



Bill Summary

The Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2011

- The Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2011 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 20, 2011 by Mr. Vilasrao Deshmukh, Minister of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences. The Bill was referred to the standing committee on January 13, 2012.
- The Bill gives effect to the agreement entered into by the central government with United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2006. Under the agreement India had agreed to establish the Regional Centre for Biotechnology (Regional Centre) under the auspices of UNESCO.
- The Bill empowers the central government to establish the Regional Centre. It confers upon the Regional Centre the status of an institution of national importance. The functioning of the Regional Centre will be reviewed every four year by persons appointed by the government.
- The objects of the Regional Centre include, among other things, (a) to disseminate and advance knowledge by providing instructional and research facilities in biotechnology; (b) to facilitate transfer of knowledge and technology at the regional level; (c) to create a hub of biotechnological expertise in the SAARC region.
- The powers of the Regional Centre include, among others, to (a) provide for masters, doctoral and honorary degrees in biotechnology; (b) recognise and de-recognise institutions of higher learning in India; (c) establish centres and laboratories for research and development; (d) determine standards of admission to the Regional Centre; (e) to charge fees, borrow money, receive donations and acquire property, with the prior approval of the central government, for the purposes of the Regional Centre.
- The Bill establishes the following authorities of the Regional Centre: The Board of Governors (Board); Programme advisory committee (PAC); Executive Committee (EC) and the Financial Committee.
- The Board consists of (i) the Secretary to the Government of India (GoI) in the Department of Biotechnology as the ex-officio Chairperson; (ii) an eminent scientist who is, in grade, not less than the head of an autonomous institution supported by GoI, as a representative of the GoI, to be nominated by the Chairperson; (iii) a representative of the Director-General of UNESCO; (iv) a representative of each of the other Member States of UNESCO in such manner as may be specified by the Statutes. The PAC Chairperson shall be a permanent invitee of the Board.
- The PAC is the principal academic body of the Regional Centre. It will advise on planning, execution, review and monitoring of the scientific and academic programmes of the Regional Centre.
- The PAC consists of (a) a chairperson, nominated by the Board; (b) two members, nominated by UNESCO; (c) three members from amongst the member States of UNESCO that provide maximum financial assistance during a period of three years, nominated by the member States; (d) two members with expertise in biotechnology policy and legal matters, nominated by the GoI; (e) six members who are renowned scientists or academicians, nominated by the Board; and (f) the Executive Director as Member-Secretary ex-officio.
- The EC is the advisory body for management issues to the Regional Centre and will advise its Board.
- The constitution, powers and functions of the FC shall be specified by the Statutes. It will report to the Board.
- The Regional Centre is required to maintain a Fund to which the money provided by the GoI, donations received, and fees charged will be credited. It may invest the money with the approval of the GoI.

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