

INDIA-AUSTRIA SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION CALL FOR PROPOSALS-2024

Launch date: 15 September 2024

Closing date: 31 October 2024, 11:59 PM IST / in Austria: 12 noon (CET)

The Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, New Delhi and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Republic of Austria hereby invite Indian and Austrian faculty/scientists/researchers to submit proposals for Joint Research Projects to promote bilateral scientific collaboration between Indian and Austrian scientists. The programme for S&T Cooperation is carried out in the frame of international agreements with selected partner countries with the aim to stimulate international research.

2. Areas of Research

Call is open for all disciplines of Science and Technology.

3. Important Dates

Starting date of Call: 15 September 2024

Closing date of Call: 31 October 2024, 11:59 PM (IST), **in Austria: 12 noon (CET)**

4. Guidelines for Austrian PIs

4.1 Who may apply

- Researchers at higher education institutions (minimum requirement PhD degree) and researchers at non-university research institutions in areas of basic research (minimum requirement Master degree)
- PhD/Doctoral students as team members (Bachelor and Master graduates are not eligible for funding)

Project applications submitted by early-stage researchers¹ as well as project applications with involvement of PhD/doctoral students and/or female researchers will be prioritized².

¹ Researchers with an experience of up to 10 years after their PhD/Doctoral degree; recognized career breaks will be taken into account (e.g. due to family or health reasons or occupation outside the academic sector).

² These project applications will receive additional points during the evaluation process and hence a better overall score.

Please note: Only new project partnerships can be funded under this programme. Follow-up applications of already funded partnerships are not eligible. A maximum of two projects can be submitted per Principal Investigator.

4.2 Financial Support:

Funding will be provided for the mobility of researchers to carry out bilateral research projects.

Funding mode: The sending side covers the travel expenses whereas the accommodation expenses will be financed by the hosting side (and vice versa).

The funding will be transferred to an institution account (Institutionskonto) only. The reimbursement of all project-related expenses will be handled by the Austrian Principal Investigator.

Project duration: 2 years

Please note: research stays in both countries are obligatory. Funding will be provided for activities within the scope of these guidelines only.

Funding amount: *max.* EUR 15,000.- over two years per project

Eligible costs:

- ***Travel expenses:*** up to max EUR 2,000 (economy class) for Austrian researchers/PhD students travelling to India will be reimbursed based on submitted invoices.³
- ***Accommodation and per diem:*** EUR 140.- per working day for Indian PhD students/researchers travelling to Austria for up to 12 days **OR** EUR 1,680.- per month for long-term stays between 12 days and max. 3 months within the max. funding amount.
- ***Project related material costs:*** max. EUR 3,000.- as part of the granted maximum budget based on submitted invoices.⁴

4.3 How to apply

It is up to the applicants to find suitable partners in the respective country. Applications must be submitted both in Austria to Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD) and in India to DST. Only applications submitted in time in both countries are eligible for funding.

AUSTRIA: Electronic application only [[web-link](#)].

³ Journeys of up to seven hours must be by bus or train. A subsidy for private car usage is only possible in exceptions and in accordance with the OeAD.

⁴ Only project-specific material costs will be reimbursed, that are essential to carry out the research project and that go beyond the resources made available from the research institution's infrastructure. Infrastructure or basic equipment of research institutions cannot be funded.

4.4 Evaluation Criteria and Expected Deliverables

- **Scientific quality** of the proposed research project incl.
 - Feasibility of the joint research plan
 - Adequacy of the scientific method
 - Qualification of the scientists/research teams involved **(max. 25 points)**
- Perspective for **further joint cooperation activities** **(max. 10 points)**
- **Added value for the institution and Austria, monitoring, exit strategy** **(max. 5 points)**
- Project applications will receive up to 10 points additionally,
 - Either if **submitted by early-stage researchers²** (+10 points)
 - Or if **involving doctoral students** (+5 points) and/or **female researchers** (+5 points) **(max. 10 points)**

Maximum score: 50 points

4.5 Documents needed to apply

- Brief academic CV of Principal Investigator incl. academic status (early-stage researchers) and language skills
- Abstract
- List of relevant publications of the last 2 years on the Austrian side
- Project description including methodology (3 to 5 A4 pages)
- Brief description of the partner institutions (incl. reason of choice of cooperation partner)
- Brief description of the project tasks of ALL project members (Austrian and partner incl. their academic status PhD students/researcher and their competence in Austria) and project timeline
- Further cooperation perspective
- Brief description: monitoring, exit strategy, added value for home institution and Austria
- Detailed budget plan (Template)

5. Guidelines for Indian PIs (to be filled by Indian side)

5.1 Who may apply

- a. Researchers working at public/private universities, and other legal entities (e.g. higher education and national research institutions) planning to carry out a non-profit-oriented research project within the frame of this call are eligible for application.
- b. Those who have 5 years before retiring may apply for the call, the early career researchers/faculty will get preference.
- c. The PI should be in regular employment and in active research.

5.2 Financial Support:

- a. Maximum budget per project is up to **INR16,00,000**.

- b. ***Travel expenses:*** The cost of international air travel (up to the airport nearest to project location) and overseas medical insurance for a visiting faculty/scientist/student shall be borne by the sending implementing Agency. Whereas the accommodation and per diem will be financed by the hosting side (and vice versa).
- c. ***Accommodation and per diem:*** The Austrian Scientists visiting India within the framework of the approved projects will be provided fully furnished institutional guesthouse accommodation or a hotel (if the institutional guesthouse is not available), with reasonable facilities subject to the limit decided by DST. In addition, they will be provided a per diem allowance for meals and out of pocket expenses including local travel and airport transfers as per DST norms for each visit. The visits should be proposed within the maximum budget per project.
- d. ***Consumables & Contingency:*** up to max. INR2,50,000/- for an overall period of two years of the project as part of the granted maximum funding based on submitted invoices.

5.3 How to apply

Application should be submitted to DST through *on-line* E-PMS Portal of DST only. Please note following important application instructions:

- The applicant can apply online by using the following link <https://onlinedst.gov.in/Projectproposalformat.aspx?Id=2317> and should submit completed application with all relevant information through e-PMS portal of the DST. ***Applications would be received in on-line mode (through ePMS) only. Physical or e-mail applications will not be considered.***
- Any shortcomings in the proposal or non-submission through the e-PMS portal will result in rejection of the proposal. DST will not be responsible for these shortcomings.
- It may be noted that after submission, applicant will get Temporary Project Number (TPN), auto generated by the system, which should be mentioned in all future correspondence.

5.4 Terms and Conditions

- Multiple applications from Host/Applicant shall be rejected. One host/applicant can submit only one application.
- In case applicant could not submit the proposal in time, DST shall not entertain that project offline and also no request to extend the date would be entertained.
- Without consent letter from Head of Institute of Host and applicant, the application shall not be entertained and shall be treated as disqualified.
- If the project proposal gets technically recommended after joint recommendations, PI/Co-PI may submit the endorsement/consent letter from the Institution at that time.
- The PIs of both the sides need to check the content of proposal for plagiarism. If any discrepancy is found out later on, it will lead to rejection of the project.

5.5 Evaluation Criteria and Expected Deliverables

We support research excellence and therefore contributions to research, training and mentoring are considered and valued as part of the review process, with a focus on the quality and impact of these contributions. Applications must address all of the following criteria in order to be considered for funding:

Sl. No.	Assessment Criteria
1.	Scientific and Technical merit including novelty of the proposal
2.	Proposed methodology and viability of the proposal
3.	Expected outcomes
4.	Specific advantage of collaboration for Indian S&T
5.	Long term alignment with national priorities / missions
6.	Justification of Collaboration
7.	Successful / noticeable past research collaboration of Host with foreign Institutions
8.	Research Infrastructure available at Host Institution
9.	The lead initiatives taken / existing in the host Institution to accelerate international research collaborations

5.6 Review Process for Evaluation of Applications

- All applications will be handled in the strictest of confidence.
- A Review Committee comprised of representatives and independent external reviewers from India and government departments will examine the proposals.
- DST may consider inviting the shortlisted applicants for online presentation of their proposed work as part of the review process, if required. Applications must attain a positive rating to be considered eligible for funding.
- The Experts Review Committee will prioritize applicants in given vertical. The final decision would be taken by DST.

5.7 Documents needed to apply

i.	Biodata of Foreign PI and Co-PI along with list of publications of last three years including the impact factor (07 pages max) (format attached as Annexure-I)
ii.	Bio-data of the Indian PI and Co-PI along with list of publications of last three years including the impact factor (format is same as Annexure-I)
iii.	Consent Letter / No-Objection letter / Forwarding letter from Institute/ University of Indian PI & Co-PI (format attached as Annexure-II)
iv.	Consent Letter/ No-Objection letter/ Forwarding letter from Institute/ University of Austrian PI and Co-PI (format attached as Annexure-III)
v.	Conflict of Interest (to be given by the Indian PI & Co-PI in prescribed format) (format attached as Annexure-IV)
vi.	A letter from the Indian /Austrian Principal Investigator agreeing with the objectives, work plan including projected visits from both sides should be enclosed

6. Funding Decision

Based on national evaluations in India and in Austria a joint shortlist will be prepared. The **funding decision** will be taken by the Indian-Austrian Joint Commission on Scientific and Technological Cooperation and **announced presumably by March 2025**.

7. Reporting and Publications

Scientific and financial reporting on the project is obligatory.

- A brief project progress report has to be submitted after one year to DST and OeAD via their prescribed methods. Its approval is the precondition for further funding.
- A final scientific and financial report has to be submitted no more than 3 months after the end of the project.
- The report has to mention outputs of the projects compared with the objectives and aims of the application.
- The final report must include a short, concise summary comprehensible to layman persons.

It is mandated to mention the support from the Department of Science and Technology, India and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research in the Joint publications/patents emanated from this project.

8. Intellectual property

The project partners must take adequate steps to ensure protection and sharing of the intellectual property that could result from the joint projects. Joint publications resulting from these cooperation projects have to mention the support from the Indian Department of Science and Technology and the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Research.

9. Contact Details

The following may be connected for further details and clarifications, if any-

<p><u>For Austria:</u></p> <p>Ms Konstanze Pirker OeAD - Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation Ebendorferstraße 7 A-1010 Vienna Tel. +43 (0)1/ 53408-471</p> <p>Email: wtz@oead.at Website: www.oead.at/wtz</p>	<p><u>For India:</u></p> <p>Dr. Charu Agarwal Scientist 'D' International Bilateral Division Department of Science and Technology, Technology Bhavan, New Mehrauli Road, New Delhi – 110 016, India</p> <p>Email: c.agarwal@gov.in Phone no.: 011-29512324 (extn:18087) URL: www.dst.gov.in</p>
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PROFORMA FOR BIO-DATA (to be uploaded)

1. Name and full correspondence address

2. Email(s) and contact number(s)

3. Institution

4. Date of Birth

5. Gender (M/F/T)

6. Category [Gen/SC/ST/OBC]

7. Whether differently abled (Yes/No)

8. Academic Qualification (Undergraduate Onwards)

S. No.	Examination passed	Year of passing	Major Subjects/ Specialization	University/Institution	% Marks/ Grade

9. Work experience (in chronological order)

Name and address of employer	Position held (Temporary/Regular)	Duration		Nature of Duties
		From	To	

10. Professional Recognition/ Award/ Prize/ Certificate, Fellowship received by the applicant

S.No.	Name of Award	Awarding Agency	Year

11. Publications (*List of papers published in SCI Journals, in year wise descending order*).

S.No.	Author (s)	Title	Name of Journal	Volume	Page	Year

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12. Detail of patents

S.No.	Patent Title	Name of Applicant (s)	Patent No.	Award Date	Agency/Country	Status

13. Books/Reports/Chapters/General articles etc.

S. No.	Title	Author's name	Publisher	Year of Publication

13. Languages Known

Language	Read (Excellent/Good/Fair)	Write (Excellent/Good/Fair)	Speak (Excellent/Good/Fair)

14. Current research Activities (**Ongoing projects**)

15. Partnerships and International Collaborations

16. Significant accomplishments

Consent Letter / No-Objection letter / Forwarding letter from the Indian Institute

(On Institute letter head)

It is certified that

- 1) The institution agrees to implement the proposed research work in discussion with Austrian PI and shall facilitate the Austrian counterpart involved in this project during their stay in India.
- 2) In the event of the Indian Principal Investigator (PI) leaving the Institute due to retirement or otherwise, the PI may suggest another PI from the same Institute for the project or the Institute may select other PI of the same field in the Institution and the Co-PI shall be responsible for completing the project and submitting the periodic progress report and financial statements;
- 3) The institution shall provide infrastructure & available facilities as mentioned above, for implementing the project;
- 4) The institution assumes to undertake management of financial & other management responsibilities for part of the project work to be carried out in this institution;
- 5) All necessary formalities as per government guidelines have been completed.

(Signature and seal of the Head of the institution)

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DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST****FOR REVIEWER & COMMITTEE MEMBER or APPLICANT or DST OFFICER
ASSOCIATED/ DEALING WITH THE SCHEME/ PROGRAM OF DST**

Issues of Conflicts of Interest and ethics in scientific research and research management have assumed greater prominence, given the larger share of Government funding in the country's R & D scenario. The following policy pertaining to general aspects of Conflicts of Interest and code of ethics, are objective measures that is intended to protect the integrity of the decision-making processes and minimize biasness. The policy aims to sustain transparency, increase accountability in funding mechanisms and provide assurance to the general public that processes followed in award of grants are fair and non-discriminatory. The Policy aims to avoid all forms of bias by following a system that is fair, transparent and free from all influence/ unprejudiced dealings, prior to, during and subsequent to the currency of the programme to be entered into with a view to enable public to abstain from bribing or any corrupt practice in order to secure the award by providing assurance to them that their competitors will also refrain from bribing and other corrupt practice and the decision makers will commit to prevent corruption, in any form, by their officials by following transparent procedures. This will also ensure a global acceptance of the decision-making process adopted by DST.

Definition of Conflict of Interest:

Conflict of Interest means "any interest which could significantly prejudice an individual's objectivity in the decision-making process, thereby creating an unfair competitive advantage for the individual or to the organization which he/she represents". The Conflict of Interest also encompasses situations where an individual, in contravention to the accepted norms and ethics, could exploit his/her obligatory duties for personal benefits.

1. Coverage of the Policy:

- a) The provisions of the policy shall be followed by persons applying for and receiving funding from DST, Reviewers of the proposal and Members of Expert Committees and Programme Advisory Committees. The provisions of the policy will also be applicable on all individuals including Officers of DST connected directly or indirectly or through intermediaries and Committees involved in evaluation of proposals and subsequent decision-making process.
- b) This policy aims to minimize aspects that may constitute actual Conflict of Interests, apparent Conflict of Interests and potential Conflict of Interests in the funding mechanisms that are presently being operated by DST. The policy also aims to cover, although not limited to, Conflict of interests that are Financial (gains from the outcomes of the proposal or award), Personal (association of relative / Family members) and Institutional (Colleagues, Collaborators, Employer, persons associated in a professional career of an individual such as Ph.D. supervisor etc.)

2. Specifications as to what constitutes Conflict of Interest.

Any of the following specifications (non-exhaustive list) imply Conflict of Interest if,

- (i) Due to any reason by which the Reviewer/Committee Member cannot deliver fair and objective assessment of the proposal.
- (ii) The applicant is a directly relative# or family member (including but not limited to spouse, child, sibling, parent) or personal friend of the individual involved in the decision-making process or alternatively, if any relative of an Officer directly involved in any decision making process / has influenced interest/ stake in the applicant's form etc.

- (iii) The applicant for the grant/award is an employee or employer of an individual involved in the process as a Reviewer or Committee Member; or if the applicant to the grant/award has had an employer-employee relationship in the past three years with that individual.
- (iv) The applicant to the grant/award belongs to the same Department as that of the Reviewer/Committee Member.
- (v) The Reviewer/Committee Member is a Head of an Organization from where the applicant is employed.
- (vi) The Reviewer /Committee Member is or was, associated in the professional career of the applicant (such as Ph.D. supervisor, Mentor, present Collaborator etc.)
- (vii) The Reviewer/Committee Member is involved in the preparation of the research proposal submitted by the applicant.
- (viii) The applicant has joint research publications with the Reviewer/Committee Member in the last three years.
- (ix) The applicant/Reviewer/Committee Member, in contravention to the accepted norms and ethics followed in scientific research has a direct/indirect financial interest in the outcomes of the proposal.
- (x) The Reviewer/Committee Member stands to gain personally should the submitted proposal be accepted or rejected.

The Term "Relative" for this purpose would be referred in section 6 of Companies Act , 1956.

3. **Regulation:**

The DST shall strive to avoid conflict of interest in its funding mechanisms to the maximum extent possible. Self-regulatory mode is however recommended for stake holders involved in scientific research and research management, on issues pertaining to Conflict of Interest and scientific ethics. Any disclosure pertaining to the same must be made voluntarily by the applicant/Reviewer/Committee Member.

4. **Confidentiality:**

The Reviewers and the Members of the Committee shall safeguard the confidentiality of all discussions and decisions taken during the process and shall refrain from discussing the same with any applicant or a third party, unless the Committee recommends otherwise and records for doing so.

5. **Code of Conduct**

5.1 To be followed by Reviewers/Committee Members:

- (a) All reviewers shall submit a conflict of interest statement, declaring the presence or absence of any form of conflict of interest.
- (b) The reviewers shall refrain from evaluating the proposals if the conflict of interest is established or if it is apparent.
- (c) All discussions and decisions pertaining to conflict of interest shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- (d) The Chairman of the Committee shall decide on all aspects pertaining to conflict of interests.
- (e) The Chairman of the Committee shall request that all members disclose if they have any conflict of interest in the items of the agenda scheduled for discussion.
- (f) The Committee Members shall refrain from participating in the decision making process and leave the room with respect to the specific item where the conflict of interest is established or is apparent.
- (g) If the Chairman himself/herself has conflict of interest, the Committee may choose a Chairman from among the remaining members, and the decision shall be made in consultation with Member Secretary of the Committee.

- (h) It is expected that a Committee member including the Chair-person will not seek funding from a Committee in which he/she is a member. If any member applies for grant, such proposals will be evaluated separately outside the Committee in which he/she is a member.

5.2 To be followed by the Applicant to the Grant/Award:

- (a) The applicant must refrain from suggesting referees with potential Conflict of Interest that may arise due to the factors mentioned in the specifications described above in Point No. 2.
- (b) The applicant may mention the names of individuals to whom the submitted proposal should not be sent for refereeing, clearly indicating the reasons for the same.

5.3 To be followed by the Officers dealing with Programs in DST:

While it is mandatory for the program officers to maintain confidentiality as detailed in point no. 6 above, they should declare, in advance, if they are dealing with grant applications of a relative or family member (including but not limited to spouse, child, sibling, parent) or thesis/ post-doctoral mentor or stands to benefit financially if the applicant proposal is funded. In such cases, DST will allot the grant applications to the other program officer.

6. Sanction for violation

6.1 For a) Indian PI and Co-PI

Any breach of the code of conduct will invite action as decided by the Committee.

6.2 For Officers dealing with Program in DST

Any breach of the code of conduct will invite action under present provision of CCS (conduct Rules), 1964.

7. Final Appellate authority:

Secretary, DST shall be the appellate authority in issues pertaining to conflict of interest and issues concerning the decision-making process. The decision of Secretary, DST in these issues shall be final and binding.

8. Declaration

I have read the above “Policy on Conflict of Interest” of the DST applicable to the PIs and agree to abide by provisions thereof.

I hereby declare that I have no conflict of interest of any form pertaining to the proposed grant * I hereby declare that I have conflict of interest of any form pertaining to the proposed grant *

Indian PI

Indian Co-PI

(Signature with date)

(Signature with date)

Name:

Name:

Dated:

Dated: