



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**for supporting**  
**Technology Innovations for Boosting Farmers' Income**  
**from**  
**Start-ups and SME's**  
**under**  
**Agri-Grand Challenge**

**A BIRAC- IKP Initiative**

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## Introduction

The Agri-Grand Challenge (AgGC), an initiative of BIRAC in partnership with IKP Knowledge Park (IKP), aims to identify and fast-track technology driven solutions that are almost ready to deploy and are scalable to help boost farmers' income especially marginal and small landholding farmers.

Agriculture plays a vital role in the Indian economy with over 70 per cent of the rural households depending on agriculture for their livelihoods. Agriculture contributes to around 17-18% of the country's GDP and provides employment to around 60% of the population. The government is keen to focus on increase in farmers' income and farmers' welfare on the whole.

A series of innovative technologies, practices, products, services, business model and/or integrated solutions, that have been piloted at a small scale in India will be identified, funded, monitored for field testing over a period of 30 months through a two-stage process in this program.

The focus of this Challenge will be to demonstrate increased incomes through deployment of selected technologies. To ensure impact, the selected innovations/start-ups in Stage 2 of the program, will test multiple crops in two agro-climatic zones and will include small and middle landholding farmers.

The AgGC will enable the selected entrepreneurs to test, refine and validate their solutions for rapid deployment in the market through expert mentorship and connecting with relevant commercial partners to aid the accelerated development, scale-up and distribution of their solutions.

### **Thematic Areas for the call:**

Proposals are invited in the following fields:

- Quality Inputs (seeds, planting material and crop-nutrition products) - product and distribution innovations
- Genome edited plants under SDN1 and SDN2 category
- Pest and Disease Management
- Resource Management (soil and water sensors, water conservation, soil health, soil microbes and crops interaction for healthy and sustainable farming, etc.)
- Bio-stimulants, bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides
- Quality assessment of agricultural output
- Weed control technologies
- Efficient Biologicals production technologies
- Farm Mechanization and Pervasive automation
- Digital Farming/Smart Agriculture (Precision and Digital agriculture, AI/ML-based, UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle), sensors, robots, weather prediction, vertical farming, organic farming, etc)
- Genomics knowledge driven precision breeding for climate resilient agriculture
- Harvesting and Post-harvest Loss Management

- Farm level storage, processing and value addition, warehousing
- Livestock technology in areas including dairy, fisheries/aqua, goatry and piggery, feed and feed supplements, quality assessment tools for dairy and other products, etc.
- Agri-fintech solutions to enable financing to small holder farmers
- Emerging agricultural technologies (Blockchain, SaaS Technologies, traceability solutions, etc.)
- Other allied areas

#### **Types of Projects to be supported:**

- Projects should strictly fall under the scope of the present RFP.
- Products/Technologies that have already been validated on a small scale
- The Technology Readiness Level (TRL) at the beginning of the project should be at least TRL 6 (Early stage validation)
- Process/product innovations with potential impact on farmers' income
- Developed process should be sustainable from an economic and environmental point of view and should be scalable.

#### **What is not supported?**

- Concepts/exploratory/early discovery research ideas without proper research and validation data.
- Proposals without any potential for product/technology commercialization.
- Proposals that are not scalable and ready to deploy.
- Proposals not falling under the scope of present RFP.

#### **Who Can Apply?**

##### **Eligibility Criteria:**

1. The proposals can be submitted:
  - a) Solely by a start-up, SME or Company\* incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013 or Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)\*\* incorporated under the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 or Joint Ventures either in the form of Company/ LLP or
  - b) By any of the above entities in collaboration with other private or public partners (Universities or Institutes).

*\*Minimum 51% of the shares of the Company should be held by Indian Citizens holding Indian passport (Indian Citizens do not include Person of Indian Origin (PIO) and Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) holders)*

*\*\*Minimum half of the persons who subscribed their names to the LLP document as its Partners should be Indian citizens.*

2. The Applicant Company/LLP should either:-
  - a) Have adequate in-house facility to address the project implementation (which shall be evaluated during the site visit) or
  - b) Incubated with any of the recognized Incubation Facility
3. For Academic collaborator:
  - Eligible Academia shall mean an entity which is having proper establishment documents
  - For Public or Private Institute, University, NGO, or Research Foundation, proper registration/ accreditation from a government body is mandatory like UGC affiliation certification, AICTE, CSIR /DSIR/SIRO certificate etc.

### **Submission and evaluation of Application Form**

#### *Submission of Application form:*

Eligible applicants (start-ups, SME's, companies) along with their collaborators (if any) are required to submit the application form online available on BIRAC website in the prescribed format before **July 15, 2022**. The form is available at BIRAC website.

#### *Evaluation of Application Form*

- After the eligibility check, the applications will be reviewed by the Review committee.
- The shortlisted candidates will be informed over email and showcased to the Biotech Kisan Hubs of DBT and other relevant stake holders for facilitating/conducting demonstrations.
- Based on their interaction with Biotech Kisan Hubs and/or other stakeholders the shortlisted candidates would be required to submit a detailed proposal in the prescribed format.
- Thereafter, the short-listed applicants along with their collaborating partners/Biotech Kisan hubs shall make an online presentation to the Review Committee comprising of representatives from IKP, BIRAC and subject experts.
- Based on data provided in the application form and online presentations, 10 start-ups will be selected for Stage 1 funding.

*(Please note that the decision of the review committee at any stage of the evaluation would be final and reconsideration requests would not be entertained)*

### **Project Timeline:**

Date of announcement of the call: May 30, 2022

Duration of stage(s) on field: (Stage 1: 6 months; Stage 2: 16 months)

## Evaluation Process:



## Funding:

The proposals will be selected and funded in two stages:

- In Stage 1, 10 start-ups will be selected for funding of up to INR 20 Lakhs each for a maximum period of 6 months. This funding will be in the form of **grant-in-aid**.
- Stage 2 funding will involve shortlisting of 5 start-ups from the 10 Stage 1 start-ups. Start-ups selected in Stage 2 will receive next round of funding of up to INR 100 Lakhs each for a period of 16 months. In Stage 2 funding, 50% of the funding will be in the form of grant and remaining 50% will be in the form of **soft loan/equity/revenue sharing**.

*(IKP will assist with the technology transfer, sales and marketing of innovations)*

## Fund Disbursement Policy:

The fund disbursement is milestone-based and will be released in instalments as per the timeline of the project which will be mutually agreed upon in the Agreement.

## Payment of Royalty

- 1) The fund recipient shall pay royalty to BIRAC at the rate of 5 (five) per cent on annual Net Sales of the product(s) developed with BIRAC's assistance. Payment of royalty shall fall due beginning with the first sale of the product(s) and the liability to pay royalty will terminate upon the first of any of the following two events to occur:
  - a) 5% royalty has been paid to BIRAC till the royalty amount paid becomes equal to the amount of the Grant-In-Aid disbursed and that was not returned to IKP as unutilized funds; or
  - b) In case of Foreclosure or Termination of Project as per the terms of GLA.
- 2) Royalty for financial year shall be payable to BIRAC within 90 (Ninety) days of close of corresponding financial year

- 3) If the fund recipient gets Grant-in-aid assistance from BIRAC for more than one Project(s)/Product(s), then the Sub-grantee shall pay royalty to BIRAC at a cumulative rate of 5 (five) per cent on annual Net Sales of the product(s) developed with BIRAC's assistance in the same manner as provided above
- 4) If the fund recipient intends to transfer/license or sell/ assign the Product's interests to any third party (includes any other method or manner of commercialization without undertaking direct sale), it shall take prior written permission/No Objection Certificate (NOC) from IKP and BIRAC will recover the due Royalty amount or 5% of the resultant income(one time transfer as well as repeated events of licensing/ transfer of rights) excluding applicable GST & other taxes, as certified by the Chartered Accountant, whichever is less, before grant of such permission.
- 5) For all intends and purposes of royalty receipt and recovery, BIRAC shall have the right and therefore can initiate necessary legal actions.

**Duration of Call for Proposals:**

The call would open on 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 and shall close on **15<sup>th</sup> July, 2022 at 5.00 pm**

**Additional information:**

For details related to TRL definitions, schemes and submission of proposals, please log on to <http://www.birac.nic.in>.

**Contact in case of queries with the Subject line “Agri-GC 2022”**

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## FAQs

### 1. Who can apply?

Indian companies applying for the award should have Registration under Companies Act 1956/2013 and must have 51% equity or shareholding by Indian Nationals. We are looking for innovations that are near-ready and are scalable.

### 2. Is the financial assistance a grant or equity investment?

Stage 1 funding will be a grant-in-aid whereas Stage 2 funding will be partly in the form of grant-in-aid and partly as funding against soft loan/equity/revenue sharing.

### 3. When is the application Deadline?

5.00 PM on July 15, 2022 (IST).

### 4. Can I submit more than one proposal?

Yes, you can. You will have to create separate user accounts on our website (with 2 different email ids) for each proposal.

### 5. What are the criteria for judging?

The criterions for judging are mentioned below:

1. Alignment with the mandate of the Call
2. Novelty
3. Market readiness
4. Scalability and impact
5. Execution capacity

### 6. Who owns the invention / intellectual property?

All Intellectual Property resides with the inventor.