

First Meeting of BRIC-Research Advisory Board (BRIC-RAB)

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The Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) is an Apex Autonomous Body established as a registered Society, formed by subsuming 14 Autonomous Institutes of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). To ensure effective oversight of BRIC's research initiatives, a Research Advisory Board (RAB) has been constituted under the Chairpersonship of Prof. K. VijayRaghavan, DAE Homi Bhabha Professor, former Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, and former Secretary, DBT. BRIC-RAB is responsible for guiding, reviewing, and monitoring the research activities conducted by BRIC Institutes (iBRIC) and fostering deliberations for developing new missions and targeted programs.

The inaugural meeting of the BRIC-Research Advisory Board (BRIC-RAB) was held on 27th-28th March 2026 at the Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB), Faridabad. The two-day event featured a dynamic gathering deliberating on bold and ambitious national initiatives, prioritizing shared infrastructure while envisioning governance reforms designed to guide BRIC's transformation into a cohesive, decentralized national biotechnology laboratory. The goal is to establish BRIC as a formidable global frontrunner in biotechnology research, paving the way for innovative advancements in the field.

Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, DBT & DG, BRIC, presented an in-depth talk on 'Co-creating the Next Phase of India's Biotech Transformation through BRIC Framework'. He articulated that the members of BRIC-RAB have a unique role as co-architects of BRIC transformation. The focus of the RAB should be on designing and guiding the realization of ambitious, forward-thinking, mission-focused objectives tailored for a growing bioeconomy. Besides setting visionary goals, innovative strategies and approaches will drive the ecosystem towards a prosperous future while fostering steadfast growth and sustainability.

Prof. VijayRaghavan commended the ongoing efforts to foster a spirit of collaboration within the vibrant and inclusive BRIC ecosystem. He offered valuable insights into how BRIC can be envisioned as a leader in pioneering groundbreaking scientific discoveries and innovations. He highlighted the significance of multidisciplinary teams, emphasizing that they are vital to creating forward-thinking laboratories capable of tackling the increasingly intricate scientific challenges we face today. He mentioned that as we embark on this new era of the bio-revolution, the questions confronting us are not only larger in scope, but efforts to solve them generate a wealth of dense and complex data. This complexity necessitates a collective approach embedded in the principles of open knowledge sharing, resource optimization, shared infrastructure and fostering an environment of continuous, iterative ideation in tandem with technology advancements.

The directors of iBRIC+, comprising iBRIC, RCB, and ICGEB, shared a map of institutional capacity, niche research domains and future aspirations while sharing a cohesive vision of the strategic infrastructure established within the BRIC ecosystem to tackle critical challenges across vital sectors such as human health, agriculture, environment, AI/Data sciences etc. A network of biomanufacturing hubs and biofoundries developed within BRIC, positions it at the forefront of the emerging bio-based economy. Follow-up deliberations focused on the importance of fostering inter-institutional collaborations and

cultivating a culture that promotes the sharing of laboratories, resources, and expertise among researchers and organisations. The performance framework matrix for BRIC scientists was also discussed, enabling BRIC faculties to understand their roles and purpose in their scientific careers and to align with institutional mandates and nation-building goals.

To steer discussions on bold national missions for the biotechnology sector, expert members led an ideation session on how best to utilise the core budget of iBRIC+ to achieve technology leadership, build strong linkages with industry to create a robust bioeconomy, and generate strong biotech leaders of the future.

The conversations surrounding frugal innovations prominently featured the concept of design intelligence, emphasizing the importance of utilizing locally-sourced materials and adopting a customized approach for critical sectors. A key theme of the meeting revolved around the imperative of developing sovereign technologies to support the vision of Viksit Bharat. Experts underscored the need to leverage the country's demographic advantages, rich biodiversity, and extensive data resources. This strategic approach aims to facilitate India's transition from merely being a consumer of technology to becoming a global leader in innovation, showcasing its potential on the world stage.

The conclave culminated with an open webinar cum panel discussion providing a valuable platform for iBRIC faculty to engage with the members of the Research Advisory Board (RAB). This interactive session allowed for an exchange of diverse ideas and opportunities aimed at strengthening BRIC's pivotal role in advancing India's bioeconomy. Participants discussed diverse strategies and key initiatives that could help propel the country's bioeconomic landscape towards disruptive research and innovation milestones.





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