

Clarification Regarding Selection Process and Conflict of Interest Policy Under the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme by Technology Development Board (TDB)

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Attention is drawn to certain media reports published today regarding the alleged conflict of interest in the disbursement of funds to companies under the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme by the Technology Development Board (TDB).

It is clarified that the said reports are misleading, incorrect, and lack proper context.

The Ministry of Science & Technology clarifies the following facts regarding the robust evaluation mechanisms, strict conflict of interest guidelines, and merit-based selection processes followed by TDB:

- **Robust Conflict of Interest Policy:** A comprehensive and robust Conflict of Interest policy is firmly in place at TDB. This policy has been followed systematically over a long period without any complaint, grievance, or irregularity reported from any quarter.
- **Pre-Investment Guidelines & Mandatory Recusal:** Prior to the commencement of the 1st Investment Committee (IC) meeting, TDB framed detailed Pre-Investment Guidelines / Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs). These guidelines explicitly lay down the conditions under which a potential conflict of interest arises. Whenever a member has a potential conflict, the policy mandates full disclosure and complete recusal of the concerned member from all discussions and decision-making processes regarding that entity.
- **Adherence in Letter and Spirit:** TDB has strictly adhered to these guidelines in true spirit. All funding decisions were taken purely on merit as per the Implementation Guidelines of the RDI Fund, with zero involvement of any conflicted members during the evaluation or sanction process of concerned proposals.
- **Independent External Validation:** The rigor and merit-based selection process of TDB is further validated by independent external assessments. Out of the 22 projects approved by TDB in its first cohort, 15 projects were independently selected by separate expert panels constituted by the Ministry of Education, following which they represented India at the prestigious Bharat Innovate Event held in Nice, France.

This independent validation clearly demonstrates that the selected companies are truly cutting-edge Deep-Tech innovators, chosen entirely on technical merit, innovation potential, and national importance.

The Government remains committed to maintaining the highest standards of transparency, integrity, and meritocracy in supporting India's growing research and innovation ecosystem.

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