

PUNE: Aimed at encouraging innovative defence products in the country, the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has decided to fund defence scientists who want to set up small scale industries.

"We will soon come up with a techno park project with an aim to promote innovations in the field of defence research," said S Sundaresh, chief controller, R&D, Armament and Combat Engineering (ACE) of the DRDO. He was interacting with TOI on the sidelines of the golden jubilee celebrations of the Research & Development Establishment (Engineers), Alandi Road, on Wednesday.

According to Sundaresh, the techno park will come up in Chennai, close to the [Indian Institute of Technology](#) (IIT). Here, 100 defence scientists will be given a chance to work with students and academicians on various innovative projects.

"Later, the projects will be selected on merit. The projects will be judged on whether they will be of use in the defence sector. If chosen, the scientists working on the project will be allowed to set up a small-scale industry. The units will be funded by DRDO," Sundaresh said. "It will be like a sabbatical.

The scientists will be asked to run the industry for two years. Then, the option of continuing with it or returning to [DRDO](#) will be discussed."

According to Sundaresh, details of the techno park project are still being finalized and will be carried out once the technical details are sorted out. This endeavour has been inspired by a similar one run by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), he said.

S Guruprasad, director, R&DE (E) thinks DRDO's initiative is likely to be received well. "The students have very good ideas. These ideas can be utilised in such a project," he said. "We carried out one such venture pertaining to the Netra unmanned vehicle with the help of IIT students. It is an example of student participation in an innovative project."

Young scientists too are looking forward to flexing their innovative muscles. "Sometimes we don't get a chance to use our ideas because of red tape. This project will give us the freedom to use our ideas the way we want," one scientist said.

Another scientist stated that some projects are rejected due to lack of funds. "It will be challenge for us to make the industry run.

So we will work with more energy and effort. Funds too will not be a problem if the project is worthy," he said.