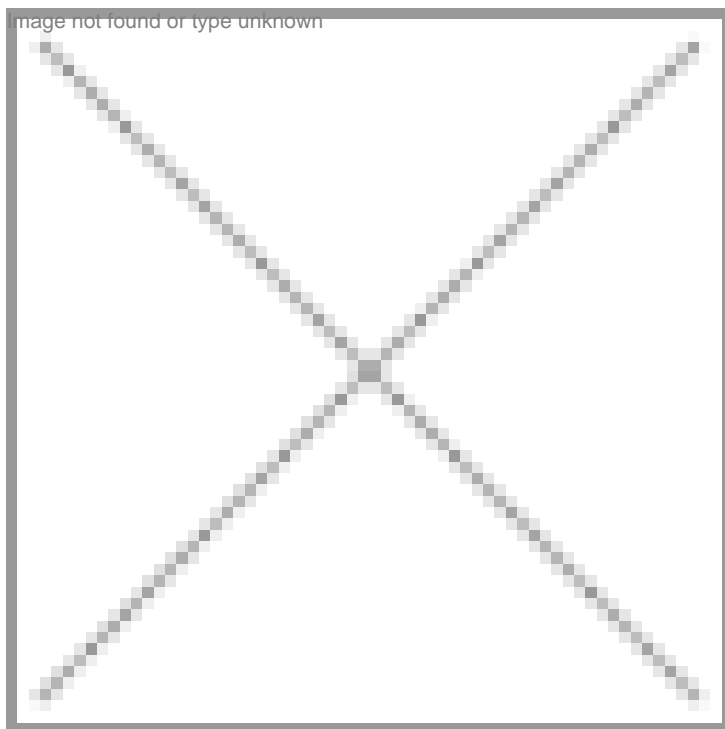


## Gujarat announces draft biotech policy document

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The government of Gujarat has come out with a draft biotechnology policy. Announcing this, chief minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, declared that the state government has prepared the draft biotechnology policy document, which highlights the state's vision, a strategic roadmap and a comprehensive incentive package to facilitate the overall development of biotechnology in Gujarat.

Chairing the Gujarat Council of Biotechnology meet held on June 14, 2005, Modi said, "The state is seriously considering creating HLA registry facilities for addressing the problem of blood related disorders like Thalassemia, which being in higher proportion in Gujarat, is a specific problem of the state. Gujarat should take the lead in stem cell research, as it is the present treatment option of many incurable diseases and a future technology for various health problems. The government is seriously considering establishing a cord blood bank in the state. Gujarat would be one of the very few states, in the entire country, to initiate work in this aspect."

He further said, "The state has declared 2004-05 as Year of Urban development. And accordingly, the state would be using biotechnology for treatment and useful conversion of domestic effluents, in bigger cities like Ahmedabad and Surat. The state is planning to start a specific project for domestic effluent management as an exclusive model in urban planning. It would serve dual purpose. Apart from sanitization of waste, it would increase the availability of organic manure in bulk, thereby encouraging organic farming. The state is planning to establish a dedicated marine biotechnology institute to study and exploit the rich marine resources. The state has started a mission mode project on bio-diesel, involving university, forest department and CSMCRI. The state is keen to use biotechnology as a tool to augment and strengthen this approach." He declared that the state government is planning to establish bio fuel mission, which shall exclusively focus on bio energy.