

NATIONAL AIDS CONTROL ORGANISATION
Research and Development Division

**GUIDELINE FOR NETWORK OF INDIAN
INSTITUTIONS FOR HIV/AIDS RESEARCH
(NIIHAR)
Under NACP-III**

September 2008



NATIONAL AIDS CONTROL ORGANISATION

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare,

Government of India

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I. Need of constituting NIIHAR

India is a large multi-ethnic country with varying demographic and social framework. Any exploratory research conducted in a limited setting does not reflect country scenario. Similarly any intervention found effective in one setting may not work in another setting. It is thus important to develop protocol on relevant research areas and conduct a multi-centric study to draw valid conclusions for policy formulation and programme management and national and/or regional level. Secondly, there are good Institutions/Organizations that have potential to undertake quality research but their capacity is utilized locally in the absence of any backing at the national level. It is thus important to constitute a consortium of Institutions/Organizations having capacity to undertake research in health sector, specifically in the field of HIV/AIDS.

It was in this context that NACP-III indicates to constitute a national consortium of research Institutions for undertaking operational, epidemiological and bio-medical research in the field of HIV/AIDS. This consortium should have linkages with universities, ICMR, CSIR, DST, ICSSR and others stakeholders including donor organizations.

NACO has therefore, constituted the consortium named, 'Network of Indian Institutions/Organizations for HIV/AIDS Research (NIIHAR)' to facilitate and undertake operational research and evaluation studies in epidemiological, behavioural, social and bio-medical disciplines. This consortium will pool resources and expertise to conduct high quality, collaborative, multi-centric research that will help evidence based decision making on policy, management and evaluation of interventions.

II. Authority to constitute NIIHAR

The Director General, NACO will have the authority to take the decisions related to the Consortium.

III. Composition of NIIHAR

The Composition will be a multidisciplinary that includes operational, bio-medical, epidemiological, behavioural and social disciplines. The consortium membership will be limited to 20 Institutions/Organizations with due considerations on locations and distribution across the country.

Following criteria will be used to enrol the Institutions/Organizations as the member of the consortium.

- The Institutions/Organizations must have at-least five years standing.
- Institutions/Organizations having capacity and experience in conducting Operational Research in Health Sector, preferably in the field of HIV/AIDS.
- Track record on Research including publications, presentations, conferences.
- Infrastructure facilities and human resources available on full time/consultancy basis.
- Sound financial management (last three year audit report).

IV. Basic responsibilities of NIIHAR

The following will be the basic responsibility of Institutions under the Network.

- Participation in various studies including multi-centric funded by NACO.
- Participation in training and capacity building programs of Individuals and Institutions.
- Organizing Annual Conference on HIV/AIDS Research.
- Deputation of experts to NACO as short-term consultants based on specific requirements.

V. Procedure of Implementing Study

- Technical Resource Group (TRG) on Research and Development will identify priority areas year-wise based on the program needs/gaps to conduct the operational research and evaluation studies.
- TRG will recommend the Institutes among NIIHAR.
- One of the selected members will serve as Lead Research Institution/s (LRI) for the particular research/evaluation topic. The LRI should have technical skills and capacity to undertake the research activities and to influence policy makers to implement their recommendations.
- LRI will develop the detailed proposal including tools to ensure uniformity and submit to NACO.
- NACO will undertake primary examination and forward complete proposal to panel of expert/s of concerned field/subject for evaluation as per standard format (ANNEXURE-A) which include following parameters.

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| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p><u>I. Program Score:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance to NACP III strategies • Innovativeness • Replicability • Scalability • Community based approach | <p><u>II. Methodology Score:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity in the research question • Questionnaire/tool formulated • Duration of the study • Sampling design and size • Coverage of State/Districts | <p><u>III. Principal Researcher Score:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification • Relevant Experience • Publications |
|--|--|---|

- Based on these scores, Panel of Experts will give their final recommendations. In order to maintain the quality of research, it will be requested to all the subject experts to look the proposals critically.
- The panel of experts should comprise of three members of the respective discipline/s. TRG will be the final authority to take decision regarding the experts included in the panel and it should be ratified annually. Experts who are unable to send the comment/recommendation in the given time more than thrice are liable to be replaced. Two weeks time will be given for the assessment of proposal.
- Proposal recommended by the panel will be forwarded to NACO Ethics Committee (NEC) for ethical clearance, if require.
- Proposal recommended with revision will be returned to LRI for modification and re-submission.
- Minimum of three weeks will be required for submission to the member of NEC.
- After receiving the approval from the NEC, approved proposal will be sanctioned by NACO and forwarded for implementation.
- Field Process and Data Processing:
 - If there are more than one Institute involved in the study, LRI will have the responsibilities to coordinate and take decision regarding the field operations with the consensus of Participatory Research Institutes (PRIs). LRI will also be responsible to organize training of field staff, data analysis and report writing.

- Participatory Research Institutes (PRI) will be responsible for recruitment of field staff, data collection process, tabulation plan, data processing in continuous consultation with LRI and NACO.
- If during field operation, any adverse condition is faced, PRI will report to LRI for advice/action.

VI. Monitoring and Supervision

LRI will be responsible for maintaining high quality of research in close consultation with PRI/s. NACO/NEC will be empowered to designate officers/experts to the research work being carried out.

VII. Submission of Report

Draft report will be submitted by LRI to NACO, which will then be forwarded to the panel of expert for comments. These will be forwarded to LRI for incorporation. The LRI will be responsible for submission of the final report on time as given in the protocol.

The final draft report will be approved by the TRG.

VIII. Publication of Reports/Papers

NACO will have rights to have access to data and rights to display the salient findings in its newsletter, websites and also publish reports/papers or make presentations with due acknowledgement/joint authorship of the Institutes. NACO permission will require to publish research papers or presentations in conferences based on the report with joint authorship.

IX. Review and Feedback

NACO will organize periodic meetings of members of Institutions under NIIHAR for feedback, progress and further development of the Network. The feedback from network is essential not only for improvement but also for sustaining the quality of functioning.

Regular feedback through frequent exchange of information will also be coordinate by R&D Division, NACO.

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PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT SHEET

Reviewer:.....

Proposal ID:

Title of Proposal:.....

Program Score (Please circle)

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| Relevance to NACP III strategies | 1 (marginal) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (highly relevant) |
| Innovativeness | 1 (routine) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (highly innovative) |
| Replicability | 1 (no) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (highly replicable) |
| Scalability | 1 (low) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (highly scalable) |
| Community based approach | 1 (no) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (complete) |

Methodology Score (Please circle)

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|---|---|------------------------|
| Clarity in the research question | 1 (poor) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (well defined) |
| Questionnaire/tool formulated | 1 (poor) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (well formulated) |
| Duration of the study | 1 (inadequate) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (adequate) |
| Sampling design and size | 1 (inadequate) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (adequate) |
| Coverage of State | 1 (low) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (high coverage) |
| Coverage of District | 1 (low) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (high coverage) |

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Principal Researcher Score (Please circle)

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Qualification | 1 (poor) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (excellent) |
| Relevant Experience | 1 (poor) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (excellent) |
| Publications | 1 (poor) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (excellent) |

Recommendations:

1. Recommended
2. Recommended with revision (as specified in the remarks)
3. Not Recommended

Remarks: _____

Signature of the Reviewer

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FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

SECTION A: ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

| | |
|--|--|
| Code No of Project | |
| Title of the Project | |
| Name and Address of LRI | |
| NIHAR-ID of LRI | |
| Name, Address and NIHAR-ID of PRI/s | |

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| | Name, Designation and Contact details | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------|
| | Principal Investigator | Co-Investigators |
| LRI | | |
| PRI-1 | | |
| PRI-2 | | |
| PRI-3 | | |
| PRI-4 | | |

Please attach detailed Curriculum Vitae of all Investigators (with subject specific publication limited to previous 5 years)

SECTION B: PROJECT DETAILS

1. Title of the project.
2. Introduction
3. Objectives
4. Application of the work in the context of priorities of NACP III, may also be mentioned.
5. Present knowledge and relevant bibliography including full titles of articles relating to the project.
6. Preliminary work already done by the Institution on this problem, e.g. selection of subjects, standardization of methods, with results, if any.
7. Detailed research plan.
 - a) Hypothesis, if any
 - b) Sample size
 - c) Sampling design
 - d) Methodology
 - e) Statistical methods to be used
 - f) Tools
 - g) Quality Assurance
 - h) Format for report
 - i) Timeline
8. Facilities in terms of equipment, etc, available at the Institutions/Organizations for the proposed investigation.
9. Budget requirements (with detailed break-up and full justification):
 - (i) Staff
 - (ii) Contingencies
 - Recurring
 - Non-recurring (equipment, etc.)
 - Travel
 - (iii) Overhead charges