The Government of India, mainly through the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), has made great efforts and taken important steps during the last few years for introducing irradiation technology for food safety and security in the country. As an example of these efforts, two technology demonstration facilities have been built in order to show the benefits of irradiation technology to farmers, traders and exporters. In 2001 a radiation processing plant at Vashi, Navi Mumbai, was built in order to process spices. At present this facility has 430 kCi of cobalt-60 activity and is irradiating more than 2000 tons of spices and other materials. The construction of another irradiator was started in 1998 and it became fully operational in 2003. The facility, named KRUSHAK, is located at Lasalgaon, in Nashik District, 250 km east of Mumbai. KRUSHAK is an acronym for ‘Krushi Utpadan Sanrakshan Kendra’, literally translated in English as ‘agricultural produce conservation centre’. The KRUSHAK irradiator is a specially designed technology demonstration unit for low dose applications of irradiation, primarily for controlling sprouting in stored onions and insect disinfestation of agricultural commodities for storage and quarantine. In 2003 only two farmers and an onion processing company irradiated about 30 tons of onion in this facility; however, due to the dissemination of technical information in the surrounding villages, the quantity of irradiated onions, as well as the number of end users (farmers), increased more than 10 times in 2004. This is a successful example of transfer of irradiation technology in this country.

At present, a dozen Memorandums of Understanding have been signed between the entrepreneurs and the BARC/Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology (BRIT) for setting up multi-product radiation processing facilities. About four of them have already finalized the financing and began construction.