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Centre Announces First National Call for ₹2,000 Crore BIRAC–RDI Fund

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What is the BIRAC–RDI Fund?

The Government of India has launched the first national call for the ₹2,000 crore BIRAC–RDI Fund.

This fund is part of the larger ₹1 lakh crore **Research, Development and Innovation (RDI)** initiative under the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**, aimed at boosting science and technology research across the country.

Why the Fund Was Created

The purpose of the BIRAC–RDI Fund is to help turn research into real products and industrial solutions — especially in cutting-edge areas like biotechnology.

It aims to bridge the gap between lab discoveries and large-scale manufacturing, supporting ideas that are promising but may be too risky for private investors alone.

Who Will Manage It

The fund will be managed by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).

BIRAC has been appointed as a **“second-level fund manager”** to deploy the financing, meaning it will decide which projects and companies get support.

How the Fund Will Work

The ₹2,000 crore will be spent over up to five years, with the option to increase the amount in the future.

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It will support technologies at higher stages of development — from mid-level prototype testing to readiness for market entry (usually between Technology Readiness Level 4 to 9).

Funding will be given through tools such as equity, convertible instruments, and long-term debt, helping both research organisations and startups scale up.

Who Can Apply for Support

Startups, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), industry partners, and research organisations working on high-impact biotech ideas can apply.

The first call for proposals is open now, and the deadline for Phase 1 applications is March 31, 2026.

Why It Matters for India

The fund signals a major push in biotechnology as a future growth engine for the Indian economy.

India's biotech startup ecosystem has grown from about 50 companies in 2014 to over 11,000 by 2026.

The bioeconomy has expanded rapidly, reaching tens of billions of dollars in value, and the government aims to reach even higher targets in the coming decade.

This move positions India as a global contender in life sciences, biomanufacturing, and new-age technologies.

Long-Term Vision

Officials say the fund will help industrialise Indian research, not just encourage academic studies.

It also supports emerging areas such as bioenergy, bioindustrial manufacturing, biopharma, advanced computation, and even space biotech, expanding India's scientific and industrial capabilities.

Important Terms Explained

RDI (Research, Development and Innovation): A government initiative to support high-impact research and turn discoveries into scalable products.

Technology Readiness Level (TRL): A scale used to assess how close a technology is to market — from lab proof-of-concept (TRL-1) to full deployment (TRL-9).

Equity and Convertible Instruments: Types of financial support — equity means ownership stake; convertible instruments can turn into equity later.

Long-Term Debt: Loans provided over many years to help scale production or commercial operations.