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File no 22/(IC Activities)/ISTAD/2023

Dated : 06th December 2023

From: Head ISTAD

To: The Directors/Heads of all CSIR National Labs/Instts /Headquarters/Units

Subject: Timelines and SoPs for International Cooperation (IC) Activities –reg

Sir/Madam,

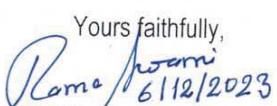
International Science &Technology Affairs Directorate (ISTAD), CSIR is mandated to foster and expand CSIR's international partnerships by initiating new cooperation tools with leading international agencies across the globe, managing / supporting collaborative projects, joint / international workshops and conferences, training programs and facilitating networking through scientific visits of CSIR delegations / scientists abroad and of foreign delegations / researchers to CSIR and its research Institutes.

Administrative & Support Activities of ISTAD include coordinating approvals for various international cooperation related proposals such as for official foreign visits of CSIR scientists (Chief Scientists and above and Directors of CSIR labs, all scientists of CSIR HQs Directorates/Units). In this regard instructions regarding the Timelines and SoPs for deputation/visits abroad were shared with all Labs/Instts vide email dated 16/Nov/2022. In case of foreign visit proposals, it has been observed that in majority cases the proposals are not sent to ISTAD as per the prescribed Timelines. Moreover, the proposals received are invariably incomplete and lack vital / mandatory required information, this involves several email exchanges and results in loss of time. Thus, even if the proposal is sent to ISTAD well on time, it is not ready for processing, sometimes even 10 days prior to the travel date because of lack of vital /mandatory data. This delay makes the target of obtaining necessary approval extremely difficult and causes undue pressure on all concerned.

As you know, the processing of foreign visit proposals involves various approvals (Vigilance Div and Integrated Finance Division of CSIR, MEA, GoI etc., and the final approving competent authority) needing several steps, mostly sequential. The processing of proposal for necessary approvals {which takes minimum 15-30 working days}, starts on the day when the proposal is complete in all respects. Thus, minimum time required is about 30 days for all Scientists; and in case of Directors, a minimum of 40 days prior to the start of journey is needed. The SoPs and Timelines for processing the cases of proposals of foreign visits of Chief Scientists and Directors are reiterated and therefore the same are being forwarded herewith again, for guidance and strict compliance, as **ENCLOSURE-1**. The Checklist of necessary documents required is also enclosed again as **ENCLOSURE -2**.

Also enclosed at ANNEXURE- A are the Timelines and SoPs for other International Cooperation Activities (such as Cooperation MoUs/Agreements, Administrative and security/sensitivity clearances of International R&D Projects, international conferences/ workshops/seminars/meetings etc, Foreigners' visit to CSIR Labs/Institutes etc.) for your kind notice and implementation.

You are requested to please bring the contents of this communication to the notice of all concerned for guidance and compliance. This communication may please be widely shared with all S&T personnel concerned and the ISTAG/Admn/Finance officials of your CSIR Labs/Instts/CSIR HQs Directorates/Units.

Yours faithfully,

6/12/2023
(RAMA SWAMI BANSAL)

Encl : as above

1 CSIR Website
2 Office Copy

ANNEXURE -A to CSIR letter no 22/(IC Activities)/ISTAD/2023 dated 06th December 2023

1) **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS:** ISTAD coordinates approvals for all bilateral and multilateral Agreements proposed to be signed by CSIR / CSIR Laboratories. These MoUs could be in the form of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA), Material Transfer Agreements (MTA), Letter of Intent, IPU Management Plan, Memorandum of Cooperation, Memorandum of Agreement etc where no business transaction is involved.

The approval process is through IPU, LA, IFD, MEA, DPIIT, DG, CSIR and the Hon'ble Minister (as applicable). The following procedure is followed for obtaining the approvals of the various types of Agreements/MoUs coordinated by ISTAD:

- a) Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA) – the NDAs are approved by DG CSIR. Comments of LA CSIR and IP Unit are obtained, based on the terms and conditions mentioned in the NDA.
- b) Material Transfer Agreements (MTA) – The CSIR Lab proposing to execute a MTA for the transfer of biological materials should obtain necessary approvals from ICMR (for human biological material) or National Biodiversity Authority (for plant biological material). The MTA along with the necessary approval is sent to ISTAD for the approval of MEA, DPIIT and DG CSIR.
- c) Letter of Intent, IPU Management Plan, Memorandum of Cooperation, Memorandum of Agreement - following approval procedure is adopted:
 - i. Evaluation of the draft MoU/Agreement by ISTAD in consultation with CSIR-IPU and CSIR Legal cell, wherever applicable for examining the IPR and legal issues involved.
 - ii. Obtaining GOI clearances (MEA, DPIIT as applicable).
 - iii. Obtaining approval of Secretary, DSIR and DG, CSIR.
 - iv. Obtaining approval of VP, CSIR and Hon'ble Minister where MoUs (bringing the Union into relation with any foreign country) are to be signed/exchanged/ announced during VVIP (PM / President / Minister level) meetings.

The following concerns should be addressed in the proposal to ISTAD for seeking necessary approval:

1. Areas/projects proposed for partnership
2. Clear objectives and plan of their execution
3. Modes of Partnership such as R&D projects, exchange visits
4. Fund requirements and Source of funds for implementing planned activities
5. Likely expenditure year wise of planned activities
6. Measures for protection of the IP to be generated under MoU/Agreement
7. Expected benefits and advantage to CSIR / India from cooperation
8. CSIR / India's loss if the MoU/Agreement does not get signed and implemented as informal partnership continues.
9. Number of similar cooperation arrangements signed by institute and present implementation status on each such arrangements and actual benefits accrued.

Timelines for Approval Process of MoUs/Agreements:

S.N.	Activity	Duration*
1.	Receipt of documents from lab, evaluation by ISTAD and reverting to lab for further information	3 days
2.	Receipt of additional information/documents, if required from lab	3 days
3.	Document sent to IPU for approval and receipt of comments/approval	2 days
4.	Document sent to LA after receipt of IPU comments/approval	2 days
5.	Document sent to IFD after receipt of comments of LACSIR and IFD CSIR	4 days
6.	Sharing of the observations of the LA/IPU/IFD CSIR with the Lab and receiving the revised proposal from the Lab after incorporation of comments of IPU/LA/IFD and obtaining concurrence of Partner in MoU	7 days
7.	Document sent to MEA and DPIIT for further approvals and receipt of approval of MEA & DPIIT	4 weeks
8.	Document sent to DG CSIR for final approval and receipt of approval	3 days
Total estimated time required		54 days

*Kindly note that these timelines are indicative. Sometimes the processing time involved in obtaining various approvals may vary from that indicated above.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY/SENSITIVITY CLEARANCE OF INTERNATIONAL R&D PROJECTS:

All Projects/Programmes involving International Collaboration (including cases where only funding is coming from abroad) require administrative and security/sensitivity clearance from Secretary DSIR. The following documents are required for processing the administrative and security/sensitivity clearance from Secretary:

- a. Copy of the proposal submitted to the funding agency
- b. Filled in Proforma for the Check List and Project Summary
- c. Certificate of the Director of the concerned CSIR Institute
- d. Recommendation / in principle approval of the sponsoring agency
- e. Call for proposals against which the proposal was submitted
- f. Actual Tangible results expected from the project and likely contributions with defined technological outputs
- g. Measures in place to manage the IPR related issues
- h. Copy of clearances from the applicable authority for sharing of sensitive data / information, material etc.

Timelines for Approval Process for Administrative and security/sensitivity clearance of International R&D Projects:

Serial No.	Activities	Processing Time (Working days)*
1.	Scrutiny of the "Security and Sensitivity Clearance Application" along with its Collaboration Agreement / Agreement/ IPM plan etc for execution of the project after receipt from CSIR Laboratory.	3
2.	Seeking clarifications/additional documents from the laboratory, if required .	5
3.	Seeking observations of LA, CSIR and IPU, CSIR on the Collaboration Agreement / Agreement/ IPM plan etc	5
4	Preparation of "Security & Sensitivity Clearance Proposal" at CSIR-ISTAD	5
5	Seeking approval from Secretary DSIR and DG, CSIR	5
6	Issue of Office Memorandum	1
Total Estimated time required		24 days

**Kindly note that these timelines are indicative. Sometimes the processing time involved in obtaining various approvals may vary from that indicated above.*

(3) APPROVAL PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES/ WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS/MEETINGS ETC.:

International events have to be processed in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Ministry of Finance (Deptt. of Expenditure)'s OM No. F.No. 7(1)/E.Coord/2010 dated 31.5.2010 (revised vide OM No. 19(36)/E.Coord/2018 dated 30.05.2018). In-principle approval of the Minister-in-charge should be taken 4-6 months in advance.

Proposal may be submitted by the CSIR institutes along with the following documents/details for processing the necessary GOI clearances and the approval of the Competent Authority:

- a. Statement of total expected expenditure of the event with Breakup, duly vetted by the local Finance of CSIR Lab/Institute (e.g. Expenditure on Travel, Local Transport, Accommodation, Food & Catering, Venue booking, Printing & Publication, Registration kit/bag etc.). Please note this should conform to the rates prescribed under CSIR/GOI financial/expenditure management norms/guidelines circulated by CSIR time to time.
- b. Statement of expenditure (with breakup) involved on Government part, if any (i.e. funds from CSIR/GOI Department etc.) duly vetted by the local Finance along with the copies of firm support letters from the Govt funding departments/organizations indicating quantum of funds approved.
- c. Statement of funds received/proposed to be received from External sources (Non GOI sources like Registration fee/industry sponsorship etc.), duly vetted by the local Finance along with copies of firm support letters from funding/sponsoring agencies indicating quantum of funds approved.
- d. Confirmation about the funds of the event being operated from the existing bank a/c of the Institute. If separate account has been opened, provide details thereof along with the permission of FA, CSIR (The necessary instructions issued by CSIR vide OM No.30-2(37)12011-IFD dated 11.11.2014 regarding opening of bank account and its operation may be referred)
- e. Details of the role, responsibilities and other support to be provided by external agency (ies) (both national and foreign), if involved, in organizing the event. Please provide copy of firm support letter from them.

- f. Copies of RC approval.
- g. Details of the person/agency who will issue the invitation letters to the participants.
- h. Details of the expenditure on Travel/Accommodation of the foreign participants, if involved, along with the list of the foreign participants who will be provided travel/accommodation by CSIR Lab/Institute.
- i. As prescribed in the Ministry of Finance OM No. 19(36)/E.Coord/2018 dated 30.05.2018, Commitment for bearing travel/ accommodation cost on participants from foreign countries should be kept to the barest minimum. Ministries/Departments shall exercise utmost economy and austerity in this regard.
- j. If no such expenditure is involved, kindly provide a statement, duly vetted by the local Finance, indicating that "the event does not involve expenditure on travel/accommodation of foreign delegates from GoI/CSIR/Laboratory sources"
- k. Hosting of conferences in 5 - Star hotels is not permitted owing to austerity measures as per the directives issued by the Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India.
- l. Full and final list of the expected foreign participants as per the enclosed proforma (i.e. passport details, contact details, birth place, nationality etc.). Please note that the MEA and MHA always insist on full and final list. Partial/incomplete lists are not considered and the clearance process takes minimum 6-8 weeks.
- m. Details of the foreign participants from Prior Reference Category (PRC) countries (i.e. Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, foreigners of Pakistani origin and Stateless persons), are to be provided separately. Please submit Full details of such participants, if any, SEPARATELY in the attached proforma (MS Excel Sheet) as they require specific clearances of MEA and MHA.
- n. GoI Rules/Guidelines (Procedure prescribed by Ministry of Finance) need to be followed for Int. Conferences/Workshops/Seminars/Meetings etc.

The following important facts may be noted in this regard:

1. Events involving expenditure up to Rs. 40 Lakh require approval of the **MINISTER-IN-CHARGE** in consultation with **Financial Adviser**.
2. Events involving expenditure above Rs. 40 Lakh require approval of the **Cabinet Secretary** through **Secretary Expenditure**.
3. **In-principle approval of the Minister-in-charge needs to be obtained 4-6 months in advance.**
4. Prior clearances of MEA and MHA (wherever required) are to be obtained in all cases. All administrative arrangements, including issuance of invitations, to be done after only receiving the approval of the **Competent Authority**.
5. Commitment for bearing travel/ accommodation cost of foreign participants to be kept to the **barest minimum** and **utmost economy and austerity** to be exercised.
6. **Procedure prescribed by MEA and MHA:-**
 - a) Political clearance is to be obtained 2-3 months in advance.
 - b) Details of expected foreign participants is to be provided to MEA/MHA in prescribed proforma (clearance process takes 4-6 weeks time).
 - c) **Prior clearance of MHA is a must in the following cases:**
 - Events involving participants from the Prior Reference Category (PRC) countries i.e. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Sudan, foreigners of Pakistani origin and Stateless persons.
 - Events where participants are required to visit 'Restricted' or 'Protected' areas in India, or areas affected by terrorism, militancy and extremism etc. viz. Jammu & Kashmir and the North Eastern States (other than the States of Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland).

Timelines for the Approval Process for International Conferences/ Workshops/ Seminars etc:

S.No	Activity	Duration*
1.	Receipt of documents from lab, evaluation by ISTAD and reverting to lab for further information	3 days
2.	Receipt of additional information/documents, if required from lab	7-15 days
3.	Document sent to MEA for Political Clearances (P)	4-8 weeks
4.	Approval from IFD CSIR-HQ (P)	7 days
5.	Approval of MHA for PRC Participants (P)	10 weeks
6.	Approval of DG, CSIR	4 days
7.	Approval of VP, CSIR	7 days
8.	Communication of Approval to Concerned Laboratory	3 days
	TOTAL	Approx 100 days

*Kindly note that these timelines are indicative. Sometimes the processing time involved in obtaining the various approvals may vary from that indicated above.

(P) – Parallel Activity

(4) VISIT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS TO CSIR FOR MEETINGS, PROJECTS, TRAININGS, FELLOWSHIPS, AD HOC PURPOSES:

The proposals for the visit of foreign nationals to CSIR for meetings, projects, trainings, fellowships, ad hoc purposes are to be approved by the DG,CSIR. The following documents are required for the processing necessary approvals for such proposals:

- a. Proposal in the prescribed format
- b. CV of the foreign visitor
- c. Certificate from the Director
- d. Information for political and security clearance.

Timelines for Approval Process for Visit of foreign nationals to CSIR for meetings, projects, trainings, fellowships, ad hoc purposes:

Serial No.	Activities	Processing Time (Working days)*
1.	Receipt of documents from lab, evaluation by ISTAD and reverting to Lab for further information, if required.	3 days
2.	Receipt of additional information/documents, if required, from the concerned lab.	3 days
3.	Obtaining MEA clearance	20 days
4	Obtaining approval of the DGCSIR	3 days
	TOTAL	29 days

*Kindly note that these timelines are indicative. Sometimes the processing time involved in obtaining various approvals may vary from that indicated above.

Obtaining of MHA clearance in case visitor is from a PRC country or the visit is planned in a sensitive area then 60 days minimum time is required by MHA. The matter may be processed in advance accordingly .The CSIR Instt/Lab concerned is required to apply for the security clearance from MHA from the appropriate portal/site. Therefore, adequate time is required by ISTAD along with complete personal details, passport details etc. The new format prescribed by the MEA has been uploaded on the CSIR website.

IT IS REITERATED THAT ALL THE PROPOSALS (AS MENTIONED ABOVE) FOR SEEKING APPROVAL FROM CSIR HQ MUST BE SENT, COMPLETE IN ALL RESPECTS IN ORDER TO ENSURE TIMELY PROCESSING BY ISTAD.

Note : The URL of Forms/proformae which are required by ISTAD for processing the abovesaid proposals are available at the following link :

<https://www.csir.res.in/csir-forms/csir-istad-forms>

SOPs AND TIMELINES FOR FOREIGN VISITS OF CSIR S&T PERSONNEL (Chief Scientists and above and Directors of CSIR labs, all scientists of CSIR HQs Directorates/Units)
CSIR-ISTAD coordinates International S&T co-operation activities of CSIR. ISTAD has been updating from time to time, the requirements related to international co-operation, SOPs and regulations involved on the CSIR website.

The official foreign visit proposals of **Chief Scientists and above of CSIR Laboratories/Institutes are coordinated by CSIR-ISTAD** for obtaining the approval of the Competent authority. The proposals below the level of Chief Scientists are co-ordinated by the labs/Instts for approval of the lab Directors.

For the processing of the deputation proposals, various approvals (from vigilance Div, Finance Div, political/MEA etc) are to be sought before obtaining the final approval from the competent authority. This involves taking several steps, mostly sequential and some parallel steps which are to be followed. The processing of proposal for necessary approvals{ which takes minimum 15-30 working days}, **starts on the day when the proposal is complete in all respects**. Thus, minimum time required is about 30 days for Chief Scientists; and in case of Directors, a minimum of 40 days prior to the start of the journey is needed for processing.

Proposals, **complete in all respects, should be sent to ISTAD alongwith vital / mandatory required information, at least 30 days** prior for Chief Scientists, Outstanding Scientists, Distinguished Scientists and a minimum of **40 days** prior for foreign visits of Directors of labs/Instts. The Checklist required for the proposals is attached as ENCLOSURE -2. The processing time{of 30/40 days required by ISTAD }, as the case may be, shall be reckoned from the date of completion of the proposal in all respects. Also, a copy of the following, be sent to ISTAD within one Month of the completion of the visit :

- a) OM issued by the labs/Instts approving official foreign visits and
- b) Reports of all official foreign visits (including ones approved at the lab/Instt level).

ENCLOSURE -2 of CSIR letter no 22/(IC Activities)/ISTAD/2023 dated 06th December 2023

CHECKLIST OF THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR PROCESSING OF PROPOSALS FOR FOREIGN VISITS

1. Filled in proforma (complete in all respects) applicable for the visit.
2. Invitation with dates.
3. Quantifiable benefits to CSIR from the visit.
4. Brochure of the conference/workshop, if applicable.
5. Funding details.
6. If funds are provided by other institution: institute's consent letter agreeing to fund the visit.
7. If funds taken from project: Project name, project sanction documents, expenditure statement of project (signed by FAO)
8. Mandatory information of funding of last two-year visits on 01 October 2015 letter format.
9. Vigilance clearance proforma,duly filled up, as prescribed specified format by CVO, CSIR.
10. Vigilance clearance proforma of Officiating Director as prescribed specified format by CVO, CSIR (in case of Director Visit).
11. Details of last three years visit.
12. Last deputation report.
13. Brief CV.
14. Day to day detailed programme (for Director).
15. Pay level, official email id and mobile no (for Director).
16. Detailed itinerary.
17. Approval of EL,if any ,during the visit (if applicable).
18. Prior permission to avail the foreign hospitality under FCRA from MHA (if availing foreign hospitality)
19. Latest Annual Property Return certified by the AO/CoA.
20. Latest Annual Property Return of officiating Director (in case of Director's Visit) certified by the AO/CoA.
21. PRC Part 1 and Part 2 Form.
22. LRF Utilization Format (if availing LRF)

IMPORTANT NOTE : Please send the proposals ,complete in all respects, at least 30 days prior for Chief Scientists, Outstanding Scientists, Distinguished Scientists and a minimum of 40 days prior to the date of visit in r/o Directors of CSIR labs/Instts failing which the proposal shall not be processed at CSIR Hq.

TIMELINES FOR FOREIGN VISITS OF CSIR S&T PERSONNEL(Chief Scientists and above of CSIR Laboratories/Institutes/Hq/Units/Directorates) :

S.No	Activity	Duration*
1.	Receipt of documents from lab, evaluation by ISTAD and reverting to lab for further information	3 days
2.	Receipt of additional information/documents, if required from lab	3-5 days
3.	Approval of Vigilance Division, CSIR-HQ (P)	14 days
4.	Approval from IFD CSIR-HQ (P)	7 days
5.	Approval of DG, CSIR	5 days
6.	Political Clearance from MEA (D)	14 days
7.	Approval of VP, CSIR (D)	7 days
8.	Communication of Approval to Concerned Laboratory	3 days

*Kindly note that these timelines are indicative. Sometimes the processing time involved in obtaining the various approvals may vary from that indicated above.

(P) – Parallel Activity

(D) – For the Director's visit