

India becomes second EMBO Associate Member State

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The Government of India through the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, EMBO and its intergovernmental funding body, the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBO), have signed a Cooperation Agreement to strengthen scientific interaction and collaborative research between India and Europe. After the signing of an agreement with Singapore in July 2015, India will now become the second country to acquire the status of EMBC Associate Member State.

The goal of the agreement is to boost Indo-European exchange and to provide a platform for interaction with top-level scientists on both sides. As an EMBC Associate Member State, researchers working in India are now eligible to participate in all EMBO programmes and activities. Indian scientists can apply to EMBO's programmes, such as long-term fellowships for postdoctoral researchers, short-term fellowships, courses and workshops, as well as the EMBO Young Investigator Programme. At the same time, Europe will benefit from networking with the top-level scientists in India's research community. Deeper cooperation between nations will stimulate vision, ideas, and provide a framework for a long-term partnership.

"For the past five years, we have been promoting international interactions beyond Europe, and India is one of our prime partners. I am extremely pleased that India is going to be an Associate Member of EMBC and I look forward to India being able to access EMBO activities. Many European researchers have established scientific connections in India. No doubt these will be strengthened further once more tools and formal opportunities for interactions are available," highlighted Professor Maria Leptin, director of EMBO.

"India is rapidly growing into a position where we are making extraordinary demands on ourselves. India can only succeed if we partner with the best everywhere to bring the best here," he added.

"Through EMBO, we will not only have the excellent joint programmes that benefit India and Europe, but we hope to be a magnet that attracts bright young people to science from in- and outside India," said professor K. Vijay Raghavan, secretary

of DBT, for the Government of India, who signed the agreement.

Professor Gerrit van Meer, president of the EMBC, remarked, "All member states welcome the exchange with Indian scientists that this agreement will bring. We look forward to seeing transcontinental projects spanning India and Europe grow in future."

An official launch ceremony will be held in Delhi, India, on 4 February 2016. The kick-off event will include scientific presentations by Nobel Laureates Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard and Ada E. Yonath. An EMBO-led delegation of ten researchers will visit various institutes across the country and meet with Indian scientists and government representatives.

The newly forged cooperation will build upon already existing links between Indian and European scientists. In 2015, 10 Indian postdoctoral researchers received an EMBO Long- Term Fellowship to work in Europe and eight India-based scientists received the EMBO Short-Term Fellowship. A satellite symposium focusing on research in India has been an integral part of the annual conference The EMBO Meeting.