Indo-U.S. Grand Challenge: Affordable Blood Pressure Measurement Technologies for Low-Resource Settings in India and the U.S.

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTENT
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. This call for expression of intent does not ask for a U.S. partner to be identified as of now. We understand that there has been a similar call by NIH as well. How would the India-U.S partnerships be forged?

    In Phase II of the program, funded research teams on each side would be required to participate in mandatory scientific networking meetings and other exchanges intended to bring Indian and U.S. teams' together beginning in the second year.

    In Phase III, a second joint funding opportunity will be announced by DST and NIH/NIBIB in Year 3, which would competitively provide project funding for bilateral research collaborations. This funding opportunity would only be available to the successful multi-disciplinary research teams that were awarded in the first year.

2. Would the applicants be allowed to propose partnerships with U.S. entities that may not have responded to the NIH call?

    Phase III funding would ONLY be available only to the successful multi-disciplinary research teams awarded in Year 1.

3. Would enhancements to existing technologies qualify for the proposal? Or do these have to be new technologies?

    The Program would consider funding either approaches – disruptive innovation, as well as upgradation of existing technologies.

4. What would be the review process for the expressions of intent?

    The Expressions of Interest received would be reviewed by a Panel of Experts and the short-listed applicants would be contacted for submission of detailed proposals. Sufficient time (upto 3 months) would be provided for drafting the full proposal.

5. Is there any guidance on fund sizes and durations for the projects?
    - Program Duration: Five Years
    - Monetary Allocation
        - NIBIB - USD 2 million per year
        - SERB - INR Rs.10 crore per year

6. How many such initiatives are expected to be identified under this call? Would multiple ideas be supported and funded at the same time?
2-5 projects may be funded appropriately.

7. Would the R&D part be open-sourced? What about the protection of intellectual property (IP)?
Since the funding is from the Govt. of India, it would be ideal to open-source part of the research findings; however, commercializable IP would definitely be suitably safeguarded and protected. It is also recommended that each consortium/group establish an internal governance structure, which should be clearly described in the application along with a proposed approach to protect and allocate intellectual property that may arise from the collaborative research.

8. What are the milestones set for the program and what are the expectations regarding the progress each year.
The milestones would be set based on the objectives of the project. There would be an annual review undertaken and the release of the next tranche of funding would be based on the achievement of the set milestones.

9. How would the production/ manufacturing proceed after the research phase?
This decision would rest with the project partners as to how they envisage their technology entering the marketplace. The GOI is extremely supportive of such endeavors.

10. How actively would be funding organization be involved throughout the research?
The Funding Agency (SERB, DST) and the Administering Agency (IUSSTF) would be actively involved in the progress and monitoring of the project.

11. What kind of a device are we looking to develop? An ambulatory device or a regular feedback device?
The program offers space for all kinds of devices and usages.

12. What kind of precision are we looking at for these devices? Should using Invasive Blood Pressure Measurements be considered to improve precision?
Invasive methods would defeat the purpose of having the technology reach out to low-resource settings; hence this program is specifically looking at non-invasive technologies.

13. Are the researchers expected to put in a full time research?

Time-contribution may be decided by the partners involved. Full-time students/Project Assistants might be needed, while Principal Investigators/Co-Investigators may put in a certain percentage of their time. This would depend entirely on the project and the partners involved.

Please note that the GOI reserves the right to adapt its policies and priorities over time, depending on circumstances. Revisions to these FAQs may be posted at a later date.