Bio-RIDE scheme, which constitutes over two-thirds of the Department's budget, the Committee emphasizes the need for sustained and stringent oversight. The Department must build on its improved utilization performance by further strengthening mechanisms for regular, milestone-based monitoring. This will ensure that the significant public investments translate into tangible, high-quality research outcomes and prevent the recurrence of the planning challenges caused by past fluctuations between budget estimates and revised estimates.

(Para 2.13)

BIO-RIDE: PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The budgetary trends for the Bio-RIDE scheme reveal a persistent pattern of volatility between initial allocation and final expenditure, coupled with a recent substantial increase that has been sustained. To enhance the effectiveness and predictability of this central sector scheme, the Committee recommends that the Department should prioritize improving the accuracy of its budget estimates to mitigate the sharp reductions witnessed at the Revised Estimate stage, thereby ensuring that the enhanced allocation of Rs. 2300 crore translates into actual spending rather than a notional figure. Furthermore, given the Department's demonstrated efficiency in utilizing 94% of the reduced RE, it is well-positioned to absorb and effectively deploy this increased allocation, but this requires a strategic shift towards multi-year financial planning and robust implementation framework that can safeguard the scheme from future cyclical cuts.

(Para 3.6)

The Committee recommends that the Department should establish a robust, real-time monitoring and evaluation framework for the newly integrated Bio-RIDE scheme. Given the merger of two major schemes and the addition of a significant new component, it is crucial to track not just financial expenditure but also tangible scientific and industrial outcomes. This framework should set specific, time-bound milestones for each of the three components—Research & Development, Industrial & Entrepreneurship Development, and Biomanufacturing & Biofoundry. Under the R&D component, the Committee recommends tracking the number of patents filed and technologies

licensed, not just the number of fellowships awarded. For the IED component, the focus should be on the survival and growth rate of incubated startups beyond the initial funding stages. For the new Biofoundry component, the focus should be on the number of industry partners utilizing the national platforms and the successful scaling of bio-manufacturing processes. This data should be publicly accessible to ensure transparency and accountability.

(Para 3.17)

To build on the impressive start-up ecosystem supported by BIRAC, the Committee recommends creating a dedicated mentorship and industry-linking program for startups graduating from the BioNEST incubators. While seed funding and grants are vital, many promising ventures falter during the transition from proof-of-concept to commercial-scale manufacturing and market entry. The Committee recommends that BIRAC, in partnership with successful bio-pharma and bio-industrial companies, should establish a "Venture Development Program." This program would pair select startups with experienced industry mentors who can provide guidance on regulatory approvals, quality control, supply chain management, and market access strategies. This would increase the success rate of startups in attracting larger follow-on funding and ultimately launching their products, thereby converting innovative ideas into economic assets.

(Para 3.18)

To accelerate the development of affordable healthcare devices, such as the intraocular lenses and cardiovascular stents, the Committee recommends creating a focused, mission-mode programme. Instead of supporting isolated projects, this programme should bring together clinicians, engineers, and entrepreneurs to solve specific, high-priority needs identified by the healthcare system. The Committee recommends that this mission mode programme be structured with clear, end-to-end milestones: from prototype development and clinical validation to regulatory approval and finally, volume manufacturing. Funding should be released in tranches tied to achieving these milestones, and a dedicated unit within BIRAC should be assigned to help these projects navigate the approval process with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) from an early stage, thereby reducing the time to market.

(Para 3.19)

AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTIONS

The Committee observes that steady increase in budget allocations over the past five years, coupled with the Department's exceptional ability to utilize over 99% of its funds, indicates a well-managed and predictable funding stream for autonomous institutions. This strong track record of efficient expenditure justifies the marginal increase to Rs. 1002.13 crore for FY 2026-27. The Committee recommends that the Department should leverage this stability to enter into multi-year funding commitments with these institutions. By providing greater financial certainty, the Department can enable them to plan long-term research projects. Furthermore, this consistent performance serves as a benchmark for other schemes, demonstrating that stable, incremental growth combined with high utilization rates can lead to more effective outcomes.

(Para 4.3)

The Committee recommends that the Department should capitalize on the Regional Centre for Biotechnology's (RCB) unique status as an "Institution of National Importance" to create a unified academic framework across all 13 iBRIC institutes and ICGB. This can be achieved by developing a centralized portal for PhD and Integrated MS-PhD admissions, allowing students to apply to multiple institutes through a single process while receiving their degrees from RCB. Furthermore, mandating credit-sharing and joint coursework between institutes would foster interdisciplinary expertise, such as enabling a student at BRIC-NIPGR to take bioinformatics courses at BRIC-NIBMG or structural biology at RCB. This network could also launch a joint "iBRIC-RCB Postgraduate Diploma in Biomanufacturing and Translational Research," pooling faculty and industry connections from iBRIC, ICGB, and RCB to create a robust talent pipeline for the growing biotech industry.

(Para 4.13)

To ensure that important scientific discoveries made in iBRIC labs actually reach ordinary people and the market, the Committee recommends that the Department should create clear and well-funded pathways from the laboratory to the clinic. For the most promising candidates, like the Mpox vaccine at THSTI, the malaria vaccine at NII, or the gene therapy for Hemophilia A developed by inStem, the Department should bring together dedicated teams consisting of the institute that made the discovery, BRIC-THSTI which specializes in translating lab discoveries into real treatments, and experts in commercialization from BRIC-NIAB or THSTI itself. Additionally, a shared "Foundry for Diagnostics" should be set up by combining the DNA fingerprinting and diagnostic skills of BRIC-CDFD with the ability of BRIC-NIAB to build practical devices like the QuantM milk tester, while also involving BRIC-RGCB which has experience in getting diagnostic kits validated and approved by regulators. This foundry would help build and speed up the launch of new diagnostic tools. Finally, the upcoming Medical Research Centre and Translational Research Facility at THSTI should serve as the main hub for conducting human clinical trials for the entire iBRIC network, giving priority to home grown discoveries that are ready for first-in-human testing.

(Para 4.14)

The Committee further recommends that the Department should initiate large, mission-mode projects that bring together the strengths of different research institutes to solve major national problems that one institute cannot handle alone. For example, a project focused on the north-eastern region of India could connect BRIC-IBSD, which has deep knowledge of local plants and traditional medicine, with BRIC-NIPGR and BRIC-NABI, which specialize in understanding plant genes and improving crops. Together, they could develop health products from local plants and create crops that can withstand changing weather conditions. BRIC-NII could also join this project to study how these traditional remedies affect the human immune system. Another important project could focus on the connection between human health, animal health, and the environment, known as the "One-Health" approach. This could bring together BRIC-NIAB's work on animal diseases that can spread to humans, BRIC-NIBMG's expertise in studying human genes, BRIC-NII and BRIC-ILS's research on infectious diseases, and BRIC-THSTI's ability to develop vaccines. Together, they could create a system to watch for and quickly respond to new disease threats like the Nipah virus before they become major outbreaks.

(Para 4.15)

While the open-access model is commendable, the Committee recommends establishing a formal, proactive mechanism for knowledge transfer between the DBT's genomic databases and the policymakers at the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and ICMR. A joint working group should be formed to periodically review findings and commission specific analyses that can directly impact national health missions, essential drug lists, and disease control strategies.

(Para 5.7)

The Committee strongly endorses the proposed National Genomics Data Grid. Given the immense diversity of the country, a target of 1 million genomes is essential and should be pursued without delay. The Committee recommends that the Department should work expeditiously to secure the necessary approvals and funding for the NGDG's first phase to maintain the momentum generated by the GenomeIndia project. However, the Committee observes that the Department has been allocated only Rs. 20 crore, that too for translational research projects. Thus, no funds have been allocated in FY 2026-27 for the National Genomics Data Grid. The Committee recommends that the proposed National Genomics Data Grid should be accorded the top most priority and should be launched as a National Mission with adequate funding in FY 2026-27 itself.

(Para 5.8)

The discovery of millions of novel and ultra-rare variants presents a unique, time-sensitive opportunity. The Committee recommends launching a dedicated, mission-mode sub-program under the NGDG focused on rare genetic diseases. This mission should specifically aim to identify founder mutations in endogamous communities, develop and validate cost-effective carrier screening kits, and create a clear pathway for translating genetic insights into therapeutic strategies.

(Para 5.9)

As the funded translational research projects begin to yield results, a parallel focus should be placed on implementation science. The Committee therefore recommends that DBT, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and ICMR should develop pilot projects to test the integration of validated genetic findings (e.g., screening protocols) into the public healthcare system, studying the operational, ethical, and logistical challenges.

(Para 5.10)

The Committee further observes that genomic data holds significant potential not only for advancing healthcare but also for addressing longstanding questions about India's ancient history and cultural evolution. In light of this, the Committee recommends that the Department should take proactive steps to collaborate with key institutions such as the Anthropological Survey of India, the Archaeological Survey of India, and leading universities across the country to facilitate interdisciplinary research in this area.

(Para 5.11)

HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGES

The Committee notes that against a sanctioned strength of 54 scientific staff in the Department, 13 posts (24%) are vacant. The Department must view this as a critical gap that directly affects its core scientific mandate. The Committee recommends that DBT should expedite the entire recruitment cycle for all levels of scientific staff and ensure that the process is completed within a defined timeline to restore its in-house scientific capacity.

(Para 6.9)

The data furnished by the Department also reveals an alarming average vacancy rate of 31% across the 15 autonomous bodies, with some institutes like NABI (70.5%), CIAB (68.8%), and NII (43.3%) being severely crippled. The Committee strongly recommends that the Department should launch a special, time-bound recruitment drive for these worst-affected institutes. The Committee also recommends that a more dynamic and continuous recruitment process is needed to attract and retain top scientific talent.

(Para 6.10)

The Committee also notes that the Recruitment Rules for scientific posts across 13 BRIC institutions are under revision. The Committee recommends that the Department should prioritize and finalize these rules expeditiously. The Committee is also of the view that over-reliance on contractual staff creates job insecurity and can lead to a brain drain of experienced project personnel. The Committee recommends that the Department should establish clear guidelines to ensure that contractual staff is hired only for genuine, time-bound projects and that core research activities are managed by permanent staff.

(Para 6.11)

RKK