

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay Receives Grand Challenges Explorations Funding

Mumbai – Indian Institute of Technology Bombay announced today that it will receive funding through Grand Challenges Explorations, an initiative created by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that enables researchers worldwide to test unorthodox ideas that address persistent health and development challenges. Dr. **Rinti Banerjee, Professor, Department of Biosciences & Bioengineering**, will pursue an innovative global health research project, titled **Nanoparticle Based Cosmetics to Deliver Micronutrients in Pregnant Women**

Grand Challenges Explorations funds scientists and researchers worldwide to explore ideas that can break the mold in how we solve persistent global health and development challenges. Prof Rinti Banerjee's project is one of 110 Grand Challenges Explorations grants announced on November 7, 2011, and amongst 2 from India.

"We believe in the power of innovation—that a single bold idea can pioneer solutions to our greatest health and development challenges," said Chris Wilson, Director of Global Health Discovery for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "Grand Challenges Explorations seeks to identify and fund these new ideas wherever they come from, allowing scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs to pursue the kinds of creative ideas and novel approaches that could help to accelerate the end of polio, cure HIV infection or improve sanitation."

Projects that are receiving funding show promise in tackling priority global health issues where solutions do not yet exist. This includes finding effective methods to eliminate or control infectious diseases such as polio and HIV as well as discovering new sanitation technologies.

To learn more about Grand Challenges Explorations, visit www.grandchallenges.org.

Prof Rinti Banerjee proposes to develop nutrient loaded pastes for skin and eye decorations like mehendi and kohl for delivery of iron, iodine, and folic acid through skin in pregnant women. If successful, life threatening complications and death rates in newborns will be reduced.

Prof Banerjee is a medical doctor with a PhD in Biomedical Engineering and her group in IIT Bombay works in the interdisciplinary area of nanomedicine. Her research includes the development of novel biomaterials and nanoparticle based platforms for drug delivery and therapeutics, with a focus on addressing global health issues and providing low cost, innovative solutions for healthcare problems in developing countries.

About Grand Challenges Explorations

Grand Challenges Explorations is a US\$100 million initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Launched in 2008, Grand Challenge Explorations grants have already been awarded to nearly 500 researchers from over 40 countries. The grant program is open to anyone from any discipline and from any organization. The initiative uses an agile, accelerated grant-making process with short, two-page online applications and no preliminary data required. Initial grants of \$100,000 are awarded two times a year. Successful projects have an opportunity to receive a follow-on grant of up to US\$1 million.