

EU and India launch biotechnology and health NPP

European Commission

NEW INDIGO comes on the heels of the AOUDA ('Action to observe and understand different approaches in Euro-Indian research programmes') project that ended in 2008. Supported under the 'Coordination of research activities' priority of the Strengthening the European Research Area (ERA) scheme of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6), AOUDA targeted identification of bilateral science and technology (S&T) projects between EU Member States and India.

Despite the fact that EU Member States and India have been strengthening their bilateral scientific ties in recent years, there is room for improvement in multilateral S&T cooperation. Experts have also pointed out that a dedicated coordination programme between the EU and India is lacking.

The NEW INDIGO partners plan to offer both parties a framework that will enable Indian researchers to access the ERA, and European researchers to strengthen their presence in the Indian scientific area. The novel networking tools, established by the European Commission, will also prove advantageous for S&T cooperation between the EU and India.

Projects launched under NEW INDIGO must ensure the involvement of at least two European and one Indian partner so as to realise multilateral research cooperation. They will also centre their activities on bioinformatics for health, biomarkers and diagnostics, and structural biology for health. Funding for these multilateral projects is a given, particularly as they will encourage mobility and workshop participation.

Officials from India's Department of Biotechnology at the Ministry of Science and Technology, a NEW INDIGO partner, said the promotion of research cooperation with Europe is high on India's agenda because of the rapid expansion of its research and development (R&D) know-how. Also significant is the fact that India has developed into a leading country in Asia for its scientific expertise.

'The substantial number of established bilateral programmes with most European countries, combined with the large funding instruments by the European Union, lays a strong basis for Indian-European cooperation,' the officials were quoted as saying by the local media.

Coordinated by France's National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS), NEW INDIGO brings together researchers and policymakers from Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, India, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.

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