

## **Ecology and Environment Research Scheme - Guidelines**

This document provides guidelines for implementation of project proposals supported under the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology & Environment. (KSCSTE). The guidelines provide general information. In addition to these, the implementing agency has to follow its own rules and regulations, wherever necessary. However, we hope that the end result of this would be a smooth implementation of the project. For any further clarification or further details, please approach the concerned official dealing with the scheme. The Council reserves the right to review these guidelines and modify them.

### **Introduction**

The Kerala State Council for Science, Technology & Environment (KSCSTE) is an apex body which promotes R&D programmes in newly emerging and challenging areas of science and engineering by providing financial support for the implementation of the project proposals. (Research project) The project which is approved for implementation is provided with a financial sanction which is subject to certain terms and conditions which are enclosed as Annexure with the first sanction order. The following guidelines assist for smooth implementation of the project in conformity with those terms and conditions.

### **Guidelines**

#### **I. Submission of Projects**

- 1) The project proposals will be peer reviewed and evaluated by the Research Advisory Committee constituted for Ecology and Environment. The project proposals may be submitted twice in a year (January and July) upon notification.
- 2) Two copies of the project proposal along with a soft copy have to be submitted in the prescribed format to the Director, Kerala State Council for Science, Technology & Environment for funding.
- 3) Applications must have the endorsement from the Head of Institution and it should be forwarded by the Head of the Institution, consent from the Investigators, Co-investigators, their detailed biodata.
- 4) The Maximum grant for a project shall be Rs 30 lakhs for three years excluding overheads. In addition, the host institution will be eligible

for an overhead @ 10% of total expenditure subject to a ceiling of Rs.1.5 lakh. Preference shall be given to low budget programmes with perceivable objectives.

- 5) Financial support to meritorious projects from NGOs shall be released by the Council without an equipment head. If equipments are absolutely required for the project, the council may consider 50% support. In such cases, KSCSTE shall consider release of the equipment grant only upon receipt of supportive evidences that the NGO has remitted the remaining 50% of the share of the fund to the PI's account created for the implementation and management of the project.
- 6) Research proposals from Central Institutions can be supported only if the proposal has a collaborator from the State Institution. The infrastructure provided in the scheme shall invariably be given to the State Institution.

Budget – Main heads

- i. Man Power:
    - a. Project Fellow @ 22,000/month (PG in Science/B.Tech )
    - b. Technical Assistant @ 19,000/month (B.Sc/Equivalent Degree)
  - ii Consumables: (Chemicals, glass wares, research materials etc.)
  - iii. Travel: Rs. 30,000/year (In exceptional cases where the study involves extensive travelling, this can be relaxed)
  - iv. Contingencies: Rs. 50,000/year (in exceptional cases this can be relaxed)
  - v. Equipment (limited to less than 50% of the project cost)
  - vi. Overheads @ 10% of total expenditure -subject to a ceiling of Rs. 1.5 lakh.
- 7) After receiving the project proposal it will be acknowledged with a reference number and other instructions if any . If the project proposal is as per the format and norms of Council it will be sent to five referees for evaluation,. Otherwise, it will be returned to the PI. After getting the positive comments from at least three referees and response from PI, the project proposals will be placed in the Research Advisory Committee (E&E) for decision.

- 8) Any correspondence with the KSCSTE regarding the project should invariably quote the reference number and date.

## **II. Sanction order**

- i) Once the project is approved, a formal sanction order is issued to the P.I . The total cost of the project is finalised based on the latest quotation(s) of equipment(s) approved under the project and other relevant documents related to manpower, contingencies etc. submitted by the Investigator. The sanction order provides the detailed breakup of funds allocated under the different heads like Equipment, Manpower, Travel, Consumables, Contingencies etc.
- ii) The PI has to submit consent letter and willingness to undertake the project with the sanctioned budget and objectives , Terms and conditions executed in a 200 rupee non-judicial stamp paper duly signed by Principal Investigator and counter signed by Head of the Institution and the bank account details for online transfer of the fund. A formal Council Order will be issued on receipt of the consent letter.
- iii) After issue of the Council order, administration will take steps to effect the payment.
- iv) All formats are available in our website for reference. Documents in other formats will not be accepted.
- v) Even though funds are sanctioned for the whole duration of the project, third year grant of a project shall be released only upon recommendation of the RAC . This also shall be based on the publications in peer reviewed journals or indications of the scope of publications/patents based on the quantum and quality of the work accomplished.

## **III . Date of Commencement of Project & its Duration**

- i) The maximum duration of the project shall be limited to 3 years and this will be specified in the first sanction order. Preference will be given to less durative projects with specific objectives to solve certain environmental issues.
- ii) The project becomes operative with effect from the date of sanction order or receipt of the fund by the implementing Institution. This date should be intimated by the Institution authorities/ Principal Investigator to the Council within one month. It will, in no case be later than one month after the receipt of the fund by the Institute.

## **IV . Principal Investigator & Co-Investigator (s) and the Implementing Institution**

- i) The Principal Investigator (PI) has the primary responsibility in implementing the project. The PI should have Ph.D in the subject area. The project team consists of the PI, Co- Investigator(s) and the project personnel appointed as per the sanction order. It is necessary to ensure that the project is carried out by the project team in a cohesive manner. Periodic meetings of the team are essential for this purpose.
- ii) The PI should have more than four years of service period at the time of submission of the project. In case of PIs who would be superannuating during the duration of the project, association of an "in service" Co-Investigator should be ensured. In such cases, the Institute authorities should inform to the Council, well in advance, about their "no objection" for providing the infrastructural facilities to the new investigator for implementation of the project after his/her superannuation.
- iii) Having accepted the responsibility for the implementation of the project, the PI should be committed to implement the project over its duration and should have no plans to go on long leave during the project period.
- iv) No premature closing is allowed except those wherein the RAC has recommended closing of the project, due to poor progress/non-compliance of the terms of implementation. The project sanctioned for three years cannot be closed prematurely owing to the PI leaving the place for better opportunities. There should be an institutional mechanism to transfer the project to the next eligible person, if available or to return the funds received till date to the Council.
- v) In case, the PI is shifting to another institution on new appointment/ transfer/ long term deputation, the project could be transferred to that institution with the mutual consent of both the institutions and of the Council. Such requests for transfer of the project should be sent well in advance and should be accompanied with 'No Objection' certificates from both the institutions and the Endorsement Certificate from the new Institution.
- vi) In case the PI leaves the project due to unforeseen circumstances, the Co-Investigator could be considered as the PI subject to the approval of the PI, Head of the Institute and KSCSTE. Such a request should be sent at least 4-6 months in advance along with a detailed bio-data of the Co-Investigator.
- vii) The PI as well as the implementing institution has the responsibility of informing the Council about any change in the status of the PI/ Co-Investigator including relieving them on short term deputation for a continuous period of 3 months or more. The implementing institution has an important role to play and in consultation with this

Council should take steps to ensure successful completion of the project, before relieving the PI.

- viii) The implementing Institute should provide full infrastructural facilities such as accommodation, water, electricity, library, communication facilities etc. for smooth implementation of the project.
- ix) Normally only one project will be sanctioned to a Scientist at a time by the Council.

#### **V. Project Staff**

i) All the personnel including Research personnel appointed under the project, for the full/part duration of the project, are to be treated as temporary employees and will be governed by the Administrative rules/ service conditions of the implementing Institute. No reference on these issues should be made to the Council. The Council will have no liability, whatsoever, for the project staff after completion of the project duration.

ii) Scale and emoluments for the posts not covered under this order are governed by norms prevalent in the implementing Institution or as may be decided by the Council.

#### **VI. Release of grants in yearly instalment and financial management**

- i) The grants for the project are released on the basis of yearly requirements taking note of the technical progress and expenditure incurred. The first sanction order indicates the budgetary allocation for the duration of the project under various heads
- ii) The first installment of grant is released along with the first sanction order. Diversion of funds from equipment and Manpower etc. is normally not allowed. However, any reallocation/ reappropriation of grants under different heads requires prior approval of this Council.
- iii) The Equipment sanctioned in the project should be procured at the earliest to avoid any cost escalation. The PI and the implementing Institute should complete all formalities in advance for placing the order.
- iv) There should not be a gap in between the project period. The project has to be done continuously and it will end on expiry of approved duration.
- v) Annual Progress report will be submitted within three months as on completion of each project year. The recipient institution shall forward an audited utilization certificate and statement of expenditure (UC & SE) signed by PI and countersigned by the HOI within three months of completion of

project period to the effect that the grant has been utilized for the research works for which it was granted, to the Director, KSCSTE. The institution should maintain separate audited accounts for the project.

- vi) The subsequent installment of grant would be released annually on the basis of expenditure incurred in the previous financial year and expected expenditure in that year. , third year grant will be released only upon recommendation of the RAC . This also shall be based on the publications in peer reviewed journals or indications of the scope of publications/patents based on the quantum and quality of the work accomplished.
- vii) However, any request for release of the next installment should be accompanied by the following documents: a) Utilization Certificate and Statement of Expenditure for the previous financial year (in original ), b) Latest authenticated Statement of Expenditure including Committed Expenditure and interest accrued if any and a detailed Annual Progress Report.
- viii) After receiving Utilization Certificate & Statement of Expenditure, if unspent funds are available as per the U.C, the money for the subsequent years will be released after deducting the unspent amount. The request for grants should however reach the Council at least 30 days in advance.
- ix) The unutilized portion of the grant amount at the end of the project period, shall be refunded to Council forthwith by DD in favour of Member Secretary, KSCSTE. In the case of project duration exceeding one year, the amount need not be refunded at the end of first or second year as the case may be, but the amount may be automatically carried forward as per the sanction from the Council.
- x) The grant amount sanctioned for the I<sup>st</sup>, II<sup>nd</sup> or III<sup>rd</sup> year should be utilized within the same project year and the unutilized portion of the grant amount should not be used without prior permission from the Council. Subsequent release of grant should be based on the yearly appropriation of the grant utilized for the purpose for which it was sanctioned.
- xi) The audited Statement of Expenditure and the Utilisation Certificates are to be submitted on project year basis within a period of 3 months from the completion of the project year. (ie. if date of start of the project is 12.01.2015, then the first statement of account and utilisation certificate will be for the period 12.01.2015 to 11.01.2016, the next statement will be for the period 12.01.2016 to 11.01.2017 and so on.)

- xii) The implementing institute will maintain separate audited accounts for the project. Any interest earned should be reported to this Council and should be reflected in the Statement of Expenditure.
- xiii) The institute will not entrust the implementation of the work for which the grant is being sanctioned to another institution nor will it divert the grant to other institute as assistance. In case the Institute is not able to implement the project, it should refund to this Council the entire grant or the balance grant at the earliest.
- xiv) For permanent, semi-permanent or infrastructural assets acquired solely from the project grants, an audited record in the form of a register in the prescribed format shall be maintained by the Institute. The term "Assets" include (a) the immovable property acquired out of the grant; and (b) movable property of capital nature where the value exceeds Rs 1,000/-. The Institute is required to send to this Council list of assets acquired from the grant.
- xv) All the assets acquired from the grant will be the property of KSCSTE and should not be disposed off or encumbered or utilised for purpose other than those for which the grant had been sanctioned, without the prior sanction of this Council
- xvi) After completion/ termination of the project, the KSCSTE will be free to sell or otherwise dispose off the assets which are the property of the Council. The Institute shall render to the Government necessary facilities for arranging the sale of these assets. The Council also has the discretion to gift the assets to the Institute or transfer them to any other Institute if it is considered appropriate and justified.
- xvii) The grant shall not be utilized for construction of any building unless specific provision is made for this purpose in the sanction order.
- xviii) The Council reserves the right to terminate the project at any stage if it is convinced that the grant has not been properly utilised or appropriate progress is not being made.

**VII. Extension of the duration of the project.**

The extension will not be granted normally. In exceptional cases where the work could not be completed, PI should submit request for extension in the prescribed format, 6months before completing the tenure and the request will be placed before the RAC for recommendation and further approval of Council.

### **VIII. Reappropriation of funds**

Reappropriation of funds within the total budget may be approved based on the recommendation of RAC. Reappropriation from manpower and equipment will not be normally allowed.

### **IX. Progress evaluation and Monitoring**

- i) The PI through the implementing Institute will furnish to this Council 3 copies of the Annual Technical Progress report of the work carried on the project on an annual basis. (ie. if the date of start of a project is 12.01.2015 the first Annual Technical Progress report shall be for the period 12.01.2015 to 11.01.2016, the next will be from 12.01.2016 to 11.01.2017 and so on).
- ii) In addition, this Council may designate Scientist/ Specialist or an Expert Panel to visit the Institute periodically to review the progress of the work being carried out and to suggest suitable measures to ensure realisation of the objectives of the project. The implementing Institute will provide all facilities to the visiting scientist/ specialist or the Expert Panel by way of accommodation etc. at the time of their visit.
- iii) This Council also organises Monitoring Workshops/ RAC meetings wherein the PIs/ Co-PIs and research staff are invited to present the technical progress of their project. The Investigators should attend such workshops since it provides an opportunity to review their progress based on which any mid term requests by the PIs for additional grants/ extension in duration etc. are considered by this Council. Subsequent releases of grant would be based on the reviewing and monitoring committees recommendations. Third year grant will be released only upon recommendation of the RAC . This also shall be based on the publications in peer reviewed journals or indications of the scope of publications/patents based on the quantum and quality of the work accomplished.
- iv) On completion of the project, the PI through the Institute should send the following documents to this Council to enable us to settle the account:
  - a) 2 copies of the Project Completion Report in the prescribed format.
  - b) One page abstract highlighting the outcome.
  - c) Soft copy of project completion report and abstract.
  - d) Consolidated audited statement of expenditure and utilisation certificates.
  - e) Asset transfer certificate in the prescribed format

f. Copies of published papers

- f) DD/ cheque for any un-spent amount drawn in favour of Member Secretary, KSCSTE, Sasthra Bhavan payable at Thiruvananthapuram.
- g) Reprints/copies of papers/patents/articles etc.

V) A review should be arranged for all completed projects and overall grading awarded and communicated to Principal Investigator. The grading for the previous projects should be mentioned in the subsequent project proposal. No projects shall be sanctioned in future by KSCSTE to the PI whose project FTR are graded below 6.0

**X. Guidelines for publication of results**

- i) Investigators wishing to publish technical/ scientific papers based on the research work done under the project, should acknowledge the assistance received from the Council.
- ii) The Investigator(s) should not enter into collaboration with a foreign party (individual/ industry) without prior approval of the Council.
- iii) Investigators are also requested to publish/patent the outcome of the project work in leading Journals. Patents shall be filed only with the concurrence of KSCSTE.
- iv) 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.