

CSIR seeks to woo industry in a big way

Kalyan Ray , DECCAN HERALD, New Delhi, May 31 , 2016, DHNS

Aims to sell home-grown technologies at lower prices



Under pressure from the government to earn more from the industry, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) looks up to big corporates to sell home-grown technologies at a price lower than imported technologies.

While three CSIR institutes in Karaikudi, Pune and Delhi set up a fuel cell test bed on a Reliance premise, another CSIR institute in Dhanbad sold a technology of collecting coal dust to make briquettes to Tata Motors, which are now selling these vans in coal-belt towns in eastern India.

Another institute in Bhubaneswar transferred a technology to a Aditya Birla group plant in Dahej for producing Tellurium, a critical component in the manufacturing of solar cells.

Though CSIR is mandated to generate a third of its annual budget from the industry through contract research and consultancy, the target was barely met in recent years, sources told DH. The government has now asked the council to pull up the socks.

“We will open all CSIR laboratories to small, medium and big industries and encourage them to come. We will handhold with the industry. This is the vision that we are going to follow in the next few years. We have ambition even to set up an industry,” said CSIR director-general Girish Sahni.

In the last two years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had several meetings with Indian scientists in which he asked them to emphasis on research that alleviate common man’s problems.

“We have been told to identify the low-hanging fruits that could be offered to the industry for commercialisation in the next two years. Each CSIR laboratory will pick up two technologies that can readily be offered to the industry,” said the director of a CSIR laboratory.

The idea of wooing the industry more was conveyed to the directors of 37 CSIR laboratories at the last director’s meeting in Dehradun.

Unlike the Department of Science and Technology and Department of Biotechnology, CSIR did not witness any rise in its annual budget in 2015-16.

Sahni said though CSIR contributes to many societal, commercial and strategic applications, the council did not receive the recognition it deserves. "We work in silent satisfaction and many in the CSIR laboratories are unsung heroes," he said.