

Guidelines for Research Studies under MGNREGA

I. Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a Central sponsored wage employment scheme, aims at providing livelihood security to the rural poor. The MGNREGA was implemented in 200 districts, in the first phase, with effect from February 2, 2006 and extended, subsequently, to additional 113 and 17 districts with effect from April 1st 2007 and May 15th 2007, respectively. The remaining districts were included under the Act with effect from April 1, 2008.

The objective of MGNREGA is to ensure livelihood security of rural people by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act envisages the following:

- Enhance livelihood security of the rural poor by generating wage employment opportunities in works that develop the infrastructure base of that particular locality.
- Rejuvenate natural resource base of the area concerned.
- Create a productive rural asset base
- Stimulate local economy for providing wage employment.
- Ensure women empowerment.

II. Rationale for Studies

During the last five years (2008-09 to 2012-13), on an average Rs. 36, 420 crore was invested for various wage employment initiatives under MGNREGA. Considering the size and scope of the programme implementation, it is necessary for the policy makers and implementers to know the benefits and impacts of such development intervention. Further, issues and challenges limiting the effective implementation of the programme at the grass-root level could be diagnosed through a detailed micro-level data analysis and corrective measures be outlined, accordingly.

III. Scope and Coverage:

The broad aims of research studies under MGNREGA should be:

- (i) Evaluation of the efficacy and effectiveness of the programme vis-à-vis its objective.
- (ii) Critical assessment of the policies, procedures and practices to reach conclusions especially on appropriate modifications required.
- (iii) Assessment of the performance of various institutions under the Act.
- (iv) Documentation of best practices for replications.

The Ministry has identified twenty four research themes (**Annexure I**) which could be explored for deeper analysis and documentation. The list is not comprehensive and can be modified by the Ministry from time to time.

IV. Modes of Receiving Study Proposals

Ministry will consider proposals received from IITs/ IIMs, UGC affiliated universities/colleges and reputed ICSSR research institutions/agencies with proven track record of research. There could be three modes of accepting research proposals under MGNREGA:

- A. Submitted proposals:** Proposals can be submitted, at any time during a year, to Joint Secretary (MGNREGA).
- B. Invited Proposals :** Proposals may be invited by the Ministry, depending upon need, from a set (or network) of research institutions identified on the basis of recognized capabilities in the concerned area, depending upon specific needs of policy making and implementation of Scheme. Selection of proposals would be made through a competitive bidding process. Focus would be laid on the technical soundness of the proposal including research credentials of the proposed research team. Invited proposals would be published in academic journals of repute.
- C. Commissioned Proposals:** The Ministry, may directly commission research studies to one or a network of research institutions, identified on the basis of recognized capabilities in the concerned area, depending upon specific needs of policy making and preparation of Scheme. Competitive bids will only be resorted to surveys under MGNREGA.

V. Cost and Duration of the Research

The cost and duration of research studies on three categories are as follows:

Proposal Category	Cost (Rs. Lakh)	Maximum Duration (Months)
Submitted	upto 15	12
Invited*	Ceiling to be determined depending on the topic.	
Commissioned*	To be fixed on Terms of Reference through discussions and negotiations	
<i>* Cost and duration of the research study under 'invited' and 'commissioned' category would be finalized by the Steering Group constituted by the Ministry for regular review and methodological guidance for research studies.</i>		

Costs beyond the limits for 'submitted' prescribed as above would require detailed justification. The Ministry would consider the request of such proposals and take final decisions of the cost estimates.

VI. Appraisal of Proposals in the Ministry

The following procedures will apply to all proposals:

Step 1: Submission of Proposals for Support of Research under MGNREGA: The proposals should clearly elaborate the research questions and specify study methodologies which include research and study design, data sources, data collection methods, sampling plan and techniques etc. It should also list out complete team of investigators/ project coordinators and provide their detailed resume highlighting their academic backgrounds and publication record. Additional personnel support required for implementing the research project should be outlined with proper justification. It should also provide a detailed break-up of the costs consistent with the funding norms. Proposals should provide the project time lines and milestones, and an indication of the outputs of the project. Proposals should be made in the prescribed application format (*Annexure II*).

Proposals prepared by the Principal Investigator (PI)/Project Coordinator should be forwarded by the Head of the Institution. In case a research proposal involves a network of research institutions, the PIs would identify the lead investigator from each of the participating institutions.

Step 2: Screening of Proposals: Proposals received by the Ministry of Rural Development, will be acknowledged within two weeks. While examining the proposals, the Ministry will determine the Order of Priority in terms of the proposed research themes and relevance of conducting such research.

Step 3: Sanction by Ministry:

(a) Proposals costing \leq Rs. 5 lakhs: Proposals upto Rs 5 lakh will be sanctioned by a Committee of the Ministry of Rural Development chaired by Joint Secretary (MGNREGA). The members of the Committee would be as follows:

Director (Monitoring), M/o Rural Development	Member
Director/Deputy Secretary (Finance), M/o Rural Development	Member
Director (MGNREGA), M/o Rural Development	Member
Head, Centre for Wage Employment and Poverty Alleviation (NIRD)	Member

If required, a representative from the relevant subject Ministry may be invited.

(b) Proposals costing $>$ Rs. 5 lakh: Proposals with a cost estimates over and above Rs 5 lakh will be referred to the Steering Group constituted for regular review and methodological guidance on research studies for scrutiny, recommendation and approval.

VII. Cost Norms

Norms for Funding Research Proposals	
Item	Funding norm
Pay and allowances of regular research staff (investigators)	Nil
Honorarium to retired professors/senior scientists	Maximum of Rs. 10,000/ p. m subject to other Govt. rules.
Pay and allowances of hired research staff (investigators)	As for equivalent University teaching and research staff under the prevailing UGC scales. However, in case of Institutions of National eminence, the pay and allowances will be applicable as per the norms approved by the competent authority like IITs and IIMs
Support staff (Technical/ non-technical) especially recruited for the project.	Actuals subject to maximum 25% of pay and allowances of Research staff (inc. JRF/SRF) even if these costs are met by Govt. under any other Scheme.
Equipment/instruments (inc. Computers, software and peripherals) not for dedicated use by project	10% of the project cost
Travel	As per the norm of institution for travel entitlements
Expendables and Field Survey	100% as per verified estimates subject to actual
Institutional Charges	10% of the total project cost

VIII. Terms and Conditions for Sanction of Research Projects

- i. “Submitted” category of research proposals will normally be sanctioned for a period of 12 months. The grant will be payable in three instalments. While 25% of the approved cost would be released at the time of approval of the project, 50% would be released after receiving interim reports of the study and Utilisation Certificate for 60% of the amount already released (in a prescribed format at **Annexure III**). The remaining 25% would be released only after acceptance of final reports and examination of financial statements like UC and Audit Report. The third instalment will be released only after 90% of the total available funds is utilised.
- ii. The duration, cost and funding criteria for “invited” and “commissioned” category of research studies would be decided by the Steering Group on research studies.
- iii. The authorities of the institution(s) where the research activities are to be carried out would submit account details to receive the grants and be responsible for their utilisation. Project

administration, submission of periodic progress reports and maintenance of accounts would be the responsibility of the grant recipient organisation.

- iv. In case, during the course of the study, principal/lead investigator/project coordinator leaves the institute, the responsibility for completion of the project may be entrusted to another equally qualified Investigator/project coordinator by the Head of the Institution with due approval of the Ministry, at **no additional cost**.
- v. All accounts in respect of the project will be subject to audit by Chartered Accountant. On termination of the project, the duly audited accounts shall be submitted and the unspent balance, if any shall be refunded to the MoRD within six calendar months of completion of the project. Full and final payment will be made after the acceptance of all the financial certificates, audit reports (if due) and final report (s).
- vi. During the course of implementation of the project, the Steering Group/MoRD may depute its staff or experts from other institutions to visit the research institution(s) concerned to review progress.
- vii. The selection and appointment of Support Staff for the project may be made by the Principal/Lead Investigator in terms of the procedures of the concerned Institutions for periods not exceeding the sanctioned duration of the project.
- viii. In respect of particular research projects, *at the time of sanction*, the Steering Group/Ministry may prescribe requirements of prior approval by the Steering Group/Ministry before submitting for publication or conference presentation, papers or articles based on the Project.
- ix. In the event, after due enquiry, the Steering Group/Ministry concludes that the progress of a research Project is highly unsatisfactory and cannot be improved, it may terminate the Project. Upon such termination, the agency will be liable to refund the entire amount to the Ministry within two weeks of such decision along with interest, as applicable.
- x. All equipment purchased out of the grant would remain with the institution concerned unless otherwise specified in the sanction. However, the grantee organization will submit the list of assets acquired under the project. The terms "Assets" here means (a) immovable property and (b) movable property of a capital nature where the value exceeds Rs. 10,000/-. The list of equipment to be purchased will be indicated in the project proposal along with estimated cost.

- xi. The project will become operative with effect from the date of receipt of the First Sanction Order by the grantee organization. The date of receipt of the Sanction Order will be intimated by the Principal Investigator/Project Coordinator to the Ministry of Rural Development.
- xii. Within three weeks of receipt of the sanction order, the grantee institution would prepare a concept note on the approach of the study and submit the same to the Steering Group/Ministry.
- xiii. Extension of the project beyond the approved period may be granted in exceptional cases. Request for such extension of the project should be sent by the grantee institution to the Steering Group/Ministry. The Steering Group/ Ministry could grant extension of project for a maximum period ranging between 1 to 3 months without any additional cost for justified reasons. If there is undue delay in completion of the Project, the Agency will be liable to pay interest on the amount released for the period of such delay.
- xiv. The grantee organization(s) will furnish 5 copies of the final report, including Executive Summary, along with a soft copy, to the Ministry.
- xv. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) seeking financial assistance for research projects shall execute a Bond in the prescribed format (**Annexure IV**). NGOs would be required to provide a performance guarantee equivalent to not less than 5% of the total cost if the research project is more than Rs 10 lakh. For a project value upto Rs 10 lakh, a certificate by DRDA/DPC of the district concerned would be required.

IX. Dissemination of Research Findings

Wide dissemination of research findings with due acknowledgement of the Ministry and its grant would be encouraged. Apart from professional journals/books, final technical reports of completed projects may be disseminated through one or more of the following channels, as appropriate:

- Web site of the Ministry.
- Website of NIRD/SIRDs/Institutes
- Websites of Major Universities (through UGC)
- Websites of State Rural Development Departments
- Professional and Policy-makers' Workshops

Research Themes

1. Inclusive growth through MGNREGA
2. Women empowerment and gender issues
3. Levels of living of women and other social groups
4. Labour market relations
5. Fund transfer systems
6. Documentation of successful practices
7. Implementation of MGNREGA – Process studies
8. Indicators for impact assessment
9. MGNREGA and good governance
10. MGNREGA and climate change
11. Methodology for work-time-motion studies (SoRs)
12. Sustainable livelihood support
13. Vulnerability reduction through MGNREGS
14. Financial inclusion
15. Asset management system
16. Social capital formation
17. Community based monitoring
18. Social audit and community empowerment
19. Stemming migration
20. Public-private-PRI-community partnerships for sustainable development
21. Convergence planning
22. MIS for tracking of workers, works and funds
23. ICT applications in planning and monitoring
24. Rent seeking behaviour

Application for the Grant for Research project

(To be completed by the Principal Investigator / Project Coordinator)

1. Title of the Project :
2. Name, Designation and Address of
Principal Investigators (PI)/Project Coordinator (PC) :
3. Date of superannuation of PI/PC :
4. Name(s), Designation and Address(es)
of Co-Investigators :
5. Institution where the project will be implemented
(Lead institution in case of network) :
6. Names of Network Partners
(if project is to be carried out by a network) :
7. Duration of the Project (years, months) :
8. Total amount of grant required :
9. **Appendices:**

Appendix (a): Project Brief

- A brief summary of the project (not exceeding one page)

Appendix (b): Project Investigators

- i. CVs of PI/PC and all research staff, covering academic qualifications, peer reviewed research publications and institutions where previously located.
- ii. Details of project grant proposals submitted by (all participating) institutions to Ministry all other funding organisations which are currently under consideration.

Appendix (c): Technical Proposal

- a) Specification of research Question (s)
- b) Survey of literature relating to the project
 - Existing relevant literature on the subject; two page note on key findings, gaps in knowledge
- c) Justification for the proposed project in relation to the Thematic Priorities
- d) Outline of research methodology
- e) Data sources
- f) Survey to be conducted
- g) Infrastructure available
- h) Infrastructure required
- i) Support staff available (Technical/non-Technical)
- j) Additional Support Staff Required (Technical/non-Technical)
- k) Time schedule of the project (PERT – Chart)
- l) Modalities for dissemination of Research Outputs

Form GFR 19 – A

Form of Utilization Certificate

Sl.No	Letter No. and date	Amount	Certified that out of Rs..... of grants-in-aid sanctioned by Ministry of Rural Development during the year in favour of and Rs..... on account of unspent balance of the previous year, a sum of Rs..... has been utilized for the purpose of for which it was sanctioned and that the balance of Rs..... remaining unutilized at the end of the year has been surrendered to Government (vide cheque/draft No....., dated.....) / will be adjusted towards the grants-in-aid payable during the next year.....
Total			

2. Certified that I have satisfied myself that the conditions on which the grants-in-aid was sanctioned have been duly fulfilled / are being fulfilled and that I have exercised the following checks to see that the money was actually utilized for the purpose for which it was sanctioned.

Kinds of checks exercised

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Signature

Designation

Date

Annexure IV

Proforma for BOND to be furnished by the Non-Governmental Organisation

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS THAT we, signed for and on behalf of a Society registered under the _____ and having its office at _____ (herein after called the 'Obligors' which terms shall unless excluded by or, repugnant to the context be deemed to include its successors, permitted assigns and all persons entitled to and capable of disposing off the assets and properties of the obligors) are held and firmly bound to the President of India (herein-after called the 'Government' which term shall unless exclude or repugnant to the context be deemed to include his successors and assigns) in the sum of Rs. _____ (Rupees _____ only) well and truly to be paid to the Government on demand and without a demur for which payment we firmly bind ourselves by these presents,

1. SIGNED this _____ day of _____ in the year Two thousand _____.
2. WHEREAS on the obligors request the Government has as per Union Ministry of Rural Development's No. _____ dated _____ (herein after referred to as the 'Letter of Sanction' agreed to made in favour of the obligors for the purpose of grant of Rs. _____ (Rupees _____ only) out of which Rs. _____ (Rupees _____ only) have on _____ been paid to the obligors (the receipt of sum the _____ do hereby admit and acknowledge) on condition of the obligors have agreed to do.
3. NOW the condition of the above-written obligation is such that if the obligors duly fulfil and comply with all the terms and conditions mentioned in the Letter of Sanction then the above written bond or obligation shall be void and of no effect; but otherwise it shall remain in full force, effect and virtue.
4. And these presents further witness as under:
 - i. The decision of the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Rural Development on the question whether there has been breach or violation of any of the terms and conditions mentioned in the letter of sanctions shall be final and binding on the obligors, and
 - ii. The Government have agreed to bear the stamp duty, if any, chargeable on the presents.
5. 5. In witness whereof those Presents have been executed on behalf of the obligors pursuant to the Resolution No. _____ dated _____ passed by the Board of the Management of the Society (Governing Body) of the obligors, on the and year herein above-written.

Obligors in the presence of

With name and address

1. Signature of the grantee institution.
- 2.

(for office use only)

Accepted for and on behalf
Of the President of India

Witness:-

(Name and Designation)