Call for proposals under joint ICMR- NCG research programme:

Investigator Initiated Randomized trials in Oncology

Overview and purpose

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is the apex body for formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research in India. It is committed to promote, support and conduct research to improve health of all our citizens, and to make India a global leader in Health. ICMR provides financial assistance for Indian researchers to conduct research in the field of medicine, public health, and allied disciplines.

The National Cancer Grid (NCG) is a large network of 300+ cancer centres, research organizations and patient groups that was established in 2012. The NCG is working towards improving the standard of cancer care in India through several initiatives. One of the key objectives of NCG is to support multi-centric research in cancer to address country relevant questions and develop cost-effective solutions for prevention and treatment of cancer.

The joint ICMR-NCG research program aims to evaluate and provide funding support to academic, investigator-initiated projects that fulfill the following criteria.

1. Randomized controlled trials
2. Multi-centric (minimum 3 centres mandatory), preferably multidisciplinary
3. Address common cancers or problems unique to India
4. Easy and wide implementation of the research output (preference for cost-effective interventions)
5. Data sharing commitment after the completion of research
6. Involvement of patient representative / public in trial steering committee

Investigator initiated grant projects are expected to result in finding solutions to priority health problems in oncology for the country by evaluation of interventions that are likely to improve current outcomes of cancer control in the country. The project should lead to significant contributions in generating effective interventions for prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment or rehabilitation of cancer. Potential deliverables from these projects should include patent/commercial products, or impactful publications to influence clinical or public health practice.

Note: ***Duplicate proposals or similar to those already submitted under Call for Investigator Initiated Research Proposals (published earlier – date and number), will be excluded.***

Focus areas

Multi Centric clinical trials will be given preference

A. *Reduce the burden of patients presenting with advanced-stage cancer via context-specific strategies at the individual, health system and population level*

1. Screening trials
2. Preventive interventional trials
3. Digital health
4. Studies to identify and overcome barriers to care

B. *Improve access, affordability and outcomes in cancer care via solution-oriented research*

1. Drug repositioning / repurposing
2. Dose optimization
3. Novel interventions for treatment of cancer
4. Palliative care interventions
5. Interventions to improve QoL

C. *Emphasize country-level health economic assessment of cancer interventions and technologies, health financing mechanisms and value-based care.*

1. Value-based care
2. Health Technology Assessment (HTA)-driven interventional trials

D. *Scale-up quality improvement and implementation research in cancer control.*

1 Implementation research
2 Health services research
3 Quality improvement

E. *Leverage technology to improve cancer control supported by robust scientific evidence.*

1 Digital health interventions including AI
2 Novel diagnostics

Duration of project and funding: The budget for these grants should be a maximum of Rs 8 crores. The duration of the project will be for 5 years

50% of the projects will be funded by ICMR & 50% will be funded by NCG. However, the contribution may vary from phase to phase. A joint project monitoring mechanism will be established to review the progress of projects.

How to apply

A proposal can be submitted for financial support through ONLINE MODE ONLY by the Principal Investigator on behalf of the proposed team of Scientists/ professionals who have a regular employment in Medical Institutes/ Research Institutes/ Universities/ Colleges/ recognized Research & Development laboratories/ Government and semi-government organizations (documentary evidence of their recognition including DSIR certificate should be enclosed with every proposal). The research team should have credentials for relevant skills, experience and demonstrated ability to solve health problems under consideration.

Proposal Review Process

All the proposals will be reviewed by a team of external peer-reviewers (national and international).The scoring criteria are as follows:

1. Rationale of the project–is it likely to solve apriority problem / answer an important research question? 20
2. Possible impact–is it likely result in patent/commercial product, Or influence clinical protocol/public health policy? 20
3. Methodology–are study methods appropriate to achieve the objectives? 20
4. Implementation strategy–is the study feasible in a timely manner? 20
5. Review of study team strengths and experience 20

Projects that receive a score of at least 60 will be shortlisted for review by a Project Selection Committee. Proposal Improvement workshops with PIs would be organized by NCG and ICMR to address comments and incorporate suggestions of the Project Selection Committee.

Timeline

Activities	Date
Release of Call	31-July 2023
Last date for submission of proposal*	15-Sept 2023
Screening and short listing	30-Oct 2023
Expert committee review	15-Dec 2023
Proposal improvement & final submission of documents	31-Jan 2024

**** ICMR epms portal will accept proposals against ICMR-NCG Joint call for randomized trials in cancer between 15th August 2023, 00:00hrs IST to 15thSep-2023 17:00 hrs IST***

Important note for the submission of proposal:

1. Submission portal will open from 15th August 2023
2. Open the ICMR Electronics Project Management System (ePMS) portal https: //epms.icmr.org.in. The user manual of e-PMS (under Guidelines → e-PMS manual) is available at the portal.
3. Project proposal submission is three steps process in e-PMS:

   Step1: PI registration /Login(https:// epms.icmr.org.in/ user Login) Step2: Verify emailed and complete/update PI profile
   Step3: Proposal submission

4. After completing mandatory section of PI profile, click on "Proposal submission → Click on Call for proposal → Click on the click here to apply new proposal against "ICMR-NCG Joint call for randomized trials in cancer" →Fill the form step by step.
5. Please submit the budget in prescribed format
6. Inclusion of at least one Co-PI from PI's institute is mandatory.
7. PIs are advised to submit proposal well ahead of the last date, since servers may be overloaded and slow to respond.
8. **For any queries related to the call, please contact**

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ANNEXURE I: Format for submission of Proposal under Joint ICMR-NCG Research Programme: Investigator Initiated Randomized trials in oncology

PART-A

1. **Title of the proposed research project (upto50words):** should be **specific**, **concise** and yet sufficiently descriptive and informative.

2. **Summary (up to 500words):** A structured summary should contain the following subheadings: Rationale/gaps in existing knowledge, Novelty, Objectives, Methods, and Expected outcome.

3. Does it cover a priority area? If yes please select the most appropriate one from the list below:

   A. *Reduce the burden of patients presenting with advanced-stage cancer via context-specific strategies at the individual, health system and population level*
   B. *Improve access, affordability and outcomes in cancer care via solution-oriented research*
   C. *Emphasize country-level health economic assessment of cancer interventions and technologies, health financing mechanisms and value-based care.*
   D. *Scale-up quality improvement and implementation research in cancer control.*
   E. *Leverage technology to improve cancer control supported by robust scientific evidence.*

4. **Keywords:** Six key words separated by comma which best describe your project may be provided.
5. **Abbreviations:** Only standard abbreviations should be used in the text. List of abbreviations may be given as a list.

6. **Problem Statement (up to 500 words):** State the currently available information to present the problem adequately, focusing on the reported proof of concept.

7. **Rationale of the study (up to 250 words):** Mention how the research question addresses the critical barrier(s) in scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or programmatic/ clinical/lab practice and its relevance to local, national and international context with relevant bibliography.

8. **Hypothesis/Research question (up to 100 words):** Please provide details.

9. **Study Objectives (up to 50 words/ objective):** Define the objectives clearly and in measurable terms; mention as primary and secondary objectives, if necessary.
10. **Methodology:** Include objective-wise work plan under the following sub-headings:
    a. Study design
    b. Study sites:
    c. Methods (e.g.PICO)

d. Sample size
e. Implementation strategy
f. Statistical analysis
g. Ethics aspects

11. Expected outcome/Deliverables aligned with research question (up to 100 words):

12. Future plan based on expected outcomes (up to 100 words):

13. Whetherthestudyisgoingtogeneratenewintellectualproperty Pleaseprovidedetails

14. Timelines with achievable targets: GANTT/PERT chart to be included.

PART-B

15. Preliminary evidence on the area of research proposed (upto250words):

16. Skill and experience of the research team: Highlight only salient points that provide confidence to reviewers that team can implement the project with quality. Include brief CV of PI and Co-PI(s)

17. Institutional Support/Facilities: Mention the efforts made to achieve inter-departmental or Inter-institutional collaboration needed for study implementation, details of coordination between clinical, laboratory and data management procedures,:

18. Laboratory facilities (*in-vitro*/*in-silico*): institutional resources such as instruments /equipment and other physical resources available for use in the proposed project.

19. Budget: Budget should be as per ICMR guidelines available on the website. Justifications for all sub-headings under budget (as per ICMR format) are to be provided in detail. A separate budget sheet may be provided for details of expenditure if necessary for clarity.

20. Conflict of Interest Declaration (if any): PI will be asked to submit declaration, if shortlisted.

21. Additional supplementary information including figures, tables, flow diagrams, etc. can be shared as PDF (20-30 KB).

Short Resume format (PI/Co-PI) (Maximum two pages)

Name:_____

_____

Qualifications:_____

Designation:_____

Institute:_____

Date of Birth	
Domain Expertise	
Articles in Pub Med(Past10years)	
H-index	
Fellow of Academies / awards (top 3 only)	

- **Maximum of 10 primary research publications (including any related to the proposal)**

Publication details in AMA style

(Publications as first, last or corresponding authors)

- **Experience as Investigator:**

Short title of project (Max.10 words)	**Role PI/Co-PI**	**Funding agency**	**Amount of funding**	**Reference of main publications**

Budget

Staff/Manpower	
Sl.No.	Salary(As per ICMR Project guidelines)
Justification of Staff/Manpower	

Equipment				
Sl. No.	Equipment Name	Estimated cost with Quotations(Preferably of GeM)	Justification	Mode of Proposed disposal

Contingency	
Detail	Breakup with Justification
Year1:TotalAmount(e.g.50,000)(amount is just for reference)	1) Item1: 20,000/- 2) Item2:30,000/-
Year2:	--
Year3:	--

Consumables	
Detail	Break up with Justification
Year1:TotalAmount(e.g.5,00,000)(amount is just for reference)	1) Item 1:2,00,000/- 2) Item2:3,00,000/-
Year2:	--
Year3:	--

Travel Allowance	
Detail	**Justification**
Year1:	
Year2:	
Year3:	

Overhead charges (as per rules)	
Grand Total	

Signature of the Principal Investigator
With Stamp

Signature of Head of the Institute
With Stamp

Date:_____