CALL FOR LETTERS OF INTENT UNDER DBT: NRC-PBI, CANADA COLLABORATION IN PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India and the National Research Council (NRC) of Canada have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to undertake collaborative activity in biotechnology. The DBT and NRC–Plant Biotechnology Institute (PBI), Saskatoon, Canada have also signed a Letter of Agreement to establish collaborative programme in the area of Plant Biotechnology. The joint efforts will encompass exchange of scientists and trainees, access to genomics infrastructure, joint research projects, sharing of knowledge and joint publications, joint strategic and project planning meetings, working together to commercialize the research for the benefit of both countries and facilitate company linkages with the research.

The DBT invites Letters of Intent (LOI) from Indian investigators to develop joint research projects with the suitable partners of NRC-PBI, Canada in the following identified priority areas of research:

- Genomics/gene discovery, molecular marker discovery for improving traits such as ‘seed coat colour’ and ‘nutritional quality’ in pulses (lentil and chickpea)
- Brassica genomics with reference to trait discovery and development on ‘seed quality and performance’ (e.g. Oil content, Oil quality, Stress tolerance and Plant vigour)
- Flax genomics with reference to Omega-3, Omega-6 fatty acids, lignan, muscilage, etc.
- Gene discovery/genomics in the area of plant bioactives such as Curcumin and Artemesinin

The LOIs/Concept Notes received from the Indian investigators will be evaluated by the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on the basis of scientific and technical merit and also the interest of NRC-PBI investigators. The short-listed LOIs will be requested to submit the full proposal in prescribed format. The criteria for funding of joint proposals would be:

- Scientific excellence
- Economic relevance
- A great deal of basic science
- Common interest from both sides
- Complementarity
- Mutual benefits to both sides
- Research oriented and time-bound
- Well defined milestones

The prospective applicants are required to submit the LOIs (of not more than four pages) that includes the following information:

- Title of the proposal;
- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail ID of the Principal Investigator and other Co-Investigators;
- Research focus, short-term and long-term goals and scientific strategies to achieve this;
- Existing facilities/infrastructure;
- How the proposal would augment the applicant’s capacity/capability;
- How the proposal would expand and develop faculty research capability and enhance research output due to collaboration;
- What complementary strength does this collaboration bring to each partner;
- Description of the groups to be involved in the research;
- Name and mailing details of other participating institutions;
- Are you participating in any existing network/collaborations in the proposed area;
- A brief CV of investigators including a list of major publications relevant to the thematic focus (Total should not exceed 3 pages) (Append this as an annexure to the LOI);
- The main strength(s) which merit(s) this support should be described in less than 200 words;
- A ballpark budget estimate for the project.

For details of ongoing research programmes at NRC-PBI, Canada, please visit their website at [www.pbi.nrc.ca/en/pbi.htm](http://www.pbi.nrc.ca/en/pbi.htm)

The LOI (15 copies) is to be sent on or before 10 July 2008 to:

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