

National Parks Board Research Collaboration Opportunity

Questions Related to RCO-CUGE-2020-01: Air Conditioning Blowdown Water Recovering System to Irrigate Retrofitted Building Greenery for Thermal Gain Mitigation

1. Does the limit for proposed budgets exclude any costs?

Answer: As outlined in section ii of Annex A, the total cost of proposals, including all direct and indirect costs, must not exceed the stated limit.

2. How will the project funds be disbursed?

Answer: 1st payment (20% of total fund) will be made upon signing of project agreement. All subsequent funds will be disbursed upon approval (reimbursement basis).

3. Can you provide a list of supported expenses?

Answer: The following list provides guidance on supported expenses. (*Adapted from NRF Fund Guide Annex L*)

- a. Expenditure on Manpower (EOM)

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>Grant funds should support manpower costs and related benefits outlined in an employment contract, as long as it is in line with the consistently applied Host Institution's HR policies.</p> <p>This will extend to Host Institution policies that govern staff recruitment and related costs (e.g., costs associated with the onboarding of staff, staff insurance, performance bonus, overtime claims, staff relocation, employment benefits, employment levy, employment pass, pre-examination medical check-up and housing allowance).</p> <p>All manpower-related costs that fall under Other Operating Costs (OOE) should be accurately reflected in the budget.</p>
Principal Investigators (PIs), Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs), and Programme Managers (PMs)	The manpower costs for PIs, Co-PIs, and PMs are not allowed.
Unconsumed leave	The costs for unconsumed leave are not allowed.

Student assistants and interns	<p>Only full-time students enrolled in local Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL) qualify to be supported as a student assistant or intern.</p> <p>The costs for student recipients of existing awards (or stipends) and students not residing in Singapore are not allowed.</p>
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b. Expenditure on Equipment (EQP)

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>The purchase of equipment is not allowed unless specifically provided for in the grant approved by NParks.</p> <p>The procurement of such equipment must be made according to the formally established and consistently applied policies of the Host Institution.</p> <p>The invoices for all claims must be dated on or before the end of the project term.</p>
Capital works, general infrastructure, general purpose IT and communication equipment, office equipment, furniture and fittings	<p>Not allowable under direct costs, unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by NParks.</p> <p>Examples of such costs are computers, office productivity software, PDAs, mobile phones, photocopier machines, workstations, printers, etc.</p>

c. Other Operating Expenditure (OOE)

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>Only costs directly related to the research will be supported.</p> <p>All procurement of such items must be made according to the formally established and consistently applied policies of the Host Institution.</p>
Visiting Professors and Experts	<p>Unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by NParks, these costs are not allowed. The visiting professor or expert must be identified</p>

	and their contribution to the project must be clearly defined and described in the proposal.
Audit fees	These costs, including internal and external audit fees, are not allowed.
Entertainment and refreshment	These costs are not allowed.
Fines and penalties	These costs are not allowed.
Legal fees	These costs are not allowed.
Overhead expenses	These costs are not allowed, unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by NParks.
Patent application	These costs are not allowed, including patent applications, maintenance, and other related costs.
Professional membership fees	These costs are not allowed.
Software	These costs are not allowed, unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by NParks.
Professional fees	These costs, including consultancy fees, are not allowed, unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by NParks.
Staff retreat	These costs are not allowed.

d. Overseas Travel Expenditure

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>These costs are not allowed, unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by NParks.</p> <p>Collaborators should only participate in conferences directly related to the area of research outlined in the project and necessary to accomplish project objectives.</p> <p>Regardless of the source of funds, all travel must align with the existing and consistently applied travel policies of the Host Institution.</p>

e. Research Scholarship Expenditure

Type of Expenses	Description
General policy	<p>The grant may not be used to support scholarship expenditures, unless specifically provided for in the grant and approved by NParks.</p> <p>Any postgraduate stipend must align with the prevailing rates set by the Ministry of Education. Postgraduate stipend and tuition support must not attract indirect costs.</p>
Undergraduate stipend and tuition support	These costs are not allowed.

Enquires & Answers:

- 1) Are indirect costs included in the cap of \$250,000 for the proposed budget?**

Answer:

As outlined in sections ii and iii of Annex A, the total cost of proposals, including all direct and indirect costs, must not exceed \$250,000.

- 2) On Page 4 of RCO-CUGE-2020-01 document uploaded on the CUGE website, it was stated the cap of \$250,000 is exclusive of GST. However, on Page 1 of Annex A, it was stated that all budgeted expenditures should include all applicable GST at prevailing rates. Would you please clarify the apparent contradiction on GST?**

Answer:

- As outlined in sections ii and iii of Annex A, the expenditures should be budgeted inclusive of any applicable Goods and Services Tax (GST) at the prevailing rates.
- For a more detailed description of the treatment of GST, please refer to NParks PA Template 1 {Clause 6.1 in Annex A – [Work Plan / Project Plan]}.
- For clarity, we have removed “This is exclusive of GST” from section 3.1 of the RCO-CUGE-2020-01 document.

- 3) Is there a list of fundable/non-fundable budget items available?**

Answer:

We have provided a list of supported expenses above.

- 4) Would you please clarify if the funds awarded under this RCO would be to: i) the PI in his/her individual capacity as a researcher, or ii) to institution for usage by the PI on approved research activities?**

Answer:

Funds will be provided to the PI's host institution.

- 5) Would you please confirm that NParks does NOT require proposals to be signed off by the Host Institution before submission?**

Answer:

We do not require a formal approval from the host institution, but the proposals must affirm the declarations contained in section 10 of Annex B (Project Proposal Template). In addition, the Project Agreement must be signed by an authorised signatory of the Host Institution.

- 6) We noted that there is a document analogous to a FAQ Factsheet uploaded on the CUGE website (<https://www.nparks.gov.sg/Cuge/Programmes-Schemes/Research%20Programme/Research%20Collaboration%20Opportunity/Clarification>). However, this PDF document was dated 9 Nov 2018, and stated that it is intended for a different project launched under a RCO back in 2018 "Project 1: Rapid and Non-destructive Detection of Incipient Tree Root Decay". May we know if the clarifications in this document is applicable for the current ongoing RCO call?**

Answer:

No, the document provided clarifications on topics related to a previous grant call, but the information is not applicable to the current grant call. However, we have provided similar above.

- 7) Can a private company be a Lead-PI of the grant call, with an IHL as co-PI?**

Answer:

With a company as the Lead-PI, only up to 70% of the approved qualifying direct costs of the project is supported. With Singapore-based-IHL as the Lead-PI, up to 100% of the approved qualifying direct costs of the project is supported. For more information please refer to [Details of Budgeting for Funding \(Annex A\)](#) in the grant call web-page.

- 8) Is the final budget of S\$250,000 inclusive of the overhead (that applies for works with Singapore-based-IHL)?**

Answer:

The cap of S\$250,000 is inclusive of allowable overhead.