

Request for Proposals



for

Establishment of SPARSH Centres

for

Social Innovation Immersion



Proposals are invited from Incubation centers, Research parks, Knowledge park, Foundations, Technology Centers, Incubators, Public Research Institutions, Private Research Institutions, and related organizations for **establishment of SPARSH Centres** for implementation of Social Innovation Immersion program of BIRAC.

SPARSH is the social innovation program of BIRAC aimed towards finding innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems through biotechnological interventions.

SIIP (Social Innovation Immersion Program), a component of SPARSH scheme, is BIRAC's social Innovation fellowship/award program aimed at creating a pool of biotech "Social Innovators" who could identify the needs & gaps within communities and then can help bridge the gaps either through an innovative product development or services. The Program is implemented through SPARSH Centres.

The immersion program is a unique social Innovation platform which provides opportunity for clinical and rural immersion and also funding support for developing the prototype through mini kick start grant apart from the monthly fellowship to young social Innovators.

Under the program, 33 social innovators in three thematic areas namely, "*Maternal and Child Health*" "*Ageing and Health*" and "*Waste to value*" have been mentored, and several novel and interesting ideas to tackle related problems were generated. Some of these ideas were further refined and presently, around 16 prototypes are in various stages of product development cycle. Most of the Social Innovators who were mentored through the program have been successful in raising follow-on funding or starting their own enterprise.

SPARSH Centres

BIRAC - SPARSH Centres are responsible for implementation of Social innovation program of BIRAC and will provide a host of technical, IP, business and marketing mentoring to the fellows.

Under the present call, proposals are invited from interested agencies for establishment of SPARSH Centres in following thematic areas:

- Maternal and Child Health
- Ageing and Health
- Food and Nutrition
- Waste to Value
- Combating environmental pollution
- Agri-Tech (including reducing post-harvest losses)

(The above-mentioned thematic areas will be modified or new ones would be added as per the needs in future)

Eligibility:

Incubation centers, Research parks, Knowledge park, Foundations, Technology Centers, Incubators, Public Research Institutions, Private Research Institutions, established as a legal entity under the relevant Law of India having at least 51% Indian stakeholders (owners/partners/trustees/members/associates etc.) are eligible to apply. It is desirable for the applicant organization to have:

- A clinical partner and Social partner to facilitate need identification.
- Experts who can provide mentorship to fellows

Roles and Responsibilities

- i. The SPARSH Centres will be responsible for selecting the social innovation fellows in consultation with BIRAC.

(In case of resignation of fellows, SPARSH Centres may recommend a new fellow under the program provided the previous SIIP fellow had availed less than six months of fellowship)

- ii. Provide desired infrastructure such as dedicated work space, common equipment and other services like mentoring, networking to the Fellows (As explained in the operational section of this document)
- iii. Overall implementation and management of SIIP

- iv. Monitoring the progress of SPARSH fellows and submitting the project progress report to BIRAC as per prescribed timelines.
- v. SPARSH Centres, if so desire, may share resources with other SPARSH Centers for optimal utilization of infrastructure.

Criteria for selection of SPARSH Centers

The BIRAC SIIP Committee comprising of experts from various domains will be responsible for selection of the new centers taking following criteria into consideration:

1. Past experience in running similar programs
2. Availability of the infrastructure (Wet Labs, Tinkering labs, Basic prototyping facility etc.)
3. Accessibility to experts/mentors
4. Availability of IP, regulatory, business support to the SPARSH fellows
5. Connections with the related hospitals, remote locations and PHCs for healthcare related themes

Selection Process

1. The SIIP Committee will be responsible for SIIP evaluation and selection process
2. After eligibility check, the proposals received will be evaluated by the SIIP/expert Committee on various parameters already elaborated in the previous section.
3. The shortlisted proposals will be called for presentation at BIRAC.
4. On the basis of presentation, The SIIP Committee will recommend the proposals for a site visit or direct consideration.
5. After the site visit (If recommended) the recommendations of the site visit committee would be presented to the SIIP committee for final decision on funding.
6. Once recommended for support, GLA signing will be done with the applicant after financial due diligence.

Tenure of SPARSH Centres

Proposals are invited for a duration of 3 years for implementation of two thematic cycles of 20 months each with an overlap of 4 months.

The performance of the SPARSH Centre with respect to a particular cycle/call would be evaluated after 20 Months. However, the overall performance of SPARSH Centre for extending the contract will be reviewed only after completion of two cycles i.e., 3 years. After the review, the contract may be extended further.

A SPARSH Center can recruit maximum of 5 fellows per theme for 18 months. Centre should complete two thematic cycles in a duration of three years with 4 months overlap between two themes.

SPARSH Knowledge Partner

For the mentoring of Social innovators and overall guidance to SPARSH Centres, BIRAC engages with SPARSH Knowledge Partner.

To a great extent success of social venture in creating sustainable social impact depends on understanding social, economic and environmental context. Immersion to the context is essential for the innovators for this purpose. And the products and/or service thus designed, developed and offered by the entrepreneurs must have relevance to the society in general and targeted people in specific. Strategic aspects such as alignment with the industry structure, market-fit and positioning are the vital aspects of the social venture to influence success of the social ventures. The SPARSH knowledge partner shall provide the necessary guidance to the fellows in this regard.

Roles and Responsibilities of Knowledge Partner

1. The knowledge partner will train the Fellows to learn the processes and tools to understand the society and associated cultural dimensions as well as train them with the entrepreneurial mind set, venture creation, managerial methods to become a successful social entrepreneur/innovator.
2. The knowledge partner will engage with Social innovators through-out the award period and provide overall guidance.
3. It will be responsible for organizing at least three training workshops in partnership with the SPARSH Centres and in consultation with BIRAC during the cycle of award.
4. It will act as brand ambassador for SIIP and will help in its outreach.

SPARSH Social Innovators/SPARSH Fellows

BIRAC Social Innovators will be selected through National level application and shortlisting process in collaboration with SPARSH Centres and SPARSH knowledge partners.

Selected Fellows would be designated as ‘SPARSH Social Innovators/ SPARSH Fellows’ who would receive a fellowship from BIRAC (amounting to INR 50,000/month for 18 months) and a onetime mini-kick start grant of INR 5 lakhs per fellow which will be provided during the course of the fellowship.

The SPARSH Fellowship requires the Innovators to work fulltime and cannot be combined with fellowships from other funding organizations.

Eligibility: The Social innovation fellowship is a prestigious award which will be provided to only Indian Citizen. Fellow could be drawn from fields such as life sciences, Agriculture, Engineering, medicine & human biology with educational qualification ranging from undergraduate (B.Tech, BE, MBBS) or postgraduate (MSc, MS, M.Tech, MPhil, MD) & PhD.

Selection process

1. The applications for SIIP fellowship will be invited at the national level through advertisements in national dailies and suitable magazines. The application will be submitted online through BIRAC portal. In the application form, the applicant will be asked to indicate his/her choice of the SPARSH Centre.
2. The Centre-wise list of applicants will be created and sent to respective Centre for eligibility checks and further evaluation.
3. The shortlisted applicants will be called for a presentation at the respective SPARSH centers before a Technical Expert Committee which would also involve a BIRAC representative.
4. The shortlisted applicants will be called as Social Innovators and will enter into an agreement with SPARSH Centre.

Operational Elements & Work Plan:

The overall administrative responsibility of the Social Innovation Immersion would rest on the partnering organization which would implement the program. The partner can select a particular theme from the bucket of themes provided by BIRAC.

SPARSH Centre can recruit 5 SPARSH fellows under a particular theme. Total number of SPARSH Innovators at a time at a center should not increase 10.

The 18 months fellowship will start from Pre-Immersion orientation and Induction phase. The work flow would be as follows:

1. Recruitment & Selection of Social Innovator Fellows

The SPARSH Centres will complete the process of selection of SPARSH fellows within 2 months of approval from BIRAC to operationalize the program. Each partner shall recruit a maximum of 5 fellows for 18 months under a particular theme.

An ideal candidate would be one who has the basic understanding of the milieu of the particular theme in different resource settings, and drive to undertake product/technology development process independently. Any training in past on various aspects of Entrepreneurship would be desirable. Nevertheless, required training and mentorship would be provided to Social innovators during the course of Program.

2. Pre-Immersion orientation & Induction:

Once the fellows are selected, SPARSH partners are expected to brief the fellows about objectives & expected outcomes of the program as well as provide necessary tools and guidance to identify existing gaps & needs in the identified thematic area.

The centers are also responsible for training the innovators on process of systematic clinical & Community observation, needs assessment and refinement, affordable technology development & Commercialization, market and industry research and enabling rural / remote settings. For these aspects it is expected from SPARSH Centres to have clinical and rural partners and mentors of primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Healthcare and other areas. SPARSH knowledge partner will organize pre-Immersion workshop for the SPARSH fellows.

3. Immersion Program

The “immersion” component of the program would be for a period of 5-6 months. During this period the social innovators would ideally be exposed to both clinical/agricultural settings as well as rural (or urban resource poor) community settings. Within the clinical landscape, it would be desirable that the fellows gain exposure at 3 levels- primary, secondary & tertiary healthcare.

It is expected that during the immersion period, fellows would identify multitudes of needs and conduct detailed ethnography and need assessment studies of different communities. Rural or Urban resource

poor community immersion would expose them to cultural aspects and other pain points faced by a community.

SPARSH Partners are expected to be in continuous engagement with fellows throughout this period and take periodic reviews of the fellows. Besides other support, they are also expected to provide mentoring on Intellectual Property Rights and technology commercialization issues.

BIRAC expects a written report from each of the fellows at the end of the immersion program about the experiences and summary of the Ideas generated during the Immersion.

4. Post Immersion Filtration

On completion of the immersion component, fellows are expected to do desk research to understand various solutions explored and list out all the gaps & need analysis carried out during immersion. Further to this they are expected to filter their list and narrowed down to top 2-3 ideas that align well with possible product or service strategies. This would involve a mix of business & technical learnings related to market dynamics, technology landscaping, regulatory challenges, business plan formulation and grant writing skills.

It is expected that the SPARSH partners would mentor and provide them with connect points especially with mentors from business (such from business schools) technical and regulatory fields. The partners will also identify and encourage participation of SPARSH fellows in workshops and conferences for social innovators relevant to their requirements and connect them to opinion leaders or stakeholders for individual specific meetings.

The Social Innovators will come out with detailed report on the 2-3 final ideas shortlisted by them. The detailed requirements for the next stage should also be envisaged. Fellows are expected to submit to BIRAC a detailed plan of action for taking identified gap/need to the next stage either in terms of product design or delivery component with at least two milestone stages. SPARSH knowledge partner will organize Post-Immersion workshop for the fellows in collaboration with BIRAC and SPARSH implementation partner.

5. Product Design, Prototyping and Delivery Mechanism

This stage will provide the live prototype development environment or planning a delivery implementation to the Social innovators. The

detailed plan of action submitted by applicant will be reviewed by Partner and a report for release of grant should be submitted to BIRAC. On submission of the plan, BIRAC would then release the mini kick-start grant of INR 500,000 in two stages of (INR 250000 each time) routed via the partner. If two or more fellows wish to work together as a team on developing a single identified need, they can combine their mini kick-start grants. However, this must be communicated to BIRAC in advance and a project lead for the joint project be identified and agreed upon. The team then has to submit a detailed milestone based plan to the SPARSH Centre & BIRAC for approval before the combined mini kick-start grant is released & routed via the SPARSH Centre. Once BIRAC approval has been provided for a joint project, it cannot be reversed. Wherever more than 2 Social innovators decide to work for a joint project, the combined mini Kick start grant will be provided in two milestone stages as for individuals.

It is expected that the SPARSH partner would help connect the fellows to product designers and engineers and various design labs during this period. SPARSH Centre will also provide access to its own Tinkering Labs to the Social innovators.

SPARSH knowledge partner will organize “Venture Design Workshop” for the fellows in collaboration with BIRAC and SPARSH Centre.

Lateral Entry to BIRAC

1. The fellows will be evaluated for their proposed idea at two points 1. After the post Immersion phase when they are ready with the filtered idea and 2. Nearing Completion. The BIRAC SIIP experts Committee during the post-Immersion workshop and Closing meeting will evaluate the progress of each SIIP fellow and depending on the achievements made and future potential at its discretion may recommend the fellows for lateral entry into BIG (Biotechnology Ignition Grant) evaluation cycle. Other SPARSH fellows who are not recommended for lateral entry into BIG or are unable to secure BIG grant shall continue with their original program.
2. On completion of their program, the Social innovators will have the option to apply under BIG scheme of BIRAC to further their research/product development process.

Recommended Milestones/timelines for all SPARSH Centres:

S. No.	Milestone Name	Timelines (Months)	% release of funds
1.	Contract Signing	0	10%
2.	Completion of Recruitment of SPARSH fellows and their pre-Immersion Induction	2	20%
3.	Post Immersion Filtration and Submission of dossier on final idea	8	30%
4.	Product designing and prototyping by the social Innovators based on the final idea	16	30%
5.	Report submission	20	10%

SIIP Committee/Panel

A Panel comprising experts from different technical background/domains, financial experts and BIRAC knowledge partner will be constituted. Depending on the needs, experts from the Panel shall be drawn to undertake the following roles and responsibilities:

1. Selection of new SPARSH centers
2. Pre- and post-sanction site visits
3. Evaluation of SPARSH partners and SPARSH fellows
4. Recommending SPARSH fellows for lateral entry to BIG program
5. As Advisors and Mentors

The Committee will meet as and when required at BIRAC or at different SPARSH centres.

Intellectual Property

The IP generated during the SIIP program would rest with the social innovators and neither BIRAC nor partners would claim the IP rights.

Outcome

On completion, BIRAC expects the Social innovators to reach a point where they have made enough advancements with respect to generation of data or

development of product/technology for licensing or to apply for funding under BIG or equivalent funding source or pitch to investors or apply for a patent.

The SPARSH Centre is expected to submit an outcome report to BIRAC at the end of the cycle highlighting the achievements of the SPARSH fellows in terms of awards won, patents filed, technology transferred, enterprise developed or follow on funding raised.

Budget per Cycle per Centre	
Budget Head	Proposed Budget
Research Fellowship	Rs. 50,000 x 5 fellows x 18 months = Rs. 45 Lakhs
Kick Start Grant	5 lakh * 5 = 25 Lakhs
Sub Total (A)	70 Lakhs
Management Fees for SPARSH Centre	4 Lakhs
Manpower Cost	Rs. 60,000 x 20 = Rs.12 Lakhs
Honorarium to experts, clinical/rural partners	3 Lakhs
Workshop Conference	4 Lakhs
Contingency	2 Lakhs
Travel/Field/site visits	5 Lakhs
Sub Total (B)	30 lakhs
Total (A + B)	100 Lakhs