

Minutes of the IRDC Meeting held on Oct. 3, 2013.

Location: PBCEC Conference room, Time: 4pm. List of members present:

Dr.A.K.Chaturvedi (DORD, Chair), Dr.S.Panda (also for Dr.Y.M.Joshi), Dr. K. Subramaniam, Dr. Anjan K.Gupta, Dr. Anandh Subramaniam, Dr.Pratik Sen, Dr. A.K.Sharma (for Dr.Anirban Mukherjee), Dr.P.K.Panigrahi, Dr. Rajeev Gupta, Dr.Tarun Gupta, Dr. Joydeep Dutta, Dr. M.S.Kalra (for Dr.P.Munshi) and Dr. R.Vijaya (Convener).

1. Announcements by DORD

- (a) The next issue of the R&D newsletter has come out. It is a special issue on equipments procured under the CARE scheme in the last two years.
- (b) The User Committee of the Research Complex for providing the detailed design brief to the selected architect has been constituted by the Director.
- (c) Four proposals have been received for the Prabhu Goel (an alumni) Foundation supported initiative on Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV). They will now be sent for review.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed without any modifications.

3. Proposal on PG admission for Project Staff

The discussion from the last IRDC meeting was continued and the suggestions were approved.

4. Relaxation in admission requirements for the External Registration Programme (ERP)

An overview of the existing ERP guidelines was presented by Dr. S. Panda. He pointed out that the number of ERP registrations is too low and that there have been requests for relaxing the current eligibility criterion of two years employment with the sponsor. It was decided that for Ph.D. applicants from National Laboratories/centres of agencies such as DRDO, DAE, DoS, CSIR, DIT, DST, DBT, ICMR, and ICAR the eligibility requirement should be reduced to one year employment with the sponsor at the time of joining the Ph.D. program. Further, it was decided that the ERP should be extended to all departments (currently it is restricted to engineering departments only). Corrections in PG Manual are suggested regarding (i) referring to the applicants as “Research fellows from National Laboratories” and (ii) expanding the scope of ERP to Ph.D (Sciences).

5. Improved procedure for writing-off of equipments

Dr. Anandh Subramaniam presented the need for a more careful scrutiny before writing off of equipments so that equipments which may be useful for some other lab are not disposed off. It was agreed that all faculty members need to be sensitized about this. It was decided that DORD, along with two IRDC members will meet the Deputy Director to explain the attached note (*Annexure I*) and discuss the modalities required for improving the current process of the institute in this regard.

6. Lab development account (LDA) in R&D office

Convener, IRDC presented the report (*Annexure I*) of the sub-committee formed for proposing the guidelines of LDA in R&D office. The report was accepted.

7. Nucleation Grant

DoRD presented the report (*Annexure I*) of the sub-committee formed to recommend procedures to identify research areas / groups where IITK can make an impact. The guidelines were welcomed by the members and the report was accepted.

The meeting ended with a Vote of thanks to the Chair.

Annexure I

Improved procedure for writing-off of equipment

PREAMBLE

This document pertains to the possible improvements to the "write-off" procedures for equipment. Sometimes fully functional equipment (/parts thereof) and those which can be serviced easily, are "written-off", as these may not be useful to the current inventory holder. In most cases, an intimation of the same is not made to staff at large (e.g. via a mail to 'acadstaff' mailing list). The 'written-off' items are often auctioned at rates which are not commensurate with the value of the equipment (i.e. the bidder often quotes the price for the cost of the steel, plastic etc. in the equipment). This implies a severe loss of possible exchequer for I.I.T. Kanpur. In special cases where information of "write-off" of equipment is available thorough 'other' means, salvaging of such equipment poses procedural challenges (e.g. the equipment might have already been auctioned and may directly go from a lab to the bidder, the staff incharge on the inventory may not entertain persons interested in inspecting the equipment for possible use, etc.). It is currently difficult to retrieve written-off equipment from stores, as there is no organized way of storing such equipment.

REASONS THAT WE NEED TO SALVAGE SUCH EQUIPMENT/PARTS THEREOF

- Such equipment ("written-off") may be useful to other labs in the institute and if transferred to a prospective user can save considerable funds.
- Easy availability without going through purchase procedure- saving of time and effort
- Spares for many equipment are not available now- these old equipment can serve as resource for spares (e.g. in IISc Metallurgical Engineering department the old SEM was kept to serve parts for new SEM).
- Some important equipment can also have 'museum value' or teaching value- e.g. the science and technology museum at Munich houses many old electron microscopes, MPI-MF Stuttgart has a cross sectional view of an old TEM. Some of the equipment may be 'outdated' for research purposes, but local schools may like to use them for teaching.

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WRITE-OFF PROCEDURE

- Mail to acadstaff when such equipments are to be written-off.
- A link in the IITK Website where such items are archived (maybe for some limited period of time).
- Better utilization of 'dump space' in stores- i.e. use it for organized storage for a period before items are auctioned off (maybe for a limited period of time).
- 'Intelligent auctioning' where better price for items can be secured.

Report of the IRDC sub-committee on Guidelines for Lab Development Account (LDA) in R&D office.

Members: Dr. Tarun Gupta, Dr. Nachiketa Tiwari, Convener IRDC and DORD

The proposed guidelines are a follow-up on the DORD Office Order dated 28th June, 2012 on the Subject: Guidelines for the maintenance and use of major equipments funded by the Institute. LDA should be mandatory for any equipment, or a pool of equipments, costing more than Rs. 50 lakhs and fully or partially funded by the Institute. It is optional for equipments procured from sponsored funding.

To open an LDA, the first step will be the proposal of a user committee and the list of equipments to be covered under the proposed LDA. This will be approved by the DORD. A user committee is mandatory for all LDA projects (including those existing from the past few years). The proposal will be submitted by the faculty member who is in charge of the equipment (referred to as Convener) and should be forwarded by the Head of the department in which the lab is located. The user committee should be broad-based, and should contain at least three faculty members in addition to the Convener. It should have regular meetings (once a semester). User charges and the exemption policy for the usage of equipments covered under the LDA should be decided by the users committee. A log file must be maintained for every major equipment in the LDA. Whenever there is a shortage of funds in the LDA, the user committee can approach the DORD for maintenance, spares support and/or purchase of maintenance contract provided the equipment under consideration has multi-discipline user base and heavy usage. By 30th June of every year, the Convener should submit a one-page note to the DORD containing (a) the list of equipment under the LDA, (b) the user charges, if any, of each such equipment and (c) the list of equipments condemned (or removed from the list) since the previous year.

User charges for using the equipment can be transferred to an LDA from any project. The balance amount in projects can also be transferred to an LDA. The funds in an LDA can be used for maintenance of equipments (including AMC), purchase of subsidiary equipment or spare parts, consumables or contingent expenses, travel related to training and maintenance of equipment and manpower support for running the lab. The project will have flexible heads for expenditure. Any expenditure on Equipment purchase or Travel will require prior approval of the DORD. Any appointment under the LDA will not be extended beyond two years. The maximum duration of an LDA will be five years. At the time of closure, if the user committee recommends the opening of another LDA, the balance amount will be transferred to the new LDA or else it will be merged with R&D funds.

Report of the IRDC sub-committee for recommending procedures to identify research areas / groups where IITK can make an impact.

Members: Dr. Sumit Basu, Dr. Anjan K. Gupta, Convener IRD C and DORD

Vision: Catalyze the nucleation of research groups for any one or more of the following (a) high impact collaborative research (b) incubation of research centres or IDPs (c) providing technology leadership to the country. It is hoped that over a period of time, some of the successful groups nucleated will lead to the establishment of research centres or IDPs or the development of technology / products.

Proposed Guidelines:

Once every year, the DORD should invite internal proposals for IITK Nucleation Grant. A proposal should have a minimum of five members, will be of one year duration and should specify the deliverables expected at the end of the year. A long term vision statement will add value to the proposal. If the long term vision is technology / product development, the condition of minimum five members can be relaxed to three members. For administrative reasons, the group will have a PI; however, the role and expected contribution of each member of the group should be clearly spelt out in the proposal.

Funding up to Rs. 15 lakhs, with appropriate budgeting, can be sought to cover the cost of manpower (post-docs, project staff), organizing meetings or workshops, consumables, contingency and travel (including those of invited visitors). The proposals can seek some flexibility in the budget heads. It is expected that there will no equipment head in most of these proposals. However, if adequate justification is provided, some expenditure under the equipment head can be allowed.

The proposals will be evaluated and funded on the basis of the recommendations of a committee appointed by the director.

All successful groups will be eligible for a mailing list and hosting of a homepage on IITK servers.

There will be a review at the end of the year. Groups with good performance can seek a renewal with a fresh proposal. Some of the yardsticks for the annual review as well as for the evaluation of the deliverables outlined in fresh proposals could be: joint proposals for sponsored funding, joint publications or patents, joint supervision of UG/PG students, number of meetings/workshops, number of visitors, contribution of project staff, post-docs hired etc.

After the successful completion of one year, a group can approach the Institute for major infrastructure funding. Further, after the successful completion of two years, a group can approach the Institute for space.