

# Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment

## Guidelines of the Scheme

### BACK-TO-LAB - RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

#### 1. Introduction

Optimum utilisation of human resources is very much essential for national development. In Kerala, with very large number of women literates, this aspect deserves more significance. There are a good number of women qualified in higher levels of academics, especially in Science. However, their representation in Science profession is not in proportion to their prominence in academics. This is mainly due to the fact that a good number of women will have to undergo career break due to family commitments and as the gap widens, they will have limited opportunity for re-entry in Science

In order to overcome this situation and to facilitate the re-entry of women having career break to Science research, KSCSTE launched the *Back -to -Lab Research Fellowship programme* in 2010. The Scheme aims at supporting Women Research Scholars having career break, to come back to research and complete the Ph.D programme.

#### 2. Who can apply

- Applicants should be women Research Scholars of Kerala Origin, below the age of 45, and who had to undergo career break due to family commitments during the course of Ph.D. programme for a minimum period of 6 months.
- Applicants should have qualified Post-Graduation with minimum 60% marks and should have a valid Ph.D. registration in a recognised and reputed University or Institution in Kerala.
- Applicant should have completed Ph.D. Course work and should not have completed four years since the date of Ph.D. registration.
- Applicant should not be receiving any fellowship or grant from any other source for the Ph.D. programme

#### 3. Time slot to apply

Applications are invited once a year, tentatively during January

#### 4. How to apply

Application format is attached

#### 5. Apply in prescribed format

- Format for budget proposal-Research Fellowship at monthly fixed rates along with Annual Contingent grant which is released in instalments on Project year basis.
- Attach copies on the following documents
  - i. *Proof on Kerala nativity*
  - ii. *Proof on Date of Birth*
  - iii. *Marklist and Certificate for Post-Graduate Degree Course*
  - iv. *Ph.D Registration Order*
  - v. *Course-work Completion Certificate*
  - vi. *Institute Order on sanction of leave during the course of Ph.D. programme*

#### 6. Social Relevance and tangible output

*Back-to-Lab* programme is aimed to support women in Science in Kerala. The programme focuses on addressing the issue of under-representation of women in higher academics and profession particularly in Science. The programme will facilitate re-entry of women in Science after a career break necessitated due to family commitments.

Active participation of more number of women in Science is socially relevant and significant especially in a developing economy. Further, the programme would benefit in qualitative interventions in Science research by utilizing maximum human resource potential.

#### **7. Commercialisation Efforts**

Projects which have scope for commercialization potential will be identified by the Research Advisory Committee and necessary instructions will be issued on commercialization of research outcome.

#### **8. Maximum grant amount and duration**

Selected candidates are eligible for a monthly fellowship of Rs. 22,000/- with 10% HRA during the first and second years and Rs. 25,000 and 10% HRA during the third year of implementation of the project. An Annual Contingent grant of Rs. 20,000/- is also eligible for the entire project duration.

Project duration : Duration of the Fellowship shall be for a maximum period of 3 years or till the date of submission of Ph.D Thesis, whichever is earlier. *[In case the Research Fellow submits the Thesis before the scheduled tenure of fellowship, the Thesis Submission Certificate and other completion documents should be submitted to KSCSTE within one month so as to enable termination of Fellowship].*

#### **9. Procedure of operation of the scheme.**

- Scrutiny of the Application  
Preliminary scrutiny of the application is carried out for verification of basic eligibility conditions and supporting documents.
- Peer review – All eligible applications are subjected to peer review by five subject experts in the relevant area of research. Proposals with at least three reviews graded above 5 (*on 10 point scale*) are only considered for further processing.
- Presentation before Expert Committee (whether RC or RAC)  
Proposals which have passed the peer review requirements will be invited for presentation before the Research Advisory committee. One or two reviewers will serve as additional Subject Expert during the RAC meeting. On favourable recommendation by the RAC, the proposal will be considered for funding by KSCSTE. The selected applicants will be informed of the decision and will be asked to execute an Agreement as per the guidelines of the scheme.

#### **10. Issuing Sanction Order and release of 1<sup>st</sup> instalment**

- **Date of start of the Project:**

On execution of Agreement by the candidate, KSCSTE will issue the Sanction Order which will also specify the yearly maximum allocation of grant under each item of expenditure. KSCSTE will release the 1<sup>st</sup> year grant immediately on issue of Sanction Order subject to the availability of fund. The grant will be transferred to the bank account of the Head of Institution through electronic clearing facility from Government treasury. The P.I. can start the project either on receipt of Sanction Order or on receipt of 1<sup>st</sup> instalment of grant as per the choice of the P.I and the Institute, preferably in two weeks' time and in no case later than one month of receipt of grant.

The P.I should communicate the actual ***“Date of Start”*** of the project to KSCSTE, in prescribed format within one month of joining. This date is significant since all further processing of the grant is based on **Project Year**.

- **Submission of Progress Report:**

The P.I should submit Annual Progress Report to KSCSTE on *Project Year basis*, in prescribed format. On completion of the tenure of fellowship, the Research fellow should submit detailed Final Technical report (FTR) of the research work done during the entire period of fellowship.

- **Progress Monitoring/Review procedure**

- i. The projects implemented by the researcher should have qualitative outcome. Good number of publications in high impact journals, patents, social relevance/ impact, scope of commercialization etc are considered as indicators for monitoring the progress of research programmes.
- ii. The progress of the project should be presented in the Group Monitoring Workshop (GMW) organized by KSCSTE firstly between 12-18 months of commencement of the project. The second and final GMW presentation will be scheduled on completion of the project work and submission of draft Technical Report.
- iii. It is mandatory that all Research Fellows should present their work in this Group Monitoring Workshop. This workshop will provide opportunity to review the progress of the work based on which any specific requests on technical/financial/duration of the project are discussed for appropriate decision by the Council.
- iv. The Council may also designate experts to visit the Institute periodically to review the progress of the work being carried out and to suggest suitable measures to ensure realization of the objectives of the project.

- **Periodic submission of SE & UC**

In addition to the Annual Progress Report, the Research Fellow should submit Audited Statement of Expenditure & Utilization Certificate for the previous project year, from the Head of Institution within 3 months of completion of each project year (*applicable for first two years*). On completion of the tenure of fellowship, the Research Fellow should submit Consolidated Audited Statements of Expenditure and Utilization Certificate to KSCSTE, within 6 months of the date of completion of the project.

- **Other necessary conditions as per the scheme**

- i. There should be a Scientist Mentor (preferably Research guide) who is a regular faculty/staff of the institution under whose guidance the woman scientist should carry out the work. The Scientist Mentor should have **at least 5 or more years** of service left in the Institution before retirement. The Scientist Mentor should constantly monitor the progress of the project, facilitate smooth implementation of the programme and ensure timely submission of financial utilization certificates by the institute to KSCSTE.
- ii. In case the Research Fellow submits the Thesis before the scheduled tenure of fellowship, the Thesis Submission Certificate and other completion documents should be submitted to KSCSTE within one month so as to enable termination of Fellowship.
- iii. Research fellows availing financial assistance / stipend from other State/Central funding agencies or other sources will not be simultaneously eligible for KSCSTE *Back-to-Lab* Research Fellowship. The Research Fellow should furnish an undertaking to the effect that she is not availing financial assistance / stipend from any other source simultaneously.
- iv. The implementing Institute should provide full infrastructural facilities such as laboratory, computer, library, communication, accommodation, water, electricity, etc. for smooth implementation of the project.
- v. The unutilized portion of the grant (along with the interest accrued) at the end of the project

period should be refunded to Council by DD in favour of **Member Secretary, KSCSTE**

- vi. Scientists who publish technical/ scientific papers based on the research work done under the project should acknowledge the assistance received from KSCSTE.
- vii. The Research Fellow should not enter into collaboration with a foreign party (individual/ industry) without prior approval of the Council.

- **Conditions if the progress is not satisfactory**

The third instalment of grant will be released by KSCSTE on receipt of Annual Progress Report for the previous year. Further, the Research Fellow should publish at least one research paper in a refereed Journal prior to seeking third instalment of Fellowship. Third instalment of grant will not be released by KSCSTE if satisfactory progress has not been made and the Research Fellow has not published papers as per the guidelines of the scheme. KSCSTE deserves right to terminate the programme at any time if it is found that satisfactory progress is not made in the implementation of the project.

**11. Release of further instalment of grant** – The grant is transferred to the Head of the Institution through electronic money transfer. Second and third instalment of grant is released by KSCSTE on review of Annual progress of the work and receipt of Statement of Expenditure and Utilization Certificate for the previous year.

**12. Project Completion documents**

- Final technical report (FTR)- 1 copy
- Statement of Expenditure and Utilization Certificate ( 3<sup>rd</sup> year & Consolidated)
- Project Completion Report

(Soft copies of all the above documents are to be forwarded to the e-mail ID: [wsd.kscste@kerala.gov.in](mailto:wsd.kscste@kerala.gov.in))

**13. Final review of the Project Report**

The Final Technical Report (FTR) will be reviewed by Subject Experts and finally by RAC

**14. Re-appropriation of Funds and Extension details**

The Fellowship and Contingent grant sanctioned on yearly basis cannot be re-appropriated. Extension of project is normally not allowed. However, in genuine cases, a maximum period of six months of extension will be allowed with no additional financial commitments during the extended period. Such requests if any, should reach the Director, KSCSTE at least 3 months in advance before the initially scheduled date of completion.

**15. Guidelines for publication of Research output**

The Research Fellow is encouraged to patent/publish the outcome of the project work in leading Journals. The P.I should publish at least one research paper in a peer reviewed journal before commencing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Project Year. The third instalment of grant will be released by KSCSTE subject to submission of copy of publication/intimation on acceptance of paper.

The Research Fellow should inform KSCSTE about any achievement, patent submission/ publication of any research outcome arising out of the project during the tenure of Fellowship. Due acknowledgement should be given to KSCSTE in all the publications/patents/ news emanating from the research work.

**16. Guidelines for IP Output generated**

If the results of research are to be legally protected, the results should not be published without action being taken to secure legal protection for the research results.

**17. General Conditions if any - like Disqualification in any form of canvassing etc.**

Selection is done purely on merit basis. Canvassing in any form will lead to disqualification.