Operational Guidelines for a Sponsored Research Project

1   Principal Investigator (PI)

Principal Investigator (PI) of a research or consultancy project is considered to be the prime interface between the funding agency and R &C and is operational head of the project. The PI is advised to keep the whole project team aware about the progress of the project and involve the Co-PIs in all related project activities. In his/her absence of short duration, the PI may request any of the Co-PI to take-over the responsibility of running the project with the approval of Dean R &C. However, if the complete responsibility is being handed over to Co PI or another faculty member, prior approval of Dean R&C and Director and funding agency is required.

Who can be the PI

Any permanent faculty member of the Institute can submit project proposal as PI. Approved Inspire faculty member also can submit projects as PI , if his/her period in the Institute is sufficient to complete the project. Normally in the case of Inspire faculty submitting projects, there shall be a Co PI and Co PI shall be a permanent faculty member of the Institute.

2   Collaborative Research proposals.

Prior approval of Dean R&C and Director is required to submit project proposals with collaboration with other Institutes/Industries. Under such cases, faculty shall submit a request letter through HOD, along with (I) copy of the proposal (ii) why do we need a collaborative proposal (iii) gain to the Institute from the collaboration (iv) expectations from NITC (v) consent letter from the head of the the organization in which we are planning to collaborate.

Normally it is accepted only if the collaborative organization is with higher NIRF or QS rank/ reputed Govt owned organizations/Industries. Highly reputed private industries like TATA, L & T etc may also be considered. Any startup under DST/TBI is also considered.

Collaboration with foreign universities will be approved only for DST/MHRD approved project proposals and also under the framework of MHRD guidelines.

3 Overhead

Institute overhead for all research projects shall be 20% in general. If any direction from funding agency for any other % of overhead, same shall be indicated with the approval of Dean R &C.

When the proposal is submitted in collaboration with other institutes/industries, overhead to NITC shall be properly made (a major share to NITC if it is to be shared)

4 Procured services and Imported items under project while preparing proposal

There are charges/taxes like GST, other tax/duty/services charges for the procured service if any under project, also import duties, taxes, custom /clearing/insurance charges, bank/LC charges etc for imported items. All these shall be added appropriately to the cost of the equipment, when the project budget is prepared in the proposal.

Direct purchase for minor consumables through amazon etc may be allowed only as per GFR guidelines.

5 Endorsement from the Institute

Generally, endorsement from Institute is required for all research projects in the prescribed format.

For all projects, endorsement will be submitted to Dean (R &C) with a request enclosing copy of the proposal.

6 Submission of proposal

Complete set of proposals + all enclosures, if submitted with appropriate address to be sent, it can be sent from R &C office. It can also be submitted by PI directly as desired.

Presentation before funding agency

Short listed proposals need to be presented by the PI before an expert committee of funding agency. Duty leave can be sanctioned by HOD for the PI/Co PI for this presentation.

Expenditure for travel for such presentation can be claimed from his/her overhead share of previous projects if any or PDA. If such funds are not available with PI , he/she may approach Dean (R &C) to explore the support. Generally, institute funding for such journeys will not be provided.

Prior sanction/approval is required for all such journeys as per GOI guidelines, if expenditure is claimed.

7   Steps after getting sanction order of projects

Receipt of Funds/Grants

Nowadays most of the grants (start or subsequent) are being released through RTGS/e-payment. PIs are requested to coordinate with Funding Agency to obtain a written communication (or email) of release of funds and convey this information to R &C office through HOD so that the grant may be credited to the appropriate account without any delay.

Generally funding agency will be asking fund transfer details. These details can be downloaded from R &C we site (Inst. Account form).

Fund is first received normally in R &C account. Once intimation of fund transfer received by PI from funding agency, PI shall submit a request Dean R &C to open a separate bank account for the project with copies of sanction letter, fund transaction details.

Dean R &C will make arrangement to open a separate bank account for the project as normally insisted by funding agency and this information will be communicated to PI by accounts section of NITC. Pass book of this account will be kept in accounts section and can be taken for verification/updation with the bank at any time by PI with permission from accounts.

PI shall quote the title of the project and name of funding agency and the account number for all his future submissions related to projects.

PFMS linking – if required by Funding agency

PFMS registration and linking is required for fund transfer in case of GOVT aided projects. Such cases request shall be submitted to Dean (R &C) by PI with details essentially-title of project, account no., name of PI, Mobile/email id , funding agency, Scheme code.

Dean (R &C) will coordinate with finance section for PFMS linking. PFMS linking shall be made only to the project account. Approval from PFMS authority will be intimated to PI by Finance section with login for data entry.

Project Monitoring committee (PMC)

Once fund is received by NITC, PI can propose for a project monitoring committee. General structure is as below:

HOD (Chair) if he/she is the PI , another senior Professor/faculty in the Dept.
PI (convenor)
CO-Pis if any
One faculty expert from the dept
One faculty expert in the area/related area from any other dept in the Institute
Dean R&C or his/her Nominee

Committee proposed will be approved by Dean R &C. In some cases, funding agency may insist an expert from outside the institute.

Administrative Sanction & Financial sanction (AS & FS)

No expenditure shall be made without prior approval.

The first meeting of the PMC shall be convened by PI with all the members. PI can brief about his/her project with exceptions /outcome/methodology/work plan, fund/grant received, expenditure approved by the funding agency under various heads/ any guidelines for expenditure by funding agency. etc.
Note: Expenditure shall be shown only for the fund received and not for the total fund sanctioned. Expenditure (for the amount received only) shall be shown as a table under various heads as approved by funding agency. It is better to show title and one line spec. of equipment if any under non-recurring head.
PMC can make recommendations for the approval (AS & FS) of the expenditure.

PI can submit a request to Dean R &C, for administrative sanction and final sanction (AS &FS) for the fund/grant received enclosing recommendation of the PMC through HOD. PI shall also attach copy of sanction letter of the project/ approval of expenditure by the funding agency under various heads and any guidelines for expenditure by funding agency and minutes of meeting of PMC.
As mentioned, It is better to write one-line spec along with the name of item to be purchased /indicate details if proprietary with justifications or imported with justifications or qualifications/experience//salary/number of posts/duration of the project staff any to be engaged.
Note that once AS & FS is taken, no deviations/changes are allowed.
Note that no deviations from the norms/items /heads approved by the funding agency shall be taken for AS & FS.

If any such deviations are observed at any time, severe action will be taken against PI and CO PIs including penalty and other appropriate disciplinary actions decide by the funding agency/Institute /MHRD.

All expenditure shall be made only after receipt of AS & FS from R &C office.

PI shall quote the title of the project /name of funding agency/the account number for all his submissions related to projects. A copy of AS & FS shall also be attached.

8 Project Staff

- **Project Engagements:** These engagements are contractual and renewed every year maximum up to the duration of the project. The request for the same may be initiated by PI (Form No. IRD/REC-2.) and submitted to R&C office.

The PI has two options for holding these selections: -
- Option I - Walk in Interview;
- Option II – Walk in test and Interview.

R & C office will post the advertisement on Institute website and a general notice will be published in a local edition of National Newspaper indicating the availability of advertised posts under the projects.
The composition of Selection Committee is to be sent to Dean R & C (Form No. IRD/REC-3) for approval. Generally, it is better to keep PMC as the expert committee for the interview.
As per the schedule, test/interview shall be conducted and PI shall give the result requesting for the engagment of project staff along with minutes etc. to Dean R &C office.
(i) Consolidated mark sheet for all candidates attended with cutoff marks and (ii)rank list of candidates as a part of minutes of meeting with recommendation for engagement of candidate as per rank shall be submitted

- **Assistantships:** PIs are encouraged to select full-time M.Tech./Ph.D. students through MHRD/Institute M.Tech. & Ph.D. selection process as project staff and extend assistantship through the Project against sanctioned staff positions in the project.
Under such cases, an application from the concerned student indicating his willingness and accepting conditions of the project, recommendations of the PMC and PG coordinator/Guide and HOD /Dean (Academic) shall be attached along with the request for such assistantships by PI.

•**Engagement on Honorarium:** Honorarium for providing assistance in project activities (lump sum or quantified) can be paid to full-time Ph.D./PG//UG Students of NITC as per approved norms of the funding agency and AS & FS from the Institute.

Construction/casual work
•**Construction work for the project:**
PI shall request Institute Engg UNIT for any construction work under the project as per the approved norms of the funding agency and AS & FS from the Institute
•**Casual work:** The PIs can engage casual workers (expenditure from contingency head) with the help of Institute security /sanitation officer for any such works required under the project as per approved norms of the funding agency and AS & FS from the Institute.

9   Extension of project staff

Remuneration of Project staff will be paid from man power allocation only. If fund in that head is not available, no salary will be paid. This will be based on the attendance report in the form from the dept signed by PI and HOD.
Normally project staff are engaged for maximum 1-year duration or lesser depending on the requirement/approvals/fund availability.
If the project is continuing, engagement of project staff can be extended based on performance evaluation in the prescribed form by PI with the recommendation of PMC. If the performance is good or above only will be considered for extension.

10   Procurement of items for the projects

There are capital items (non-recurring head of expenditure) and consumable items and contingency (recurring head). All procurements shall be as per GFR guidelines only. PI shall understand Institute Purchase rules issued by purchase section.
No amount from non-recurring to recurring is permitted under any circumstances.

(a)   Capital items shall be purchased generally through Institute purchase. A submission shall be given to DR (S&P) through HOD for the procurement of items enclosing (i) detailed tender specifications of items to be procured, quantity and budget cost
 NOTE: critical care shall be taken to give all the required/appropriate specifications including power supply conditions, installation, training if required, warranty conditions, AMC after warranty etc. (ii) copy of AS & FS (iii) list of vendors known and copy of any budgetary quotations already collected.

Indicate clearly: - if items are proprietary - enclose proprietary certificate as per GFR guidelines/format both from PI/HOD (see "purchase section in nitc web site). In addition to this, a proprietary certificate shall also be collected from the manufacturer and submitted along with the request.

Indicate clearly: if items are imported- details of manufacturer, Indian agency/dealer details etc. Note that NITC will import items only under LC and TT in general.

Note that proprietary /imported items are only allowed if same is indicated appropriately same way in AS & FS.

Generally items if available in GEM (matching with the specification required) shall only be procured from GEM. Such requests shall be submitted in the appropriate form (see "purchase section" in nitc web site) of purchase indicating GEM code.
If specifications of items available in GEM are not matching or items are not available in GEM , a certificate in the proper form (see "purchase section" in nitc web site)   to that effect may be submitted to Purchase section from PI/HOD.

Minor equipment may be purchased from Dept. as per GFR guidelines, if required to save time with proper justifications (total cost less than Rs 75000/ for all minor items - including all taxes/duties etc)

All project purchases are done by S8 section of purchase. PI are requested to follow up with S8 and update the status.

 (b) Consumable items: Generally consumable items are low cost and required in a distributed manner (not the entire lot together) during the course of the project.

(b-i) Consumable items required in one lot, can be listed and a submission is given to HOD along with AS & FS for procurement. If the total amount in that lot is less than Rs 25,000/- (including all GST/tax etc) , PI can procure the items directly from Vendors as per GFR once the approval is given by HOD.

Note: Under (b-i) where total amount is less than Rs 25,000, it is suggested that if the highest value of a single item in the lot is more than Rs 10,000/- , PI may collect quotations for all items from vendors (minimum 3) and take the lowest. No need of floating quotation notice.
Generally items if available in GEM (matching with the specification required) shall only be procured from GEM.

Online purchases of minor consumables (total amount less than Rs 20,000) through amazon etc may be done, if essential, with prior sanction of HOD. If essential, contact purchase section, prior to purchase.

(b-ii)If the total amount in that lot is less than Rs 75,000/- (and above Rs 25000) , PI can procure the items through the Dept by inviting quotations (publish the quotation notice(as per the approved format) in web site/ send it to probable vendors) as per GFR/Institute guidelines, once the approval is given by HOD. On receipt of quotations by HOD, all procurement procedure shall be followed with the help of Dept. purchase committee.

Generally items if available in GEM (matching with the specification required) shall only be procured from GEM as per GFR guidelines/Institute purchase rules. (see "purchase section" in nitc web site)

(b-iii)If the total amount in that lot is higher than Rs 75,000/- , HOD shall recommend and forward the request to purchase section.   Please ensure to enclose detailed tender specifications of items to be procured, quantity (ii) copy of AS & FS (iii) list of vendors known and copy of any budgetary quotations already collected.

GST

GST applicable for all purchase under research is at concessional rate – 5% (as per GFR). (see "purchase section" in nitc web site for forms)

Evaluation of Quotations/tenders

As per GFR/Institute guidelines, upto Rs 2.5 lakhs- quotations and above Rs 2.5 lakes- tenders.
Minimum 3 offers shall be received in all the above cases. If 3 offers are not received, PI can request for extending the last date of receipt. Even after extending date, if less than 3 offers are only received, PI can request purchase section either (i) for re -tender with a minor change in tender specification (no change of item permitted from the AS &FS)) , if PI is confident that a minor change in the tender technical specification can bring more offers. Or (ii) to open the offers received with the permission from the Director with appropriate justifications.
PI shall also take effort to contact vendors to submit their offer in time.

Dept level quotations:
Once offers are received by the HOD for Dept. level quotations, dept office will put the seal and date of receipt. If minimum no. of quotations are received with in the due date, Dept purchase coordinator/HOD/PI will open the quotations and sign all quotations.

Comparative statement is prepared and choose the appropriate offer with proper justifications (if not the lowest, clear cut justifications in detail shall be given). Justifications like data missing /not available etc are not sufficient for choosing an item which is not the lowest. Dept can procure the items by issuing PO with the recommendations of Project Monitoring committee and approval of HOD.

Offers received through Purchase section:
Once offers are received by the Purchase section for tenders, Purchase section will send to the Dept for evaluation. Once received from HOD, Comparative statement is prepared and choose the appropriate offer with proper justifications (if not the lowest, clear cut justifications in detail shall be given) . PI can get the recommendations of Project Monitoring committee (or Dept purchase committee) and submit the recommendations though HOD to purchase section for procurement.
If the budget cost is very high (high values items), tender evaluation will be done by Institute level committee appointed by the Director.
Please note that PI or any officer are not permitted to contact any firm for any clarifications without prior written approval from the Director.
If no offer is technically acceptable, PI can request purchase section for re -tender with a minor change in tender specification (no change of item permitted from the AS &FS)) , if PI is confident that a minor change in the tender technical specification can bring more offers.

After receipt of items

Any items (capital or consumable) purchased shall be received by the Dept. Stores only. Items will be inspected/checked by PI for good condition and acceptance to all specifications. (see that there is no deviation from tender specifications- not to add or change or delete anything)
Once it is all in good condition, it can be certified by PI and advice the Dept stores to take into store stock. PI shall mention the appropriate stock register of the lab.
(There shall be separate stock registers (or separate set of pages) for each project – one for capital items and other for consumable items.
All items -capital or consumable or stationary or even procured service (even the cost is less than a rupee) shall be entered in the appropriate stock register.

Only after certifications and appropriate stock entry, bill/invoice (both shall be with GST) shall be recommended for payment or payment shall be made by PI in case of direct purchase of consumables by PI

Note that quotations received/collected are not bills/invoice. And these cannot be submitted for payment.
Also cash receipts /bills shall be submitted along with invoice if payment is done by PI for reimbursement/advance settlement. All such cash receipts/bills shall be with "payment received" with signature and seal of the supplier (over a revenue stamp if value is more than Rs 5000)

Payment to the party

Payment to the supplier shall be made by purchase section for all items processed by them. This will be based on receipt of recommendation of payment with invoice/bills- after certification by HOD/Store in charge
Payment to the supplier shall be made by PI from the advance taken by the PI from the project account for the same purpose.

Payment to the supplier shall be made by PI from his pocket and following the procedure said above, and submit the bills for reimbursement in the appropriate form.

11   Use of Contingency

Contingency fund is for meeting any additional/excess expenditure incurred under capital or consumable or travel. It can also be used for any miscellaneous expenditure connected with project with prior approval of HOD.

12   Travel
No journey shall be conducted without prior approval.

If a travel is required by PI, Co PI or any staff under project, give a submissions indicating reasons/need for travel, detailed budget – table consisting of travel mode,(see eligibility as per 7th Pay) expenditure , accommodation-expenditure, local travel any etc to R & C office through HOD enclosing copy of AS & FS, proof of the need of travel etc.
If travel is by air, GOI clearly indicates Air India shall be chosen. If Air India is not available-clear-cut and detailed justifications shall be submitted (other than that of routes where blanket permission is given)

Dean R & C office will issue permission for the journey from the competent authority
Advance sanctioned for a journey is <u>not the approval</u> for the journey.

13   Advance from Project account

Advance from project account is taken generally to purchase consumables or to meet contingency /travel expenditure (no advance will be sanctioned for the equipment/man power expenditure) , <u>only if critical</u>.   Advance request (general advance form) with proper justifications + item wise budget (with appropriate head) recommended by HOD shall be submitted to Dean R &C. Enclose AS & FS (approval of journey if for travel) and mention project account number.

Any advance taken shall be settled as per Institute rule. All advance taken from project shall be settled through R & C office.
Advance Settlement form enclosing sanction order and all bills/invoice as per GFR guidelines with endorsement from HOD can be submitted to R &C office.

14   UC & SE and Progress Report

There will be a project start date, duration of the project in the sanction order of project from funding agency.
Ist installment of the fund may be received at a later date. Irrespective of the fund received date, Utilization certificate and statement of expenditure shall be given by PI to the funding agency at the end of every financial year from the date of sanction of the project. This is required weather expenditure is made or not.

Utilization certificate and statement of expenditure shall be prepared by PI in the appropriate form, if specified by funding agency like GFR-12. Only expenditure made shall be indicated head wise. Committed expenditure shall be shown only if funding agency clearly specified. Interest shall be shown, if asked, under recurring and non-recurring separately.

Note :provide following authorities at the bottom of the UC & SE instead of Chief Finance officer, Chief account officer etc

Name & Signature of PI   Name & Signature of HOD   Name & Signature of Account Audit officer

Here -Name & Signature of HOD is an option and not essential. UC & SE prepared shall be submitted to R & C office for verification.
R &C office will arrange for audit and all authentications and issue the signed UC & SE to the PI.

Progress report –Monthly or Quarter wise or annual progress report shall be prepared by PI as required by funding agency and to be submitted to them in time. Copy of the same shall be sent to R &C office with the signature of HOD. It will be authenticated by R & C office and issued to PI, if required.

15   Project Over head

Project overhead received from funding agency will be transferred to Institute immediately after AS & FS, by   R & C office.

An order from Dean R &C, showing split up of Overhead charges- (60% Institute IRG +20% DCF   and 20% PCF) will be issued.

Amount under PCF can be used by PI either as per PDA rules within the limit or for any expenditure for his/her lab consumables/development, with approval from HOD/Dean R&C/Director depending on the upper limit of amount.

Amount under DCF can be used by HOD for the dept purchase of consumables/development with recommendation from DCC.

PI may use the amount under DCF with recommendation from DCC and approval of HOD/Dean R&C/Director (either as per PDA rules within the limit or for any expenditure for his/her lab consumables/development)

16   Extension of project

If the project is not completed within the specified period due to <u>valid reasons,</u> request for extension can be given by PI to the finding agency. Copy of the same shall be submitted to R&C office.

Once extended by the finding agency, order of the same shall be submitted to R & C office.

<u>No fund shall be spent after the project period.</u>

17-PMC meeting

PMC meeting shall be conducted minimum once in a year or as required. PMC recommendation is essential (i) Taking AS & FS of fund received (ii) Project staff interview (iii) project staff extension or termination before the normal contract period (iv) submitting UC & SE (v) submitting extension of project

18   Publications-Patenting

PI is free to make publications for the achievements from NITC side. SCI journals/Scopus indexed conferences are only preferred. Certain funding agencies   like DRDO may ask for their permission also to publish. Under such conditions publications shall be made with their permission.

Acknowledgement shall be made to the project & funding agency and NITC for all publications.

PI is free to file patents/copyrights for the achievements from NITC side. Certain funding agencies   like DRDO may ask for their permission also to file a patent.

PI can contact Institute patent office or R & C office to get the help of filing patents. Charges for filing the patents can be sanctioned from the R &C office.

Once patent/copyright filed and granted, same shall be intimated to R & C office

19   Project completion

On completion of the project, PMC shall be met and PI shall present the achievements and present the final report. PI shall also be encouraged to give an open seminar on the project and achievements.

Project completion report, Final UC & SE, other reports like transfer of equipment as required by funding agency (to the Dept stock register or as required) shall be submitted to Funding agency with a copy to Dean R &C.
Any unspent amount shall be returned to funding agency as required by them

On final acceptance of UC &SE and report by the funding agency, PI can make a submission to R &C office to close the account.

Dean R & C

This is with approval from competent authority