BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE
PILANI, (RAJASTHAN) 333031

Seed Grant Scheme

2012

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Introduction

The Seed Grant scheme of Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani is designed to stimulate competitive research in strategic areas of national or international importance, to promote innovative product and technology development, and/or to facilitate the start of research programs which will potentially develop into creative ventures on their own through external funding. It is expected that this scheme will run until the end of the 31st March 2013, after which it will be reviewed. (An interim review after one year of policy implementation will be performed)

Objectives

1. To aid a faculty to start a research program that has the potential to sustain by attracting funds from external agencies.
2. To test a novel idea and to generate preliminary results before submitting proposals to external agencies.
3. To promote inter-faculty collaboration in emerging areas.
4. To promote generation of IPR and product/process development.
5. To attract and retain talent.

Awards

1. Grants shall be awarded with a maximum value of Rs.20 Lakhs.
2. The duration of the Grant will be 2 years. It could be extended by another year after a complete review of the outcomes.

Eligibility

1. Any faculty member of BITS holding a PhD degree with a proven track record of quality research and employed in BITS for at least one semester.
2. Any group consisting of faculty of BITS and collaborators from other institutes who shall provide an undertaking that they will submit a proposal for an externally funded program with the same proposers during or within 6 months of the completion of the seed funded project. External collaborator cannot be Co-PI in the seed grant. However, where required, letters from such collaborators may be attached in the proposal with commitment (such as facility use) clearly specified. They should also demonstrate that they do not have funding from external agencies for their proposed research.
3. Any group comprising BITS faculty, PhD scholars, undergraduates, and post- doctoral fellows belonging to BITS with the principal investigator (PI) being a BITS faculty with PhD. Only BITS faculty can be PI. Participation by students of any category is encouraged but they may be only named as personnel in the project.
4. At any time, a PI can submit only one application. However, he/she can be a co-investigator in more than one proposal.
5. The PI at the time of submission of application shall not have a running project funded by the seed-funding scheme in which he or she is the PI.
6. However, to encourage younger faculty members, proposal from faculty members having/completed any major project of Rs 10.0 lakhs or more will not be considered.
7. Faculty members having Research Initiation Grant are eligible to apply.

Application Process

1. The call for proposals **may** limit research funding to a few strategic areas.
2. Pre-proposals should be submitted for short-listing.
3. The short-listed applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal of maximum 7 pages including figures and references.
4. The full proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee. The PI will be invited to make a presentation before the selection committee. (Refer to evaluation process)
5. Decision on the grant award will be announced.

Submission Deadline

Proposals will be invited maximum twice in a year. A decision will be made within 10 weeks of the submission deadline of the application.

Selection criteria

1. Innovative interdisciplinary research
2. Team of faculty members whose expertise is complimentary.
3. Promise of sustainable research and development attracting external funds.
4. Budget matches the claimed outcomes.

Potential to generate intellectual property. (Including product and process development)

Evaluation

The total evaluation process will follow a two stage scheme :-

Stage 1

1. Pre-proposals will be evaluated by a rating scheme which considers each of the selection criteria. Additional points will be awarded for the following cases:

    i. The proposal is from a new faculty

The proposal is linked with PhD program of students.

The selection committee would comprise a core of three or more internal faculty members. The committee would also take inputs from all those PIs who have submitted the pre-proposals.

Stage 2

1. The PIs of the shortlisted pre-proposals will be asked to submit a full proposal.
2. The selection committee would comprise a core of three or more internal (or external) faculty members/experts who may seek inputs from internal and/or external reviewers (as required).
3. The full proposal will be rated for intellectual merit and its broader impact.
4. The selection committee may if required, discuss proposals with R&C Division, and may seek further information from the PI before making a final decision.
5. The proposal evaluation will consider the alignment of the budget with the deliverables.

The committee **may** suggest that two or more proposals be combined if the committee deems it advantageous, and may award an amount greater than Rs.20 Lakhs.

Conditions

1. The decision of the selection committee will be conveyed to the PI who will be the contact person for all administrative matters regarding the project.
2. The PI is responsible for the conduct of the research in accordance with the institute research policy.
3. Procurement, utilization and maintenance of equipment will be as per institute policy
4. The funds have to be utilized within the stipulated period.
5. The grant money has to be utilized in accordance with the approved <u>budget</u>.
6. The PI should submit a progress report every six months in the prescribed format for evaluation by the committee mandated to monitor individual projects. In case it is found that proper efforts are not being made further release of funding may cease.
7. The PI will <u>also</u> be required to report progress or outcomes at the end of one year after the termination of the seed grant, including grants received and publication/IPR arising out of the seed grant.
8. In any research communication arising out of the funded project, the contribution of the institute should be duly acknowledged.
9. In case PI leaves the institute before the completion of project, a co-investigator from BITS will assume responsibility as PI. No collaborator from another institution can become PI under this condition.

Expected Deliverables

1. Externally funded projects should be generated as outcome of seed grant scheme.
2. Publication in peer-reviewed journals/intellectual property generation including product/process development would be expected as outcomes of the project. Further, it is understood that any IP emerging out of research funded by BITS will be owned by BITS. Such IPR will recognize contributions by all researchers as "inventors", and any resulting royalties will be shared by BITS with the inventors.

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