The National Research Foundation (NRF) Competitive Research Programme (CRP) Funding Scheme seeks to foster the formation of multi-disciplinary teams in Singapore to conduct cutting-edge research of relevance to Singapore. This allows a coordinated, integrated and sustained way of bringing together complementary research groups in Singapore to conduct high-impact research.

2. The CRP scheme funds use-inspired research based on scientific excellence, selected through a merit review process. The theme of the proposed research programme must be motivated by an important need or problem to be solved, rather than solely curiosity-driven.

3. The CRP 17th call will be launched on **01 March 2016, 9am**. This will be a general/open call for research ideas in all areas of science and technology, including Health & Biomedical Sciences (HBMS)\(^1\). Research ideas at the intersection of multiple disciplines are encouraged.

**Grant**

4. The CRP scheme offers funding support for programmes of varying size, up to a period of 5 years. Applicants are advised to provide a realistic budget with appropriate justifications that corresponds to the scope of work to be accomplished. Strong justification, in terms of economic or societal impact, is expected of proposals with budget exceeding S$5 million.

**Selection Process**

5. Interested applicants need to submit a mandatory CRP application form (Letter of Intent (LOI)), with all the sections duly filled by **11 April 2016**. NRF Expert Panels will shortlist promising ideas to be developed into **Full proposals**. Full proposals will be evaluated at the 2nd stage, by an international peer review and the CRP International Evaluation Panel (IEP).

The proposals will be evaluated based on:
- Significance of the problem to be solved
- Potential for scientific breakthroughs/Disruptive innovation
- Programme management & budget
- Technical competencies of research team
- Potential impact/relevance to Singapore

\(^1\) CRP proposals are open to all therapeutic areas in HBMS. Applicants are encouraged to focus on 5 therapeutic areas identified as national priorities: (i) Cancers; (ii) Cardiovascular diseases; (iii) Diabetes mellitus and other metabolic or endocrine disorders; (iv) Infectious diseases; (v) Neurological and sense disorders.
Eligibility

6. PIs from **publicly funded** Institute of Higher Learning (IHLs), Research Institutions and Medical Institutions in Singapore are eligible to participate in the call. Private sector and other entities can participate as collaborators.

7. Lead and Co-PIs at the point of application must fulfill the following requirements:

- Hold a primary appointment in a local publicly funded institution;
- Have a laboratory or research program that carries out research in Singapore;
- Be an independent PI with a track record of leadership ability in coordinating research programs and providing mentorship to research team, as well as having productive research outcomes; and
- No outstanding reports from other national grants.

Application

8. More details on the 17th CRP grant call will be made available from **01 March 2016, 9am** using the following web-link, and all applications must be submitted here: [https://rita.nrf.gov.sg/AboutUs/NRF_Initiatives/CRP17/default.aspx](https://rita.nrf.gov.sg/AboutUs/NRF_Initiatives/CRP17/default.aspx)

9. It is mandatory for all LOI to be submitted via RITA by **11 April 2016, 5pm**. Late submissions or submissions from individual applicants without endorsement from the Host Institution will not be entertained. Walk-in or email submissions will not be accepted.

10. Research support office from the IHLs, research institutions and medical institutions are required to ensure that information submitted by their researchers for the CRP grant complies with NRF expectations. The following will be rejected without review:

- Missing Letter of Intent (LOI)
- Wrong version of the LOI
- Incomplete applications (e.g. sections left blank, missing CVs, etc.)
- Late submission or endorsement on RITA by the respective Director of Research by the stipulated deadlines
- Revisions, made after closing date
- Unreadable text (e.g. small font size and tight para spacing)
- Resubmitted LOIs with minimal or no revision

11. Please note ORCID of PIs and Co-PIs must be listed together with their names in the LOI. Collaborators are highly encouraged to provide their ORCID in the LOI, if available.

Resubmission of Proposals

12. Resubmission of the same proposal is not encouraged, unless substantial changes have been made. Resubmitted LOIs must highlight clearly the portions where changes have been made. Those with minimal or no revision will be rejected without review. **Proposal resubmission** is allowed only once, unless invited to resubmit.

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2 Defined as minimum time commitments of 9 months per year.
Pointers for good proposals:

Good ideas are often undermined by missteps in proposal preparation. Most winning proposals have been polished repeatedly. Allow time to write and rewrite the proposal. Read the instructions and understand the evaluation criteria. Touch all the bases, and not just the ones you are comfortable with. Each section of the LOI must be filled up carefully, as evaluations are based on how well the guiding questions are answered. Don’t make work for the reviewers. Make it easy for the reviewers to get to your main points.

Pay heed to these general pointers in writing a good LOI:

i) Define the problem statement and build a compelling case for need upfront.

ii) Use clear, accessible language. Avoid insider jargon and acronyms. Use direct statement and active voice.

iii) Different parts of the projects need to be pulled together. Explain the basis for each sub-project and their linkages in fulfilling the overall programme objectives.

iv) Show that you have an understanding of the existing competition.

v) Do not inflate the budget. Ask for a budget that realistically reflects the scope of work that will be accomplished. Where possible, existing equipment/facilities should be leveraged.

vi) Clearly articulate the impact of your research and how you would achieve it. This should not be confused with output KPIs (e.g. no. of paper publications, no. of postdocs recruited etc.) Be specific and quantitative if possible on the research outcomes — e.g. 2X improvement, or a specific achievement, or a new concept etc.

vii) Root out inconsistencies in format, typos, misspellings, mislabelling of diagrams, grammar etc. Get another person to proof-read.

For further enquiries, please email NRF at NRF_CRP@nrf.gov.sg.