

Guidelines for Operation of Projects for Grantees of ICMR's Extramural Research Projects

The Indian Council of Medical Research provides financial assistance to promote biomedical and health research. The assistance is provided by way of grants to scientists in regular employment in the Universities, medical colleges, postgraduate institutions, recognized research and development laboratories and NGOs. (Applications from non-governmental agencies should provide documentary evidence of registration, track record etc.)

1. Proposals in fundamental/ strategic research; development and evaluation of a tool, and operational research are considered for ICMR support.
2. Research grants from the ICMR are essentially intended to supplement the research facilities available with the host institutions. All facilities for the conduct of research, such as basic equipment and ordinary laboratory chemicals, glassware, furniture and other assistance as may be required for the smooth working of the project shall be provided by the Institute.
3. **Staff** - The following categories of staff are eligible to be employed in the ICMR funded projects.
 - a. **FIXED EMOLUMENTS**
 - i) Jr. Research Fellows
 - ii) Sr. Research Fellows
 - iii) Research Associates
 - iv) Research scientists
 - v) Laboratory and Field staff

Note : Running scales will be applicable only for the staff who are in existence prior to order no. 16/91/2000-Admin-II dated 9/8/2001 of the ICMR.

- b. No research staff should be employed on any ICMR project for more than four years.

The rates of fellowships and emoluments of the research personnel will be in accordance with the guidelines issued by the ICMR from time to time. (Please see Annexure 1). For Centres for Advanced Research (CAR), the scales of staff should be based on scales of pay of the host institution. The project staff would be eligible for DA, HRA, CCA and leave etc. as per norms, revised from time to time.

Only those candidates can be appointed as Junior Research Fellows who have cleared the ICMR-PGI National Eligibility Test/CSIR/UGC NET test NET UGC in Social Sciences. The progress of JRF and SRF working on a project will be assessed at the end of two years by a committee consisting of PI, Head of Department (where PI is HOD, the next senior of Department/Dean will be a member) and an external member who is an expert in the relevant field - not less than an Associate Professor/Professor. The stipend of JRF will be increased from Rs. 12000/- pm to Rs. 14000/- pm and of SRF from Rs. 14000/- to Rs.15000/- pm for remaining tenure of the project, provided the research progress has been found satisfactory by the Committee. On upgradation, the designation would be changed.

4. Once a project is approved for funding, the concerned Technical Division of ICMR would inform the Principal Investigator (PI) the decision that the project has been technically approved for funding and communicate the budget including the details of the staff, equipment(s), contingencies, travel etc.
5. The PI is expected to inform the concerned Technical Division about
 - a. His/Her acceptance of the budget.

- b. For all equipment approved in the project, the PI is required to give a certificate from the Head of the Institute to the effect that equipment is not available/accessible/cannot be spared for this project work.
 - c. The name of the statutory auditor of the College/Institute.
 - d. An undertaking that the staff employed for the project would be the responsibility of the host Institution and would have no claim to a permanent employment with the ICMR. They are not to be treated as employees of the ICMR and the employment of such staff at the time of completion or termination of the project shall not be that of ICMR. They would be subject to administrative control and other service rules as applicable to them, of the Institute where the project is based.
6. On receipt of the above information the Technical Division of ICMR would process for release of grant.
7. **Auditors**

The Council would normally accept audited report from statutory auditors. The Council may also accept statement of accounts audited by Chartered Accountants approved by or registered with the CAG and /or Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. The necessary registration number should be provided for record.
8. **Release of grants**

The funds are released as 6 monthly installments. The first installment is released along with the sanction letter. It would include the entire grant for purchase of equipment, and recurring grant for the period of six months. The next installment would be for the remaining period. Steps to procure the approved equipment should be initiated immediately (to avoid escalation of cost) following the prescribed norms of the host institution.
9. **Re-appropriation of funds**

Expenditure should on no account exceed the budget sanctioned for the project. Expenditure incurred over and above the sanctioned amounts against one or more, sub-heads of expenditure such as pay & allowances, contingencies etc shall be met without references to the ICMR, by re-appropriation of savings under remaining sub-heads provided (except under sub-head 'equipment') by re-appropriation of money during the financial year provided it is within over all sanctioned ceiling of the year. No expenditure shall be incurred on items not sanctioned by the Council. Savings should also not be re-appropriated for meeting or incurring expenditure on staff that has not been sanctioned by the Council.
10. **Down-gradation/ Up-gradation of approved posts**

For whatever reasons, if an investigator would like to downgrade a post or convert it to an equivalent or lower level post, the justification needs to be sent to the concerned Technical Division of ICMR. This request would be carefully examined by the Technical Division, and if convinced, the change can be effected by the Chief of Division. If on the other hand an approved post needs to be upgraded, the justification provided by the PI should be examined by the Divisional Chief and if satisfied, the approval of Director-General should be taken. When in doubt, the Chairperson of the respective Project Review Committee (PRC) could be consulted for up-gradation as well as down-gradation. The PRC should be informed about the change at its next meeting.
11. **Date of start**

The sanction letter would specify the date of start. It can only be a prospective date. If however no date is mentioned in the sanction letter, the project would be deemed to have become operative on the day the grant is received by the Investigator. This date would have to be communicated by the host Institute to the ICMR. It will in no case be later than one month after the receipt of the draft by the Institute. The date of start of a project can be changed on the request of the PI provided no expenditure has been incurred from the grant released by the Council.
12. **Utilization of travel grant**

The grant can be utilized for travel within the country of the PI, co-investigator or of Research staff working on the scheme :

- a. Attending seminars/symposia/conferences within the country provided the PI himself or the project staff is presenting a research paper (based on the project work) which has been accepted. Copy of the acceptance letter should be sent to the Council.
- b. Taking up field work/travel connected with the research work (TA/DA would be as per the entitlement) including procurement of chemicals, equipments etc.
- c. Visiting the ICMR Hqrs office for meetings related to the project
- d. Attending a training course related to the project, mainly for project staff
- e. The travel grant cannot be used for foreign travel or any other expenses for visits abroad

13. Utilizing the contingent grant

This is meant for recurring as well as non-recurring expenditure. The contingent grant can be utilized for purposes like, but not limited to:

- a. Acquisition of books and documents of relevance to the research topic in case these are not available in the library, these would become the property of the Institution library and after purchase and accession may be issued to the Department/ Scientist till they are needed.
- b. Chemicals/consumable items required for research work
- c. Charges for specialized investigations for which facilities do not exist in the host institute
- d. Publication charges/ reprints/ off-prints of research papers published as an outcome of the research
- e. Data entry charges
- f. Printing of questionnaire
- g. Computer utilities, charges for analysis of data (computer charges)
- h. Typing of research reports including preparation of the final report
- i. POL
- j. Communication charges
- k. The grant cannot be used for purchase of furniture items/office equipments such as telephone, fax machine, computers etc.

14. Contingency grant

For contingency grant exceeding Rs.25,000/- per annum detailed breakdown should be given.

All expendable and non-expendable articles acquired for work of the project should be purchased in accordance with the procedure in vogue in the host institutions. For permanent and semi-permanent assets acquired solely or mainly out of the grant, a separate audited record in the form of register in prescribed Performa enclosed shall be maintained by the Institute. The term "assets" means moveable property where the value exceeds Rs.1000/-. Separate assets registers for items costing more than Rs.20,000/- and less than Rs.20,000 may be maintained.

15. Equipment

- a. The Council would also provide equipment(s) for conduct of the study provided it has been approved by the appropriate PRC. There is no upper ceiling on the amount to be sanctioned for purchase of equipment(s). This would vary on the nature, scope and need of the project.
- b. All equipments should be purchased according to the rules and procedures of the Institutions where the project is to be carried out
- c. Equipment procured through the ICMR grant should bear a label "ICMR funded"
- d. On completion of the study a list of all equipments procured from the project funds along with their cost, date of purchase, and suggestions for disposal should be sent to the ICMR Hqrs.
- e. Equipments costing less than Rs 20,000 are generally allowed to be retained by the Institute, while for those costing more than Rs 20,000 the Council would take decision on case to case basis.

16. Annual Progress Report

- a. The Annual Report is to be submitted annually in the prescribed format. (Annexure-3).
The first progress report should be submitted about three months prior to the completion of the annual period so as to enable the evaluation and provide the grants within the completion of one year from the starting date. The subsequent annual report will be for the period of one year.
- b. The progress of the project would be evaluated by the ICMR through appropriate peer review/Expert Committees.
- c. The scheme will not be renewed for the next financial year unless the Council receives the progress report in time.
- d. A delay in receipt of the report in time for consideration by the Committee may lead to termination of the project
- e. The PI may be asked to present the progress at the meeting of the Committee, if considered necessary.
- f. The suggestion and views of the Committee and mid-course correction, if any, would be conveyed to the PI from time to time for effective conduct of the project. This would be binding on the PI.

17. Annual utilization certificate (Annexure 4a)

- a. Each year a simple statement of accounts giving the funds received and expenditure incurred by 31st March needs to be submitted for release of the first instalment for the next year duly signed by the Accounts Officer of the Institute.
- b. Unspent balance would be adjusted in the first installment for the next year
- c. An audited statement would be essential for release of the second installment of the annual grant from second year onwards.

18. Final Project Completion Report

- a. At the completion of the project, the final report should be sent in the prescribed format. (Annexure-5).
- b. The report should be submitted not later than three months from the date of completion of the project.
- c. 10% grant would be withheld for release after receipt of the final report.

19. Final settlement of the Accounts

The final settlement of the Accounts will be done only after the receipt of the following:

- a. Final audited statement of expenditure (Annexure-6).
- b. Final utilization certificate (Annexure -4 a).
- c. List of equipments procured from the project along with their cost, date of purchase, and suggestions for disposal

20. Duration of project

Extension beyond the approved duration normally would not be entertained. If interesting/important leads emerge that need to be followed-up, a separate proposal may be submitted. Only in exceptional cases, where a valid justification exists, an extension can be considered to complete the project.

21. Change of PI

- a. PIs are encouraged to have a co-investigator in the project.
- b. If for any reason the PI leaves the project, an eligible co-investigator could be considered as the PI subject to recommendation of the PI, the Head of the Institution, and the approval of ICMR. Such a request should be sent well in advance.
- c. In case the PI is shifting to any other Institution, the co-investigator could be made the new PI, or the project could be transferred to the new Institution with the mutual agreement of both Institutions and the approval of the ICMR.
- d. The host Institution has an important role to play in the above contract. The Institute/Principal Investigator will have to inform ICMR of any changes, and in consultation with ICMR take steps to

ensure successful completion of the project before relieving the Principal Investigator.

22. Number of projects with the PI

Under normal conditions, a PI should not be implementing more than three research projects at a given point in time. While submitting an application for a research project, the PI should give in detail all the research projects (completed, on-going). Fresh research proposals can be considered only when the on-going research proposals are about to conclude.

23. Overhead expenses

- (i) 5 % of the cost of the project (excluding the cost of equipment) to the educational institutions.
- (ii) 3% of cost of the project (excluding the cost of equipment) to the research institutions (e.g. laboratories & institutes under S & T agencies, other departments).
- (iii) On projects costing more than Rs.40 lakhs, the quantum will be decided on a case to case basis.

24. Budget

The budget would be sanctioned under broad sub-head as under:

- i. staff pay and allowance of the staff
- ii. contingency recurring
non-recurring(equipment)
- iii. travel
- iv. overhead charges

25. The grant paid by the ICMR shall be refunded by the institution as and when the investigator discontinues a scheme midway or does not follow the detailed technical programme as laid down and approved by the ICMR.

26. All raw data (in all forms) should be made available/accessible to ICMR if needed.

27. Publication of Results/Presentation of Papers:

The research papers and publications based on the results of the research project should acknowledge assistance by the ICMR along with IRIS ID number. Copies/reprints of papers published should be sent along with the progress/final report.

28. Intellectual Property Rights

All new intellectual property viz., patents, designs etc. generated as part of the research supported by the ICMR would belong to the Council. The Council shall have the right to take up patent/design in respect of inventions/discoveries made in research schemes financed by the Council. The project investigators and the staff employed on the project shall not apply or obtain patents without the approval of ICMR. All patents shall be registered in the name of Indian Council of Medical Research. The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Cell can provide all necessary assistance in the IPR related issues including patent applications.

29. Conflict of interest

In order to maintain the objectivity in the conduct and reporting of research, it is imperative that the investigators should not have any interests that undermine scientific integrity while recording and reporting their data. Any research or other links of the investigators with industry are discouraged as such a link would compromise or likely to compromise unbiased reporting of research data. In addition, such a financial conflict of interest could lead to loss of public faith on the credibility of data being reported, especially in the light of recent reports of financial conflict of interest of investigators in drug and other clinical trials. All investigators, desirous of ICMR support should declare financial

conflict of interest, if any, before submitting the project for support. They should also ensure that during the conduct of the project, they would also observe the same code of conduct. If the Council comes to know of any unethical conduct on the part of investigator including improper/incomplete declaration, the project is liable to be terminated immediately.

Annexure -1

Emoluments for Research Personnel participating in Research project of the Central Govt.
Departments/Agencies

Fellows

1. Junior Research Fellows

1.1 Qualifications

- 1.1.1. M.Sc. degree holders in Life Sciences who have qualified in the CSIR/UGC or ICMR/PGI National Entrance Test (NET) or CSIR/UGC NET and have a valid certificate.
- 1.1.2. M.A./Master in Social Work (MSW) degree holders who have qualified in the National Entrance Test (NET) of the UGC in Social Sciences.

1.2 Emoluments (per month)

- 1.2.1 First and Second year Rs. 16000/-
- 1.2.2 Subsequent year Rs. 18000/-

2. Senior Research Fellows

2.1 Qualifications

- 2.1.1 M.Sc. (Life Sciences), MA (Social Sciences), Master in Medical Social Work (MSW) degree holders with two years research experience.
- 2.1.2 MBBS/BDS/MVSc/M.Pharm./M.E./M.Tech. degree holders

2.2 Emoluments (per month)

- 2.2.1 With medical and dental qualifications
 - First year and thereafter Rs 20000/-
- 2.2.2 With non-medical qualifications
 - First and second year Rs 18000/-
 - Third year and thereafter Rs 20000/-

3. Research Associates

3.1 Qualifications

Doctorate degree in Medicine namely M.D./M.S./MDS or Ph.D. in any field.

3.2 Emoluments

- 3.2.1 With upto three years post-doctoral research experience: Rs.23000/-
- 3.2.2 With more than three years post-doctoral research experience: Rs.24000/-

4. Research Scientists

| | Consolidated Salary (per month) | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------|
| | Medical | Non-Medical |
| Scientist-1 (equivalent to Research officer) (In the minimum of the scale of Rs.8000-275-13500) | Rs. 23,700/- | Rs. 18,960/- |
| Scientist-2 (equivalent to Sr Research Officer) (In the minimum of the scale of Rs10000-325-15200) | Rs. 29,625/- | Rs. 23,700/- |
| Scientist-3 (equivalent to Asstt Director) (In the minimum of the scale of Rs12000-375-16500) | Rs. 35,550/- | Rs. 28,440/- |

HRA is payable with reference to the initial basic of pay scale plus NPA, HRA is admissible if the place of duty falls within the qualifying limits of the City/Urban agglomeration irrespective of the place of residence.

5. Supporting staff/ non-scientific
Scales below 8000-13500
As recommended by 5th Pay
Commission and approved by
Central Government
6. Other Benefits admissible will be as under:
 - 6.1. D.A. and C.C.A.
JRFs/SRFs and Research Associates will not be entitled to these allowances
 - 6.2. H.R.A.
HRA and Medical benefits will be allowed to all categories of JRFs/SRFs and research Associates as per the rules of the Institutions where they are working. For the purpose, the fellowship amounts for JRFs/SRFs and Research Associates will be taken as basic pay.
 - 6.3. Leave salary and Other service benefits
JRFs/SRFs will continue to be eligible for the casual leave while Research Associates will be entitled to leave as per rules of the concerned Institution. However, Maternity Leave will be given to all categories.
 - 6.4. Bonus and L.T.C.
Bonus and LTC is not admissible to any category.
7. Retirement benefits
These will not be applicable to JRFs/SRFs Research Associates. Research scientists who are appointed for the duration of the project in regular scales of pay as mentioned above may be allowed to be members of the Contributory Provident Fund.