

US-India Science & Technology Endowment Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the US-India Science & Technology Endowment Fund?

The governments of the United States of America (through the Department of State) and India (through the Department of Science & Technology) have established the United States – India Science & Technology Endowment Fund for promotion of joint activities that would lead to innovation and techno-preneurship through the application of science and technology. The aim of the Fund is to support and foster joint applied R&D to generate public good through commercialization of technology achieved through sustained partnerships between US and Indian researchers and entrepreneurs.

2. What are the objectives of the US-India Science & Technology Endowment Fund?

To select and support through a grants program financially promising joint US-India entrepreneurial initiatives that have demonstrable societal impact. These initiatives can originate from government, academic, non-governmental or commercial entities, and any combination thereof provided they focus on applied R&D, incorporate a business plan and proof of commercial concept, and have significant sustainable commercial potential.

3. What is “societal impact”?

For the purposes of the Endowment Board, societal impact could involve ideas that help poorer or underserved sections of society. Technologies might significantly reduce the cost of a product or service, benefitting the poor or citizens in remote areas (either in the U.S. or India). Or they might create new solutions improving the quality of life for people in either country.

4. What are the program areas for support?

Healthy individual: Affordable biomedical devices, diagnostic / preventive / curative measures, or food and nutrition products to improve health. (Drug development and clinical trials are not eligible activities in this category).

Empowering citizens: Reducing the digital/technology divide. This could include amongst others, information and communication technologies with societal impact in areas such as water, agriculture, financial inclusion, and education.

5. What are the eligibility criteria for applying for the Fund?

- Proposals must include a minimum of one partner from each country. Bi-national teams applying to the Endowment will work together to commercialize technologies for societal impact.
- The Bi-national teams can include:
 - i) Start-up companies; or
 - ii) Incorporated companies; or
 - iii) Non-incorporated entities with strong intent to commercialize the technology; or

iv) Individuals or consortia from academia, government laboratories, non-government R&D institutions.

- Each bi-national team must include at the time of application an entrepreneurial (small-scale as opposed to large-scale) entity that will receive a portion of the grant and take the technology to the market. If partners are planning to form a new venture to commercialize the technology, the proposal should include planned incorporation date and the amount of grants requested for the new entity.
- Relationships between the U.S. and Indian partners must be clearly defined, including ownership of intellectual property rights for the technology proposed to be developed and commercialized.
- The proposed technology must have the potential to be commercialized within two to three years.

6. Is it mandatory to have a bi-national team?

Yes. Every application must have minimum one Indian and one US partner.

7. What is the quantum of funding?

Grants of up to Rs. 2.50 crores or approximately \$500,000 (*subject to exchange rate*). Proposals outside this range may be considered under exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the US-India Science & Technology Endowment Board (hereafter referred to as 'Board').

8. Can a scientist/ engineer apply as an individual researcher for the Award?

Yes. Any individual/entity could apply as part of a bi-national team meeting mandatory application requirements (see question 4).

9. Can a proposal for drug discovery be eligible?

No. Proposals on drug discovery will not be eligible.

10. Can support be applied to clinical trials / other clinical studies or for drug discovery/ pharmaceutical development?

No

11. Is vaccine development acceptable?

If an applicant can demonstrate a near-term timeline (under three years) for vaccine commercialization the application may be considered. However, funds received from the Endowment cannot be used to support clinical trials.

12. Can a company submit more than one proposal in principle?

Any company or other entity fulfilling mandatory application requirements (see question 4) may submit more than one proposal. However no entity will receive more than one award.

13. Can small businesses apply for funding under this program?

Yes. Any individual/entity could apply as part of a bi-national team meeting mandatory application requirements (see question 4).

14. Can an application be made for amounts smaller than those indicated in the release?

Yes.

15. What is the percentage of the project cost covered by the grant, and does any investment need to be committed by the researcher and/or the company?

The applicant bi-national team must work out these details and clearly state their plans when submitting their proposal. If awarded, the amount of grant would be decided by the Endowment Board / IUSSTF and might not be equal to the total amount requested in the proposal.

16. Are equipment, fabrication costs, salary, consultancy, etc. covered under this grant?

Yes. Request for grants can be apportioned under these heads with proper justification. However salary for the project coordinators and already existing staff would not be covered. Staff costs clearly attributable to the project could be covered (include those of existing staff who are reassigned to project duties). The decision of IUSSTF/ Endowment Board regarding the budget and its breakup would be final.

17. How is the confidentiality of the project submitted guaranteed?

A Non-Disclosure Agreement will be signed by all reviewers with IUSSTF to ensure confidentiality. The Endowment Board and its Executive Secretariat IUSSTF will not enter into non-disclosure agreements with outside parties.

18. Are consortia acceptable?

Yes. Any individual/entity as part of bi-national team could apply as long as its proposal has the essential commercialization potential (in the specified areas) and meets all the mandatory application requirements (see question 4).

19. Is inclusion of an academic partner in one or both countries required?

Inclusion of an academic partner would be acceptable though not mandatory. All identified partners of a team, including academic ones, must have clearly specified roles and contributions.

20. At what stage of development do the devices need to be before submission? Can the submission include something that is mostly finished, or is some amount of basic R&D allowed?

The proposed technology must have potential towards commercialization within two to three years.

21. What are the expectations after the Grant has been awarded?

The grantee will be required to meet pre-determined milestones and grants will be released upon meeting each milestone. Milestones and grant installments will vary depending on the individual grantee's plan.

22. Would you fund grants to service companies which are based in the United States or India?

Pure service companies that do not leverage significant science and technology innovation will be unlikely to be considered favorably.

23. Are these grants given as debt or equity into the companies?

No, these awards will be pure grants and are not structured as either debt or equity investments.

Note: The FAQs will not cover every possible contingency in terms of technology, allowable expenses, or other specifics. The Board may refine its position on specific details about various issues. Applicants are encouraged to submit the best possible proposal, bearing in mind that binational benefits, scale, social impact and rapid commercialization are priorities of the Board.

Please note that the Endowment Board reserves the right to adapt its policies and priorities over time, depending on circumstances, and that future calls for proposals may differ both in scope and particular details.