

## Press Release

# Biocon Foundation in Partnership with NCBS and BeST Cluster Launches BioWISE Program - to Empower Women in STEM

*25 women students to receive internship, training, and mentorship in Life Sciences segment*

**Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, June 9, 2025**

**Biocon Foundation**, the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of **Biocon Group** in collaboration with The **Bengaluru Science and Technology (BeST) Cluster**, and **National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS)** today announced the launch of first-of-its-kind program **BioWISE - Women in STEM Empowered**, aimed at disadvantaged science students from tier 2 and 3 universities across Karnataka, to build a career in life sciences. The announcement was made at an event at NCBS campus, Bengaluru which was attended by R Anantharaman, CEO, BeST, Prof. L S Shashidhara, Director-NCBS, Prof. Vatsala Thirumalai, Dean Research, NCBS, and Dr. Anupama Shetty, Mission Director, Biocon Foundation along with Dr Sumana, Nodal Officer, DCE, Govt of Karnataka,

Some of the other guests also included Prof Uma Ramakrishnan, Dean Faculty, NCBS, Dr Vineeta Ragavan, Research Development Officer, Instem, Prof. TNC Vidya & Dr Achira Roy from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Dr Rajeswari Shome from ICAR-NIVEDI, Dr Mansi Malik & Dr Pankaj Gupta from Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS), among other dignitaries.

BioWISE, a part of Biocon Biologics CSR initiative, is a transformative initiative aimed at enhancing access, participation, and retention of women from underserved communities in STEM, particularly life sciences. By supporting 25 women students from diverse communities through scholarships, extended internships, and mentorship, this program is a significant step towards building a scientific ecosystem, which is diverse, inclusive, and equitable.

**Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairperson, Biocon Group**, said, *"At Biocon Group, we believe that science must be inclusive. Empowering women in STEM through our program BioWISE, is not just a moral imperative; it is a strategic investment in our nation's future. Our commitment to supporting women in science stems from our broader vision of enabling equitable access to health, education, research, and opportunity."*

**Prof Ambarish Ghosh, Co-PI, BeST Cluster,** Said, *“At BeST Cluster, we believe diversity and inclusion are essential. BioWISE is our step toward a scientific community where women from all backgrounds can thrive, lead, and inspire.”*

**Mr. Anatharaman, CEO, BeST Cluster,** said, *“This initiative is a commitment to ensure that career breaks do not translate into career ends. We believe BioWISE will help unlock the vast potential of talented women in STEM across Karnataka.”*

**Prof. L.S. Shashidhara, Director, NCBS,** stated, *“NCBS is honored to serve as a hub for this initiative, and we look forward to hosting and mentoring the next generation of women leaders in science.”*

**Dr Sumana, Nodal officer, DCE, Government of Karnataka,** observed *“Empowering women in STEM is not just a goal, it is a necessity for building resilient, future-ready research systems. BioWISE is an inclusive platform that brings this vision to life, starting right here in Karnataka.”*

As the first state-level cohort, the BioWISE program will support 25 women students, including 15 postgraduates (PG) and 10 undergraduates (UG) from life sciences backgrounds. The initiative is designed to run for 6 months for PG students and 3 months for UG students, offering them extensive exposure, training, and mentorship. BioWISE provides a multi-dimensional platform to build competencies, foster mentorship, and open up research and industry pathways for women entering the STEM specifically life sciences workforce.

Biocon Foundation will enable the initiative through funding and experts from Biocon Biologics, industry partner, will support with mentorship; while NCBS will serve as the host institute and academic mentoring partner. BeST Cluster will contribute to the program’s design, management, and implementation.

**Dr. Anupama Shetty, Mission Director, Biocon Foundation,** stated *“BioWISE is an essential step toward creating enabling environments where women can thrive in science. At Biocon Foundation, we believe that empowering women in STEM will have a ripple effect across communities, leading to more inclusive and sustainable growth.”*

**Prof. Vatsala Thirumalai, Dean Research, NCBS,** said *“BioWISE represents more than training, it is about transformation. We are proud to support an initiative that brings opportunities to young women from underserved communities and prepares them for impactful careers in life sciences.”*

## Program Highlights:

- **Regular Mentor-Mentee Sessions:** Participants will engage in continuous mentorship sessions with experts from Biocon Biologics, NCBS, and other institutions to gain insights into research and career opportunities.
- **Lab Visits & Scientific Exposure:** Structured visits to NCBS, TIGS (Tata Institute for Genetics and Society), IISc (Indian Institute of Science), and JNC (Jyoti Nivas College) will provide practical exposure to world-class research labs and facilities.
- **Bio-Incubation Centre Visits:** Participants will explore bio-incubators and entrepreneurial ecosystems to understand innovation pathways in life sciences.
- **Hands-on Training & Research Seminars:** Focused workshops, wet-lab experiences, and research-oriented seminars/webinars will help participants build core technical and scientific thinking skills.
- **Soft Skills & Communication Training:** Emphasis will be placed on workplace readiness, professional communication, and career planning to ensure sustainable reintegration into STEM fields.

## About Biocon Foundation:

Biocon Foundation, the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of Biocon, Biocon Biologics and Syngene International, has been working to empower marginalized communities since 2005. Biocon Foundation partners with society to promote social and economic inclusion.

It has thus made significant investments in enhancing access to quality healthcare, education, and civic infrastructure along with environmental sustainability projects. Combined with field initiatives, these programs create momentum to elevate the marginalized sections of society.

Over the years, Biocon Foundation has built a strong reputation for the quality of its programs and their impact in addressing the social, humanitarian, and environmental challenges facing India. To make a more meaningful impact, the Foundation regularly partners with government agencies and like-minded organizations for program delivery. Besides addressing critical national and state level challenges in primary healthcare, education and rural development, the Foundation is also augmenting environmental sustainability through the lake revival mission in Bengaluru.

Visit: <http://www.bioconfoundation.org>

## About BeST:

The Bengaluru Science and Technology Cluster (BeST) is an initiative under the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, established to foster innovation, collaboration, and societal impact through science and technology. BeST leverages Bengaluru's vibrant ecosystem of academic institutions, industry leaders, startups, civil society organizations, and government bodies to address critical challenges in public health, sustainability, and urban development. Coordinated by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and supported by over 20 partner organizations, BeST began with seed funding sanctioned in September 2022. Its establishment was led by the Director of IISc, Professor Govindan Rangarajan (Principal Investigator), with Professor Ambarish Ghosh of

IISc and Dr. Taslimarif Saiyed, CEO of C-CAMP, as Co-PIs. On May 14, 2024, BeST transitioned into a Section 8 Company under the name Foundation for Bengaluru Science and Technology. This non-profit organization was co-founded by four leading institutions: IISc, the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), and the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS). Through its multidisciplinary approach, BeST aims to create scalable, technology-driven solutions that enhance quality of life and promote inclusive growth in Bengaluru and beyond.

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## About NCBS

National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), a centre of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, an autonomous institute of Department of Atomic Energy, Govt. of India, is a premier research institution dedicated to fundamental research at all levels of biology covering a diverse set of subjects spanning from molecules to ecosystems and from nanosecond to evolutionary time. The mission of NCBS is to amplify boundaries of biological knowledge, create scientific human capital and deploy contemporary tools and technologies for capabilities in science. At the NCBS scientific culture encourages interdisciplinarity, collegiality, collaboration, non-hierarchical engagement, objective oriented and unbiased approaches. NCBS is committed to building bridges across disciplines, institutions, and borders. It actively nurtures collaborations with scientists both within India and internationally, catalysing the creation of new programs, innovative institutions, and transdisciplinary initiatives. The Centre also plays a pivotal role in connecting the history of science to contemporary challenges, and in linking scientific discovery to societal needs.

Visit: <https://www.ncbs.res.in/>

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