Students Innovations for Translation & Advancement of Research Explorations (SITARE)

Scheme Guidelines
Version 1; September 2019

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1. SITARE Scheme

Students Innovations for Translation & Advancement of Research Explorations (SITARE) Scheme is aimed at supporting innovative student projects in the area of biotechnology. The scheme's mandate is to promote and encourage young students for embracing translational research (defined under Section 4) to develop innovative products and technologies addressing unmet needs. SITARE-GYTI Award Grant is not a usual research fellowship. The scheme also provides an opportunity for orientation, training and mentoring through residential workshops etc.

The scheme has two components:

- **SITARE-Gandhian Young Technological Innovation Award Grant (SITARE-GYTI):** 15 innovative student projects will receive funding support of upto INR 15 lakhs each. SITARE-GYTI encourages postgraduate and doctoral students to undertake projects with commercial potential leading to creation of biotech startups. The fund recipients are recognized as **BIRAC's SITARE-GYTI beneficiaries**.

- **SITARE-Appreciation Grant:** Residential workshops called as Biotech Innovation Ignition School (BIIS) for undergraduate students are organized to provide hands-on-technical training and mentorship for problem identification in 3-4 weeks duration. Out of 30-40 students per workshop, 10 students are selected and provided a grant support of up to INR 1 lakh each to encourage their inquisitiveness and sustained efforts. The recipients are recognized as **BIRAC's SITARE-Appreciation beneficiaries.** In a year, 3 such workshops are conducted.

Applications for SITARE-GYTI Award Grants and BIIS workshop participation are invited at national level. Processes and terms relevant to both have been distinctly provided below.

2. Processes and Terms related to SITARE-GYTI Award Grant:

2.1 Eligibility: An Indian Student (Refer definition under Section 4) pursuing Ph.D/Masters* in any discipline is eligible to apply for this award grant. The student should have a valid ID issued by the Institution/University. A No objection Certificate (NoC), as per prescribed format needs to be submitted along with application.

*Exceptions for exceptional talent: Meritorious candidature outside the above eligibility criteria may be considered for SITARE with approval of BIRAC's competent authority.

2.2 Nature of Proposals supported:
- Translational research (Refer definition under Section 4) proposals to develop innovative products and technologies with a potential to address unmet needs
- The work supported through SITARE-GYTI Award Grant is expected to lead to creation to biotech start ups. Hence, only proposals with potential to commercialize innovative products and technologies will be considered for support.

2.3 Areas covered

SITARE-GYTI award grant proposals can be submitted in any domain including Healthcare, Lifesciences, Diagnostics, Medical Devices, Drugs, Vaccines, Drug Formulations and delivery systems, Industrial Biotechnology, Bioinformatics, Agriculture, Secondary agriculture, Waste Management, Sanitation, Clean Energy and Artificial Intelligence/IoT with application in any of these areas.

BIRAC encourages interdisciplinary proposals from any stream that can help conversion of innovative ideas into biotech products and technologies in any of the above fields.

2.4 Duration of project

The funding is provided for a period of up to 24 months. The project is implemented in a milestone based manner.
In case the grant award duration extends beyond degree programme, the grantee is encouraged to incubate in any of the bioincubators for completing SITARE-GYTI award grant mandate.

Extension: Extension of grant award duration is discouraged. Request for extension of milestone/project can be considered (without any additional financial implications) only in selected cases based on recommendation of the SITARE-GYTI Review Committee conducted by SITARE Partner/BIRAC. However, such request with proper justification must reach SITARE Partner/BIRAC well before the scheduled date of completion of grant award period.

2.5 Application Process

Proposals shall be submitted online only during an active Call for Proposals.
Frequency of Call: Once a year
Month of announcement: August/September
Call Duration: The call is typically open for 45-60 days

Process for submitting the proposals online is detailed below:

- Log on to the BIRAC website www.birac.nic.in
- If you are a registered user, log-in using the credentials, else you need to register yourself as an individual by clicking on New User Registration.
- In case of new user registration, a computer generated password would be sent to the email-id provided at the time of registration. The password can be changed later.
- Once you login, you would be navigated to the page displaying SITARE link.
- Click on the SITARE-GYTI link under Programmes and the active call would be highlighted.

- Click on the active call against which you wish to submit the proposal.
- Further details on How to submit a proposal would be available in the SITARE User Guide available on the website

2.6 Selection Process

- The applications received will be subjected to basic eligibility check. Stage wise screening of applications will be done by relevant Committees with domain experts.

    a) Initial Stage: At this stage, proposals will be examined for preliminary technical strength and suitability of translational research mandate
    b) Short listing Stage: This stage will have review of applications by a team of experts based on online review comments and specific project/work plan.
    c) Recommendation Stage: At this stage, final shortlisted candidates# will be called for presentation before an Expert Panel

    # Class II Rail fare can be reimbursed to the invited outstation students.

2.7 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of proposals received will include following criteria at each step of selection:
- Novelty
- Technical Rigor
- Competence of Student
- Societal/Commercial Value
- Frugality

2.8 Support provided to beneficiaries under the scheme

- The funding support under SITARE is in the form of grant-in-aid.
- Extent of funding is up to INR 15 lakhs
- The fund allocation is milestone based and released in installments of up to INR 5 lakhs each based on review of the milestone achieved.
- Guidance related to planning and utilization of funds is provided in Section 2.9 below.
- SITARE Partner and BIRAC provide continuous mentoring support to the fund recipients, including but not limited to the following:
    o Technical Mentoring
    o IP Support
    o Legal Support
    o Networking and Outreach
    o Trainings
    o Regulatory Advice
    o Business Mentoring
    o Fund raising

2.9 Utilization of Grant Money

- Development of Prototype (including outsourcing activity)-Up to 30%
- Travel: Up to 15%
- Incubator Rentals: Up to 15%
- Manpower: Up to 15% (may be drawn as salary by the Project Investigator (SITARE-GYTI Fund recipient) during incubation or may be paid to another team member for technical assistance anytime during the project)
  - The fund recipient shall not be eligible to draw any manpower cost while pursuing degree programme
- Consumables: Up to 20%
- Training and conferences: Up to 10%
- Contingency: 5%

2.10 Signing of Agreement and Fund Disbursement

- **Agreement of funding**
  On announcement of finally selected students, a Grant Award Letter Agreement (GALA) needs to be signed by the Fund Recipient and SITARE Partner. Format of GALA is available on the website of SITARE Partner/BIRAC.

- **Other Requisites for Funds Disbursement**
  In addition to signing of GALA, the fund recipient needs to open up a No-Lien Account with a scheduled/nationalized Bank before release of first installment.

2.11 Mentoring, Monitoring and Review

- SITARE Partner along with BIRAC support shall provide mentoring and monitor the progress of grant recipients periodically.
- SITARE Partner shall organize and conduct:
  - Induction Programme for Award Grant Recipients
  - Biannual review of projects by SITARE Review Committee
- Final Review will be done by BIRAC towards completion of the project

2.12 Transfer of Award Grant:

- The award grant is non-transferable.

2.13 Foreclosure and Termination

- In case, during the Project Duration, if it is found that the Project or any Project component is not likely to lead to successful completion, SITARE Partner/ BIRAC may decide to foreclose the Project or a specific Project component as warranted. The

decision of BIRAC shall be final in all respects. If the Fund Recipient likes to continue the Project at its own cost, it would be able to do so without restrictions from SITARE Partner/ BIRAC after complying with these provisions.

- The Fund Recipient may, before the completion of the Project, terminate the project by giving one month's notice in writing to SITARE Partner/BIRAC. SITARE Partner/BIRAC may also terminate the Grant Award Letter Agreement (GALA) by written notice in the event of "the Fund Recipient" committing breach of any term of ALA and either not rectifying it to the satisfaction of SITARE Partner/BIRAC or not satisfying SITARE Partner/BIRAC about its inevitability within a specified period. In the event of termination of the ALA, no further disbursement shall be made by SITARE Partner/BIRAC.

2.14 Other Terms and Conditions

- A student can receive SITARE-GYTI Award Grant only once.

2.15 Expected Deliverable:

The scheme's mandate is to promote and encourage young students for embracing translational research to develop innovative products and technologies addressing unmet needs. The work supported through SITARE-GYTI is expected to lead to generation of Intellectual property and creation to biotech startups.

2.16 Acknowledgement of BIRAC support

The fund recipient is obliged to acknowledge the assistance of BIRAC while publishing, marketing the resultant Product or presenting in any manner the details of the Project, its progress or its success along with a "Disclaimer" that reference therein to any specific commercial product, process, views or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or assuming liability of any sort by the BIRAC. Use of BIRAC logo is not permitted without written approval from BIRAC.

2.17 Results of SITARE-GYTI:

Intellectual Property, technology know-how generated during the SITARE-GYTI projects will generally follow institutional norms. BIRAC encourages to assign ownership and inventorship to BIRAC SITARE award grantee.

2.18 Data Sharing with SITARE Partner:

Information submitted by the applicants as part of SITARE-GYTI application will be shared with SITARE partner. SITARE Partner will be an integral part of SITARE-GYTI Implementation.

SITARE Partner will execute a Confidentiality Agreement and No-Conflict-of-Interest document with reviewers before sharing any information provided in the SITARE-GYTI application.

2.19 Scope of activities undertaken by SITARE Partner for SITARE-GYTI Implementation:

- View and process online applications received for SITARE-GYTI
- Screen applications for eligibility and suitability for the scheme
- Carry out online Technical Review of eligible applications through Subject Experts (Reviewers)
- Shortlist proposals for F2F/skype/telephonic interview by an Expert Panel
- Communicate decision to applicants at each step of selection
- Seek BIRAC approval on final selection of grantees
- Sign an Grant Award Letter Agreement (GALA) with Grantees on behalf of BIRAC
- Organize an induction programme for every batch of Grantees
- Disburse funds and monitor the targeted milestones
- Organize periodic review meetings
- Provide mentorship and handholding for domain expertise and activities including but not limited to IP management, mobilizing resources and other business development related activities
- Provide platforms/opportunities for interaction with experts.
- Facilitate transition of graduating SITARE-GYTI Award Grantees to incubator settings during Award duration.
- Provide periodic updates and reports on SITARE-GYTI Award Grantees to BIRAC
- Any other required activity for effective implementation of SITARE-GYTI on mutual consent with BIRAC.

3. SITARE Appreciation Grants

3.1. About BIIS

The mandate of Biotech Innovation Ignition School (BIIS) is to provide an exposure and orientation for entrepreneurial journey through hands-on-technical training, interactive sessions with experts, access to bioincubation centre etc. This to promote grass root innovations and nurture ideas with societal impact, pioneered by undergraduate students, especially from Tier II/III cities. Selected few would receive financial support of INR 1 lakh as an encouragement to pursue their inquisitive entrepreneurial idea. The fund recipients would be recognized as SITARE-Appreciation recipients and may also receive follow on training and mentoring.

The BIIS is a national level programme to provide up to 4 weeks residential training benefitting up to 40 students in each session.

3.2. Eligibility

Students pursuing Bachelors programme in any discipline, preferably from Tier II/Tier III cities and aspirational districts within India. The student should have a valid ID issued by the Institution/University.

A student can avail only one opportunity for BIIS workshop training across all SITARE Partners, except for the SITARE-Appreciation Award Grantees who will be eligible to avail access to subsequent workshops by other Partners on recommendation by SITARE Partner/BIRAC.

3.3. Application Process

Applications need to be submitted online only. Call for applications will be invited against advertisement by SITARE Partner.

Format of application with Statement of Purpose can be accessed through the website.

Selected students will be informed 3 weeks prior to start of the workshop.

Tentative months for conduct of BIIS Workshops: February, June and December.

Process for submitting the proposals online is detailed below:

- Log on to the BIRAC website www.birac.nic.in
- If you are a registered user, log-in using the credentials, else you need to register yourself as an individual by clicking on New User Registration.
- In case of new user registration, a computer generated password would be sent to the email-id provided at the time of registration. The password can be changed later.
- Once you login, you would be navigated to the page displaying SITARE-BIIS link.
- Click on the SITARE-BIIS application link under Programmes and the active call would be highlighted.
- Click on the active call against which you wish to submit the proposal.

3.4. Selection Process

Selection will be based on Statement of Purpose (SoP) submitted by the Student. Key factors for selection of applications include
- Originality (40%)
- Clarity of Purpose (20%)
- Implementation Plan (15%)
- Potential impact (15%)

3.5. General structure of BIIS workshop:

- Assignment of projects to student/student team and sharing of abstract and objectives (7-10 days before start of BIIS)

- Literature search by the student (before start of BIIS)
- Development of project plan under expert supervision (Day 1-2) ⎤ Week 1
- Hands-on-training for skills required to undertake the project (Day 3-6) ⎦
- Students undertake the project work Week 2
- Compilation and analysis of results Week 3
- Presentation of analysis to Jury Week 4
- Selection of SITARE-Appreciation grantees

3.6. Facility for conduct of BIIS:

BIIS workshop shall be conducted in lab/Bio incubator/suitable premises arranged by SITARE Partner.

3.7. Travel/Accommodation

Following expenses will be covered for student participants:
- Class II Rail fare and local travel expenses
- Hostel accommodation
- Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- Shuttle facility from hostel to project site

3.8. SITARE-Appreciation Award Grants

The work done by students during BIIS is assessed on the last day of the school and the outstanding studies (up to 10 per BIIS) are identified for further support of INR 1 lakh each as SITARE-Appreciation Award Grant. The grantees are expected to conduct further research on the topic either at home institution or at SITARE Partner's lab. SITARE Partner can extend mentoring and other support required for the same.

3.9. Other activities:

SITARE Partner is encouraged to provide mentoring to BIIS participants by organizing invited talks by experts from institutions such as but not limited to TiE, BREC, Management schools etc. and may undertake tour(s) to nearby reputed colleges/institutions/incubation centres.

3.10. Expected Deliverables:

Exposure and orientation towards entrepreneurship among students from/for Tier II/Tier III cities and aspirational districts.

3.11. Responsibilities of SITARE Partner for BIIS Workshops & SITARE-Appreciation Award Grants:

- Advertise call for applications for BIIS workshop
- View and process applications
- Screen applications for eligibility
- Select students for the workshop as per guidance given above
- Communicate decision regarding selection to all applicants
- Organize and conduct BIIS workshop while meeting optimal standards
- Manage and support travel, boarding and lodging of students and experts
- Organize Jury Meeting for selection of SITARE-Appreciation grantees
- Seek BIRAC approval on final selection of grantees
- Provide access to continued support to SITARE-Appreciation grantees for carrying their research work further.
- Any other required activity for effective implementation of SITARE-Appreciation Award Grants on mutual consent with BIRAC.

4. Definition(s):

a) **Translational Research:** Translational research refers to application of knowledge for advancement of basic research to clinical research. This can be quantified on a Technology Readiness Level scale of 1 to 9 (ref. Annexure 1/www.birac.in).

b) **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. In case, a student does not have a valid passport, Adhaar Card along with a declaration attested by a Class I gazetted officer can be submitted as a proof of nationality.

5. Current SITARE Partner:

Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions (SRISTI), Ahmedabad is the current SITARE Partner.
Contact details of SRISTI:

SRISTI, AES Boys Hostel Campus,
Near Gujarat University Library & SBI Bank,
Navrangpura, Ahmedabad-380 009, Gujarat, India.
Email: info@sristi.org

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