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# DBT launches joint funding initiative with UK for COVID-19 research

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**New Â£8 million COVID-19 fund spurs UK-India collaboration**



UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT),Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt. of India are launching a joint funding initiative to support collaborative research focused on understanding the severity of COVID-19 in South Asian populations in India and the UK.

Since the start of COVID-19 pandemic, DBT and UKRI have made significant rapid investment in COVID19 research.Building on this strong base, through the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) UKRI is investing £4 million to support the UK component, with matched equivalent resource provided by DBT in support of the Indian components.

This joint funding opportunity will support new research projects that are trying to understand, the pandemic through the study of related ethnic groups in different environments in both countries.

Successful projects will focus on:

ï?· Mechanistic studies of the disease and its sequelae ï?· Virology, Immunity and Pathophysiology ï?· Epidemiology and behavioural science

Dr Renu Swarup, Secretary of India’s Department of Biotechnology said: This joint programme builds on the strong foundation of India-UK research collaboration and is an opportunity to bring together our collective expertise to understand the severity of COVID-19 infection in South Asian populations of both India and the UK. This pandemic has brought together scientific research groups nationally and globally to address key research questions. Faced with one of the biggest challenges of our time, research from this DBT-UKRI collaboration will be important in understanding the differential response among these two populations. Improved understanding in this regard will empower us in planning more effective interventions to fight COVID-19 pandemic and any such events in future.