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Biotechnology Ignition Grant (BIG)

Igniting New Ideas…..

Scheme Guidelines

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1. Scheme in brief

The Biotechnology Ignition Grant (BIG) scheme of the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Government of India. The scheme enables technology innovators and entrepreneurs to pursue a promising technology idea, and establish and validate proof of concept (POC) for the idea. By funding establishment and validation of POC, BIRAC wishes to help innovators and entrepreneurs advance an idea closer to eventual commercialization/implementation in the form of technology licenses or creation of start-up companies or raising investments for the company. The scheme aims to support high-risk technology ideas with considerable potential for impact.

2. Purpose of the BIG scheme

2.1. To support projects that aim to establish or validate proof of concept for a promising and innovative technology idea.

2.2. To promote the creation of new start-ups based on innovative technology ideas and/or to support early start-ups to establish and validate their technology ideas up to the POC stage.

3. Types of projects supported

3.1 Nature of projects	
	3.1.1. What is supported • Projects that propose a process/ product innovation with significant potential impact or commercial potential • Projects with clear technology objectives • Projects focused on establishing or validating proof-of-concept for a technology idea • Projects aimed at technology de-risking i.e., reducing uncertainties in the technology • Projects focused on generating and providing the scientific data needed to demonstrate an idea to

	3.1.2. What is not supported • Basic/exploratory research projects that aim to demonstrate scientific principles/techniques etc without technology commercialization objectives. • Projects with no plan to convert ideas into saleable (implementable) technology/products/services. • Projects with no element of novelty • Projects with serious ethical and EHS risks deemed unfeasible by experts • Projects involving systematic clinical trials, field trials or late stage validation/certification of the technology. • BIG funding cannot be used to support PhD student research or any other academic research. BIG grant is no a research fellowship.
3.2 Topics and themes	
	3.2.1. What is supported • Technology ideas relating to medical/health biotechnology, biopharma and medical devices/biomaterials/diagnostics, agro-biotechnology and animal/marine biotechnology, industrial/ environmental biotechnology and biomass value addition via biotechnology, biotechnology based services/reagents/supplies, bioinformatics and bio-IT interface etc.
	3.2.2. What is not supported • Technology ideas with no or weak connect with life sciences, biotechnology and bioengineering.

4. Project Duration

The funding is provided over a maximum period of 18 months in installments against agreed milestones. Proposed project duration can range from 15 to 18 months. No request for extension shall be entertained under any circumstance.

5. Support provided to grantees under the scheme

5.1 Financial	
	5.1.1 The funding support offered by BIRAC under BIG scheme is in the form of grant-in-aid. No royalty will be charged on the disbursed fund.
	5.1.2 The funding level is up to Rs. 50 lakhs.
	5.1.3 The fund disbursement is milestone based and is released in 4 installments: 1st Installment: Signing of Contract: Max 30% 2nd Installment: Completion of 1st Milestone (M1): ~ 30% 3rd Installment: Completion of 2nd Milestone (M2): ~ 30% 4th Installment: Completion of project and submission of final report (M4): ~ 5-10% Last installment is released after conclusion of the project and hence is in the nature of reimbursement.
	5.1.4 Requirements, restrictions and constraints relating to planning and utilization of funds are provided in Section 11 below.
5.2 Other support	
	5.2.1 Under the scheme, BIG partners shall provide mentoring/ advisory/ referrals support to the grantees.
	5.2.2 BIRAC and BIG Partners arrange periodic events to provide learning, visibility and networking opportunities for BIG grantees.
	5.2.3 BIRAC's IP Cell can assist BIG grantees with IP related services on need and availability basis.
	5.2.4 The BIG review, evaluation and monitoring process provides grantees with valuable comments and inputs from BIRAC and BIG Partner networks of experts.

6. Who can apply? (Eligibility criteria)

6.1 Individuals	
	6.1.1 The individual applicant should be an Indian citizen (defined in section 14).
	6.1.2. The primary applicant should be the Project Leader (as per Section 7.1 below) who meets eligibility requirements mentioned below
	6.1.3. The applicant has to be physically incubated (see section 14) in an incubator (defined in section 14). At the time of application, the applicant needs to minimally identify his/her preferred incubator and produce a letter from the incubator of having initiated discussions on subscribing to incubation services; however, a formal acceptance from the incubator will be required before final grant approval.
	6.1.4. If the applicant is formally employed (or registered as a student) with a non-profit academic or research organization, then • the applicant has to produce a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the head of the organization clearly indicating that the organization has policies in place to allow the applicant to accept funding support (if successful) as an individual and undertake BIG projects in an incubator (defined in section 14) or alternatively, has policies in place to allow its employees to create entrepreneurial ventures while in service or while in sabbatical leave or while in EOL. • Alternatively, the applicant needs to provide an undertaking that he/she plans to terminate his association with the current employer and take up the project full time in the event of a grant approval. A resignation/ relieving/retirement letter will be needed as supporting document before final approval and release of the grant.

	6.1.5 If the applicant is formally employed with a for-profit company, • the applicant needs to provide an undertaking that he/she plans to terminate his association with the current employer and take up the project full time in the event of a grant approval (A resignation/ relieving/retirement letter will be needed as supporting document before final approval and release of the grant.), or, • Alternatively, the applicant needs to apply as Company.
	6.1.6. Individual who is a promoter shareholder of any company or one of the partners in any LLP will not be allowed to apply as an individual, irrespective of the percentage of shareholding of the applicant in the company. (In such a case, the application can be submitted through company/LLP route, in case the company/LLP meets the required eligibility criteria as detailed below)
6.2 Company/ LLP	
	6.2.1 The Company/LLP should be registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956/2013
	6.2.2 The incorporation date of the Company/LLP should not be earlier than 5 years from the date of launch of the BIG
	6.2.3 A company is considered as 'Owned' by resident Indian citizen if minimum 51% of the capital in it is beneficially owned by resident Indian citizens and / or Indian companies, which are ultimately owned and controlled by resident Indian citizens
	6.2.4 A Project Leader (as per Section 7.1 below) who meets eligibility requirements mentioned below must represent the Company/LLP's application.

	6.2.5 The Company/LLP must have its own in-house R&D facilities that are functional and adequate to execute the project. If the Company does not have a functional and adequate laboratory (defined in section 14) of its own. (This shall be verified by BIG Partners via a visit during pre-grant due diligence), then it should be incubated at an incubator with functional and adequate laboratory facilities.
	6.2.6 An applicant company, in which any promoter holding more than or equal to 20% of the shares, is a co-promoter of another ineligible company or a partner in another ineligible LLP, then the applicant will not be eligible. The only exception to this shall be situations wherein the latter ineligible company/LLP is operating in non-biotech domains. In case applicant is a LLP: An applicant LLP, in which any of the partners is also a partner in another ineligible LLP or is a co-promoter in another ineligible company, then the applicant will not be eligible. The only exception to this shall be situations wherein the latter ineligible LLP/company is operating in non-biotech domains.

7. Other eligibility criteria

7.1 Project leader	
	7.1.1. Every proposal must clearly identify a Project Leader who will take responsibility for the technical and managerial aspects of the project execution.
	7.1.2. The Project Leader must be technically qualified to undertake the project. The Project Leader must have completed basic undergraduate training in natural sciences/engineering/ medicine. Essential qualification is PhD/MTech/BTech/BPharm/MD/MBBS/BDS/ MSc / M Phil/ M Des / MPH /MBA / MSW and equivalents with under- graduate training in Science, Medicine, Engineering. Project Leaders with a BSc degree with at least 1 year of full-time work or research experience shall also be eligible.

	7.1.3. In the event that the proposal is shortlisted for presentation in front of the Expert Selection Committee, then the same Project Leader will be required to present the case for support. In the event that proposal is shortlisted for funding support, then the Project Leader will be required to sign the project agreement.
7.2 Others	
	7.2.1 Applicants are expected to show documentary evidence that they have tied up the following critical resources needed to execute the project: • At the time of application and prior to shortlisting for presentation to the Technical Expert Panel (TEP) (to be verified by BIG Partners): o Letter of commitment from Scientific Advisors/Mentors to serve as *honorary* advisors (see section 11) o Letter of intent of key members of the technical team o Letter of interest/intent from the incubator o Evidence of access to key facilities needed to execute a project (ex: BSL3 facility) o Evidence of access to key samples needed to execute the project (ex: bio-fluids) • At the time of due diligence and grant finalization o Letter of acceptance or MoU with incubator o Formal agreements/ MoUs with other key facilities/ suppliers o Any other due diligence documents requested in case to case basis by BIG Partners
	7.2.2 The project cannot be the same as another project by the same applicant with the same scope and objectives that has already received funding from another source of government grant-in-aid funding.
	7.2.3 An individual/organization that has already received BIG support once is not eligible for receiving BIG funding support once again.

7.3 Individual to Company Conversion	Since one of the goals of BIG is to promote creation of scientific start-ups, we allow an individual applicant to set up a new company and transfer the application/project to the newly formed company. The newly formed company will need to meet all eligibility criteria as listed above for a company applicant under BIG and comply with the due diligence requirements. The Project Leader will also need to remain the same and need to be a promoter shareholder in the new start- up.

8. Application process

- BIRAC will issue a national call for BIG at least 2 times each year (1st of January & July of every year).
- The Call for Proposals is advertised in various leading Newspapers and Scientific Journals.
- The Call for Proposals is typically open for a period of one and a half month.
- The BIG Scheme is implemented through our Partners called the BIG Partners (defined in section 14; details in Annexure A2), across the country. The Call will mention the BIG Partners for the particular call.
- The applicant needs to submit an online application for funding by registering and logging-on the BIRAC website www.birac.nic.in. Please note that applications are accepted online only.
- The applicant has to select one of the mentioned BIG Partners in their online application form. The BIG Partner shall be responsible for initial eligibility checks, screening of applications, due-diligence of shortlisted applicants following the Expert Screening Committee (ESC) meeting, signing of necessary agreements, release of funds and project monitoring besides mentoring the grantees. The applicant is free to choose a BIG Partner as per their convenience.
- The applicant may need to be incubated in an incubator (see definition in section 14). An exemplary list of incubators is provided in Annexure A3.
  (Please note that BIG Partner need not be the same as the applicant's incubator. See definitions in Section 14).
- Applicants are advised to fill-up and submit their applications early without waiting for the last date in order to avoid any last minute contingencies. The system stops accepting applications automatically at midnight of the last date of receipt of application.
- Applicants are advised to provide sufficient details in their applications to allow for an informed and fair evaluation/review. Applicants are advised to provide self-contained proposals with essential supporting materials provided as uploads.
- Requests for changes in the proposal once submitted will not be encouraged.

- Providing incorrect information intentionally is viewed adversely.

Annexure A1 has process steps and timelines for the Application Process.

9. Selection process

- As the first step, BIG Partners screen the applications for eligibility and appropriateness under Biotechnology Ignition Grant scheme.
- Eligible proposals are assigned by the partner to 2-3 subject experts for online review.
- Based on the reviews by experts, BIG partners shortlists applicants and shortlisted ones are called for a detailed presentation to Technical Expert Panel (TEP) at BIG partner's location.
- TEP then further shortlists and recommends applications for final presentation in front of Expert Selection Committee (ESC), held at BIRAC, New Delhi.
- ESC at BIRAC takes the final decision and selects proposals for further due diligence and funding under BIG.
- ESC recommended applicants are then subjected to financial and technical due diligence by the BIG Partner. This typically involves visit by the partner to applicant's site. (Details of the due diligence process is provided under Point No. 12)
- Due diligence reports provided by the partner are then examined by BIRAC, subsequent to which proposal is finally approved for funding support under BIG.

Annexure A1 has process steps and timelines for the Selection Process.

10. Indicative evaluation criteria

The indicative evaluation criteria for proposals under the BIG scheme are as follows:

Criteria	Description	Illustrative weightage
Technical feasibility of the idea	• In the view of Subject Experts, is the technology idea feasible based on the current knowledge of the field and any preliminary data available? • Are there any serious flaws in the technical arguments and proposal? • Are technical claims reasonable? Does the strategy to demonstrate POC follow the scientific method?	10%

Novelty	• Does the proposed technology have at least one significant novel component? • If the novelty is only in a national/ regional context, does the technology reduce a national dependence on a monopoly producer or meet important national priorities? • Does the potential technology have potential to create new IP?	20%
Importance and potential impact	• Will the technology have significant commercial and/or environmental impact? • Does the idea represent a potential solution to an outstanding need in market/society? • Is the market being addressed is large and important? • If the idea succeeds, does it have potential for disrupting the markets or industry or technology landscape? Is the idea disruptive?	15%
Commercializa-tion strategy	• Has the applicant identified the end-product/service offering based on the technology? • Has the applicant identified potential customers for the technology/product/service? • Has the applicant outlined the value accruing to the niche customer for the product/service? • What is the value proposition vs other offerings available to the niche customer? • What is the plan to take the technology to its final goal of commercialization? Has it been thought through?	15%

Team	• Does the team have the necessary technical background to execute the project? Does the team and its advisors cover all the essential expertise needs for executing the project? • Does the team have members who can communicate value proposition to a customer and take the project to commercialization? • Does the team have experienced scientific advisors/ mentors to fill in key expertise gaps?	20%
Barriers and strategies to address them	• Does the plan have any large barriers to execution such as: o Regulatory o Ethical and EHS o Investment needs o Key expertise gaps o Lack of key facility o Patents and lack of FTO • Has the team thought through these potential barriers?	10%
BIG project plan	• Does the project proposal have sufficient details to evaluate the proposal? • Has the team done detailed thinking on project execution and path forward after the project duration? • Are the project time lines reasonable? • Are the objectives achievable with the funding cap of Rs 50 lakhs?	10%

Please note that the suggested weightages are only applicable to cases that meet key essential criteria and are not seriously flawed in any one criterion.

11. Other conditions, planning your budget and restrictions on budget

Bank account	All grantees will be expected to create a separate, auditable, no-lien bank account with a scheduled bank in order to receive the funds.
Budget heads	The typical budget heads allowed are:
	• Equipment • Manpower/ salary/ fees • Consumables, research supplies etc. • Incubation services/ rentals etc. • Travel and related costs • External/outsourced services • IP costs • Contingency
Equipment	• Maximum of 30% of project cost can be considered for non-recurrent equipment. Specific exemptions can be considered on a case-to-case basis.
Manpower/ salary etc	• Maximum of 30% of project cost can be considered for man-power/salary head. • Scientific advisors/ mentors to the BIG grantee cannot draw a salary under the grant. • If the applicant is formally employed (or registered as a student) with a non-profit academic or research organization, he/she cannot receive salary/stipend/fellowship from two sources simultaneously.
Consumables, research supplies etc; Incubation services/ rentals etc; Travel and related costs	• These heads are flexible but need to be justified at time of due diligence.
External/outsourced services	• Outsourcing cost should not exceed 30% of project cost.
Contingency	• Contingency head cannot exceed 5% of project cost.
Other heads	• Funding can be used for conducting limited market research, patenting costs, working capital during the period, etc.
Waivers	The above guidelines shall be followed unless there is a specific exemption for a project approved by BIRAC.

Last installment	The last installment is released after completion of the project and submission of final reports, and hence is in the nature of a reimbursement. Grantees are expected to plan for financing the amount corresponding to the last installment via other sources.

12. Due diligence (DD), fund disbursement, monitoring and review process

- The due diligence process is carried out by the BIG Partner for applications that have received in principle grant approval from the Expert Screening Committee (ESC).
- The due diligence process involves:
  - Reconfirming eligibility
  - Legal, technical and financial due diligence
  - Confirming how applicant has tied up all resources: Space, equipment, manpower, advisors, incubation services, samples etc
  - Checking how applicant shall manage safety, ethics and waste disposal.
  - Checking for all aspects that the ESC has pointed out as needing verification/ confirmation
  - Justification of budget (usually by providing quotations); meeting budget caps and other requirements of BIRAC
  - Finalization of milestones, budget and payment schedule; defining clear milestone targets that are easy to track.
- Following due diligence, the BIG Partner recommends proposals for final grant approval to BIRAC. BIRAC takes the final decision on grant approval.
- BIG Partners sign agreements with BIG grantees on behalf of BIRAC.
- Funds are released into the dedicated no lien account created by the grantee for the purpose of the BIG project.
- Once the project gets started, BIG Partners periodically monitor progress and review the project. Grantees have to submit periodic reports and utilization certificates in the prescribed format to the BIG Partner.

Annexure A1 has process steps and timelines for the DD Process. Fund disbursement, monitoring and review process.

13. Project operation, management and reporting requirements

- BIG Partners shall provide guidance notes and templates to BIG Grantees on best practices in project operation, management and reporting.

14. Nomenclature and definitions

Term	Definition and clarifications
BIG Partner	Entities identified as Partners by BIRAC to assist BIRAC in implementing the BIG scheme. More information in Annexure A2.
BIRAC	Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a Section 8 'Not-for-Profit Company' of Government of India, has been set up as DBT's interface agency, to serve as a single window for emerging biotech companies.
Company	An entity registered under the Indian Companies Act 1956/2013.
Incubatee	A physical resident of an incubator.
Incubator	For the purposes of the BIG scheme, an incubator is defined as a dedicated physical facility designed for housing R&D driven start-ups and individual innovators leveraging life sciences/ biotechnology/ bioengineering. In addition to physical infrastructure, the incubator will also typically provide access to scientific facilities, mentoring and advisory support, and other aspects of the innovation eco-system required to support early stage startups and innovators. An incubator must have formal approvals from the executive head of a host institution and/or BIRAC and/or NSTEDB as a long term (beyond duration of the proposed BIG project) and dedicated activity. Applicants (faculty, students etc) from research and academic organizations cannot claim their own research labs as ad hoc incubation spaces. However, the incubator may set-up arrangements with other organizations to make available specific facilities to the BIG Grantees on a need basis. Your chosen incubator may or may not be your BIG Partner.

Indian citizen	An Indian citizen is defined as one who is in possession of a government approved proof of nationality such as a valid passport. NRIs are Indian citizens. OCI/PIO cardholders are not eligible for this scheme. As per Article 9 of the Constitution of India 1949, people voluntarily acquiring citizenship of a foreign state are not deemed to be citizens.
Laboratory, functional and adequate	For the purposes of the BIG scheme, a functional and adequate laboratory is defined as one that: • Has the necessary scientific infrastructure to carry out the BIG project • If required, has essential EHS (environment, health, safety) practices in place for undertaking the BIG project. • If required, has essential approvals in place.

Annexure A2: BIG Partners

The BIG Scheme is implemented through BIRAC's Partners called the BIG Partners located across the country. The Call for Proposals will mention the BIG Partners for the particular call. The current BIG Partners are:

S.No.	BIG Partner	Contact information
1.	Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP), Bangalore	Website: www.ccamp.res.in; Contact Number: 080-67185100
2.	Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), New Delhi	Website: www. fitt -iit d. org; Contact Number: 011-26597167, 011-26857762
3.	IKP Knowledge Park, Hyderabad	Website: www.ikpknowledgepark.com; Contact Number: 040-23480022
4.	KIIT Technology Business Incubator, Bhubaneswar	Website: www.kiitincubator.in; Contact Number: 0674-2725466
5.	Venture Center (Entrepreneurship Development Center), Pune	Website: www.venturecenter.co.in; Contact Number: 020-64011026, 020-25865877
6.	SIDBI Innovation & Incubation Centre (SIIC), IIT Kanpur	Website: http://www.iitk.ac.in/siic/d/; Contact Number: 0512 - 2597979

The responsibilities of the BIG Partner include:

- To receive online applications on behalf of BIRAC
- To screen BIG applications for eligibility and fit into the scheme
- To carry out Technical Review of eligible applications through Subject Experts (Reviewers) with relevant background and expertise.
- To shortlist proposals for presentation in front of Technical Expert Panel (TEP).
- To conduct technical & financial due diligence of the applicants finally shortlisted by the ESC.
- To monitor the targeted milestones and disburse the funds accordingly to the selected BIG Innovator.
- To provide mentorship and handholding for activities related to IP management, legal and contract, mobilizing resources and other business development related activities to all recipients of Biotechnology Ignition Grant (BIG innovators/grantees).
- To organize workshops/seminars/mentoring sessions for the BIG Innovators.
- To provide a platform for interaction with Senior/ Subject Experts and other academic partners.
- To organize a onetime mentoring session or pre graduation ceremony just

before the completion of the selected projects.

- The BIG Partners would be authorized to sign an Agreement with the BIG Innovators on behalf of BIRAC.
- For the management of the Ignition grant, BIRAC has signed an agreement with each BIG Partner for fulfilling the roles and responsibilities.

Annexure A3: Incubators in India

BIRAC Funded Bio-Incubators

S. No.	Incubators
1.	Ahmedabad University, Ahmedabad
2.	B. V. Patel PERD Centre, Ahmedabad
3.	Gujarat State Biotechnology Mission (GSBTM), Ahmedabad
4.	SRISTI Innovation, Ahmedabad
5.	C-CAMP, Bangalore
6.	Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre (BBC), Bangalore
7.	Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore
8.	IKP Eden, Bangalore
9.	IIT Madras Research Park, Madras
10.	Golden Jubilee Women Biotech Park, Chennai
11.	Healthcare Technology Innovation Centre HTIC, Chennai
12.	IKP Knowledge Park, Hyderabad
13.	Society for Biotechnology Incubation Centre (SBTIC) , Hyderabad
14.	NAARM-TBI, Hyderabad
15.	University of Hyderabad
16.	IIIT, Hyderabad
17.	LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad
18.	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, Hyderabad
19.	KIIT-TBI, Bhubaneswar
20.	IIT Bombay, Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE), Mumbai
21.	RiiDL (Research Innovation Incubation Design laboratory Foundation), SomaiyaVidyavihar, Mumbai
22.	PSG-Science & Technology Entrepreneurial Park (*PSG-STEP*), Coiambatore
23.	VIT-TBI, Vellore
24.	IIT Delhi, Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), Delhi
25.	ZTM-BPD, IARI, New Delhi
26.	NCR Biocluster, Faridabad
27.	BITS Pilani K K Birla Goa campus, Goa
28.	SIDBI Innovation & Incubation Centre (SIIC) at IIT Kanpur, Kanpur
29.	Entrepreneurship Development Centre, Venture Center, NCL , Pune
30.	Panjab University, Panjab
31.	Foundation of Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship (FISE) , New Delhi
32.	Technology Incubation and Entrepreneurship Development Society

	(TIEDS), IIT Roorkee
33.	Andhra PradeshMedTechZone(AMTZ), Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh,
34.	SPMVV Society For Innovation Incubation Entrepreneurship, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh
35.	B.S.AbdurRahmanCrescentInstituteofScience&Technology,Chennai

Illustrative list of other Bio-incubators or Incubators available across India

1. TICEL Bio Park, Chennai
2. Lucknow Biotech Park, Lucknow
3. Agri Science Park, Hyderabad
4. International Biotech Park, Pune
5. KINFRA Biotech Park, Thiruvananthapuram
6. Bangalore Helix, Bangalore
7. MITCON Biotech Park, Pune
8. Gujarat Akruti TCG Biotech Park (Gujarat Akruti Biotech Park)
9. Amity Technology Incubator, Noida
10. Technology based Incubator Society (TBIS), University of Delhi , South Campus, Delhi
11. Shriram Institute for Industrial Research , Shriram Scientific and Industria Research
12. E Health-TBI, PES School of Engg . Tech Park, Bangalore
13. Villgro, IIT Madras
14. Technology Business Incubator, Centre for Biotechnology, Anna University
15. Technology Incubation and Entrepreneurship Society (TIETS), IIT Kharagpur
16. TREC STEP, NIT Trichy
17. Technology Business Incubator, VIT, Vellore
18. Malviya Centre for Innovation Incubation& Entrepreneurship, IIT BHU
19. Punjab Biotech Park, Mohali
20. BioTech Park at Sitapura, Jaipur
21. BioTech Park at Boranada, Jodhpur
22. Bio Tech Park at Bhiwadi
23. Bosch Centre, IISc, Bangalore
24. SID, IISc, Bangalore

Annexure A4: Frequently asked questions and Clarifications

1. ***What should be the duration the project?***
   The duration of the project will not be more than 18 months.

2. ***Is there any limit of number of projects to be submitted?***
   You can apply for more than one proposal. However, more than 1 proposal may not be selected for funding. ????

3. ***What is the format to apply for BIG scheme?***
   The format is available online on the BIRAC website www.birac.nic.in. The applicant should register as a new user on the BIRAC website as "BIG User" and fill the online form.

4. ***I have registered for BIPP, CRS and want to register using the same user name, e-mail id for BIG.***
   Please use a different user name and e- mail id for submitting BIG proposal.

5. ***I have registered on the BIRAC website using company user and I cannot view the BIG application.***
   You have probably registered under a different scheme. To apply for BIG scheme kindly click on the link "Click here to register as a BIG Scheme User".

6. ***Can Individuals apply for BIG Scheme?***
   Individuals may apply but as this is a competitive grant so it is preferred that a team of Individuals, with expertise to execute the project apply, to make the application stronger.

7. ***Should I have a guide/mentor?***
   A Guide or Mentor is most preferable but is not a must. Individual applicants are encouraged to apply with a Guide/Mentor.

8. ***Would guides/advisors/ mentors be considered while evaluating team competence?***
   Yes. However, a formal letter of commitment from Guides/ Advisors/ Mentors agreeing to serve as honorary advisors is required.

9. ***I am a Scientist in an institute, can I apply?***
   Scientists are eligible to apply for BIG Scheme provided that there is no conflict with the policies of their Institute. However this fund is not meant to carry out the regular research of the institute. The scientist should carry out the research and development with BIG funds in an Incubator. An NOC from the

institute authorizing the scientist to undertake the TBI (Technology Business Incubator) project should be furnished.

10. ***I am MSc/PhD Research student, can I apply?***

Students are eligible to apply for BIG Scheme provided that there is no conflict with the policies of their Institute. This fund is neither a fellowship nor can it be used for carrying out the regular research of the institute. The project work should not be carried out in their own institute lab. The student should be located in an Incubator.

11. ***I am employed; can I apply for this scheme?***

The BIG scheme is meant to encourage entrepreneurship. People working in the private sector can apply for BIG scheme provided they leave their job and meet the other eligibility criteria. Scientists/professors in any Institute may apply provided there is no conflict with the policies of their institute. However the scientist cannot work in their institute lab. They should be incubated in an Incubator. The grant will be provisionally assigned to the applicant, and funds disbursed only when he/she meets the eligibility criteria.

12. ***Can a Director/ Promoter/ Owner/ Shareholder of a Company (ies) apply for the BIG scheme?***

Please refer to Section 6.1.6 and Section 6.2.6.

13. ***Can a Director/ Promoter/ Owner/ Shareholder of a Company (ies) starting a new company be eligible to apply for the BIG scheme?***

Please refer to Section 6.1.6 and Section 6.2.6.

14. ***I am a person of Indian origin but hold a foreign passport can I apply?***

No, only Indians or Indian Companies are eligible to apply for this scheme.

15. ***Can proprietorship firm, for BIG scheme?***

No, the legal entity should be a company registered under the Companies Act.

16. ***Can Institute apply for BIG scheme?***

No, Institutes/Universities are not eligible to apply for this scheme.

17. ***Our firm is registered under Society's act, are we eligible to apply for BIG scheme?***

No, the legal entity should be a company registered under the Companies Act or a Limited Liability Partnership.

18. ***Is DSIR recognition needed to apply for this scheme?***

No, DSIR certification is not needed to apply for this scheme.

19. ***Which BIG partner do I select? Do I need to choose the one nearest to me?***

You can choose any BIG Partner that you choose. It is not necessary to choose the one nearest to you all though due diligence and project monitoring processes are more convenient if the BIG Partner is nearer.

20. ***What do Incubator and Incubatee mean?***

Please refer to Section 14.

21. ***Can my institute be the Incubator? What are the criteria to become a Technology Business Incubator?***

Please refer to Section 14.

22. ***Whether we should be an incubatee at present to be eligible for Biotechnology Ignition Grant or can we become an incubatee once we get the grant?***

If you are not an Incubatee yet then you may initiate talks with the Incubator you wish to incubate in. After the selection for BIG Grant you may formalize the agreement with the Incubator. But your selection will be provisional till the time you get Incubated in an Incubator.

23. ***In case of Individual applicants, who will receive the funds?***

The applicant will receive the fund in a separate auditable account. The selected applicants will have to open a separate bank account in a scheduled bank. The fund disbursed will be milestone based by the BIG Partners.

24. ***Is the information provided by me kept Confidential?***

We maintain confidentiality of all the proposals we receive under different schemes. All the reviewers sign a non-disclosure agreement and no conflict agreement before viewing the proposals.

25. ***Can I apply for infrastructure development?***

No, the BIG scheme does not provide fund for infrastructure development.

26. ***Can one request a change in applicant from Company to Individual?***

No

27. ***Can one request a change in applicant from Individual to Company?***

Since one of the goals of BIG is to promote the creation of scientific start-ups, this provision is allowed. However, the new company will need to meet all eligibility

and due diligence requirements. The Project Leader will need to remain the same. The Project Leader will need to be promoter shareholder in the new start- up.

28. ***Can one request transfer of the grant from an individual to a new start-up during the course of the project (that is once funding has been released)?*** Can be taken up on case to case basis.

29. ***Can the applicant request for a change in the project leader?***
This request will normally not be accepted.

30. ***If an individual who is a proprietor in a sole proprietorship firm or a partner in a partnership firm or LLP firm (but not promoter of a private limited company) apply?***
LLP is also an incorporated legal entity like company. Hence it may be treated similar as company category and the LLP partners should be majority Indian citizens and LLP should be less than 5 yrs old. The same applies for 'One Man Company' under 2013 act.

Contact Person for query and feedback:

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