

Guidelines for Research Grants For Financial Year 2020-21



ASSAM STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARD
Aranya Bhawan, 2nd Floor
Panjabari, Guwahati-37

February, 2021

1. About the Board:

The Government of Assam constituted “Assam Biodiversity Board” on 29th September 2010 as per Section-22(1) of the Biological Diversity Act-2002 (Act 18 of 2003) to promote biodiversity conservation in the state, sustainable use of its components besides equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources and its associated traditional knowledge.

The Board is headed by a Chairman not below the rank of Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam. Apart from the Chairman, the Board has six Ex-officio members from related Departments of Government of Assam and five Expert Members. The officer in-charge of Biodiversity in the Forest Department, not below the rank of CCF is the Member Secretary to the Board.

2. Research Grants:

The Board shall provide limited financial assistance for studies/research works that help the Board in carrying its mandate forward and that address identified priority areas of the Board which are given at **Annexure-I**.

SI No.	Grants	Allotted Budget (Rs in Lakhs)	Project Duration
1	Small Grant	Upto Rs 2.0	Not beyond 1 year
2	Medium Grant	Rs 2.0- Rs 5.0	Not beyond 2 years
3	Large Grant	Upto Rs 15.0 lakhs	Not beyond 3 years

2.1. Eligibility Criteria for Small Grant:

- i. Project proposals can be submitted by young individual researcher who has the desire to work in the field of biodiversity conservation.
- ii. The applicants must be Post-graduates in Life Science (Zoology/Botany/Biotechnology/Wildlife Science/Forestry), Environmental Science and Geography.
- iii. Research scholars pursuing PhD, who are not getting any form of scholarship/fellowship must submit a ‘No Objection Certificate’ from their Research Guide and HoD.
- iv. Researchers working in NGOs/CSOs must submit a ‘No Objection Certificate’ from the Head of Organization/Institution.
- v. Working experience of minimum 1-2 years in relevant fields/ with local communities.
- vi. Publications in the relevant fields in reputed journals etc.

- vii. CV should be enclosed along with the application with all supporting documents of qualifications, trainings, experience certificates etc.
- viii. Applicants should mention the details of referees in the application format. The referees should send a consent letter directly to the Board.

2.2. Eligibility Criteria for Medium and Large Grants:

- i. Project proposals can be submitted by academic and research institutes, national/local NGO's/CSO's;
- ii. Have been registered with an appropriate national authority for a minimum of two years;
- iii. Have demonstrated a proven or otherwise strong potential capacity to implement participatory and community-based projects in one or more relevant fields including: conservation of biodiversity/sustainable use/management of biological resources.
- iv. Have scientific and professional credibility and can demonstrate capacity and experience in project management and financial administration;
- v. Proposals for academic and research institutes must demonstrate the applied nature of the research proposed and clearly indicate how the local communities are involved.
- vi. CV of the PI and other team members should be enclosed with the application.
- vii. NGOs/CSOs, have to submit audited Annual Reports of last two years along with the application.

3. Evaluation Criteria:

3.1. Preliminary Evaluation

The initial screening of the proposals shall be done on the basis of its relevance the themes, its clarity of objectives, expected outcome, eligibility & competency of the applicant and cost etc. The priority themes for FY 2020-21 are given at **Annexure-I**.

Such screening may also include preliminary discussions with the applicant and calling for a presentation by the applicant, if required.

In case the application is not covered by the Research Grant Guidelines of the Board, it may be rejected and such a rejection shall be communicated within four weeks of receipt of the application. If the application is found falling within the guidelines but lacking in some details, these may be called for within four weeks of receipt of the application.

3.2. Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

After the preliminary evaluation, the shortlisted proposals that fulfill the prescribed criteria shall be further evaluated by a Research Advisory Committee (RAC).

The members of the Research Advisory Committee shall nominate subject matter specialist on a case to case basis, as may be required, keeping in view the nature of the project, maintenance of confidentiality etc., for an independent evaluation of the project proposal. The experts (serving or retired) may belong to government departments, R&D organizations, academic institutions, industry and financial institutions. The RAC shall normally comprise of not less than 5 members.

The RAC shall evaluate the proposals based on the following criterias:

- i. Relevance of the thematic area (10 marks)
- ii. Practical applicability; (10 marks)
- iii. Originality of the proposal - Innovative, novel & feasible towards avoiding repetitiveness & duplicity (10 marks);
- iv. Competency of the Individual/organizations/R&D institution(s) in the proposed action network;(10 marks)
- v. Reasonableness of the proposed cost and financing pattern - proposed budget justified with methodology, activities & outcomes; (10 marks)
- vi. Appropriate Methodology; (10 marks)
- vii. Measurable objectives, targets and milestones; (10 marks)
- viii. Past experiences in the related field; (10 marks)
- ix. Publications in relevant fields; (10 marks)
- x. References from Institution/Organizations; (10 marks)

Total: 100 marks

Qualifying marks: 60 marks

The proposals getting 60 marks or above shall quality to be considered for further examination. The RAC may further evaluate the proposals on the basis of presentation by the proposer, if required. The applicant shall be given opportunity to present various aspects of the project proposal to the RAC. The recommendations of the RAC shall be placed before the Board for acceptance. The acceptance of the recommendations of the RAC shall be subject to availability of funds.

4. Operation of the Grants:

- i. Call for applications shall be made through advertising in national & local newspapers and also in websites.
- ii. Submission of Applications: Interested candidates/agencies should submit a brief of project as '**Concept Note**' in the prescribed Format-I along with a '**Full Proposal**', in the prescribed **Format-II**.

- iii. For organisation/institution detail information has to be provided in the prescribed **Format-III**.
- iv. Funding Pattern: It is proposed to release the total sanctioned amount for an approved project/study/ as per the following:
- a. **1st installment:** 20 % of the total project cost as mobilization amount immediately on signing of the agreement.
 - b. **2nd Installment:** 30% of the total project cost on receipt of the 1st progress report (Quarterly/Six-monthly based on project duration) and its acceptance by the competent authority.
 - c. **3rd Installment:** 30% of the total project cost on receipt of the 2nd progress report (Quarterly/Six-monthly based on project duration) and its acceptance by the competent authority.
 - d. **4th Installment:** 10 % of the total project cost on receipt of draft final report and its acceptance by the competent authority.
 - e. **Final installment:** 10% of the total project cost on receipt of Final Report (both hard and soft copy) and its acceptance by the competent authority.
- v. **Financial Reports:** The Grantee shall submit Utilisation Certificate (UCs) and Statement of Expenditure (SoE) of each installment along with the progress reports for release of next installment or as outlined in the Sanction/Agreement. These will be used for project monitoring and as a basis for grant disbursement.
- vi. **Bank Guarantee:** A bank guarantee of 10% to 20% of the total cost/value of project for Large Grants has to be submitted by the Agency/organization which will be returned on completion of the project.

5. Termination of the Project:

All payments are subject to an '**Agreement**' to be signed between the party and satisfaction of the Board that the required benchmark has been achieved by the Party. In the event that the Review Committee/the Competent Authority of the Board found the Progress Reports not satisfactory at any stage, the project may be terminated and the expenses incurred or the funds released so far shall be recoverable by the Board.

6. Terms and Conditions:

1. The applicant must be an Indian origin having its registered office in Assam.
2. The applicant must have experience in research works related to biodiversity conservation and other allied areas, preferably in Assam.
3. The proposal must be submitted in the prescribed format as per **clause 4** of the Guidelines for Research Grants for FY 2020-21.

4. The 3 hard copies of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope superscribed as ‘**Research Proposals for Small/Medium/Large Grant**’, failing which, the same shall be **REJECTED**.
5. The proposals must be sent by post addressed to The Member Secretary, Assam State Biodiversity Board’, Aranya Bhawan, 2nd floor, Panjabari, Guwahati-37 or submitted at the ASBB Office at the designated ‘**DROPBOX**’ during office hours. Proposals submitted online will not be accepted. No application will be accepted after **5.00 PM of 24th February 2021** and the Board will not be liable for any postal delay.
6. Name, Address & Contact number of the applicant to be clearly written on the envelope.
7. The last date of submission of research proposal is on or before **5.00 PM of 24/02/2021**. The proposals submitted after the stipulated date & time will be summarily **rejected**.
8. Research Proposals with inadequate information and those which do not meet the eligibility criteria shall not be considered.
9. All the three copies of the proposals will have to be duly signed by the applicant. This shall be treated as acceptance of all terms and conditions by the applicant.
10. For evaluation/selection of research proposals, decision of the ‘Research Evaluation Committee’ shall be final. The Board reserves the right to reject incomplete proposals.
11. Only one proposal, in each category, will be selected for award in the financial year 2020-21, subject to sanction of the fund by the competent authority.
12. The Board reserves the right to cancel award of any one of the grant category i.e. Small/Medium/Large Grant, in case of non availability of suitable proposals in each category for FY 2020-21.
13. An applicant can submit only one proposal in each category.
14. Same proposal cannot be submitted for grant in more than one category by an applicant.
15. The Board reserves the right to reject or accept any or all proposals without assigning any reason thereof. No further queries shall be entertained in such cases.
16. Expert Members of the Board or any other member currently associated with the Board or Staff of the Board are not eligible to apply the grants as an applicant.
17. The Principal Investigators of ongoing projects are not eligible to apply till completion of the projects.
18. An undertaking have to be submitted by each applicant in the prescribed format (**Annexure-I**)

IDENTIFIED PRIORITY AREAS OF THE BOARD FOR FY 2020-21

Sl. No.	Broad Thematic Group	Identified Thematic Areas for Research works in Assam
1.	Agro biodiversity	a) Nutritional value evaluation of indigenous crop varieties and fruit varieties of Assam.
		b) Research on weed and invasive alien species diversity, distribution and impacts on agricultural crops.
		c) Generation of livelihood opportunities by establishing of value addition centres through local BMC's, self-help groups and food processing units in rural areas of Assam.
		d) Strengthening of market linkages of the finished value-added products. Exploring opportunities for safeguarding traditional knowledge through intellectual property rights. Promoting community based agro-tourism in agricultural hotspots
2.	Agro-forestry	a) Development of bamboo based agro-forestry systems by encouraging the use of endemic bamboo varieties along with indigenous horticultural crops.
		b) Trade linkages and value addition of NTFP of Assam and raising awareness among the fringe community in conservation of NTFP.
3.	Floral Diversity	a) Primitive flora of Assam.
		b) Insectivorous flora of Assam.
		c) Bio-piracy involving rare and endemic plant species having economic value
		d) Threatened plant species of Assam notified under BD Act, 2002.
4.	Faunal Diversity	a) Threatened animal species of Assam notified under BD Act, 2002.
		b) Lesser known and threatened species of Assam.
5.	Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)	a) Identification and documentation of potential sites for declaration of BHS.
6.	Traditional Knowledge (TK)	Documentation of traditional knowledge of local communities of Assam (Stories, Songs, Folk-lores, Cultural values, beliefs, community laws, agricultural practices, medicinal practices etc).

Format-I

**Template for Concept Note
Application for Grant**

(Note: The concept note should be a maximum of 20 pages.)

- 1. Priority theme addressed: (See Annexure-I)**
2. Project title: (Should reflect the work of the project)
3. Name of the Individual/Organisation:
4. Project Idea (please provide short statements on the following questions)
 - (a) What is the current situation and the problems to be addressed?
 - (b) What are the main causes for this problem? Which of these causes does the project address and what is the rationale behind this choice?
 - (c) Where did the idea for the project originate?
 - (d) Are there other organisations working on the same problem in the project area?
 - (e) What would be the project objectives and results?
 - (f) Who will benefit from the project?
 - (g) What are the main changes expected by implementing the project that will benefit the biodiversity and/or people dependent on the biological resources?
5. Where will the project be implemented in Assam?
6. How does the project address priority issues related to ASBB programme of work?
7. Project duration:
8. Project Management:
 - (a) Provide a brief statement on how the project will be managed.
 - (b) List the Partners involved in project implementation and their roles and responsibilities if any.

Partner	Roles and responsibilities
(i)	
(ii)	

9. Budget (INR): (Please elaborate a proper budget against the action plan)

**Template for Full Proposal
Application for..... Grant**

1.	Project Title:	
2.	Principal Investigator	
3.	Organisations/Institutions	
4.	Contact Information	
5.	Project information	
	Project period	
	Total Budget	
	Grant Applied for	
6.	Project details	
	Abstract	
	Rationale of the project	
	Study area	
	Materials & Methods	
	Outcome of the project	

	Time line of the project	
7.	Budget details	(May provide the details seperately as Annexure)
8.	Referee 1 (Compulsory For individual Researcher and optional for CSOs/Institutions)	
	Referee 2 (Compulsory For individual Researcher and optional for CSOs/Institutions)	

Declaration:

I/we declare that the proposal has not been submitted to other agencies for grants and that the proposed work is not part of a larger project.

I/we further declare that the information given above and in the enclosed documents is true to the best of my knowledge and belief therein. I/we are well aware of the fact that if the information given by me is proved false/ not true at any point of time, I/we will have to face punishment as per any provision of law for the time being in force as well as the benefit availed by me or the benefit accrued to me shall be summarily cancelled.

Date:

Place:

Signature of the applicant

Information about the Organisation/Institution**Application for Grant**

Note: Fill in this form and send it with the Concept Note and Full Proposal

Project Title:		
Name of the Organisation/Institution		
Office Address:		
Telephone		
Email Id		
Fax No		
Website		
Mission and Goal of the Organisation/Institution		
About the Organisation/Institution	Registration date:	
	Contact person:	
	Contact No:	
	Email Id:	
	Number of Staff:	
Bank Account Details	Account Name:	
	Bank Name:	
	Bank Address:	
	Account No:	
	IFSC Code:	
References (Optional for CSOs/Institutions)	Referee 1	Referee 2
	Name:	Name:
	Address:	Address:
	Email Id:	Email Id:
	Tel. No:	Tel. No:
Projects implemented during the last 5 years relevant to the theme of the current proposal		
Title of the Project	Donor/Amount in INR	Reference (Name/Tel/Email)

**UNDERTAKING
(To be submitted by the Applicant)**

To
The Member Secretary
Assam State Biodiversity Board
Aranya Bhawan, 2nd floor, Panjabari
Guwahati-37

Sub. : Submission of research proposal for Small/Medium/Large Grants for FY 2020-21
(Strike out whichever is not necessary)

Ref. : NIO ref. No.....

Sir,

1. I/We, _____, being the Principal Investigator of (Title of the Project”) having registered office at..... or address for correspondence do hereby declare that I/We have gone through the terms and conditions mentioned for the above and undertake to comply with all terms and conditions.
2. The Research Proposal inviting authority has the right to accept or reject any or all the proposals without assigning any reason.
3. I/We hereby declare that the undersign or (Name of the Organization/Institution) has not been debarred/blacklisted by any Government/Semi-Government organization for any reasons within the last 5 years nor there is any pending court cases against us.

SIGNATURE OF THE Applicant/PI:

NAME & DESIGNATION:

DATE:

NAME & ADDRESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL/ORGANIZATION/INSTITUTION (if applicable):

SEAL: