

International Collaborative Research Programme (ICRP)

Programme Guidelines

RATIONALE

The National Science Foundation is mandated to serve and strengthen the Science and Technology sectors in Sri Lanka and to foster the interchange of scientific information among scientists in Sri Lanka and foreign countries. This programme is specially designed to develop International Research collaborations between Sri Lankan and International Research Institutions to stimulate information exchange to advance science and technology and to meet global standards in research. Through collaborative research programmes, a synergistic effect is sought by such means as sharing resources and research facilities.

PROGRAMME CONCEPT

This programme is aimed to contribute to a mutual scientific development of the countries involved through support for collaborative research projects of high scientific quality and mutual relevance. This programme will facilitate researchers of high standing at any stage of their career to share and disseminate new and original ideas and/or techniques, initiate and undertake collaborative research/technology development and facilitate interaction and training of scientists, engineers, science and technology policy makers and research personnel. Funding will be provided to Research Institutes and Universities to initiate and establish such specific international collaborative research programmes.

OBJECTIVES

1. To support Sri Lankan research-based institutions to develop collaborative relationships in research with well established and recognized foreign institutions;
2. To facilitate Sri Lankan researchers to be a part of collaborative research programmes of high quality and mutual concern.
3. To facilitate knowledge /skill development, technology transfer and science communication internationally.
4. To develop nationally significant programmes related to Science Technology and Innovation as well as research projects which address global challenges.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Eligibility

1. The programmes must include at least two researchers: Principal Investigator, the one who affiliated to a University or Research institution in Sri Lanka and the International collaborator, the one who affiliated to a University or Research institution in a foreign country.
2. Principal Investigator for ICRP must be a citizen of, and residing in Sri Lanka registered with the NSF and actively engaged in scientific research or technology transfer programmes in a Sri Lankan institution and as a minimum qualification the Principal Investigator should possess a Master's degree with minimum of one year full time research component
3. One applicant can have a maximum of two ongoing grants as a Principal Investigator at NSF.
4. The task of identifying an international collaborator and preparing a joint proposal is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator. NSF will not entertain applications directly from the International collaborators for funding under any component of ICRP.

Application Procedure:

Applications will be entertained throughout year and the approved ones will be processed quarterly per year.

Applicants are required to follow the following processes;

1. **Finding an International Collaborator:** Before commencing an application the Principal Investigator must find a collaborator and contact the Head of the proposed institution. Once a partnership is agreed upon, the approval for the acceptance and the statement from the Head of Institution of the International Collaborating Institution for the proposed research collaboration has to be obtained and it should be submitted along with the ICRP application.
2. **Submission of Application:** Application forms must be downloaded from the NSF Website. The application will contain two parts:
 - a. Part 1: Detailed Scientific description of the Project, Budget for the cost of research (consumables, major and Minor equipments, travel expenses, etc.)
 - b. Part 2: Details of all Investigators and Collaborators, Detailed Budget, Information on all the proposed activities other than Research (Training visits, Workshops, seminars, etc.), MoUs, etc
 - a. **Part 1** (including bibliographic references with the specific headings set out below);
 - **Synopsis**-Brief on the current research activities of the applicant as they relate to the proposed project
 - **Research Proposal**- Description of the research and other collaborative activities proposed at the collaborating foreign institution. These should include aims and significance of the proposal and suitability of the research environment in the host institution, outcomes and outputs, activity plan and

detailed budget for the proposed project. Preference will be given to research proposals that have been approved by the Board of Management /Senate of the Local Institution

- **Benefits to the Individual and the Institution** -The specific benefits to individual and the local institution through the collaborative project including alignment with existing or developing research strengths within the foreign institution, training and transfer of skills and expertise, and dissemination of new knowledge to staff and students
- **National Significance of the Project** states the national relevance and benefits of the project to Sri Lanka

b. Part 2: Overall Structure of the Project

- **Curriculum vitae of all Investigators** and collaborators including, academic merits, current positions and employment history, refereed publications within last five years, licensed patents, best 10 career publications, awards and invited lectures, current research grants, etc.
- **Activity plan** in a form of Gantt's Chart
- **Research grants record:** Brief the ongoing and previous grants received from NSF or other research granting bodies.
- **Ethics or Biosafety Clearance:** Research may not commence on any funded project until the appropriate Ethics and Biosafety Clearance has been obtained. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain and submit the approved clearance to the NSF.
- **Memorandum of Understanding:** If the Institution is having an already established International Collaboration with an MoU signed, that MoU can be submitted along with the application form. This will include instruments as Agreement of parties, Material transfer, Publication authorship and use of names, Confidentiality, Potential for intellectual property development, Human and animal subjects in research, Indemnification, Dispute resolution and Authorized signatories.
- **Information on other activities of the proposed project:** Overseas training, International research visits, International conferences, Seminars and Workshops, Visits of the International collaborator as a resource person.

- c. Assessment and Selection:** Applications will be assessed by relevant evaluation committees according to NSF procedures appointed by the NSF

Assessment Criteria

- Research Excellence will be the primary criterion. The relevant evaluation committee/s will consider the track records relative to opportunity of the Principal Investigator and of the foreign collaborator; the proposed research; the benefits to the Individual, Institution as well as the country arising from the collaboration and credibility and capability of both collaborating partners.
- These criteria will be considered equally but preference will be given to projects which are judged as being of particular benefit to early career researchers in Sri Lanka. If an applicant has

an existing collaboration with the International collaborating Institution, then the application must describe elaborately how the proposed research is new and different from the existing collaboration.

- Preference will be given to recipients of NSF research grants (previous or current). The dissemination of research findings, or of skills gained, during the course of a particular ICRP programme will be encouraged through workshops and seminars at all times, and such proposed seminar / workshop programmes should be included in the project proposal.
- Preference will be given to projects that are arising out of MoUs signed between NSF and International Organizations.

Conditions of the Award

The Award is offered under the following conditions;

1. The duration of the award shall be up to a maximum of **three** consecutive years. Under exceptional circumstances, a period longer than three years would also be considered.
2. Before any applicant requests financial support from the NSF, the Principal Investigator must satisfy all administrative arrangements and requirements of the institution(s) where the collaborative research is to be conducted. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator and the institution of the Principal Investigator that the International collaborator(s) is/are provided with all required facilities.
3. The value of ICRP award shall comprise the costs related to one preparatory visit, and one concluding visit of Principal Investigator between collaborating institutions.
4. Based on the requirement and relevance,
 - a. Overseas training, International research visits, attending International conferences, seminars and workshops could be supported by OSTP and International Travel Grants Schemes of NSF.
 - b. Visits of the International collaborator as a resource person could be supported by IPSAT Grant Scheme of NSF.
 - c. Cost of research (equipment, personnel, consumables, local travel, etc) could be supported by Research Grants and Equipment Grant Schemes of NSF.
 - d. OSTP, Travel Grants, IPSAT and Conference Support schemes will be considered as a whole in a single ICRP application and will be evaluated and processed separately.
5. All applications to NSF for the research component will have to be submitted by the Principal Investigator who must abide by the standard procedures of NSF. This does not, however, preclude applicants from seeking additional funds from other sources, both within and outside Sri Lanka.
6. Preference will be given to research to be conducted in Sri Lanka and we strongly discourage samples to be taken to foreign research institution for any kind of studies. Research at the foreign institution will be supported only if the facility is unavailable in Sri Lanka.
7. All correspondences regarding the ICRP will be made with the Principal Investigator. It is responsibility of the Principal Investigator to involve with the application procedures, submission of reports, submission of financial reports, and corresponding with NSF
8. The Head of Institution of the Principal Investigator's Institution will be responsible for signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Head of collaborating Institution.

9. The letter of award to the successful applicant will **specify the dates to take up the award**.
10. The Principal Investigator and the Head of Institution of local institution must sign an agreement with NSF to accept the award with the submission of MoU between the two respective parties.
11. If the institution **does not** have a signed MoU with the International Collaborating Institution for the proposed research collaboration, it is necessary to fulfill this requirement prior to sign the agreement with NSF. A grace period of **six months will be given from the date of award** to submit the MoU and to sign the agreement with NSF.
12. If, under any circumstances, the applicant is unable to take up the award within the time specified in the application the award must be withdrawn. The NSF is not responsible for any costs that may have been incurred by the applicants upto this point.
13. The International collaborator must be present for the duration of time the grantee is visiting the foreign institution and similarly the local applicant must be present for the duration of the time the International collaborator is visiting the local Institution.
14. Accommodation for all foreign collaborators should be arranged through the counterpart (Sri Lankan) institution with which they will be collaborating. Similarly accommodation for the Principal Investigator during the period of stay at the respective foreign country must be arranged by the Principal Investigator by himself/herself. Preference will be given to partnerships with partial support.
15. Visa Arrangements are the responsibility of the Principal Investigator.
16. Both Principal Investigator and the International Collaborator agree to comply with all lawful directions of both local and foreign institutions.
17. It is mandatory that recipients acknowledge support from the NSF in their reports, publications, and presentations as an indication of the use made by public funds towards scientific advancement and national capacity building.

Reporting

- All recipients are required to submit **half yearly progress reports** throughout the project period and a detailed final progress report according to the NSF format indicating the outputs and outcomes of that particular ICRP, signed by both applicants (Principal Investigator and the foreign collaborator), on their project within a month of completion of the project.
- Those who fail to submit reports within the specified time may be ineligible in receiving further grants from NSF.

Annexure A: Outline of the ICRP.