

# Bill Summary

## The Anusandhan National Research Foundation Bill, 2023

- The Anusandhan National Research Foundation Bill, 2023 was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 4, 2023. It repeals the Science and Engineering Research Board Act, 2008 and dissolves the Science and Engineering Research Board set up under it. The Bill provides for establishing the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (NRF).
- **Functions of NRF:** NRF will be the apex body in the country to provide strategic direction for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the fields of: (i) natural sciences including mathematics, (ii) engineering and technology, (iii) environmental and earth sciences, (iv) health and agriculture, and (v) scientific and technological interfaces of humanities and social sciences.
- Key functions of NRF include: (i) preparing short-term, medium-term, and long-term roadmaps and formulating programs for research and development (R&D), (ii) facilitating and financing the growth of R&D and related infrastructure in universities, colleges, and research institutions, (iii) providing grants for research proposals, (iv) supporting translation of research into capital intensive technology, (v) encouraging international collaboration, (vi) encouraging investments in the Foundation by private and public sector entities, and (vii) undertaking annual survey of scientific research, outcomes, and spending.
- **Funds for NRF:** The Foundation will be financed through: (i) grants and loans from the central government, (ii) donations to the fund, (iii) income from investments of the amounts received by the Foundation, and (iv) all amounts with the Fund for Science and Engineering Research set up under the 2008 Act.
- The following Funds will be constituted by the Foundation for allocation purposes: (i) the Anusandhan National Research Foundation Fund for salaries, allowances, and administrative purposes, (ii) the Innovation Fund for funding outstanding creativity in the areas supported by the Foundation, (iii) the Science and Engineering Research Fund for the continuation of projects initiated under the 2008 Act, and (iv) one or more special purpose funds for any specific project or research. The central government will prescribe rules for the utilisation of these Funds. CAG will audit the accounts of the Foundation annually.
- **Governing Board:** NRF will have a Governing Board headed by the Prime Minister of India. The Board will provide strategic direction to the Foundation and monitor the implementation. Other members of the Board are: (i) the Union Ministers of Science and Technology, Education as Vice Presidents, (ii) the Principal Scientific Advisor as Member Secretary, and (iii) Secretaries to the Departments of Science and Technology, Biotechnology, and Scientific and Industrial Research.
- The President of the Board may appoint or nominate additional members to the Board. These may include: (i) up to five members from business organisations or industries, (ii) one member from the fields of social sciences and humanities, and (iii) up to six experts from natural sciences, engineering, and technology. The President may appoint a Chief Executive Officer, who should be of the rank of an Additional Secretary, or above.
- **Executive Council:** The Foundation will have an Executive Council to undertake implementation. The functions of the Executive Council include: (i) considering applications for the grant of financial assistance, (ii) prescribing regulations regarding applications for financial assistance, requirements for extension of assistance, and grounds for revocation of assistance, and (iii) preparing budget of the Foundation and maintaining its accounts. The Council will have the power to authorise an officer to visit the applicants for grants and verify the accuracy of submissions made by them.
- The Principal Scientific Advisor will be the chairperson of the Council. Other members of the Council include: (i) secretaries to various departments of the central government including Science and Technology, Higher Education, Health Research, Agricultural Research, and Defence Research, and (ii) the Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation. The President of the Foundation may nominate or appoint to the Council: (i) up to two secretaries of departments not covered under the Bill, and (ii) up to three experts.

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