National Agri-education Project (NAP): Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in ICAR Institutes (Deemed Universities and their Hubs)

Introduction

The Agricultural Education under the aegis of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research undertakes planning, development, coordination, and quality assurance in higher agricultural education in India and, thus, strives for strengthening and development of the higher agricultural education system through partnership and efforts of the components of the ICAR-Agricultural Universities System comprising State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Deemed to be universities (DUs), Central Agricultural Universities (CAUs) and Central Universities (CUs) with Agriculture Faculty.

Recently in the process of upgradation of the IARI-deemed university into a global university 16 ICAR Institutes (IARI Hubs) are associated with ICAR-IARI in its Academic Programs (UG, PG, and PhD) and these hubs admitted students for the 2023-24 session (Table 1). So there is an urgent need to develop the basic infrastructures like girls' hostels, boy's hostels, and other new civil works related to student amenities, including, educational museums, examination halls and auditoriums, repair/ refurbishing/ renovation and modernization of educational structures, etc. This also includes personality development, faculty development, strengthening of sports and games facilities, placement cells, and other student amenities, equipment/ computers/ implements for higher education; strengthening of library, ICT facilities, etc. Support also includes preparation of quality instructional material, writing university-level textbooks, manuals, etc. for effective teaching and learning process. Apart from this financial support also required for the deemed universities of ICAR to upgrade their facilities with increase in the enrolment of students.

Table: 1 to IARI-Hubs (ICAR Institutes) and DUs of ICAR for which Financial support from Corpus Funds is being proposed					
Existing IARI Hubs: 16					
S.No	**Institute (IARI -Hub)**	**S.No.**	**Institute (IARI -Hub)**	**S.No**	**Institute (IARI -Hub)**
1.	ICAR-NRRI Cuttack	**2.**	ICAR-IIAB , Ranchi	**3.**	ICAR-NIBSM, Raipur
4.	ICAR-RCER, Patna	**5.**	ICAR-CRIJAF,Kolkata,	**6.**	ICAR-NIASM,Baramati,
7.	ICAR-IISR, Lucknow	**8.**	ICAR-CIAE, Bhopal	**9.**	ICAR-IIHR, Bengaluru,
10.	ICAR-IIWBR, Karnal	**11.**	ICAR-CRIDA, Hyderabad	**12.**	ICAR-CICR, Nagpur
13.	ICAR-CAZRI,Jodhpur	**14.**	IARI-Jharkhand	**15.**	IARI-Assam
16.	ICAR-RCNEH, Shillong				
New Hubs being planned by IARI: 9					
ICAR deemed Universities: 4					
1.	ICAR-IARI	**2.**	**ICAR-IVRI**	**3.**	**ICAR-NDRI**
4.	ICAR-CIFE				

2. Nature and Quantum of Grant

Proposals will be invited in competitive mode exclusively to develop the basic infrastructures related to student amenities, faculty development, strengthening of sports and games facilities, placement cells, equipment/ computers/ implements for higher education, strengthening of library, ICT facilities, etc. Support also includes preparation of quality instructional material, writing university-level textbooks, manuals, etc. for effective teaching and learning process. **The funding support will be restricted to maximum Rs. 5 crores for 3 years.**

The details are given as below:

(i) New Civil Works:

All IARI Hubs seeking support under this head need to get prior approval from the Council with regard to the designs and estimates of the civil works as per ICAR guidelines. As far as possible, the construction of environmentally friendly buildings (green buildings) should be preferred.

(a) Hostels:

For the construction of girls' and boys' hostels, a maximum of Rs.300.00 lakh for each hostel shall be provided. Priority is given to the construction of the Girl's Hostel as per the actual need of the institute.

(b) Educational Museum:

Need-based support for Theme-based Educational Museums shall be provided subject to a maximum of Rs.100.00 lakh per museum/institute.

(c) Sports Facilities and other student/ faculty Amenities:

Need-based support for strengthening existing sports and other recreational facilities shall be provided subject to a maximum of Rs.50.00 lakh per institute.

(d) Examination Hall:

Support for the development of the Examination Hall subject to a maximum of Rs.50 lakhs per examination hall will be provided.

(e) Repairs and Renovation:

Limited need-based support subject to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 50.00 lahks per institute will be provided for refurbishing, renovation, repair, and maintenance of existing structures viz. Hostels and Academic Blocks, International Hostel, Museum, Sports Complex, Examination Hall, and other structures related to teaching and learning activities. However, estimates exceeding Rs.10.00 lakh per single work need to be vetted by the Council.

(f) Furniture and Fixtures: Need-based support for furniture and fixtures for Hostels, classrooms, examination hall, etc. shall be provided subject to a maximum of Rs.100.00 lakh per institute.

(ii) Up-gradation/Replacement of Facilities, including Equipment and their Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMCs):

Need-based support will be provided with the following conditions for replacement/ up-gradation of facilities/equipment for teaching and practicals, which are either outdated or have lived their life and are required to be urgently replaced to impart quality education.

- To seek prior approval of the Council, particularly with reference to equipment costing Rs. 5 lakhs and above.
- The Institute must avoid duplication of major equipment and need to submit an undertaking in this regard.
- Support for the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment may be provided. The equipment must be installed in the Common Instrumentation Laboratory (CIL) and the institute may submit an undertaking in this regard. The institute needs to submit the demand for the purchase of such equipment for the CIL.
- The grant to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 20.0 lakh per laboratory will be provided exclusively for strengthening the laboratories including the computer lab for the smooth conduct of practicals. Prior approval of the Council is required in case of purchase of an item costing over Rs. 5.0 lakh.

(iii) Experiential Learning Units (ELUs)

A special grant up to a maximum of Rs. 100.0 lakhs/ for the establishment of **Experiential Learning Units** (3-5 Nos of ELU) by up-gradation & strengthening of facilities and purchase of equipments & machinery in the following broad subject groups/themes are suggested: (A) Agricultural Production Technologies (B) Value Addition Technologies (C) Engineering Technologies (D) Technical Support Services (E) Integrated Technologies.

Prior approval of the Council is required in case of purchase of an item costing over Rs. 5.0 lakh.

(iv) Establishment of Smart Class Rooms:

A special grant up to a maximum of Rs. 20.0 lakh (2 classrooms) will be considered per institute for the establishment of Smart Class Rooms consisting of interactive board, touch screen, bio-matrix, visualized, e-kiosks and Artificial Intelligence (AI) based course modules, etc.

(v) Curriculum Development and Delivery:

- Preparation of Quality Instructional Material, Practical Manuals, and e-resources: support of Rs. 5.0 lakh per institute will be provided for the preparation of practical manuals, and computer-led instructional material.
- Contingency Grants for UG/PG Practicals: In order to meet day-to-day needs for the conduct of practicals including consumables, glassware experimental material etc., a grant of Rs. 5.0 lakh will be provided.

(vi) Students Study & Educational Tours:

Support of Rs. 5000/- may be provided to each student once in a degree course for educational tours considering the fact that such tours to well-known institutions and organizations and interactions with their faculty will help students broaden their knowledge and skills. A maximum support of Rs. 5.0 lakh per institute will be provided for this purpose.

(vii) Student and /Faculty Amenities:

- Students Counselling and Placement Cell including Health Facilities: Support will be provided for managing campus interviews and other related welfare activities in the colleges and hostels including games, sports & and cultural activities, and health-care facilities with a maximum limit of Rs. 5.00 lakh per institute.
- Faculty Amenities: Funds are also provided based on the merit of the case for faculty-related activities such as games, cultural, literary activities, and special lectures of common interest with a maximum limit of Rs. 5.0 lakh per institute.

(viii) Support to Coordinator:

Support to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 5.0 lakh per institute will be provided for carrying out the following activities:

- Development & Strengthening of Facilities: The Dean's office is envisaged to be strengthened to facilitate interactive teaching and learning. Need-based support in order to introduce innovative teaching techniques and carry out creative activities in the institute for the overall welfare of staff and students.

- Support for Examination Cell: Need-based funds will be provided for meeting part of the expenditure for conducting examinations and strengthening of examination cell.

- Faculty Specific Requirements for Improving Education: Need-based financial support will be provided with prior approval of the Council for assisting faculty with special grants to strengthen learning, particularly in the conduct of practicals or research by the students.

(ix) Allocation Criteria under Library Strengthening

Financial support may be considered for the strengthening and modernization of libraries including networking for online access to literature for ensuring equity and availability of quality learning resources for the benefit of students and teachers, e-learning tools, modules, and networking and overall library strengthening along with the promotion of ICT connectivity, video conferencing and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL).

A sum of a maximum Rs. 20.00 lakh per Institute library may be provided for strengthening of existing library. The fund is allocated under the following head under the subcomponents "Library Strengthening".

1. Essentially to convert the existing library into a digital library for book issues, deposition,
2. Maintaining text, reference, and book bank, etc.
3. Procurement of books from international publishers and e-resources related to the subject matter.

4. Repair and renovate of old library and equip it with new shelves, Air Conditioners, De-humidifiers, illumination shields, comfort seating zones, and e-Kiosks for assessing facilities.
5. Digitization of already available books/references/CD ROMS, etc.
6. Strengthening of digital library and ICT tools, annual maintenance of equipment installed in the library, strengthening/installation of security system, purchase of fire extinguishers, establishment of Wi-Fi zone in the library.
7. The institute may incur the expenditure on the above items after completing all the coral formalities of the procurement procedures.

3. Monitoring for Judicious Use of Grant Released:

- The institute seeking grants will be monitored by the Council for judicious use of the grant released through Committees constituted by the ICAR. The institute will make accessible all records related to the utilization of the ICAR grant to the monitoring team.
- The timeline for the submission of the requisite documents must be adhered to.
- The funds may be released in two to three instalments. Each institute must submit the utilization certificate in the prescribed format and within the timeline prescribed by the Council. The first instalment of the grant may be released only after receipt of the Utilization Certificate (UC) of the previous instalment. The unspent balances reflected in UC shall be adjusted during the release of the next instalment.
- The completion certificate for all the new works supported by the Council must be submitted along with photographs and other related documents.
- Detailed Annual Reports of the grants given to the institutes must be submitted in the prescribed format within the specified timeline.
- The grantee Institute has to adhere to the funds earmarked for each head and would utilize the grants as per head-wise budgetary provisions fixed by the ICAR, exclusively for the purpose it was sanctioned and funds will not be diverted for other purposes.
- The utilisation of fund by grantee institution would be made as per the provisions of GFR and amendments made to it from time to time.
- The books of accounts and other records of the grantee institution would be open for Internal Audit by ICAR.
- The grantee institutions would render accounts (SoE/UC/AUC) to the Council duly audited by the Statutory Auditors of the grantee institutions.