

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS 2023-24

1 Introduction

Fostering research stands as a key goal for Concept Foundation Trust. Offering financial backing to research endeavors, the trust supports scholars in conducting innovative studies across social sciences and technical fields. These projects span various disciplines and may be characterized by their theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and policy implications.

The broad disciplines of study, within the domain of social sciences and Technical Domain, are:

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| 1. Anthropology, Social | 18. National Security and Strategic Studies | 35. Media |
| 2. Anthropology, Socio-Philosophical Studies | 19. Philosophy, Socio-Philosophical Studies | 36. National Security and Strategic |
| 3. Commerce | 20. Political Science | 37. Socio-Philosophical |
| 4. Cultural Studies | 21. Psychology, Social | 38. Social |
| 5. Development Studies, Economics | 22. Public Administration | 39. Sociology |
| 6. Diaspora Studies | 23. Sanskrit Studies | 40. Gender |
| 7. Education | 24. Science | 41. Legal |
| 8. Engineering | 25. Social Geography | 42. Social Psychology |
| 9. Environmental Studies | 26. Social History | 43. Sanskrit |
| 10. Gender Studies | 27. Sociology | 44. International Business |
| 11. Health Studies | 28. Sociology, Sociolinguistics | 45. Development Studies |
| 12. International Studies | 29. Social Work | 46. Cultural |
| 13. Legal Studies | 30. Technology, Nano | 47. Political |
| 14. Library Science | 31. Diaspora | 48. Social Anthropology |
| 15. Management | 32. Environmental | 49. Social History |
| 16. Media Studies | 33. Health | 50. Social Geography |
| 17. Nano Technology | 34. Library Science | |

Note: The Concept Foundation Trust is open to supporting researchers or scholars from diverse disciplines beyond those explicitly mentioned. This support is contingent upon the individual's interest and, as deemed by the trust, possessing the requisite competence to engage in research within the realm of social sciences or the social dimensions of other scientific fields. The Foundation also welcomes projects that transcend disciplinary boundaries, aligning with its broader areas of interest.

2 Research Project Categories:

The Concept Foundation Trust categorizes research projects into two types, taking into consideration the scope, duration, and budget:

(a) Minor Projects: Awarded for a 24-month duration with a budget of up to Rs.3.00 lakh.

(b) Major Projects: Awarded for a 36-month duration with a budget of up to Rs.10.00 lakh.

3 Eligibility

- Recognized Institutes, Institutes of National Importance (as defined by the Ministry of Education), UGC Recognized Indian Universities/Deemed Universities/Affiliated Colleges/Institutions under (2)F/12(B), etc.,

- are eligible to apply. Collaborations with registered organizations having established research and academic standing are permitted, and joint teams, including The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator may be formed. Such partnerships should be shared with the concept foundation trust in advance in the application.
- Retired faculty/teachers and government/defense officers should affiliate with Recognized Institutes, Institutes of national importance, UGC-recognized Indian University, or Deemed University of their choice, subject to prior approval from Concept Foundation Trust.
- Any independent researcher or professional can also apply, if have keen interest in above stated subject mentioned above.

4 How to Apply:

4.1 Application Process:

Interested individuals can apply by responding to advertisements on the Concept Foundation Trust website (<https://www.theglobalfoundation.in/>), its social media platforms, and, if necessary, in print media.

4.2 Online Submission:

Applicants are required to submit an online application, including the research proposal in the prescribed format. Additionally, hard copies of the application and annexures, duly endorsed by the Competent Authorities of the foundation, must be submitted within 5 days from the prescribed last date of online submission.

4.3 Withdrawal of Candidature:

If the hard copy/Softcopy of the application is not received within the specified 5-day period, the candidature of the applicants will be considered withdrawn/cancelled.

4.4 Language of Documents:

Research proposals and final reports should be in either English or Hindi. (Devanagari script should be used for filling out the application form in Hindi).

5 Procedure for Awards

5.1 Application Assessment Process:

The Concept Foundation Trust Secretariat and/or a Screening Committee meticulously reviews applications to verify eligibility. Eligible submissions then undergo examination and evaluation by Expert Committee(s). Those shortlisted are invited for presentations and interactions at Concept Foundation Trust, either in person or online, facing another expert committee. Recommendations for the award of studies and suggested budgets for the recommended projects are provided by the expert committee(s).

6 Budget and Heads of Expenditure

6.1 Disbursement of Funds:

The approved amount will be disbursed in multiple installments, aligned with the study's phases and duration as specified in the Sanction Letter. Concept Foundation Trust retains the right, guided by expert opinions, to convert a Major Research Project proposal into a Minor Research Project or vice versa.

6.2 Budget Preparation:

Institutes/The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator s/groups of scholars/Researcher are responsible for crafting detailed budget estimates, including proportionate Heads of Expenditure. The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator opting to work without research personnel, particularly under Minor Research Projects, should outline the proportionate Heads of Expenditure in the proposed budget.

6.3 Allocation of Expenditure Heads:

Remuneration for Research Staff must adhere to Concept Foundation Trust guidelines.

The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator, in consultation with the affiliating institution, decides the proportionate allocation of expenditure for budget heads such as Fieldwork (Travel/Logistics/Boarding, Survey Preparation, or Consultancy, etc.); Equipment and Study material (Computer, Printer, Source Material, Books, Journals, Software, Data Sets, workshop, etc.); and Contingency charges, among others.

Affiliating Institutional Overhead Charges, set at 6.5% over and above the awarded grant, to a maximum limit of Rs.10,000/-, will be released by Concept Foundation Trust upon successful project completion.

6.4 Remuneration and Emoluments:

The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator /principal investigator, as per project rules, engages/appoints Project Staff/ co-investigator on a full/part-time basis during the research work, with the duration to be determined by The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator /principal investigator. Monthly emoluments for the project staff must align with the specified guidelines. Maximum one co-investigator can be added on a salary not more than 10000/- Per Month.

6.5 Staff Selection Process:

The selection of Research Staff should be conducted through advertising on the respective institute's website. A selection committee, comprising (1) The Project Director/ Principal Investigator (2) One external Expert (unaffiliated with the institute where the project is based); (3) a representative nominated by the Vice Chancellor/Head of the Institution; and (4) the Dean of the faculty or Head of the Department of The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and duly approved by the competent authority, will be responsible for the selection process. In case of independent researcher, he can use his own discretion to hire co-investigator.

6.6 Ownership of Equipment and Books:

All equipment and books purchased using project funds become the property of the affiliating institution. A certificate, duly signed by the Head of the Institute/Registrar/Principal, must be submitted to Concept Foundation Trust. However, Concept Foundation Trust reserves the right to request books and/or equipment if necessary.

7 Commencement of the Project and Grant Disbursement:

The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator required to commence the project within one month of receiving the award letter. To do so, the scholar must submit a mail of a declaration while mentioning the study's commencement date. In exceptional circumstances, Concept Foundation Trust may extend this period up to a maximum of three months.

7.1 Disbursement of Project Grant:

- The total grant for Research Projects will be released in specified installments, outlined in the Sanction Order:
- The first installment (30% of the total grant) is disbursed upon completion of the necessary joining formalities by The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator.
- The second installment (30% of the total grant) is released after a satisfactory twelve-month Progress Report, a Simple Statement of Accounts with 60% and above utilization of the first installment amount, one published research paper in a peer-reviewed journal, and submission of the grant-in-aid bill for the second installment.
- The third installment (30% of the total grant) is disbursed after receiving a book-length Final Report, an Executive Summary of the Final Report, a 400-word abstract of the Final Report (in both MS Word and PDF formats), the second published research paper (totaling 2 papers during the project period) in a peer-reviewed journal, a similarity index score sheet for the final report, a simple statement of accounts for the expenditure, and the grant-in-aid bill for the third installment.

- The final installment (remaining 10% of the total grant) is issued after receiving the expert's recommendation for the acceptance of the Final Report, an audited statement of accounts in the prescribed format with a utilization certificate in GFR-12A form for the entire approved project amount, duly signed by the Finance Officer/Registrar/Director of the affiliating institution. Verification of all documents and a decision on retaining equipment and books are also considered.

7.2 Release of Overhead Charges:

Overhead Charges to the affiliating institution will be released after the acceptance of the Final Report, along with the receipt of the final audited Statement of Accounts and Utilization Certificate in prescribed formats, verified by Concept Foundation Trust.

7.3 Expenditure and Compliance:

The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator, must ensure that the incurred expenditure aligns with the approved budget heads and relevant rules. An audited statement of accounts with a Utilization Certificate for the entire approved project amount is required.

8 Monitoring of Research Projects:

8.1 Progress Review and Termination:

The research conducted by a The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator will undergo periodic progress reviews through the submission of progress reports in the prescribed format. The project may be discontinued or terminated if the research progress is deemed unsatisfactory or if any Concept Foundation Trust rules are violated.

8.2 Acknowledgment and Publication:

The scholar/awardee must acknowledge the support of Concept Foundation Trust in all publications resulting from the project, such as research papers, journal articles, and articles in edited books. A copy of these publications must be submitted to Concept Foundation Trust during or after the project's completion. Failure to acknowledge may result in being blacklisted, preventing future applications for Concept Foundation Trust schemes. Papers published in conference/seminar proceedings will not be considered, except for those published by Scopus-indexed/UGC CARE listed journals.

8.3 Communication and Queries:

All project-related queries will be directed to The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator /Affiliating Institution for timely responses.

8.4 Verification of Accounts:

Concept Foundation Trust may request verification of accounts and other relevant documents related to the project at any time.

8.5 Affiliation Change:

Concept Foundation Trust reserves the right to change the affiliation if it is found that the affiliating institute is not cooperating with the scholar and is not facilitating the timely completion of the study.

8.6 Expert Evaluation of Final Report:

The final report submitted by The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator, mandatory for evaluation by an expert appointed by Concept Foundation Trust before considering the release of the final installment.

8.7 The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator 's/) Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator Responsibility:

The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator is personally responsible for the timely completion of the project. The project proposal/final report cannot be submitted for the award of any university degree/diploma or funding by any institution by any member of the project staff, including The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator. However, Concept Foundation Trust has no objection if any member of the project staff utilizes the project data for this purpose.

8.8 Consequences for Non-compliance:

If scholars fail to submit the requisite documents and the final report in a timely manner or do not complete the project within the stipulated period, they will be blacklisted, and legal recourse will be initiated.

8.9 Utilization of Grant:

As per the ruling of the concept foundation trust, the granted amount is to be utilized within the project's duration. Any unspent grant amount must be refunded to Concept Foundation Trust immediately after the project's expiry. Failure to utilize the grant for the sanctioned purpose or submit the audited statement of expenditure within the stipulated period may require the grantee to refund the amount with interest at a rate of 10% per annum.

9 Completion of the Study:

A. Upon concluding the study, The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator must submit the following:

- Final report in a publishable form (Softcopies in both PDF and word format).
- Abstract in 400 words (Softcopies in both PDF and word format).
- Executive Summary of the final report in 4000 words (Softcopies in both PDF and word format).
- Similarity index sheet (Plagiarism and Artificial Check) for the final report.

B. After the Concept Foundation Trust accepts the report, incorporating any suggested changes, the The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator should submit:

- A soft copy of the modified final report (in both PDF and word format) along with two hard copies.
- Five copies of the executive summary.
- Softcopies of (if any) Data Sets, along with a well-defined definition of data and other important information for documentation.

C. Concept Foundation Trust checks every report for plagiarism, generating a similarity report. As a policy, Concept Foundation Trust does not accept content beyond 10 percent on the similarity index. Scholars are required to check their final and modified reports for the similarity index and attach a report at the time of submission.

D. The final report submitted by the scholar is deemed satisfactory only after the final recommendation of acceptance by the expert appointed by Concept Foundation Trust.

10 Obligations of the Affiliating Institution:

- The affiliating institution must provide an undertaking, as per the prescribed format contained in the Application Form, to administer and manage the Concept Foundation Trust grant.
- It is also mandatory for the affiliating institution to furnish the necessary research infrastructure to the scholar and maintain accurate accounts.
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- The affiliating institution is required to open/maintain a dedicated bank account for the Concept Foundation Trust grant (although not applicable to independent researcher), ensuring the timely release of the Project Grant.
- The affiliating institution is obligated to ensure the submission of the final report and an Audited Statement of Accounts and Utilization Certificate (in the prescribed Proforma GFR 12-A), duly certified by the competent authority of the institution. This includes the refund of any unspent balance. The institution must also make appropriate arrangements for the preservation of data related to the study, such as filled-in schedules, tabulation sheets, manuscripts, reports, etc. The Concept Foundation Trust reserves the right to request raw data or any parts of the study it deems necessary.
- In the event of a scholar leaving, discontinuing, or passing away during the project before completion of the tenure, the affiliating institution must promptly inform Concept Foundation Trust, settling the accounts and refunding any unspent balance within a year of submission.

11 Other Conditions:

- The project's maximum duration is three years for Major Projects and two years for Minor Projects, including time for Final Report writing. In exceptional circumstances, an extension may be granted by Concept Foundation Trust without additional financial burden, contingent on satisfactory progress and quality publication. To request an extension, the Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator must submit a request at least three months before completion, justifying the delay with evidence of progress. Retrospective extensions will not be permitted.
- The contingency grant can be utilized for stationery, computer typing-related costs, specialized assistance like data analysis, and consultation for field trips related to the research work.
- Defaulters of any previous fellowship/project/grant from Concept Foundation Trust will not be eligible for consideration.
- No scholar can take up a research project simultaneously with any Concept Foundation Trust fellowship.
- Requests for additional grants beyond the sanctioned budget will not be considered.
- Purchase of equipment/assets for the research project is permissible only if originally proposed and approved by Concept Foundation Trust, adhering to the rules of the affiliating institution.
- The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator cannot make any changes to the research design at any stage Regarding Transfer of a Project/Appointment of a Substitute the Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator
- The Concept Foundation Trust may permit the appointment of a Substitute the Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator in exceptional circumstances on request from a university/institute.
- The Concept Foundation Trust may appoint a Substitute the Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator if convinced that the original awardee cannot carry out the study successfully.
- The Concept Foundation Trust may transfer the project from one affiliating institution to another, subject to the submission of satisfactory progress reports, no objection certificates, audited statements of accounts and utilization certificates, and any unspent balance. However, no transfer of project/The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator should be requested in the last six months of the study.
- Overhead charges will be apportioned proportionally among the institutes as per the grant released or as finally decided by Concept Foundation Trust.
- In case of superannuation of The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator, and if the institution's rules require, the project may be transferred to a serving faculty member with prior approval from Concept Foundation Trust. The credit of the project shall belong to the original submitting The Project Director/ Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator.
- Consideration under other calls requires a fresh proposal.
- The Council reserves the right to reject any application without assigning any reason and will not be responsible for any postal delays/loss.

- Incomplete applications in any respect will not be considered.
- The final authority related to the interpretation of the guidelines or any unresolved issue is vested with Concept Foundation Trust.
- No queries will be entertained by the Concept Foundation Trust Secretariat until the final declaration of results against a call. Any lobbying for an award will lead to disqualification.
- While accepting a Research Project from Concept Foundation Trust, an awardee should not accept any other fellowship or research project or assignment from any other institution.
- Concept Foundation Trust reserves all rights to publish the project funded by it, provided the work is recommended for publication by Concept Foundation Trust appointed experts.