



THE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL'S FUNDING SCHEME FOR PUBLIC SECTOR R&D PROJECTS

The completed form and its supporting documents must be submitted to the respective Office of Research/Principal's Office/Agency Head Quarters for subsequent submission to the Science and Engineering Research Council.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR R&D PROJECTS FUNDING SCHEME

1 OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 The Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC) encourages and supports high quality R&D in all areas of science and engineering except the biomedical sciences¹.

2 ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 This grant call is open to all researchers from publicly funded local universities, polytechnics, non-defence-related public sector agencies² and other organs of state. A*STAR Research Institutes and private companies may only be involved as collaborators.
- 2.2 SERC only considers proposals submitted by organisations on behalf of individuals or collaborative teams for support of research. Hence, all proposals must be submitted **through** their respective Office of Research/Principal's or Director's Office/Agency Headquarters or equivalent.

3 APPLICATION FORM

- 3.1 All applications should also be made electronically via the "*Project Administration, Management and Submission System*" (PAMS) available at <http://pams.a-star.edu.sg>.
- 3.2 All proposals must state clearly the I) problem formulation II) potential impact/application/exploitation III) capability indicators, IV) implementation schedule, v) case for support, VI) amount of funding required, and VII) qualifications of the investigators.
- 3.3 Relevant privileged or confidential information should be disclosed to help convey a better understanding of the project. However, such information must be clearly marked in the proposal.
- 3.4 If any of the investigators identified on the project has received A*STAR research funding in the past three years either as a Principle Investigator or Co-Investigator, a one-page summary/progress report of each such funded project should be included as an appendix.

¹ Proposals in the field of biomedical science and its related disciplines should be submitted to the Biomedical Research Council (BMRC).

² These include Ministries, Statutory Boards and Organs of the State. They exclude A*STAR-funded Research Institutes and Centres and other corporatised laboratories/institutions.

- 3.5 Please refer to **Document B "Notes to Case for Support"** obtainable from PAMS.

4 FUNDING SUPPORT

- 4.1 Under this scheme, SERC will normally only support projects with total project value (this excludes contributions in-kind, existing equipment and the cost of existing manpower³ as well as building cost) **less than \$3M**. Typical period of support is **three years**.
- 4.2 Budget items are categorised as direct cost that is defined as the **incremental cost** required to execute the project. This excludes contributions in-kind, existing equipment and the cost of existing manpower as well as building cost.
- 4.3 Grants awarded by A*STAR on or after 1 December 2007 are eligible for indirect costs funding. The eligibility of the Institutions to receive this support is at the absolute discretion of A*STAR.
- 4.4 Funds approved under indirect costs shall not be used for patent costs, commercialisation expenses, fines and penalties, and any other activity not related to the Research.
- 4.5 You are also required to justify your budget e.g. equipment purchase.
- 4.6 Please refer to **Document C "Notes to Budget Proposal Preparation"** obtainable from PAMS.

5 SOLICITATION FOR PROJECTS

- 5.1 The deadlines for proposal submission will be on the **15th of January⁴** every year.
- 5.2 Information on announcements, deadlines, submission windows and other matters relating to the specific solicitation can be obtained at the SERC website.
- 5.3 Incomplete submissions will not be entertained. Late submissions will be considered only in the subsequent round.

³ Existing manpower includes academic as well as non-academic staff supported by other projects, program or funding sources.

⁴ Principal investigators should check with his corresponding Office of Research (or its equivalent) on his employing organization's internal deadlines for proposal submission. If the SERC deadline falls on a weekend or public holiday, it will be extended to the following working day.

6 SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

- 6.1 All proposals should be consolidated at the respective Office of Research/Principal's Office/Agency Head Quarters (hereby referred to as "employing organisation") prior to submission to SERC for consideration.
- 6.2 Each submission must be accompanied by nominations of at least **six** suitable international reviewers made by the principal investigator and his Head of Department. Please refer to **Document E "Criteria for the Nomination of International Referees for Proposal Review"** obtainable from PAMS for criteria of a suitable international reviewer for a research proposal.
- 6.3 Proposals should not be substantially similar to proposals submitted to any other funding agency, including but not limited to BMRC, MOE and NRF.
- 6.4 In the event that there is a commitment to cost-share either by the employing organisation, industry or a participating sponsor, documentary evidence of such prior commitment/s must accompany the submission.
- 6.5 A proposal may be withdrawn at any time before a final decision is made. Written notification of the withdrawal by the proposer and the employing organisation must be forwarded to Grants Operations. SERC will not return copies of the withdrawn proposal and will maintain a file copy.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF PROPOSAL

- 7.1 Acknowledgment of receipt of the proposals will be made to the respective employing organisation of the submission and copied to the Principal Investigator.

8 PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW

- 8.1 All qualifying proposals will be submitted to a SERC-appointed research panel for evaluation. The panel will comprise members nominated by the universities and research institutions. The panel will study the proposals and the international reviewers' comments, score, rank and make recommendations (to award or decline) for each proposal.
- 8.2 The major criteria for award will be the technical merits of the proposal, abilities of the researchers, their past performance in prior awards, comments of the international reviewers and the proposal's rank amongst other submissions in the solicited round.
- 8.3 The recommendations of the panel will then be forwarded to SERC for approval.

- 8.4 **SERC's decision will be final.** An unsuccessful proposal may be resubmitted only after revision that takes into account the comments and concerns of the panel. Resubmissions will be treated as a new proposal and subject to the standard review process.

9 LETTER OF OFFER

- 9.1 Notification of awards will be sent to the respective employing organisations and copied to the Principal Investigator. Written acceptance of the terms and conditions of the award **co-signed** by the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators and the respective employing organisation, must reach SERC within 14 working days from the date of the offer letter.
- 9.2 The Principal Investigator should also complete and submit Schedule 4.1 (Budget Phasing Form) along with the Acceptance form.
- 9.3 Written acceptance of the award must be submitted to the following address:

Extramural Programmes
Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC)
Agency for Science, Technology & Research (A*STAR)
1 Fusionopolis Way, #18-10 Connexis North
Singapore 138632

10 DISBURSEMENTS

- 10.1 Funds will be disbursed upon requisition submitted by the Principal Investigator using the designated forms. Fund requests for any given year shall not exceed the approved phasing award for that year. The approved funds will be disbursed directly to the employing organisations.

11 THE AWARD AND CONTINUED SUPPORT

- 11.1 Research must commence within **2 months** and Research Personnel shall be recruited within **6 months** of the date of the Letter of Award, otherwise the offer of the grant may be **withdrawn**.
- 11.2 The institutions agree to employ or otherwise engage **Research Assistants** who are **Singapore citizens** and/or **Singapore Permanent Residents of ASEAN origin** to be deployed in the work under the Research. For **Research Fellows**, the Institutions agree to use reasonable efforts to employ or otherwise engage **Singapore citizens** and/or **Singapore Permanent Residents**.
- 11.3 The authority for virement per item basis (i.e. with no increase in overall budget) is delegated to the employing organisations subject to the following conditions.

- (a) The approval authority will be the Director of Research/Principal or his/her designate.
- (b) The approval authority covers all projects awarded under this scheme from SERC.
- (c) The approval authority for the virement of funds between votes is subject to a cumulative amount not exceeding 30% of the original grant amount of either vote.
- (d) The total Travel vote after virement cannot exceed \$18,000.

11.4 No additional equipment can be purchased or new hires supported later than 6 months before the project completion date.

11.5 Requests for project extensions must be made to SERC from the employing organisation for review and approval. Under normal circumstances, requests for extensions will not exceed more than **6 months** of the project completion date. Only under extenuating circumstances can projects be granted additional extensions.

11.6 Extensions of one or two years beyond the original support will be given only in exceptional circumstances. These will normally be given to especially creative investigators that require an extended opportunity to work on some "high-risk" aspect in the general research area but not covered by the original proposal. There will be no additional funds.

11.7 Requests for a change in the Principal Investigator must be made to SERC through the employing organisation. Under normal circumstances, the new Principal Investigator should be one of the Co-PIs.

11.8 All requests to the SERC (ie. for change in Principal Investigator, project extensions, requests for supplementary budgets, virement, or a change in project directions) are to be made on a prescribed template **PSF15** downloadable from PAMS. A template, **PSF16**, downloadable from PAMS for "**Capability Indicators**", must be filled, uploaded and attached to the submission.

12 PROGRESS REPORTS

12.1 The Principal Investigator is required to submit annual progress reports to SERC through the employing organisation using predefined templates. These reports may be reviewed by the SERC-appointed review panel for satisfactory progress. The panel may require additional information about the progress of an award if it deems the information inadequate.

12.2 The deadline for submission of the annual progress report is either **14th July** or **14th January**. Failure to submit progress reports may lead to suspension of the awarded grant. Principal Investigator needs to write to SERC with justifications, through his employing organisation, for consideration to restore funding for the project.

- 12.3 A template, **PSF16**, downloadable from PAMS for “**Capability Indicators**”, must be filled, uploaded and attached to the submission.

13 FINAL REPORT

- 13.1 All Principal Investigators are required to submit a final report using predefined templates to SERC **within 3 months** of completion of the project. The report must be submitted through the respective employing organisation. The research panel may examine the report for satisfactory completion of the stated objectives and goals.
- 13.2 A template, **PSF16**, downloadable from PAMS for “**Capability Indicators**”, must be filled, uploaded and attached to the submission. A softcopy A1-sized poster must also be designed and attached to the submission.

14 TERMINATION

- 14.1 The prompt submissions of project progress and final reports will form part of the Principal Investigator's track record with SERC. SERC reserves the right to terminate the award for any project at any time if the Council deems the project unsatisfactory in progress or achievement of its stated objectives.

15 OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS OBTAINABLE FROM PAMS

Document	Description
B	Preparing a Case for Support
C	Preparing a Budget Proposal
D	SERC Key Technology Areas
E	Criteria for the Nomination of International Reviewers