



Science and Engineering  
Research Council

# **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING A PROJECT**

Extramural Programmes (EP)  
Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC)  
Agency for Science, Technology & Research (A\*STAR)

## GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING A PROJECT

The guidelines are extracted from the following documents to facilitate the proper management of a project:

- Document A - PSF Funding Guidelines
- Document C - Notes to Budget Proposal Preparation
- PSF05 – Terms and Conditions of SERC Grants

### 1 LETTER OF OFFER

- 1.1 Notification of awards will be sent to the respective employing organisations and copied to the Principal Investigator.
- 1.2 The Acceptance Form must be **co-signed** by a duly authorised officer representing the Institution, and the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators agreeing to accept and be bound by the terms and conditions of this Contract.
- 1.3 Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator/s cannot also be the authorised officer representing the Institution. In such cases, another officer duly authorised by the management of the Institution shall sign on its behalf.
- 1.4 Where practicable, all signatures should appear on a **single** Acceptance Form which is forwarded to SERC.
- 1.5 The signed Acceptance Form should be faxed to SERC at: 6779 8061 by the date stated on the letter of offer. The original should be sent to SERC by confirmation mail as soon as possible to the following address:

Extramural Programmes (EP)  
Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC)  
Agency for Science, Technology & Research (A\*STAR)  
1 Fusionopolis Way, #18-10 Connexis North,  
Singapore 138632
- 1.6 The Acceptance Form should be accompanied by a cover letter issued by each Institution authorising the relevant person to accept this Grant on its behalf.
- 1.7 **The Principal Investigator should also complete and submit Schedule 4.1 (Budget Phasing Form) along with the Acceptance form.**
- 1.8 Your attention is drawn to the following clauses in the terms and conditions:
  - (a) **Clause 5** - 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shall be recruited within **6 months** of the date of the Letter of Award, otherwise the offer of the grant may be **withdrawn**.
  - (b) **Clause 6.5** - 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**.

Whenever new Research Personnel are hired for the project, Schedule 3 (Manpower Details Form) has to be completed and returned to A\*STAR. Please fill up every section of the form, **especially the Nationality Section**. Note that details of previous Research Personnel should not be removed from the form.

## 2 DISBURSEMENTS

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 **Note that the first disbursement request must reach A\*STAR within 6 months of the date of the Letter of Award, otherwise the offer of the grant may be withdrawn.**
- 2.3 Please note the following points while filling in the Manpower section of the Projected Expenditure Form Claims:
  - The manpower list should contain all staff employed under the project, including those whose employment has ended.
  - If new staff is to be employed during the financial year, please add on to the manpower list.
  - Please fill in all columns, especially the **Nationality and Country** section.

## 3 THE AWARD AND CONTINUED SUPPORT

- 3.1 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 / Executive Director 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 the vote to be vired into or vired from (whichever is lower).
  - (d) The total Travel vote after virement cannot exceed the stipulated limits.
- 3.2 **No additional equipment can be purchased or new hires supported later than 6 months before the project completion date.**
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 Request for project extension should be made only in the final year of project duration. All requests should reach SERC at least **6 months** before the project end date.
- 3.5 Extensions of one year or more 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.**

- 3.6 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-Investigators.
- 3.7 All requests to the SERC (i.e. 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.

#### 4 PROGRESS REPORTS

- 4.1 The Principal Investigator is required to submit annual progress reports to SERC through the employing organisation using predefined templates (**PSF12**). 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.
- 4.2 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 or termination of the awarded grant.
- 4.3 A template, **PSF16** downloadable from PAMS for “**Capability Indicators**” must be filled, uploaded and attached to the submission.

#### 5 FINAL REPORT

- 5.1 All principal investigators are required to submit a final report using predefined templates (**PSF13**) 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.
- 5.2 A template, **PSF16** downloadable from PAMS for “**Capability Indicators**” must be filled, uploaded and attached to the submission.
- 5.3 An A1-sized poster summarising the project is to be designed (only softcopy required). The design should include illustrations and the following key points:
- i. Project Motivation/Objectives
  - ii. Technical achievements/findings
  - iii. Other achievements such as awards, patents, papers, students
  - iv. New areas of research or new projects arising from original project
  - v. Website address for a continuation of the work (if any)
  - vi. Contact for continuing research/public query
  - vii. Acknowledgement of A\*STAR's funding support

## 6 TERMINATION

- 6.1 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.

## 7 FUNDABLE / NON-FUNDABLE DIRECT COSTS

- 7.1 The following provide a guideline of the fundable/non-fundable direct costs for your project. You should check with your office of research/finance office for further details. These are subject to review from time to time.

### 7.1.1 EOM Related Expenses

| Type of Expenses  | Description  |
|---|--|
| Salaries, CPF and fringe benefits including medical, dental, contribution to welfare fund, etc. | <p>Allowable as part of overall compensation to employees provided such costs are incurred under formal established and consistently applied policies of the host institution.</p> <p>The salaries offered to staffs should be reasonable, in line with local market benchmarks and comply with formal established pay scale of the host institution that is consistently applied regardless of the source of funds.</p> |
| Bonus / Incentive payments  | Allowable as part of a total compensation package, provided such payments are reasonable and are made according to a formal policy of the host institution that is consistently applied regardless of the source of funds.   |
| Overtime  | Not allowable.   |
| Annual leave  | Allowable for employees. The number of days of leave accorded to staff must be in accordance with formal policies of the host institution that is consistently applied regardless of the source of funds.  |
| Staff recruitment and related cost  | <p>Not allowable. Examples of such costs are advertisement and recruitment agency cost.</p> <p>Staff relocation, settling-in allowances, housing allowances, etc, are not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.</p>   |
| PI's & Co-Investigators' EOM cost   | Not allowable.   |

| Type of Expenses    | Description   |
|---------------------|---|
| Staff insurance     | A*STAR will only fund premiums for such plans if they are incurred under an established and consistently applied policy of the host institution. Host institution may be requested to certify that such payments are in accordance with its established policy or on the same terms as the other staff. |
| Visiting Professors | Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.  |

### 7.1.2 OOE Related Expenses

| Type of Expenses  | Description   |
|---|---|
| Audit fees  | Not allowable. This includes both internal and external audit fees.   |
| Bank charges  | Allowable as long as it is specifically related to the payments for consumables and equipment used in the project.  |
| Books and specialised journals relevant to the research | All host institutions have a library. Books and journals should be obtained from the library and PI should refrain from purchasing the same books or subscribing to such journals. The funding for journal subscription would be restricted to the duration of the project. |
| Customs and import duties                               | Allowable as long as it is specifically related to importation of consumables and equipment used in the project.  |
| Entertainment & Refreshment                             | Not allowable.  |
| Equipment usage charges                                 | Only allowable for external (inter-institution) equipment usage charges.<br><br>Not allowable for internal (intra-institution) equipment usage charges.   |
| Fines and penalties                                     | Not allowable.  |
| GST   | Allowable for expenses incurred for the project.  |

| Type of Expenses   | Description   |
|--|---|
| Insurance premiums   | <p>Not allowable. This includes insurance premiums for equipment, workmen compensation and professional indemnity of researchers funded from A*STAR grants.</p> <p>The host institution is responsible for the insurance of the equipment, relevant workmen compensation and professional indemnity insurance which are in line with the host institution's risk policies.</p> <p>However, personal travel insurance for approved overseas trips is claimable.</p>  |
| Laundry  | Not allowable. This includes clean-room attire and footwear.  |
| Lab Coat   | Not allowable.  |
| Local & international students' fees or other stipends or awards to students | Not allowable.  |
| Legal fees   | Not allowable.  |
| License Fees   | Not allowable. (e.g. radiation licence from HSA)  |
| Local & Overseas conferences   | <p>Allowable, if conference is directly relevant to the research area or necessary to accomplish the project objectives for PI, co-investigators, co-applicants, researchers and lab technicians funded under the project grant.</p> <p>Generally, sending of attachment students for conference is not allowable. If the PI wishes to send approved attachment students for conference, please <u>write to A*STAR's Council with the appropriate justifications to seek approval prior to commencement of the conference.</u></p> <p>If the conferences are conducted overseas, the travel policy of the host institution must be consistently adhered to.</p> |
| Overhead expenses  | <p>Not allowable.</p> <p>This includes rental, utilities, facilities management, telephone charges, internet charges, etc.</p>  |
| Patent application   | <p>Not allowable.</p> <p>This includes patent application filing, maintenance and other related cost.</p>   |

| Type of Expenses   | Description  |
|--|--|
| Professional fees (including fees to consultants)  | Not allowable.   |
| Professional membership fees   | Not allowable. This applies to PI and Co-PIs as well as all research staff funded from the grant.  |
| Publications   | <p>Allowable.</p> <p>Page charges for publication of manuscript in professional journals are allowable. The costs of reprints and publishing in other media, such as books, monographs and pamphlets are <b>not</b> allowable unless specific approval has been obtained from the Council.</p>   |
| Purchase of lab supplies, consumables, animals, use of services or lab spaces within the host institution's central facilities | <p>Allowable.</p> <p>The cost for the use of the services and central facilities owned by the host institution such as animal holding units, central laboratory services are allowable and must be based on host institution's fee schedules which are consistently applied regardless of source of funds.</p> <p>Host institution may be requested to certify that the fee structure is applied consistently.</p> |
| Repairs and maintenance of equipment   | <p>Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.</p> <p>The period of maintenance funded from the research grant, if approved, should be restricted to the duration of the project.</p>   |
| Staff retreat  | Not allowable.   |
| Stationery and printer consumables   | Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council. This includes printing and photocopying charges.  |
| Training   | Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.   |

| Type of Expenses                           | Description   |
|--|---|
| Transportation, postage & courier services | <p>Not allowable for general transport, postage &amp; courier charges.</p> <p>Only allowable for postage, courier and freight charges for bringing in equipment and specialised research consumables.</p> <p>Rental of vehicles (land/sea/air) not allowed unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.</p> |
| Vaccinations                               | Not allowable for routine health vaccinations. Only allowed when working with micro-organisms carrying infectious diseases.   |
| Volunteers and research patients           | Allowable for payment to volunteers and research patients provided this is the scope of the research and has been provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.  |

### 7.1.3 Equipment Related Expenses

| Type of Expenses                  | Description  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| General policy                    | There shall be no purchase of equipment <u>6 months before the completion date of the project</u> . The completion date of the project refers to latest approved completion date.  |
| IT equipment                      | <p>Not allowable.</p> <p>Purchase of computer equipment and printers are generally not allowed <u>unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council</u>.</p> <p>Purchase of IT equipment must be in accordance with the IT policy of the host institution regardless of source of funds.</p> |
| Purchase of PDAs, handphones, etc | Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.   |
| Office equipment                  | Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.   |
| Office furniture & fittings       | Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council.   |

| Type of Expenses  | Description  |
|---|--|
| Cost of capital works and general infrastructure (including the costs associated with the establishment and running of the Grant Administration Office) | Not allowable unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by the Council. |

## 8 INDIRECT COSTS

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Funds approved under indirect costs shall not be used for patent costs, commercialisation expenses, fines and penalties, and other activities not related to research.

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <i>Principal Applicant -</i>    | An individual who is the main intellectual and organisational driver of the proposed research and who has primary responsibility over the proposal. His/Her employing organisation would be the direct recipient of grant award and will abide by terms and conditions of the accepted grant.  |
| <i>Co-Principal Applicant -</i> | An individual who participates actively in the proposed research and who will be named in the Letter of Award as a "Co-Investigator" for the Research.   |
| <i>Collaborator -</i>           | <p>Any company, institution, incorporated body or other industry or academic collaborator which is not an Institution or an Investigator but is to be engaged in the Research in collaboration with the Institutions or any of them.</p> <p>For avoidance of doubt, collaborators are not entitled to receive (directly or indirectly) any portion of the Funds.</p> |
| <i>Employing organisation</i>   | Refers to the participating organisation's Office of Research / Principal's Office / Agency Head Quarters.   |
| <i>Visiting Professor</i>       | Overseas experts who are invited to the University for 1 month or more as part of the research project's programme.  |
| <i>Approval Authority</i>       | Delegated authority to the employing organisation to decide on matters relating to virement and variations.  |
| <i>Award</i>                    | Approved and committed grant support by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) for the duration of the project (normally not exceeding 3 years).   |