

South Asia Biosafety Program

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ANNOUNCEMENT

A New Competitive Grants Program to Strengthen the Biosafety Knowledge Base in Bangladesh

In the recent years, research on crop biotechnology and the biosafety regulatory system is progressing significantly in Bangladesh. The country is also advancing towards the biosafety evaluation of genetically engineered (GE) crops and post-release monitoring. Against these developments, the USAID-funded South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP) is launching a competitive grants program—the *Biosafety Research in Bangladesh Grants Program (BRBGP)*—to improve science-based risk assessment knowledge.

The BRBGP will support research that will be:

1. Providing baseline information related to current agricultural practice in Bangladesh in order to inform future assessments of the likely use of GE plants and their potential impact. This could include:
 - a. The management and use of pesticides or herbicides.
 - b. Other agricultural management practices, including tillage, crop rotations, etc.
 - c. Characterizing the impacts and interactions of current agricultural practices on surrounding ecosystems.
2. Developing effective mechanisms to enhance risk management, including:
 - a. Understanding how farmers in Bangladesh obtain and use information about agricultural management practices, in order to inform future efforts to support effective stewardship of GE plants.

Eligible Institutions and Collaborations

Public and private agricultural research institutions and universities of Bangladesh, or International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs) involved in research in Bangladesh, may submit pre-proposals. The pre-proposal must include at least one collaborating scientist that resides and works in Bangladesh.

Collaboration between research and regulatory institutions is strongly encouraged. Consortia comprised of research institutions in Bangladesh and those from developed countries or international institutions are also strongly encouraged. In such cases, complementarity and/or value addition in terms of experience, expertise, and/or facilities should be shown.

Grant Size

In 2019, a number of grants ranging between US \$15,000 and US \$25,000 are expected to be awarded to competent institutions to conduct research for one year.

Pre-Proposal Guidelines

The BRBGP Grant Announcement & Pre-Proposal Guidelines may be downloaded at: www.ilsirf.org/what-we-do/biosafety/sabp/#BRBGP

Pre-proposal Submission Deadline

February 15, 2019, 18:00 hrs GMT

Contacts for more information on the program & pre-proposal format:

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Source: www.ilsirf.org/sabp

Annual Conference on Biosafety and Biosecurity 2018

Dr. Asadulghani, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research

The Bangladesh Biosafety and Biosecurity Society, in association with the biosafety office of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences, Dhaka University, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute, National Institute of Biotechnology, and other government and non-government universities and partners in Bangladesh, under the guidance of the Disease Control Division of the Director General of Health Services, organized the *Annual Conference on Biosafety and Biosecurity 2018 - Challenges for Sustainable Development in Health and Agriculture*.

The two-day long conference was held at Shahid Dr Milon and Milton Halls, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University on October 12-13, 2018. The conference program included six sessions: Biodefense Preparedness in Bangladesh; Integration of Biosafety & Biosecurity in Academia for Sustainable Development in Health and Agriculture; Biosafety and Biosecurity in Genetically Modified Organisms; Culture Free Disease Diagnosis and Effective Disease Detection and Control Strategies in Bangladesh; Biosafety & Biosecurity in Agriculture and Livestock; and Biological Waste Management.

During the conference, speakers discussed the current status of biosafety and biosecurity and challenges for sustainable development in both health and agricultural sectors. Biosafety concerns in genetic

modification is one of the most well discussed and researched areas in the field of biotechnology in Bangladesh. Dr. Jiban Krishna Biswas, (Former) Director General, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Gazipur was invited to talk about advancements and issues in biosafety. During his talk, titled "Towards Golden Rice to Brand Rice Nutraceutically Enriched: Some Biosafety Issues," he showed the progress and prospect of golden rice research in Bangladesh. Various technological perspectives were presented at the conference along with an emphasis on preparing and educating the future generation about biosafety issues. Recommendations were made to include modules on biosafety policies and procedures to familiarize young researchers with practical aspects of biosafety within their scientific research.

A preconference workshop was organized at the Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences, University of Dhaka, on October 10-11, 2018. During this workshop, training was conducted on: Principles and Practices of Biosafety and Biosecurity; Biological Waste Management; Biological Safety Cabinets Selection, Installation, Certification, and Maintenance; Biosafety and Biosecurity in Teaching Laboratories; and Biosafety and Biosecurity in the Pharmaceutical Industry. Participants from different areas of biological sciences participated in the training workshop.



From left: Dr. Md. Giasuddin, Head, Animal Health Research Division & Director, National Reference Laboratory for Avian Influenza, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute and Vice-president, Bangladesh Biosafety and Biosecurity Society; Prof. Dr. Be-Nazir Ahmed, National Consultant, Coordination & Support Center, Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Dr. Asadulghani, Head Biosafety, ICDDR,B and President, Bangladesh Biosafety and Biosecurity Society; Dr. Md Latiful Bari, Head of Food Analysis Laboratory, Center for Advanced Research in Sciences, University of Dhaka and Vice-president, Bangladesh Biosafety and Biosecurity Society; Prof. Dr. Mohammad Yousuf Ali Mollah, Member, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, representing the University Grants Commission Chairman; Prof. Dr. Md Anwar Hossain, Vice Chancellor, Jessore University of Science and Technology, Jessore; and Prof. Dr. Niyaz Ahmed, Senior Director, Laboratory Sciences and Services Division, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh and Professor, School of Life Sciences, University of Hyderabad.

ANNOUNCEMENT

2019 Cornell Alliance for Science Global Leadership Fellows Program

The application for the *2019 Cornell Alliance for Science Global Leadership Fellows Program* is now open! People from all walks of life and from all corners of the world are encouraged to apply. In the past, participants have included priests, journalists, guitar players, communications professionals, farmers, and scientists—all with a passion for ensuring access to biotechnology. After completing the program, fellows emerge as team-oriented, forward-leaning biotech advocates with new innovative tools and global connections inspired to make change in their country contexts. The application period runs through **March 1, 2019** and will be followed by a rigorous review. The first wave of program invitations will go out by mid-April.

Learn how to apply at: <https://allianceforscience.cornell.edu/education/global-leadership-fellowship/applying-global-leadership-fellow/>

Something New! This year, applicants are asked to provide a 1-minute video personal statement (i.e., a "pitch") in addition to their short essay responses. They will need to upload their videos to YouTube and transcribe them prior to submitting their online applications. Detailed instructions are found in the application.

Source: <https://allianceforscience.cornell.edu/education/global-leadership-fellowship/>

Global Network of Bangladeshi Biotechnologists (GNOBB) Members at the Plant and Food Sciences Symposium in China

Dr. Nurul Islam, Department of Botany, University of Dhaka

Eight members of the Global Network of Bangladeshi Biotechnologists (GNOBB) were invited to participate and deliver presentations at the 3rd *International Symposium on Innovations in Plant and Food Sciences*, held at Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University, Fuzhou, China on December 15-18, 2018. The team was led by Dr. Zeba Islam Seraj, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, University of Dhaka (DU) and a member of the Biosafety Core Committee (BCC). The group included: Dr. A. B. M. Khademul Islam, Associate Professor, Department of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, DU; Dr. Mohammad Nurul Islam, Dr. Mohammad

Zabed Hossain, and Dr. Md. Abdul Karim, Department of Botany, DU; Prof. Kazi Shakhawat Hossain, Department of Botany, Jagannath University; Prof. Dr. Jamilur Rahman, Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, Shere-bangla Agricultural University; and Dr. Sabrina M. Elias, Assistant Professor, Independent University, Bangladesh. Different aspects of plant biotechnological research were presented in the symposium, ranging from plant response analysis through genomics, phenomics, bioinformatics, and metabolomics, as well as genetic transformation for development of stress tolerance against both abiotic and biotic factors and bioremediation.



From left: Dr. Jamilur Rahman, Dr. Sabrina M. Elias, Dr. Mohammad Nurul Islam, Prof. Kazi Shakhawat Hossain, Dr. Zeba Islam Seraj, Dr. A. B. M. Khademul Islam, Dr. Mohammad Zabed Hossain, and Dr. Md. Abdul Karim.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Opportunities at Agri Incubator for Start-ups in New Delhi

Pusa Krishi Incubator (PKI) is an innovation hub and technology business incubator of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and is housed at the Zonal Technology Management and Business Planning & Development (ZTM-BPD) Unit in the IARI campus. PKI is an agri-focused incubator and helps agri start-ups to scale up their product. The incubator also offers selected start-ups access to networks of technical and business experts, industry and government partners, training with the commercialization experts from the agri sector, an extensive mentor network, as well as access to funding organizations like venture capitalists, angel investors, and government grants. Through its affiliation with the IARI, PKI also partners start-ups with technical teams to help create a successful path to the market.

UPJA is an agriculture-focused incubation program powered by Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY-RAFTAAR), an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. Designed under the government's *Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied Sector Rejuvenation* initiative, this scheme is structured to promote innovation and entrepreneurship within the field of agriculture production and agriculture-dependent ancillary businesses. Start-ups from the agri sector working at the interface of technology and agriculture, in the pre-commercialization stage with a minimum viable product and undergoing testing and validation with customers in the market, can benefit from this scheme. Start-ups are expected to have an innovative component, with a technology/product or service with a unique value proposition that addresses an existing market need. Agri-biotech and precision farming are among areas listed for support under the program.

Presently, PKI, through its flagship incubation program UPJA, is inviting applications for its first cohort up to **January 27, 2019**. There is also an opportunity for grants in aid funding up to Rs 25 Lakhs for selected start-ups for Phase II.

Source: <http://www.pusakrishi.iari.res.in/>

ANNOUNCEMENT

Plant Genotyping and Genomics Facility (PGGF) at New Delhi

The Department of Biotechnology has established the *Plant Genotyping and Genomics Facility* (PGGF), located at the National Institute of Plant Genome Research in New Delhi. This national facility is a "single-window service system" for advanced genomics technology services that could positively influence the Indian Seed industry. The "Facility" will have the potential to evolve into a "leading edge" genotyping service provider and consulting facility that would impact not only agriculture in India, but could also serve as a model globally.

Source: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=186662>

EVENT	ORGANIZED BY	DATE	WEBSITE
INDIA			
8 th Indian Horticulture Congress 2018: Shaping Future of Indian Horticulture	Horticultural Society of India & Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur, Chhattisgarh	January 17 - 21, 2019, Raipur	http://igau.edu.in/pdf/event/event_ihc2018resdul.pdf & http://igau.edu.in/pdf/event/event_ihc2018.pdf
National Horticultural Fair - 2019	ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research	January 23 - 25, 2019, Bengaluru	https://iihr.res.in/sites/default/files/Brochure%20english-1final.pdf
Genomics India 2019 Conference: Transforming Lives with Genomics	Genotypic	January 24 - 25, 2019, Bengaluru	http://genomicsindia.co.in/registration/
First Vegetable Science Congress on Emerging Challenges in Vegetable Research and Education (VEGCON-2019)	Indian Society of Vegetable Science, Agriculture University, Jodhpur, Indian Institute of Vegetable Research, Varanasi, and Indian Council of Agricultural Research	February 1 - 3, 2019, Jodhpur	http://aujodhpur.ac.in/
National Consultation on Roadmap for Utilization of Bioresources towards Bioeconomy	Institute of Bioresource & Sustainable Development (IBSD), National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI), Allahabad, & Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL)	February 4 - 5, 2019 New Delhi	https://ibsd.gov.in/
Training Program on Modern Concepts in Plant Disease Management for Enhancing Quality and Productivity	G. B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar (sponsored by ICAR)	February 8 - 28, 2019, Pantnagar	http://www.gbpuat.ac.in/trainings_conferences/20.11.2018_Circular.pdf
13 th International Conference on Dryland Development: Converting Dryland Areas from Grey into Green	International Dryland Development Commission, Arid Zone Research Association of India, and Central Arid Zone Research Institute	February 11 - 14, 2019, Jodhpur	http://www.13icdd.com/
International Conference on Trends in Plant Sciences and Agrobiotechnology 2019	Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering and Center for Rural Technology, IIT Guwahati and Plant Tissue Culture Association - India	February 14 - 16, 2019, Guwahati	https://ictpa2019.in/
INTERNATIONAL			
15 th ISBR Symposium	International Society for Biosafety Research (ISBR)	April 1 - 4, 2019, Tarragona, Spain	http://www.isbr2019.com/



SOUTH ASIA
BIOSAFETY PROGRAM

The South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP) is an international developmental program implemented in India and Bangladesh with support from the United States Agency for International Development. SABP aims to work with national governmental agencies and other public sector partners to facilitate the implementation of transparent, efficient, and responsive regulatory frameworks for products of modern biotechnology that meet national goals as regards the safety of novel foods and feeds, and environmental protection.



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