



**Department of Biotechnology  
Government of India**

**Guidelines for DBT-BIRAC Amrit Team Grants (October, 2024)**

- 1. Background and Purpose:** The DBT-BIRAC Amrit Team Grants is a new initiative/program in accordance with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's call for "Jai Anusandhan" to support new and innovative collaborative research programs. The program will address national needs and propel India as a global leader in Biotechnology.
- 2. Salient Features:** Under this initiative, ambitious research ideas, high-risk, milestone driven research for knowledge based discoveries and interdisciplinary efforts involving academia, the clinic and start-ups will be supported to address challenging problems beyond the scope of a single laboratory. Spin outs and venture creation will be encouraged. Outcomes are expected to enhance the bioeconomy, break silos and provide knowledge based solutions to societal needs.

The proposals will be considered in all domains of biotechnology including Healthcare, Agriculture, Plant, Animal Biotechnology, and Biomanufacturing. Applications will be assessed for relevance, risk, transformational impact and advances of scientific value. This initiative aims to foster excellent science, balancing high quality research with societal needs.

**3. Scope**

- Targeting knowledge bottlenecks
- Break research silos and promote multi-organisational collaborations, involving Industry and start-ups
- Societal engagement: Identifying solutions to problems of today and bring knowledge to addressing challenges of the future
- Provide in-depth mechanistic understanding of biological processes.
- Encourage investigations across systems to understand a common biological problem
- Integrate classical approaches with newly emerging scientific disciplines

Areas that will not be within the purview of this program-

- Disease Epidemiology;
- Creation of new clinical cohorts/ biobanks

- Clinical/drug trials;
- Stand-alone *in silico* approaches;
- Improvements to existing technologies;
- Training/ workshops/ capacity building efforts;
- Creation of infrastructure facilities only.

#### 4. Application Process & Eligibility Criteria

- *Eligible Organizations*: The organization seeking support should:
  - a. Be a Public Research or Educational Institute/University or Private Research or Educational University /Institute or Society/ Trust/NGOs/ Foundations/ Voluntary Organisation or a Start-up registered in India and should be a legal entity as per Indian law.
  - b. Not be blacklisted by any Central/State Government/Public Sector Undertaking, Govt. of India.
  - c. Not have pre-exited or terminated any contract with or by BIRAC in last 5 years as on the date of submission.
  - d. Adhere to the Policies of DBT and BIRAC on data protection, confidentiality & conflict of interest.
- Private Research or Educational University /Institute, and Society/ Trust/NGOs/ Foundations/ Voluntary Organisation –
  - (i) Should have experience of at least 3 years in socio-economic or scientific research, teaching, training and extension activities; and must follow research as one of the mandates.
  - (ii) Should submit the following supporting documents along with the proposal :
    - Proof of registration at 'NGO DARPAN' of NITI Aayog (<http://ngodarpan.gov.in/>),
    - Certificate of registration under Society Registration Act,
    - Organization's Memorandum of Association,
    - Organization's Articles of Association,
    - Organisations Byelaws
    - Valid DSIR-SIRO certificate/ DSIR inhouse R&D recognition certificate (as applicable)
    - Duly audited account statements for the past three successive years
- Applications must have one lead investigator/coordinator, and well-defined goals achievable within a duration of 2 years, extendable upto 5

years based on performance (i.e. maximum duration of the project will not exceed 5 years in any case). Teams should comprise investigators from a **minimum of three host organizations/ three different Departments of the same organization (for large organisations)**, with all participating organizations contributing directly to the research problem identified. Teams may include one or more start-up with an academic laboratory.

- Applications led by women scientists are encouraged.
- Application may be submitted by the Coordinating PI, appending approvals of the competent authority of all participating organisations through DBT e-PROMIS portal- <http://dbtepromis.nic.in> (academia-academia collaboration) and BIRAC portal (academia- start-up collaboration) only. Any proposal submitted after the call date or through any other mode shall not be considered.
- Participation of early- and mid-career investigators (definition of early career researchers is within 3-7 years of setting up an independent lab, mid-career researchers is between 7-15 years of setting up an independent lab) is encouraged. For the purposes of this program, investigators availing DST Inspire Faculty program, Ramalingaswamy Fellows and Ramanujan Fellows will be considered early career investigators.
- An investigator may participate in only one such proposal at a time.
- An organization may forward more than one application, provided that each application is scientifically distinct. The host organization should undertake the overall responsibility of implementing the project including following of relevant statutory requirements/norms/guidelines/procedures.
- A single organisation/ single Department of the same organization shall not receive more than 40% of the total funded amount for each awarded grant.

**5. Funding Mechanism:** Financial support for projects selected under this program will be under the DBT Bio-RIDE scheme. Projects having academic partners only will be funded by DBT. Projects involving academia & start-ups will be supported by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a PSU of DBT.

**5a. Funding to academia** will be through Grant-in-aid. The maximum budgetary limit for a proposal will be ₹10 Crore for 2 years, extendable upto 5 years based on performance. Private Universities/ NGOs/ Trusts/ foundations etc. will be encouraged to share 25% of capital investment cost.

**5b. Funding to Startups will be upto ₹50 lakh only** through Grant-in-aid (including Grant in Aid under any other BIRAC grant).

**6. Selection Process:**

- Proposals will be invited through national calls announced on DBT & BIRAC website.
  - All proposals will firstly be evaluated for scientific and technical merit by a Screening Committee. Only such proposals that are shortlisted by the Screening Committee will be called for presentation before the Selection Committee which will recommend the selected proposals for funding. The Screening & Selection Committees will be set-up jointly by DBT & BIRAC.
  - The proposals may additionally be sent for peer review by subject area experts prior to their consideration by the Screening Committee.
  - DBT shall reserve the discretion on determination of sanction of funding and processes as per its standard norms and such determination shall be final.
7. **Monitoring:** The performance of the projects selected for funding will be reviewed by the Selection Committee 1 year post-award for continuing support for the remaining period. The Selection Committee may also constitute smaller 'Project Monitoring Committee' for onsite/ interim monitoring of the projects, if necessary.
8. **Scope of Intellectual Property generated during the duration of the project:** The Intellectual Property (IP) rights will be as per IP policy of the Department of Biotechnology (<https://dbtindia.gov.in/regulations-guidelines/guidelines/dbt-ip-guidelines-2023> )
9. **Acknowledgement of DBT/BIRAC support:** Funded applicants will duly acknowledge the assistance of DBT /BIRAC while publishing, marketing the resultant product or presenting in any manner the details of the project, its progress or its success.
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## DBT-BIRAC Amrit Team Grants Application Format

The application will include the following:

1. Title
2. Name(s), institutional affiliations & address(es), email(s) of the investigators
3. Collaborator[s] (if any) Name, Institutional affiliation and email
4. Detailed Research Plan, which should include:
  - a. **Specific Aims:** A concise description of the overall goals of the project must be provided. The proposed research should be presented as a fully integrated and cohesive scientific program with specific aims organized to address the overall objective rather than by individual investigator contributions. Objectives must include an overall strategy statement
  - b. Approach should encompass the following:
    - i. **Scientific significance:** a problem statement; a comprehensive overview of leading, current research and limitations of current approaches; how the proposal addresses barriers to advancement; how will the outcomes be transformative and impact knowledge, clinical practice or technological capability.
    - ii. *Strategy statement* indicating the main goal[s] and why the steps outlined are an effective approach to achieve this. Explain why the programme priorities, best address the problem
    - iii. **Implementation Plan:** Describe in detail how the proposed objectives will be attained. Include, milestone-based development of objectives. How are resources going to be used for maximum impact. How will available institutional resources be leveraged. Justify the use of human subjects/ animals/ plant resources. Methodology must be clearly described. Preliminary data (published and/or unpublished) in support of the proposal may be included in the appendix to the main proposal.
    - iv. **Research material:** Information on numbers and justification for the use of clinical material/ human subjects/ animals/ plant resources for the research plan.
  - c. **Team Composition:** Team organisation should be mapped to objectives. The track record of investigators and demonstrated expertise in the area of the proposal must be explicitly stated. Applications should explain why the overarching research challenge cannot be adequately addressed by independent individual research grants, and justify the need to engage in a collaborative effort. Explain the role and expectations from the non-funded collaborator[s]. Evidence for synergistic interactions or past collaborations among the investigators, if any, may be highlighted. However, a simple expansion of the scope of research arising from previous collaborations will not be supported by this call.
  - d. **Coordination of Activities:**
    - i. **Team Management Plan, Governance and Coordination** (leadership, coordination of research, reporting etc.); Use a problem and solutions approach to explain how the partners will engage to ensure collaboration and complementary interactions to achieve the identified goals. Clearly indicate roles and responsibilities.

- ii. Resource allocation, sharing of resources within the participating members; Data sharing, archiving, and subsequent access to the wider research community
- iii. Risk Management plan. Describe the anticipated risks and relevant management and mitigation efforts

**iv. Milestones with Timelines.**

5. Funding: Proposed budget for the project with year-wise, investigator-wise and institute-wise breakup
6. Institutional support, existing resources and facilities available.
7. Appendix:
  - Gantt chart
  - Status of statutory approvals obtained/pending for all components of the project.
  - Brief biodata of all investigators highlighting training/ publications/research outcomes relevant to the proposed grant.
  - Brief biodata of collaborator[s], if any.
  - Complete contact information of 5-7 potential reviewers with expertise in the area.