

RDI Fund 'Conflict of Interest' policy protected by Stringent Safeguards to Ensure protection of Taxpayers Money and Private Capital; however, suggestions from stakeholders most welcome and wherever feasible more safeguards could be considered: Dr Jitendra Singh

RDI Fund Disbursal Completed for Some Selected Firms; Remaining Disbursals to Follow Shortly: officials inform Dr. Jitendra Singh in Review Meeting

Second Level Fund Managers for RDIF being appointed within two weeks or so

Inter-Ministerial Consultations Expand RDI Fund's Sectoral Scope to Address Strategic Technology Needs

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The monthly joint meeting of Science Secretaries chaired by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, was marked by three important announcements.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that the RDI Fund 'Conflict of Interest' policy was protected by stringent safeguards to ensure protection of Taxpayers' Money as well as private capital. However, he added that suggestions from stakeholders are most welcome and wherever feasible more safeguard could be considered. The Minister was apprised that stringent protocols are being followed for both fund disbursement and conflict-of-interest safeguards to ensure transparency, fairness and accountability, given that the RDI Fund involves public money. He was also informed that the framework has robust mechanisms to protect the integrity of investment decisions, with further safeguards being considered wherever required.

During the meeting, Dr. Jitendra Singh was apprised that the disbursal of RDI funds to some of the selected firms has already been completed, while the process for disbursal to the remaining selected firms is underway and will be completed shortly.

The Minister was also apprised that the process for selection and announcement of Second-Level Fund Managers (SLFMs) is underway and is expected to be completed within two weeks or so. These SLFMs will play a key role in identifying deserving companies and supporting them through the RDI Fund

framework. It was informed that the onboarding of SLFMs is being carried out through a transparent process, as these fund managers will have the responsibility of managing investments within the approved framework while ensuring fairness and equal opportunity.

The Minister was also informed that inter-ministerial consultations have been undertaken to make the RDI Fund framework more inclusive and responsive to strategic technology requirements across different sectors. Inputs were sought from various ministries to identify areas of national importance that may require support beyond the initially proposed list of sectors. These suggestions were evaluated by an expert committee, which recommended expanding the sectoral scope to make the framework more flexible and inclusive, enabling the Fund to cater to a wider range of technological priorities.

The Minister noted that the RDI Fund carries a shared responsibility, as 50 per cent of the investment is expected to come from private equity sources, placing an equal responsibility on investment committees to safeguard both taxpayers' money and private capital. He emphasised that while due diligence and verification processes must remain uncompromised, timely release of funds is equally important to enable firms to move forward. He directed officials to adopt faster timelines and make the disbursal process more responsive in the future.

Dr. Jitendra Singh was chairing the Monthly Review Meeting of Science Ministries and Departments at Aryabhata Hall, Technology Bhawan, New Delhi. The meeting was attended by Prof. Umesh V. Waghmare, Secretary, Department of Science & Technology; Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology; Dr. N. Kalaiselvi, Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and Director General, CSIR; Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences; Dr. V. Narayanan, Secretary, Department of Space and Chairman, ISRO; Shri Rajesh Kumar Pathak, Secretary, Technology Development Board; and the CEO, Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), besides other senior officials.

The Minister's direction on RDI processing comes at a time when the Government is seeking to create a more competitive and responsive environment for private-sector participation in research and development. During the review, it was informed that the first round of application assessment had already been completed and positive recommendations were ready in respect of eligible applications. The emphasis was on moving the proposals through the remaining stages without avoidable delay, while retaining the scrutiny required before public funds are released.

The RDI initiative assumes particular significance as a first-of-its-kind Government effort to accelerate private investment in R&D by providing public funding support. The meeting noted that the first cycle is also expected to help the mechanism move towards a smoother and more efficient mode in subsequent cycles. At the same time, the Government is conscious that private-sector participation is a new experience within such a public funding framework and therefore requires a balance between speed, responsibility and stakeholder confidence.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also reviewed proposals to widen the scope of strategic areas covered under the RDI framework, based on consultations with Ministries and expert deliberations. The expansion is intended to cover areas of emerging strategic importance while remaining within the framework of the RDI guidelines. The discussions also recognised the rapidly changing nature of technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence, requiring the innovation-support ecosystem to remain sufficiently flexible to accommodate new and emerging fields.

The meeting further reviewed measures to strengthen inter-departmental collaboration and information sharing across the science and technology ecosystem. The Secretaries and departments have been encouraged to maintain regular interaction, identify areas of mutual interest and develop greater synergy among scientific institutions and programmes. Periodic institutional interactions involving CSIR and other scientific organisations are also being pursued to strengthen collaboration and avoid duplication.

The review also took stock of the progress of Sah-SANKALP, the resource book showcasing technologies developed through Government-supported scientific research. Of the 60 technologies featured in the initiative, 56 have already been deployed at the grassroots level, while 41 have reached Technology Readiness Levels of 8 or 9, indicating strong potential for wider adoption. CSIR has also reported interest from enterprises and entrepreneurs in adopting 38 technologies showcased during the initiative, with technology seekers being connected to the relevant laboratories for further action.

A significant part of the meeting focused on making the communication of scientific achievements more direct, contemporary and accessible. The Minister stressed the need for greater coordination among the communication and social-media teams of different science departments so that important achievements, technology transfers, industry collaborations and societal interventions receive sustained visibility. The discussions also favoured greater use of short-form digital content and platforms that can directly reach citizens, industry and potential technology users.



The proposed digital library of science and technology success stories was also discussed as a means of creating a common, easily shareable repository of validated content from different departments and laboratories. The proposed approach envisages short videos of around two to three minutes, enabling laboratories and institutions across the country to contribute directly while making scientific achievements more accessible to wider audiences.



Preparations for the Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC) 2026, scheduled from October 27 to 29 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, were also reviewed. Three Nobel Laureates and three other distinguished international award recipients have confirmed participation, while additional

confirmations are expected. The exhibition is being expanded to up to 150 stalls, including participation from Ministries and Departments, an ESTIC Innovation Booth, major sponsors and selected deep-tech startups. More than 120 invitations have been issued, with 73 acceptances received so far.



The meeting also reviewed preparations for the Swachh Sagar Surakshit Sagar (SSSS) Campaign 2026, scheduled from September 12 to 19, with activities planned across 111 identified beaches. Participation from fisherfolk, universities, colleges, NCC, NSS, Scouts and Guides, voluntary organisations and private stakeholders is being facilitated. A dedicated website, dashboard and mobile application have already been created, while the campaign is being supported through digital outreach, competitions and the Ocean Olympiad.



The meeting further reviewed initiatives to strengthen public engagement with science, including the proposed monthly ‘Vigyan Ki Baat’ lecture series beginning August 29 and science- and innovation-based competitions and quizzes in collaboration with MyGov. These initiatives are aimed at creating a stronger interface between scientific institutions, citizens, young researchers and the wider innovation ecosystem.

The review meeting reflected the Government’s broader approach of combining speed in RDI delivery with rigorous safeguards in the use of public funds. With private investment emerging as an increasingly important component of India’s R&D ecosystem, the Government is working to ensure that promising startups and private innovators receive timely support while public resources remain protected through robust verification, transparency and conflict-of-interest safeguards.

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