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Funding agencies play synergistic role in science'

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International funding agencies play a pivotal role in promoting scientific research in developing nations and also help them to face the various challenging areas of bioscience research in the human health, agriculture, green technologies and related sciences. With respect to India, it is often argued (and rightly so) that since the last decade, the nation has seen increased funding in bioscience research considerably. Thus funding for a scientifically strong research problem is no longer an issue in India now.

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India, through its various initiatives has launched funding programs for human health, animal health, agriculture, food technology and green energy for developing safe and affordable technologies and products in both basic and translational space for industries and academic institutes.

The expertise, that these agencies bring in, are many folds, as they have experience in managing research projects across geographies. They bring strong project management experience, which includes the identification of the right project, which have clear unmet needs. Furthermore, the area of scientific problem needs not to be congested, so that if the research program becomes successful, it will surely create the right impact. These agencies play a catalytic role in promoting scientific temper alongside the government funding agencies.

These global funding agencies also bring along hand- holding expertise in grant writing (due to diligence of the research program), including the identification of unmet needs, the business plan, the regulatory pathway, IP strategy and the exit strategy of the program. A full 360 degree review process is built in the program. This helps the applicant in understanding the path he needs to choose to take his research program forward. It also helps the applicant to determine what scientific path the researcher needs to follow and if there is any commercial exit possible in the program.

The agencies provide mentorship to researchers to draw up a suitable business plan and follow up on funding strategy if needed. The other element that the international agencies bring, is rigorous monitoring of project progress, which is quite helpful to researchers as the project are funded on simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) milestone.

Every tranche of the funds are linked to achieving a milestone, which are reviewed at regular intervals; this helps the researcher to manage the program effectively.

The international funding agencies play a constructive and synergistic role to the national agencies in building a strong research platform in India, which also leads to address the problems of a billion people in India as regard to food security, affordable healthcare, and green energy.