

GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING UNDER SUB SCHEME “SETTING UP OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION INNOVATION SQUARE (DCIS)” UNDER CHAMPION SERVICES SECTOR SCHEME

1. Name of the Scheme:

Digital Communication Innovation Square (DCIS) under Champion Services Sector Scheme (CSSS).

2. Objectives: The objectives of the Scheme is as under:-

- To promote the ecosystem for research, design, development, proof of concept testing, IPR creation, pilot project and manufacturing i.e. complete value chain to make India a global hub for production of telecommunication equipment and a centre for digital communication services.
- To develop and establish standards to meet national requirements and participate in international standardization bodies to contribute in formulation of global standards, thereby making India a leading nation in the area of international telecom standardization.
- To promote India specific application development that matches with behavioral pattern of the masses and adds value to their day-to-day activities both economic and social.
- To create synergies among the Academia, Research Institutes, Start-ups and Industry for capacity building and development of a balanced telecom ecosystem by organizing workshops/seminar/ webinar etc. for sharing their views, plans, expectations and concerns in a free and constructive manner.
- Bridge the gap between R&D and commercialization

3. Focus Areas of the sub-scheme:

Communication services in India are mainly provided by imported equipment and technologies. The scheme will promote indigenous innovation and incubation of future technologies and their deployment/manufacturing

thereof, resulting value addition for the Indian Telecom Sector. The scheme will be focused mainly in the following areas:

- (i) LTE Advanced, 5G and future generation access technologies, Software Defined Networks (SDNs) and Network Function Virtualization (NFV), IOT/ M2M, the cloud and data analytics.
- (ii) Backhaul radio and communication technologies,
- (iii) Core and edge routers, Soft switches, Ethernet Switches, xDSL, modems, routers, dongles, data cards, mobile handsets, wireless access points, mobile handsets etc.,
- (iv) Security and surveillance equipment, sensors,
- (v) Convergence of telecom, IT and broadcasting technologies,
- (vi) Over-the-top (OTT) services as drivers for penetration of broadband services
- (vii) Green and energy efficient technologies / solutions for the telecom sector and
- (viii) Any other area considered commercially relevant in future.

The main idea of the scheme is translation of research into technology (product/process) but not to carry out open ended fundamental research. Investigations must lead to innovation or new product/process ready for demonstration or pilot scale deployment (not only publication/ patent).

4. Name of the Implementing Agency:

Telecom Centre of Excellence (TCOE) India.

5. Deliverables:

Impact of this Scheme will be measured in terms of: -

- (i) Pilots of innovative ideas converted into full scale operation.
- (ii) Number of Start-ups, MSMEs providing educational order, culminating in getting full-fledged orders.

6. Administrative set-up for implementation of the sub-scheme:

The sub-scheme will be implemented under the aegis of an Inter-Ministerial Apex Committee. The Composition of the Inter Ministerial Apex Committee will be as follows:-

- | | | |
|-------|---|-----------------|
| i. | Additional Secretary, Telecom, DoT | Chairperson |
| ii. | Joint Secretary, Telecom, DoT | Member |
| iii. | One Member each from Industry, Academia, and VC to be opted by the Chair | Members |
| iv. | Advisor (Technology), DoT | Member |
| v. | Advisor (Finance), DoT | Member |
| vi. | Representative from NITI Aayog | Member |
| vii. | Representative from Ministry of Electronics & IT | Member |
| viii. | Executive Director, C-DOT | Member |
| ix. | Director IP | Member-Convener |
| x. | Any other representative(s) from Central Government Ministry/ Department/ Organization may be co-opted with the approval of Chairperson | Members |

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR GRANT UNDER DIGITAL COMMUNICATION INNOVATION SQUARE (DCIS) SCHEME

Implementation Mechanism & Scope of Implementing Agency

TCOE India will implement the Scheme on behalf of the Department of Telecom. The Implementing Agency will work under the overall supervision of the Apex Committee and guidelines issued by the DoT.

Role and responsibility of the Implementing Agency

The role and responsibility of the of the Implementing Agency are as under:

Due Diligence

A Technical Expert Committee (TEC) will be constituted by Implementing Agency in consultation with Department of Telecom to select beneficiary, recommend release of grants/continuity/extension/short- close, periodically steer and review the technical and financial progress of the scheme, etc.

Due diligence of beneficiaries that have received in principle grant approval from the Apex Committee will be carried out by TEC.

The due diligence process involves:-

- Reconfirming eligibility
- Legal, technical & financial due diligence
- Confirming how application has tied up all resources: space, equipment, manpower, advisors, incubation services, equipment etc.
- Budget utilization plan (usually by providing quotations); other requirements of ESC, if any
- Finalization of milestones, budget and payment schedule; defining clear milestone targets that are easy to track.

Signing Agreement

- Following due diligence, final grant approval to be provided by Apex Committee to implementing agency.

- An agreement will be signed between implementing agency and the beneficiary, defining terms of association.

Grant Approval

- Fund will be released into the dedicated no lien account created by the beneficiary for the purpose of this scheme.
- Fund disbursement will commence against the milestones of the project.

Monitoring

- Once the project begins, TEC will periodically monitor progress and review project. Beneficiary will submit periodic reports and utilization certificates in the prescribed format to implementing agency.

Financial Support to Start-up and MSME

Under the scheme, financial support will be provided to those projects/ideas who have reached at least “Proof of Concept (PoC)” level. Financial support will be provided to the beneficiary in form of grants. However, implementing agency shall work with other venture funds to get them more funding on mutually agreed entry-exit terms.

Eligible expenditure for funding:

Since the focus of the program is to facilitate creating of prototypes and bringing of products /technologies to market, applicants will be encouraged to spend on:-

- Research & Development
- Prototyping
- Testing, Trials and Piloting

While, expenses on following not permissible under the funding

- HR manpower expenses
- Power
- Tools & Machineries
- Office expenses

Funding of Projects to be supported

DCIS would aim for supporting Startups/MSMEs/Innovators to create prototypes and/or commercialize products/solutions in the area of Telecom Sector.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Beneficiary:

- Startups, as defined and recognized by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, working towards innovation, development or improvement of products or processes or services, or if it is a scalable business model with a high potential of employment generation or wealth creation.
- Any Indian company incorporated under the Companies Act 1956/2013, primarily a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) as defined in the MSME Act, 2006 having over 51% stakes by the Indian Citizen / NRI / OCI and Head Quarter in India.
- Individual Innovators will also be encouraged to apply (research & academic institutions can use this category to apply). However, release of fund shall be subjected to compliance of eligibility condition for either Startup or MSME before agreement signing.

More than one organization can jointly submit the application in partnership with consortium, registered societies & Academia

Collaboration with Academia / R&D Organization are highly encouraged

Every proposal must clearly identify a Project Lead (PL) who will take responsibility for the technical and managerial aspects of the project execution. If an application is selected for funding support, then its Project Leader will be required to sign the project Agreement on behalf of the applicant(s).

Application Procedure

Implementing Agency would be creating a dedicated complete website (e.g. www.dcis.gov.in) for this purpose. This website will be complete website for DCIS scheme and support the activities such as Online Application Submission, Project Status Tracking, Fund Releases, Monitoring/Mentoring, Database of Digital Communication Technology companies, Event Promotion, Partnership facilitation, Regulatory Information etc.

Ownership of any intellectual property generated by the beneficiary will accrue solely to those participants. DoT has the first right of refusal for preferential access to these technologies for product, go-to-market, and investment.

Program Implementation Methodology

Selection & Funding Process

- All applications will be Initially Scrutinized for the Eligibility Check and completeness of Application by the Implementing Agency.
- Eligible applicants will be considered for the 'Shortlist' by the Implementing Agency.
- Shortlisted applicants will be called to give a detailed presentation to showcase their idea/product/solution to the TEC.
- Recommended applicants by the TEC will undergo with Due-Diligence process as stipulated at para 2.1.
- After due diligence, final grant proposal along with Due-Diligence, will be presented by implementing agency to Apex Committee for approval.
- A funding agreement will be signed between implementing agency and successful applicants.
- Fund will be released into the dedicated no lien account created by the successful applicants for the purpose of this scheme.
- Fund disbursement will commence against the milestones of the project .
- Once the project begins, implementing agency through its Expert Panel will periodically Monitor the project. Beneficiaries will submit periodic reports and utilization certificates in the prescribed format to implementing agency.
- Implementing agency will Coach / Mentor the project during Project Completion and two years post completion through its Expert panel.
- Implementing Agency will help beneficiaries in Piloting, Testing and Public Procurement.

Indicative Evaluation Criteria

The indicative evaluation criteria for applicants under the scheme are as follows:

S. No.	Criteria	Details	Indicative Weightage (%)
1	Technical Feasibility	Feasibility & reasonability of the technical claims, methodology used/to be used for validation, roadmap for technology development	20
2	Potential Impact	Market size, customer demographic & the technology's effect on these	20
3	Novelty	USP(s) of the technology, IP associated with the technology, national importance (if any)	15
4	Commercialization Strategy	Utilization of technology to create a product/service, its positioning & value addition for the intended customers, plan for go-to-market, challenges expected	25
5	Team	Technical & business expertise, mentors	20
Total			100%

Selected beneficiaries will be offered funding during scheme period in installments against agreed milestones.

Milestone based Fund releases

Successful applicants will be offered funding support in the form of a grant of up to Rs. 40 lakhs. The fund disbursement will be milestone-based and will be released in 4 installments:

Installment	Milestone	Release
1st Installment	Signing of Contract	40% of Total Grant
2nd Installment	Completion of 1st Milestone	20% of Total Grant
3rd Installment	Completion of 2nd Milestone	20% of Total Grant
4th Installment	Completion of project & submission of final report with prototype/product (focusing on Technology Completion of the project and outcome could be Technical Success or Failure)	20% of Total Grant

Timelines for milestones of the project shall be decided between the beneficiary and Implementing Agency after due-diligence approval.

Monitoring

- A Project Monitoring Committee (PMC) shall be mandatorily required to be put in place by the Implementing Agency before release of funds. The PMC will ensure timely and proper implementation of the project without time and cost overruns.
- The PMC shall have a representative of the Department of Telecom, Government of India.
- The Implementing Agency shall ensure that the PMC shall meet once in every quarter and submit its report duly signed by the Head of the implementing agency. This report will be used to review the progress of utilization of the funds released and will also be taken into account while considering further release of funds by the department.

Fund Disbursement from DoT to Implementing Agency

Project Funding

- The funds shall be released to the Implementing Agency for the approved projects in two or more equal installments

- The 1st installment will be released after approval is accorded to the projects by the Apex Committee. Further installments may be released based on the recommendation / ratification of Project Monitoring Committee (PMC).
- Release of further installments shall be subject to furnishing of complete Utilization Certificate, report of the Project Monitoring Committee (PMC) and the proof of matching contribution of the funds having been invested by the Implementing Agency from its own or other sources on pari-passu basis as per the approved cost sharing.
- Apex Committee would approve the startups & MSMEs under the scheme along with the approved amount of grant, and milestone details for each
- Upon approval of projects by the Apex Committee, Implementing Agency would communicate to the successful applicant and initiate the funding process.
- First installment of payment to be made available to successful applicants within three weeks
- Technical Expert Committee of Implementing Agency would approve each milestone payment to be made available to startup & MSME; Implementing agency to disburse amount within three weeks
- Implementing agency will maintain a separate bank account for all activities related to the scheme
- Implementing agency will submit Statement of Expenditure (SE) on annual basis during beginning of the Financial Year
- Implementing agency will submit a half-yearly progress report of fund disbursements
- DoT and Implementing agency will conduct an annual review of fund disbursement, other activities and deliverables to gauge output, and to approve activities for the forthcoming year.

Success Metrics for the Program

Performance of the mentor will be judged on quarterly basis on clear tangible outcomes, such as:

- Jobs created
- Royalty Collection and Corpus Rebuilding
- Expansion of startup and MSME into new geographies
- Growth in userbase/clientele of startups and MSME
- Growth in startup and MSME revenue
- Capital raised (equity/debt/grant), as required
- Government incentives availed

- Mentorship hours for startup (external specialized mentor)
- Feedback of startup and MSME
- Pilots conducted

Pilot Opportunity

- Piloting opportunity for supported Startup and MSME, shall be provided in the Digital Communications space. For this, DoT along with ITI, BSNL, BBNL, CDOT etc. shall take a proactive approach in allocating experimental licenses, establishing regulatory sandboxes, facilitating allocation of spectrum for R&D and experimentation at affordable prices, simplifying and fast-tracking approvals for experimental purposes through de-licensing and other mechanisms for the shortlisted teams.
- The pilot opportunities will be provided to startups and MSMEs in the below manner,
 - Any Startup/ MSME desirous of availing the opportunity for pilot, shall be required to submit a detailed proposal outlining their requirements, scope of work, location for the pilot, timelines, potential impact, success metrics, etc.
 - This proposal will be presented to Apex Committee for review & inputs.
 - Apex Committee shall hold a one-on-one meeting with each interested team to discuss the proposal and finalize requirements.
 - ITI, BSNL, BBNL, CDOT can provide strategic inputs in the Apex Committee evaluations and provide pilot opportunities to the shortlisted startups and MSME. R&D support from these organizations may be provided to shortlisted startups and MSME for at least 3 months to help these startups fine-tune their products and services.
 - All finalized B2B proposals will be presented to a panel of corporates from Digital Communications space on a 'Demo Day'. Apex Committee will facilitate all experimental licenses and other resources within 30 days of proposal review.

Procurement Opportunity

DCIS shall make appropriate mechanism to ensure that products/ services developed by startups/MSMEs funded under the project find market and become financially viable over a period of time.. DoT shall try to work with PSUs for getting them educational orders and also make available and work with them for technology trials. As per the Public Procurement Policy for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSMEs) every Central Ministry/Department/PSU shall set an annual goal of minimum 25 per cent of the total annual purchases from the products or services produced or rendered by MSMEs. DoT will sensitize the concerned agencies about the products/services

developed by startups/MSMEs and request for consideration of their proposals, submitted i.r.o. their tenders, as per due rules and procedures.

Review & Evaluation

- The Scheme would also be subject to midterm review for its efficacy by an independent third party engaged by DoT for this purpose. .
- For the above purpose, expenditure upto a maximum of 2% of the Scheme funds may be utilized.

13. Recall of the Central Grant

- The Implementing Agency has to abide by Terms & Conditions for Grant-in-Aid as per **Annex**.
- Apex committee retains the right to curtail/ recall the central grant along with applicable interest calculated at 3 years SBI MCLR prevailing on the date of disbursement in case of unsatisfactory use of the grant including compromise with the quality envisaged, or partial/incomplete implementation of the project.

Terms & Conditions for Grant-in-Aid

The grant is for the specific project as approved by Department of Telecom (DoT) shall be subjected to the conditions listed below. The proposal originating industry and implementing agency shall give an undertaking that they agree to be governed by these conditions.

1. The grant amount shall be i) spent for the project within the specified time; and ii) Any portion of the grant, which is not ultimately required for expenditure for the approved purposes, shall be duly surrendered to DoT;
2. The implementing agency should adhere to GFR guidelines while incurring expenditures out of DoT's grant under the project. The Implementing Agency shall be responsible for ensuring that all procurement of goods, equipments and services, including works, are through a transparent and competitive bidding process as per the applicable government rules / guidelines;
3. The implementing agency shall maintain an audited record in the form of a register in the prescribed proforma for permanent, semi-permanent assets acquired as solely or mainly out of DoT grant;
4. The assets referred to in (3) above will be property of DoT and should not, without prior sanction of DoT, be disposed off or encumbered or utilized for the purposes other than those for which the grant has been sanctioned;
5. In addition to the ownership of the facility created, preparation and approval of the DPR, the Implementing Agency shall also be responsible for obtaining all necessary statutory approvals/clearances including those for environmental compliance and quality standards as applicable;
6. The implementing agency shall furnish Utilization Certificate (UC) along with its request for next release of Grant in Aid certifying that the fund released to them for which UC has been furnished is as per the objective of the Scheme;
7. The implementing agency shall render progress-cum-achievement reports at interval of not exceeding six months on the progress made on all aspects of the project including expenditure incurred on various approved items during the period;
8. The implementing agency shall render an audited statement of accounts to DoT.

9. The audited statement of accounts relating to grants given during financial year together with the comments of the auditor regarding the observance of the conditions governing the grant should be forwarded to the DoT within six months following the end of the relevant financial year;
10. The utilization of grant for the intended purposes will be looked into by the Auditor of implementing agency according to the directives issued by the Government of India at the instance of the Comptroller and Auditor General and the specific mention about it will be made in the audit report;
11. DoT or its nominee(s) will have the right of access to the books and accounts of the implementing agency for which a reasonable prior notice would be given;
12. The implementing agency should maintain separate audited account for the project. If it is found expedient to keep a part or whole of the grant in a bank account earning interest, the interest, thus earned should be reported to this department. All Interest against Grant-in-aid should be mandatorily remitted to the Consolidated Fund of India immediately after finalization of the accounts. Such advances should not be allowed to be adjusted against future releases;
13. Institute may retain the sale proceeds of prototypes, etc fabricated as a result of the development of the project arising directly from funds granted by the department. The Institute may use funds thus generated for furtherance of project objectives;
14. The Intellectual property and the rights associated with it shall be agreed between the participating organizations before the start of the project. The Industry/ Industry Consortium/ Institution(s) will make all efforts to protect intellectual property generated out of the project. The institution(s)/ industry would submit the periodic report to DoT for a period of minimum 1 year on the status of IPRs created/ commercialization under the project. Furthermore, IPR must also reside in India so that India has access and complete control to these rights in times of emergency to protect our national interest;
15. Application by implementing agency for any other financial assistance or receipt of grant/ loan from any other Agency/ Ministry/ Department for this project should have the prior approval of DoT;
16. The Implementing agency(s) is not allowed to entrust the implementation of this project for which grant-in-aid is received to another institution and to divert the grant-in-aid received from DoT as assistance to the later institution;

17. In case of any dispute on any matter related to the project during the course of its implementation, the decision of the Secretary, DoT, shall be final and binding on the proposal originating industry/ industry consortium and grantee institute;
18. The financial assistance given under the Scheme shall be subject to audit by the CAG of India;
19. Implementing Agency will submit a pre-receipt bill for the funds to be disbursed to it along with certificate that it has not indulged in corrupt practices.