

## Preamble

The Indian Council of Medical Research (Est.1911) under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, is the premier autonomous organization for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and support of biomedical research in India. The Council has under its aegis a network of twenty-seven permanent Institutes/ Centers spread all over the country.

Until recently, biomedical scientists working in the Council have not been oriented to thinking in terms of protecting new knowledge for commercial gains through patents and licensing. The broad philosophy of the Council has been that all new knowledge generated through public funding should be first transmitted to the medical community for the larger benefit of human kind. Of late, there have been several changes both at the national and international levels in respect of how research, including those done with taxpayer's money, should be commercially exploited. The new intellectual property regimes in the post-WTO era and the rapid globalization have put considerable pressure on the national economies, which hitherto enjoyed considerable protection. In addition, even the thinking at the national level has undergone a sea change. Policy makers are talking in terms of return on investments even in biomedical research, primarily carried out to solve the national's health problems, expect research agencies to generate some amount of revenues without compromising on the basic objectives.

The Council has demonstrated capability in carrying out world class research and with the vast infrastructural and laboratory facilities built over a period of time, a strong and potential base exists for undertaking R&D that could lead to commercializable knowledge. Several products have been developed by Institutes/ Centers of the Council such as Vector Control Research Centre, Puducherry, National Institute of Virology, Pune; National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases, Kolkata; Institute of Cytology and Preventive Oncology, Noida; National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health, Mumbai *etc.* What is more, considerable interest has been shown by the private sector for working together on a partnership basis for further development of these processes/products for pilot/commercial production.

To help the Council's scientists in their efforts to generate, protect and commercially exploit new knowledge, the ICMR has set up an Intellectual Property Rights Unit in the ICMR Headquarters office in 1999. The IPR Unit provides the necessary technical, legal and all other support needed for all the IPR-related activities of all ICMR supported research.