



भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान अनुसंधान परिषद  
स्वास्थ्य अनुसंधान विभाग, स्वास्थ्य और परिवार  
कल्याण मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार

Indian Council of Medical Research  
Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health  
and Family Welfare, Government of India

File No.-5/7/BMIPR/2022-RBMCH

Date: 01/11/2022

## ICMR Call for proposals in Stillbirths under the ICMR Task Force Program

### BACKGROUND

Stillbirths are a hidden tragedy that impacts millions of women and families across the globe daily. The stillbirth rate may be one of the indicators of the quality of a country's medical system. Stillbirth has multifactorial etiologies. Early identification of risk factors for stillbirth and appropriate antenatal management may reduce preventable stillbirths and improve the pregnancy outcomes. The INAP by the Government of India now plans to bring down stillbirths to single digits by 2030. There is a need for research into the causes of stillbirth and effective prevention and treatment of these causes

### IDENTIFYING RESEARCH CHALLENGES

The ICMR expert group on Still Births has identified three key thematic areas to prioritize and articulate research challenges. Interested applicants are required to submit concept proposals under the following themes.

THEMATIC AREAS	SUB AREA
EPIDEMIOLOGY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facility and Community-based surveillance of stillbirths</li><li>Diet, nutrition and stillbirths</li><li>Infectious diseases and still births</li><li>Environmental risk factors for stillbirth</li><li>Epidemiology and Risk factors of antepartum and intrapartum stillbirths</li></ol>
DIAGNOSTICS AND PREVENTION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Development of novel predictive biomarkers/newer tools for early identification of risk of stillbirth or risk stratification of pregnant mothers</li><li>Imaging for early diagnosis and risk stratification: Fetal biometry, growth charts and uteroplacental blood flow parameters</li></ol>

THEMATIC AREAS	SUB AREA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for risk stratification models</li> <li>iv. Intervention packages for prevention of Still Births</li> <li>v. Intrapartum care diagnostics to prevent stillbirth during labour</li> <li>vi. Use of Multi-omics for the discovery of novel predictive biomarkers for adverse pregnancy outcomes and for inferences on the mechanistic pathways leading to adverse pregnancy outcomes</li> <li>vii. Genetics and StillBirths</li> <li>viii. Psychological support in Still Births</li> </ul>
<p><b>IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH FOR HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Implementation Research to identify contextual issues and barriers to implementation of government programs and policies impacting stillbirths especially in the field of intrapartum care and care around delivery</li> <li>ii. Implementation Research to improve intrapartum care and care around delivery through routine healthcare system</li> <li>iii. Implementation Research co-designing scalable community-based approaches for improving preconception health and pregnancy care</li> <li>iv. Implementation research to operationalize GoI's Stillbirth sentinel surveillance</li> <li>v. Health Technology Assessment and Economic Analysis of the interventions to prevent still births</li> </ul>

Task force studies are national projects, centrally planned and coordinated and usually implemented on a multi-centric basis. These projects are time-bound with a goal-oriented approach and clearly defined targets, specific time frames and conducted by standardized and uniform methodologies.

Hence, under this call, collaborative, multi-center/multi-institutional interdisciplinary research initiatives to investigate and examine the issue of stillbirths holistically will be encouraged. For implementation research, partnerships of academic/research organization with public healthcare delivery system will be encouraged. All concept proposals for implementation research must have a co-Principal Investigator from public health care delivery system. Proposals for knowledge synthesis in the form of systematic reviews in all the thematic areas are also invited. Concept proposals with specific objectives and scientific questions on the above focus areas should be submitted online **by 30 December 2022 till 5 pm.**

## **WHO CAN SUBMIT PROPOSALS?**

The concept proposal can be submitted for financial support through ONLINE MODE ONLY by Scientists/ professionals who have a regular employment in Medical Institutes/ Research Institutes/ Universities/ Colleges/ recognized Research & Development laboratories/ Government and semi-government organizations and NGOs (documentary evidence of their recognition including DSIR certificate should be enclosed with the proposal).

## **CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION**

The project proposal should adhere to the focus areas described. The scientific team should have demonstrable expertise in the areas of focus. Collaborations between research and clinical groups will be encouraged. Proposals must be written in English and titled in the ICMR format. Project descriptions and style should conform to ICMR guidelines and require all requisite approvals and permissions.

## **POINTS TO BE KEPT IN MIND WHILE SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL**

The duration of the research projects will be for three years and can be extended upto a maximum of five years based on the individual merit and need of the project. The budget and duration of the project will, however, adhere to the recommendations of the Project review group.

1. The concept proposals must address at least one of the thematic focus areas. However, collaborative, multi-center/multi-institutional interdisciplinary research initiatives connecting more than one thematic area will be encouraged
2. Descriptive studies will be discouraged.
3. Should focus on outcomes that are translatable into practice and policy.
4. Proposals in multidisciplinary collaborative mode will be encouraged.
5. Be Innovative and promote the development of indigenous technologies.
6. Be feasible within the constraints of the funding and time available.
7. Foreign collaboration is not allowed under the call.

## **CONCEPT-PROPOSAL FORMAT**

1. **Title of the proposed research project:** should be concise and yet sufficiently descriptive and informative. Title may include study design such as randomized controlled trial; an observational study; a case-control study etc.

2. **Rationale** (up to 350 words): Describe the current knowledge available on the subject area, critical gaps in knowledge, its relevance and application to local, national and international context and the research question which this project aims to address.
3. **Novelty/Innovation** (up to 100 words): Describe how the proposal challenges and seeks to shift the current research/knowledge/clinical practice paradigms etc. by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions etc. Also mention preliminary work done by the applicant if any.
4. **Project Description** (up to 700 words): Describe study setting, study design, sampling strategy, sample size, feasibility, expected outcomes, inter-department/inter-institutional collaborations if any, timelines, budget.
5. **Strength of PI**: Describe academic qualifications; nature of employment (permanent/ad-hoc); previous experience of handling research projects and the scientific contributions made from these grants; enumerate 10 recent publications (in Vancouver style).
6. **Institutional Support**: Mention the institutional support in terms of basic infrastructure, departments and laboratories with equipment required for the proposed research work, and whether Institute as a valid SIRO/DSIR Certificate.

#### **Important information for the concept proposal submission:**

1. Open the ICMR Electronics Project Management System (e PMS) portal <https://epms.icmr.org.in>
2. Project proposal submission is three steps process in e-PMS.
  - Step 1 : PI Registration/Login
  - Step 2: Verify Email Id and Complete/Update PI Profile
  - Step 3 : Proposal submission
3. Click on "LOGIN and select "Register" for new registration OR else if already registered provide details to login and enter into e-PMS portal.
4. After registration in the portal, login in the portal. Verify your registered email and complete the PI profile. IP profile includes Personal detail such as -Salute, Name, DOB as per 10th certificate, Details of 10th (Board name, roll number, Year of passing), Attachment (10th certificate/mark sheet), Gender (Male/Female), Category (GEN, OBC, SC, ST), State, District, Institute Name (if name doesn't exist in the drop down list then there is an option to add the new institute also), Designation, Nature of Employment, Department, Broad Area of Research, Subject Area.
5. After completing mandatory section of PI Profile, click on "**Proposal submission** → **Submit Concept Proposal** → Click on "ICMR Call for proposals in Stillbirths under the ICMR Task Force Program" or Apply button at front of call.
6. Concept proposal format and other relevant documents can be downloaded at <https://epms.icmr.org.in/adhoc>
7. The user manual of e-PMS (under Guidelines→e-PMS manual) available at <https://epms.icmr.org.in> Before proceed to submission the proposal, it is suggested to read user manual and ICMR Extramural Research Program guidelines; and make ready all relevant information, documents and research plan.

8. All complete proposals should be submitted online at <https://epms.icmr.org.in> on or before **30th December 2022 till 5 pm**. No submission after this date and time will be accepted and no queries in this regard will be entertained. Applicants are advised not to wait for the last minute to upload the documents, since server may be overloaded and slow to respond.
9. For any query please contact

Proposal submission related query	Program related query
<p><b>Dr Lokesh Sharma</b> Scientist E and Program Officer Division of BMI, ICMR Headquarters, V Ramalingaswami Bhawan, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi-110029 Email: po.epms@icmr.gov.in</p>	<p><b>Dr Reema Mukherjee</b> Scientist 'E' &amp; Program Officer Division of RBMCHN, ICMR Headquarters, V. Ramalingaswami Bhawan, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi- 110029 Email: rima.mukerjee@gmail.com , reema.mukherjee@icmr.gov.in</p>