

Department of  
Biotechnology  
Ministry of Science &  
Technology  
Government of India

Indian Council of Medical Research  
(An Autonomous Organization  
under the Ministry of Health &  
Family Welfare)  
Government of India

### **PROGRAMME ANNOUNCEMENT (PA)**

#### **JOINT CALL FOR RESERCH PROPOSALS IN HIV/AIDS**

##### PREAMBLE:

Proposals/concept papers are invited from investigator driven research initiatives with interactive collaborating efforts across institutions and disciplines in the areas of HIV/AIDS and microbicides. The focus is to address major scientific challenges, which require a team approach. Towards this endeavour, the Department of Biotechnology and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have joined hands in order to accelerate the HIV/AIDS prevention related research including vaccine and microbicide development. The idea is to augment the advanced scientific research and development through the implementation of shared scientific strategic plan, mobilization of adequate financial resources and greater collaboration among the HIV/AIDS researchers in the country. Towards this endeavour ICMR and DBT have organized series of meetings with leading HIV/AIDS researchers and planners. The strategic areas thus identified include understanding the pathogenesis of HIV/AIDS, designing novel vaccines and microbicides concepts, curtail HIV replication etc.

##### FOCUS:

This Programme Announcement is to promote HIV/AIDS research in the following areas:

|  |
|--|
| <b>A. HIV Pathogenesis and Vaccine Related Research</b>  |
| 1. Development of HIV viral load assays and CD4 assays   |
| 2. Molecular surveillance of circulating HIV-1 strains: application of novel technologies                    |
| 3. Development of infrastructure for high throughput sequencing, data management and bioinformatics capacity |
| 4. New vector design and adjuvant formulations   |
| 5. Mucosal immunity, including cellular responses in mucosal compartments                                    |
| 6. Cohort development for individuals at risk of HIV infection   |
| 7. Assessment of host genetics in relation to infection and progression                                      |

- B. Microbicide Development and Related Areas:**
1. Development of microbicides, including HIV-specific inhibitors
  2. Design of novel inhibitors of HIV replication
  3. Identification and development of indigenous anti-viral compounds
  4. Development of infrastructure for high throughput viral inhibition assays
  5. Development of combinational microbicide formulations
  6. Preclinical and clinical testing of microbicides

WHO CAN APPLY:

Grant applications are solicited from scientists working in universities, research institutions, public and private organizations having sound scientific track records. The research groups are expected to be involved in coordinated research activities with the participation of basic scientists, applied scientists, biomedical scientists and clinicians from relevant disciplines. Ideally, the collaborative efforts would involve and develop linkages between the investigators within the same institute or across other institutes.

HOW TO APPLY:

Applicants are requested to send a Letter of Intent (LOI) focused on one or more topics from the table above using the template and guidelines provided in the LOI submission format as detailed below.

DATE OF SUBMISSION:

LOIs should be sent by March 20, 2006 to S. Sinha, Adviser, Department of Biotechnology, Block-II, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110 003.

TIME LINE:

|                                    |                |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Receipt of LOI:                    | March 20, 2006 |
| Call for Full Proposals:           | April 20, 2006 |
| Full Proposal Submission Deadline: | May 30, 2006   |
| Award Notification:                | July 31, 2006  |

REVIEW PROCESS:

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by a panel of experts. On the basis of the recommendations of this panel, the PIs of the shortlisted LOIs would be invited to submit full research projects. These would then be reviewed and the applicants would be informed regarding the funding decisions.

AWARD CRITERIA:

Proposals should be conceived as complementary to and not duplicative of ongoing efforts. Criteria for award decision will primarily include the following:

- 1 Scientific merit and priority of the proposed area.
- 2 Expertise and leadership qualities of the Principal Investigator(s) and the team.
- 3 Ability to integrate collaborative arrangements, if applicable.
- 4 Availability of core infrastructure and support facilities to carry out the proposed project at host institute(s).

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) FORMAT (NOT MORE THAN 2-3 PAGES)

1. Project Title:
2. Area: (please "√" mark in the relevant box):  
 HIV/Pathogenesis and Vaccine Related Research  
 Microbicide Development and Related Areas
3. Name of the Principal Investigators (PI) & Co-PIs (Address, Phone, Email etc:)
4. Institutional Affiliation(s)/Sponsor(s):
5. Project Hypothesis:
6. Objectives:
7. Brief Research Plan:
8. Expected Outcome:

Note: *All the enquiries with regard to the PA should be addressed to S. Sinha, Adviser, DBT (email: [ssinha.dbt@nic.in](mailto:ssinha.dbt@nic.in) Phone: 24363760).*