

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Indo-Australia Fund for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (Indo-AISRF)**  
**Round 13**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS-2020-2021**

**LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020**

The Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, New Delhi and the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER), Australian Government are providing financial support for joint research activities carried out by Indian and Australian researchers. Indian-Australian research teams are hereby invited to submit Collaborative Research Projects on special call on COVID-19 under Round 13 of AISRF.

## **PART 1 – OVERVIEW**

### **1.1 Background and objectives**

The Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) is a platform for bilateral collaboration in science, jointly managed and funded by the governments of India and Australia.

Since its establishment in 2006, the AISRF has supported collaborative, leading-edge research between scientists in India and Australia across a range of agreed priority areas. It has also helped to build linkages between premier research institutions in both countries.

The objectives of the AISRF are to:

- increase the uptake of leading-edge science and technology (S&T) by supporting collaboration between Australian and Indian researchers in strategically focused, leading-edge scientific research and technology projects, and strengthening strategic alliances between Australian and Indian researchers; and
- facilitate Australia's and India's access to the global S&T system.

### **1.2 ROUND 13 COVID-19 Collaborative Research Projects Grant Opportunity**

Applications are sought for proposals in the Round 13 COVID-19 Collaborative Research Projects grants. This grant opportunity was announced as part of the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund.

The objective of the grant opportunity is to fund short collaborative research projects with tangible outcomes focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The intended outcomes of the grant opportunity are:

- bring together leading research institutions and/or industry in both Australia and India currently working on areas relevant to COVID-19 such as vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics
- Projects of a mutually beneficial nature whose outcomes contribute to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Support is provided for collaborative **research projects** involving Indian and Australian partners.

If you have received AISRF project funding in a previous round, you cannot receive funding for the same activities in this round.

### 1.3 INDO-AUSTRALIAN S&T FUND

The Indo-Australian S&T Fund is jointly managed by the Australian Government's Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and the Government of India's Department of Science and Technology (DST).

The priority areas for collaborative research projects in Round Thirteen of the Indo-Australian S&T Fund are:

- **Antiviral coatings, other preventive technologies**
- **Data analytics, modelling, Artificial Intelligence applications**
- **Screening and diagnostic testing**

All applications for the Indo-Australian S&T Fund must fall within one of this priority area. Applications not related to this area will not be considered.

### 1.4 TIMELINE FOR ROUND 13

The call for applications for Round 13 is open from **4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020**. For online submission of application forms please visit at

<https://onlinedst.gov.in/Projectproposalformat.aspx>

## PART 2 - ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for funding under the *Indo-Australian S&T Fund*, the Indian applicant must:

- Seek support for a bilateral collaborative research project in one of the priority areas of research;
- Have obtained the agreement of their proposed Australian research partner to undertake the project activities;
- Be one of the following 'eligible organisations' (or a consortium of eligible organisations):
  - Education institution;
  - UGC recognized Universities/ Deemed Universities
  - Academic Institutes and National Research & Development Laboratories/Institutes

- public sector research agency; or
- private, not for profit, research organisation (Recognised by Department of Scientific & Industrial Research, Govt. of India organisation as S&T organisation)
- Address each of the Assessment Criteria
- Seek funding for eligible expenses; and
- Not seek funding for activities funded under another Indian Government program.

## 2.2 Conditions relating to Eligibility Criteria

AISRF grants are not intended to duplicate support available from other Indian Government sources. Where an applicant already receives Indian Government funding for their core activities, the applicant will only be eligible if they can demonstrate that the activity for which funding is sought is additional to their core activities.

## 2.3 Eligible activities and expenses

Under the *Indo-Australian S&T Fund*, the Indian Government will support the direct costs of **bilateral collaborative research projects** in one of the priority areas of research

Indian side will provide for the following expenses:

COVID19-related international and domestic travel restrictions imposed by governments and institutions may preclude travel during your project. However, if travel restrictions are eased or removed and domestic and international travel is available, eligible travel and overseas expenditure may include:

- **International economy excursion class return airfares for Indian researchers travelling to Australia to participate in collaborative research projects** (*international airfares for Australian researchers travelling to India will be met by the Australian Government*);
- **Living expenses, including accommodation and meals, for Australian researchers travelling to India to participate in collaborative research projects and workshops. Indian side will contribute a maximum of Indian Rs. 2,500/ per person per day or Indian Rs. 25,000/- per person per month whichever is the lesser amount and Guest House Accommodation Charges** (*Living expenses, including accommodation and meals, for Indian researchers travelling to Australia will be met by the Australian Government, Australian side will contribute a maximum of AUD\$300 per person per day, or AUD\$4,000 per person per month, whichever is the lesser amount*).
- Travel and living expenses combined must not exceed 20 per cent of the approved grant amount.
- Manpower-Salaries and on-costs for Indian researchers employed specifically for the project (this includes JRF/RA etc.) as per DST norms.
- Minor Equipment (if specific)
- Consumables up to 2 lakhs per year

Details of cash and in-kind contributions should be disclosed

## **2.4 Costs not eligible for support**

The following activities/costs will not be funded by the Indian Government:

- any cost incurred prior to the execution of a funding agreement with the Indian Government;
- costs that duplicate the in-kind support from the applicant or other participants in the project;
- capital expenditure for the purchase of assets such as office furniture, motor vehicles, computers, printers or photocopiers; and the construction, renovation or extension of facilities such as buildings and laboratories
- costs involved in the purchase or upgrade/hire of software (including user licenses) and ICT hardware (unless it can be used only for the project);
- administration and infrastructure costs;
- Indian project manager's salary and salaries for existing staff, including salary related expenses;
- staff recruitment and relocation costs;
- international travel and living expenses for undergraduate and Masters students;
- costs associated with the protection or patenting of intellectual property;
- costs associated with the internal preparation of finance and audit statements; and
- debt financing.

## **2.5 Duration of projects**

Expected commencement of the project is ground September/October 2020.

Projects may range from short bilateral collaborations to more complex projects spanning up to twelve months.

We may approve a further six month extension provided you complete your project by 31 May 2022

## **2.6 Cash and in-kind support from other sources**

Applicants will be assessed on the level of support that they can procure from both Indian and Australian organisations (including the applicant's own organisation) for the collaborative research project.

There is no requirement for applicants to demonstrate that the Indian contribution (cash and/or in-kind) to the project matches or is more than the funding sought from the Indian Government.

Indian contributions to the project may be in cash and/or in-kind. The contributions may be from the applicant's own organisation, or other Indian sources, for example, collaborative participants, industry contributions or contributions from other Indian Government funding sources. Salaries for Project Managers may also be included as an in-kind contribution.

In-kind contributions will be required to be detailed and costed. In-kind costs must be directly related to costs of delivering the activities of the project and can include salaries of

staff for the time they are involved and other costs incurred for the duration of these activities.

## **PART 3 - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND PROCESS**

### **3.1 Notes on the Assessment Criteria**

Applicants should note that, in accordance with the 'value with public money' requirements of the Government of India, they should clearly demonstrate that the intended outcomes cannot be achieved without grant assistance from the AISRF.

Please note the maximum number of words or pages specified for each criterion, use clear language, avoid technical jargon wherever possible and spell out acronyms or abbreviations in the first instance. Include all information and do not refer to other sources, e.g. websites.

Supporting documentation should be provided as listed under each of the criteria.

The information provided in your application must be consistent with that provided by your Australian partner's application to the Government of Australia.

### **3.2 Assessment Criteria**

Providing the eligibility criteria set out in the AISRF Guidelines have been met, applicants will be assessed against the following criteria, all of which must be addressed. The assessment criteria must be addressed as a written proposal of **no more than ten (10) A4 pages** (other than supporting documentation identified below), to be submitted as an attachment with the online application form.

**NOTE:** Use the same Project title as the one in the Project Details section of the application form. The Project title must be identical in both the Australian and Indian applications.

#### **Assessment criterion 1**

##### **How your project will advance research in priority areas to deliver tangible outcomes and benefits for both India and Australia (50 points)**

You should demonstrate this by identifying:

- a. the specific problem or issue your project will address, why it needs to be addressed, how your project will address it, including the rationale for your approach and any existing research you will build on
- b. the expected outcomes and benefits of your research and how they would contribute to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including demonstrating a clear path to end use such as application of outcomes for the public good and/or commercialisation.

#### **Assessment criterion 2**

##### **Your capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (50 points)**

You should demonstrate this by identifying:

- a. your access to personnel with the right skills and experience, including management and technical staff, and to any infrastructure, capital equipment, technology and intellectual property required for the project

- b. a sound project plan to manage and monitor the project, including arrangements for governance and intellectual property rights and the identification of risks and mitigation strategies.

### 3.3 Conditions relating to Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria provide the basis for assessment of an application. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all relevant information and documentation as required.

Please note that:

- i. applicants may be asked to provide additional information to clarify any issues raised during the assessment process; and
- ii. the Department may also seek the applicant's permission to obtain further advice from third parties, if appropriate.

### 3.4 Collaborative Research Projects

Supporting documentation checklist to assist with the preparation of your application.

Supporting Documentation	Have you attached this to your application form?
Criterion A: Detailed written proposal that demonstrates the scientific merit of the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion A: Letter from the Australian primary partner confirming that the proposal is jointly prepared. The letter should state that the Australian partner agrees to submit an equivalent proposal to the Government of Australia.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion A: Curricula vitae for each of the key personnel (both Australian and Indian).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion B: Describe why collaboration between the Indian and Australian partner organisations is integral to achieving the outcomes of the proposed research project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion C: Detailed project plan and Indian budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion D: Letter of support from the applicant organisation clearly articulating the organisation's financial support (cash and/or in-kind) for the project and commitment to engage in the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion D: If applicable, letter of support from any other Indian partner organisations clearly articulating the organisation's financial support (cash and/or in-kind) for the project and commitment to engage in the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Supporting Documentation	Have you attached this to your application form?
Criterion D: Letter of support from the Australian partner organisation clearly articulating the organisation's financial support (cash and/or in-kind) and commitment to engage in the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion D: If applicable, letter of support from any other international partner organisations clearly articulating the organisation's financial support (cash and/or in-kind) and commitment to engage in the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3.3 Conditions relating to Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria provide the basis for assessment of an application. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all relevant information and documentation as required.

Please note that:

- iii. applicants may be asked to provide additional information to clarify any issues raised during the assessment process; and
- iv. the Department may also seek the applicant's permission to obtain further advice from third parties, if appropriate.

### 3.4 Collaborative Research Projects

Supporting documentation checklist to assist with the preparation of your application.

Supporting Documentation	Have you attached this to your application form?
Criterion A: Detailed written proposal that demonstrates the scientific merit of the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion A: Letter from the Australian primary partner confirming that the proposal is jointly prepared. The letter should state that the Australian partner agrees to submit an equivalent proposal to the Government of Australia.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion A: Curricula vitae for each of the key personnel (both Australian and Indian).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion B: Describe why collaboration between the Indian and Australian partner organisations is integral to achieving the outcomes of the proposed research project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion C: Detailed project plan and Indian budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion D: Letter of support from the applicant organisation clearly articulating the organisation's financial support (cash and/or in-kind) for the project and commitment to engage in	<input type="checkbox"/>

Supporting Documentation	Have you attached this to your application form?
the research collaboration.	
Criterion D: If applicable, letter of support from any other Indian partner organisations clearly articulating the organisation's financial support (cash and/or in-kind) for the project and commitment to engage in the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion D: Letter of support from the Australian partner organisation clearly articulating the organisation's financial support (cash and/or in-kind) and commitment to engage in the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion D: If applicable, letter of support from any other international partner organisations clearly articulating the organisation's financial support (cash and/or in-kind) and commitment to engage in the research collaboration.	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3.5 Eligibility checks and assessment of applications

All Indian applications received by the Department by the advertised closing date will be assessed in accordance with the AISRF Guidelines and these Application Instructions.

### 3.6 Discrepancies, ambiguities, inconsistencies, errors or omissions in an application

The Indian and Australian Governments will not accept responsibility for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an applicant to comply with the guidelines, or arising from any ambiguity, discrepancy, error or omission contained in an application.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring the correctness, sufficiency and eligibility of their submitted application. If an applicant discovers any material discrepancy, ambiguity, inconsistency, error or omission in their application, they must **immediately** bring it to the attention of the Department by email to [ujjwala@nic.in](mailto:ujjwala@nic.in)

The Department may request further information from an applicant or referee and allow an applicant to remedy any errors, omissions etc in an application at any time, including after the round closing date. The Department reserves the right to consider new information regarding matters referred to in the original application at any time, including after the round closing date.



The Department reserves the right to allow applicants to correct errors or omissions in submitted applications. On these matters the Department's decision will be final. No correspondence will be entered into in relation to the decision other than to inform the applicant of the decision.

**Note: Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence.**

**Please note that on the Indian side applicant already implementing two projects funded by the International Division of DST is not eligible to submit the project against this call.**

### **Guidelines for Proposal Submission**

- The deadline for the submission of proposals is **2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2020**.
- The Indian researchers can download the proposal formats from website [www.onlinedst.gov.in](http://www.onlinedst.gov.in) after registering themselves (if applying for the first time) and should submit completed application form and all relevant information. Proposals must be submitted to DST through the **e-application system** provided at [www.onlinedst.gov.in](http://www.onlinedst.gov.in). **It should be ensured that application with identical title has been submitted by his / her Australian counterpart to AISRF by due date.**
- Soft copies of the proposal should **also** be sent to [ujwala@nic.in](mailto:ujwala@nic.in)
- **Please remember to upload 6 documents before "SUBMIT" the final proposal. So make it ready (in the formats given below) before submitting.**
  - i. Biodata of the PI (in pdf, Max size 800kb)
  - ii. Conflict of Interest (in pdf, Max size 800kb)
  - iii. Certificate from PI (in pdf, Max size 800kb)
  - iv. Endorsement from Head of the Institute (in pdf, Max size 800kb)
  - v. Complete proposal (in pdf with max size 5mb)
  - vi. Complete proposal (in doc with max size 5mb)
- **Proposal submitted only on one side will not be considered.**
- Australian Principal Investigators need to submit proposals with a matching joint research project plan to AISRF simultaneously. Australian Researchers are requested to contact AISRF for their application submission period, documents to be submitted etc.

**For application format, please see  
International Cooperation (Bilateral) at**

**<https://onlinedst.gov.in/Projectproposalformat.aspx>**

\*\*\*