



BIUST Document Control Cover Sheet

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GUIDELINES FOR BIUST RESEARCH INITIATION GRANT

1.0. Background

Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) encourages both fundamental research and applied research by creating a research culture that actively responds to the needs of the people of the Republic of Botswana, whilst also contributing to the global research community and creating new products and services for society.

Annually, the budget of the university allocates a sum for the Research Initiation Grant. The grant is to stimulate research at BIUST by individuals and groups, with preference given to research groups that are aligned to the BIUST's four Research Focus Areas, which are as follows:

- i. Natural Resource Management;
- ii. Climate and Society;
- iii. Frontiers in Science;
- iv. Innovative Technological Products and Service for Economic Development.

2.0. Purpose

The purpose of the present Grants Guidelines is to support initiation and development of research projects at BIUST by encouraging new staff and upcoming researchers. A new staff must apply for the grant within the first 3 years of joining BIUST. Young researchers, with respect to this grant, will be considered as those who have held their PhD degrees for not more than 3 years. Grant recipients are expected to use the funds awarded to purchase normally only minor equipment but largely for operational costs for their research projects. This grant will normally be awarded only once to an individual unless under special circumstances, for which acceptable motivation is provided to and approved by the University Research Committee (URC).

3.0. Application procedure

3.1. Period of Project Grant

The period of the Research Initiation Project Grant would be a maximum of (3) three years.

3.2. Duration of the Initiation Grant Call Advert

The Research Initiation Grant Call would be advertised as soon as the funds become available, with a (1) one month deadline for submission, after which the call is closed. The call will be published on the BITRANET and immediately and explicitly e-mailed to academic staff.

3.3. Submission

The Research Project Proposal should be submitted to the Office of Research, Development and Innovation via the Faculty.

- 3.4.** The application must not exceed 5 pages and it must be written on the supplied template.

4.0. Eligibility and Priorities

- 4.1.** All full-time academic staff members with contracts of duration at least three years are eligible to apply for the Research Initiation Grant;
- 4.2.** The Research Initiation Grant is open to both new (not more than 3 years at BIUST) and young (with PhD for not more than 3 years) staff members;
- 4.3.** Priority in funding shall be given to researchers who are willing to align themselves to existing BIUST Research Groups or create their own ORDI-recognized research groups (in line with the BIUST priority areas);
- 4.4.** Research Initiation Grant will be awarded to a researcher only once;
- 4.5.** Every research project requires a Research Permit before the project is started. If research of the applicant includes human or animal subjects, the researcher must get Ethical Clearance before such research is conducted.

5.0. Requirements for submission

- 5.1.** Short description of the past experience of the applicant or the Research Group Director in the field of the application;
- 5.2.** Formulation of problem;
- 5.3.** Project objectives;
- 5.4.** Description of research methodology and approach;
- 5.5.** Timelines (Gantt charts);
- 5.6.** Budget of Project.
- 5.7.** Output, outcomes and potential for Intellectual Property protection (if applicable)
- 5.8.** References

6.0. Financial issues

6.1. The financial administration is performed by the researcher through the HOD in collaboration with the BIUST Directorate of Financial Services and the Research Office. It is recommended that balance of budget be done periodically at the level of the academic departments.

6.2. The budget should be split between the years of the project and should have special budget lines for the following:

6.2.1. Personnel costs (e.g. Research Assistantship)

6.2.2. Consumables (General Expenses);

6.2.3. Data collection (Travel, Casual labour)

6.2.4. Workshops & Conference Expenses (at most 15% of the budget);

6.2.5. Equipment/Asset Expenditure (e.g. computers).

6.3. Approval for changing the amounts between different lines of budget must be approved by the Office Research, Development and Innovation. Requisitions for expenditure shall to be submitted with the approved budget as one of the supporting documents.

7. Evaluation Process

The process of Project Proposal evaluation is as follows:

- 7.1.** Submission of the applications to the Research Management System; in order to be considered for evaluation and awarding, the applications have to be submitted before the deadline given by Office of RDI;
- 7.2.** Internal reviewers for the project proposals are recommended by a departmental committee established by the Head of Department, while trying to avoid conflict of interest, and their names are forwarded to the Faculty/Centre for approval;
- 7.3.** Internal Reviews and Markings; After reviewer approval by the Faculty/Centre an evaluation form is transmitted to the reviewers by the Dean. The evaluation forms completed by the reviewers are sent to the Dean, who then writes his/her own recommendations for awarding grants or rejecting applications;
- 7.4.** A proposal that has been rejected may be resubmitted after correction to be considered in the subsequent year, subject to clause 4.2;
- 7.5.** Recommendation for funding is submitted to the University Research Committee (URC) and then to the Senate Research and Innovation Committee (SRIC) which makes the final decision on the award.

8. Criteria for Assessment of Research Initiation Grant Proposals

The Grants Applications will be evaluated against the following Criteria:

8.1. Research Approach

- 8.1.1.** Clarity of the research questions and goals, as well as the alignment with the BIUST Research Strategy that is summarized by the institution's four research focus areas;
- 8.1.2.** Completeness of the literature review and relevance to study design/research plan;
- 8.1.3.** Clarity of rationale for the research approach and methodology.
- 8.1.4.** Appropriateness of the research design;
- 8.1.5.** Feasibility of the research approach (including recruitment of subjects, project timeline, preliminary data where appropriate, etc.);
- 8.1.6.** Proper consideration given to likely risks that may be encountered in the research and provisions made for mitigation.

8.2. Originality of the Research

- 8.2.1.** Potential for the creation of new knowledge;
- 8.2.2.** Originality of the proposed research, in terms of the hypotheses/research questions addressed, novel

technology/methodology, and/or novel applications of current technology/methodology.

8.3. Applicant Qualification and Experience

- 8.3.1.** Qualifications of the applicant, including training, experience and independence (relative to career stage);
- 8.3.2.** Experience of the applicant in the proposed area of research and with the proposed methodology;
- 8.3.3.** Expertise of the applicant, as demonstrated by scientific productivity over the past five years (publications, books, grants held, etc.). Productivity should be considered in the context of the norms for the research area, applicant experience and total research funding of the applicant;
- 8.3.4.** Ability to successfully and appropriately disseminate research findings, as demonstrated by knowledge translation activities (publications, conference presentations, briefings, media engagements, etc.);
- 8.3.5.** Appropriateness of the team of applicants (if more than one applicant) to carry out the proposed research, in terms of complementarity expertise and synergistic potential.

8.4. Appropriateness of Research Environment

- 8.4.1.** Availability and accessibility of personnel, facilities and infrastructure required to conduct the research.
- 8.4.2.** Suitability of the environment to conduct the proposed research.
- 8.4.3.** Suitability of the environment (milieu, project and mentors) for the training of personnel (if applicable).

8.5. Sustainability and Impact of the Research

- 8.5.1.** Research proposal addresses a significant national and/or international need or gap;
- 8.5.2.** Potential for a significant contribution to the improvement of Science and Technology and Society in general;
- 8.5.3.** Appropriateness and adequacy of the proposed plan for knowledge dissemination and exchange.
- 8.5.4.** Human and institutional capacity development for sustainability

9. Administration

9.1. Maximum Award

- 9.1.1.** The BIUST Research Grant Initiation Fund has a limited amount of funds and efforts should be made to ensure that these funds are available to as many researchers as possible. It is also important to ensure that the funds allocated to researchers are sufficient for them to conduct meaningful research;

9.1.2. It is therefore recommended that the following limits to allocation of funds to Research Initiation Grant. The amount to be awarded per grant holder shall not exceed P300,000 unless under special circumstances motivated by the applicant and approved by the SRIC.

9.2. Opening of Projects Account

9.2.1. Approved Research projects will be allocated a project code and a project vote/account on the financial system.

9.3. Disbursement of Research Grant

For the purposes of supporting and encouraging new Academic staff members who have just joined BIUST as Academic Staff (Faculty and/or Researcher), the stock of the BIUST Research Initiation Fund will be divided equitably to the extent possible. The specific amounts awarded will be at the discretion of the BIUST University Research Committee.

9.4. Reporting

9.4.1. Each recipient of a Research Initiation grant shall provide progress reports to the Directorate of Research and Development on quarterly basis;

9.4.2. Failure to submit such timely reports without providing concrete reasons will result in suspension or termination of further disbursement of the research grant.

9.5. Project Completion

9.5.1. The proposal must show project starting and completion date.

9.5.2. Outputs at the end of the research project are in form of published or accepted papers in reputable peer reviewed journals, patents in any of the patent databases, products accepted by the community or economy (letter of acceptance form the economic/social partner is provided); The number of outputs must be consistent with that of the promised deliverables, which will be kept in BIUST research repository.

9.5.3. Deliverables proposed should be either articles in reputed peer reviewed journals (as per the BIUST Publication Policy), or patents or products;

9.5.4. Remaining balances from the total research project budget shall be returned to the Office of Research, Development and Innovation account.

9.5.5. A final Project Closeout report about the project is received by ORDI.