

## BIRAC celebrates second birthday, Industry lauds its performance

24 March 2014 | News | By Rahul Koul Koul

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This year the theme for the 2nd BIRAC's foundation day was "Promoting Partnerships - Innovation Research to Product Development". The event had a participation of around 300 delegates from government, industry and academia from national and international forums.

What made it unique was the foundation day lecture by Dr Sam Pitroda, chairman, National Innovation Council, on "Role of Government in fostering ecosystems for innovation". That actually set the momentum for the two day event.

The event began with a welcome note by Dr Renu Swarup, managing director, BIRAC and adviser, DBT, who presented the BIRAC's journey for promoting the bio-innovation ecosystem, over the past 2 years.

Prof K VijayRaghavan, chairman, BIRAC and secretary, DBT, delivered the key note talk highlighting the importance of Partnerships in achieving the vision and goal of BIRAC for creating an Innovation Research Ecosystem for Affordable Product Development.

On the occasion, the theme lecture was given by Dr M K Bhan, founder chairman, BIRAC and former secretary, DBT, who emphasized on the importance of forging national and international partnerships to address the challenges faced by Indian Biotechnology sector and to make the indigenous competencies globally competitive.

The second day of the event saw the presence of Mr Arun Maira, member, Planning Commission of India. Mr Maira in his speech asked the industry to innovate and partner for the good.

The event was attended by a number of International Funding Agencies - Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome Trust,

Tekes, USAID, Grand Challenges Canada in addition to senior science counsellors and representatives from embassies. BIRAC funded 10 BIG Innovators also presented their Innovations on this occasion.

BIRAC has also been responsible for the DBT-BIRAC-BMGF Grand Challenge. The five award winners for the Grand Challenges India program titled "Achieving Healthy Growth through Agriculture and Nutrition", which is managed by BIRAC under the aegis of trilateral partnership with DBT and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, were also announced.

On this occasion two new partnerships were announced. A Joint Call on "Red Biotechnology" between BIRAC - CEFIPRA for Indo French Industry Academia Collaboration and a BIRAC - Wellcome Trust Joint Call on "Translational Medicine" with the focus on "Diagnostics for Infectious Diseases".

At the closing of the event, the key recommendations were read out. These included the "To Do" list for all the verticals including agriculture, pharma, services and education. Overall, the industry participants expressed satisfaction over the success of BIRAC as an organization to promote the industry.