

SB/S3/SURE/EC/01/2022

Dated the 1st September, 2022

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Constitution of Screening Committee on State University Research Excellence (SERB-SURE) under Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB).

The Science & Engineering Research Board (SERB) was legislated through an Act of Parliament viz. the Science and Engineering Research Board Act, 2008. Supporting basic research in emerging areas of Science & Engineering is the primary and distinctive mandate of the Board. State University Research Excellence (SERB-SURE) is a new scheme of the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) to augment the research capabilities in a structured way to create a robust R&D ecosystem in state universities and colleges by fostering collaboration for high-end research. In order to assist the Board in evolving, formulating and implementing the programme in newly emerging and frontier area of Science, Engineering and qualitative Social Science, a Screening committee for SERB-SURE has been set up.

2 The composition, terms of reference and the tenure of the Screening Committee are as follows:

A. Composition:

The composition of the Screening Committee for SERB-SURE scheme is attached at Annexure- I.

B. Terms of Reference:

The Screening Committee will have the overall responsibility for the development of the specific discipline assigned. The specific terms of reference are:

1. To evaluate individual R&D proposals received from the project investigators and screened it for next stage.
2. The Committee may meet as many times as possible to consider new proposals for screening purpose.
3. Special efforts may be made to ensure linkages with relevant industry wherever required.
4. Any other relevant activity to promote R&D in the discipline.
5. The Committee may co-opt / special invitees any other member, if required, with the approval of Secretary, SERB.
6. The Committee is guided by SERB Policy on Code of conduct and Conflict of Interest given in attached Annexure-II.



Contd..-2/-

C. Tenure of the Screening Committee:

The tenure of the Screening Committee will be two years from the date of issue of this O.M. or until further orders.

D. TA/DA/Honorarium:

The members of the Screening Committee will be eligible to avail TA/DA and Honorarium as admissible under rules of the SERB/Government of India and as amended from time to time for such meetings and work.

3. This O.M. is issued with the approval of Secretary, SERB.




(Satish Marar)
Under Secretary
11/9/22

To,

All concerned

Copy to:

1. Office of Secretary, SERB
2. Office of Director, SERB
3. Guard File.

Prof. M.S. Singh, BHU-Varanasi - **Chairman**

Chemical Science

Core Members:

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. Prof. Pratik Sen, IIT-Kanpur | - | Sub-Committee Chairman |
| 2. Prof. D. Ramachary, UoH, Hyderabad | - | Member |
| 3. Prof. Kamaljit Singh, GNDU, Amritsar | - | Member |
| 4. Prof. P. Thilagar, IISc., Bangalore | - | Member |
| 5. Dr. Rohit Sharma, PU, Chandigarh | - | Member |

Co-opted Members:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 1. Prof. Bimlesh Lochab, SNU, U.P. | - | Member |
| 2. Dr. Nidhi Gour, IU, Gujarat | - | Member |
| 3. Prof. Rina Ghosh, JU-Kolkata | - | Member |
| 4. Prof. Vaishali Sanjay Shinde, SPPU, Pune | - | Member |
| 5. Prof. V Padmavathi, SVU, Tirupati | - | Member |

Earth & Atmospheric Science

Core Members:

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| 1. Prof. Dilip Majumdar, Dib Univ., Dibrugarh | - | Sub-Committee Chairman |
| 2. Dr. Anirban Das, PDEU, Gujarat | - | Member |
| 3. Dr. Manju Rawat Ranjan, Amity University, Noida | - | Member |
| 4. Dr. Sadhana M Chatterjee, JU, Kolkata | - | Member |
| 5. Dr. Seema Singh, PU, Punjab | - | Member |

Engineering Science

Core Members:

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. Prof. R. Sarathi, IIT-Madras | - | Sub-Committee Chairman |
| 2. Prof. D. Mohan Lal, Anna University, Chennai | - | Member |
| 3. Prof. Manjuri Kumar, BITS, Goa | - | Member |
| 4. Prof. U P Singh, KIIT-Bhubaneswar | - | Member |
| 5. Prof. V. Balasubramanian, AU, Tamil Nadu | - | Member |

Co-opted Members:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 1. Prof. Amit Prakash Singh, GGSIPU, Delhi | - | Member |
| 2. Prof. Anitha H, MU, Manipal | - | Member |
| 3. Prof. Asis Mazumdar, JU-Kolkata | - | Member |
| 4. Dr. C. Anandharamakrishnan, CFTRI-Mysore | - | Member |
| 5. Dr. Roli Purwar, DTU, Delhi | - | Member |



Life Science

Core Members:

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Dr. K. Uma Maheswari, SAstra, Thanjavur | - | Sub Committee Chairperson |
| 2. Prof. R.P. Singh, JNU, New Delhi | - | Member |
| 3. Dr. Sanjay Gupta, TMC, Mumbai | - | Member |
| 4. Dr. Saroj Surendra Ghaskadbi, SPPU, Pune | - | Member |
| 5. Dr. Sridevi Ganapathi, MKU, Madurai | - | Member |

Co-opted Members:

- | | | |
|--|---|--------|
| 1. Prof. Maitrayee Dasgupta, UoC, Kolkata | - | Member |
| 2. Dr. Ashoke Sharon, BITS Mesra, Ranchi | - | Member |
| 3. Dr. Dipsikha Bora, Dib Univ., Dibrugarh | - | Member |
| 4. Dr. Ramalingam Suresh, TNAU-TNRRI, Tamil Nadu | - | Member |
| 5. Prof. Tapasya Srivastava, DU, Delhi | - | Member |

Mathematical Science (also QSS)

Core Members:

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| 1. Prof. Vinayak Vishnupant Joshi, SPPU, Pune | - | Sub-Committee Chairman |
| 2. Prof. Anuradha Sharma, IIIT, Delhi | - | Member |
| 3. Prof. Digambar Tukaram Shirke, SU, Kolhapur | - | Member |
| 4. Dr. Madhuri G Kulkarni, SPPU, Pune | - | Member |
| 5. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Khanday, KU, Kashmir | - | Member |



Physical Science

Core Members:

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| 1. Prof. D. Kanjilal, IUCA, Delhi | - | Sub-Committee Chairman |
| 2. Prof. Bivash Ranjan Behera, PU, Punjab | - | Member |
| 3. Prof. Palash Baran Pal, UoC, Kolkata | - | Member |
| 4. Dr. Shubra Singh, AU, Chennai | - | Member |
| 5. Prof. Sudeep Bhattacharjee, IIT, Kanpur | - | Member |

Co-opted Members:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 1. Dr. Chhagan Lal, RU, Rajasthan | - | Member |
| 2. Prof. Kaustubh R Priolkar, GU, Goa | - | Member |
| 3. Prof. Mahendra Singh Dhaka, MLSU, Udaipur | - | Member |
| 4. Prof. Sanjay Daga Dhole, SPPU, Pune | - | Member |
| 5. Prof. Sourangshu Mukhopadhyay, TUoB, Bardhaman | - | Member |

**POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR GRANT APPLICANTS
(INCLUDING COLLABORATORS), REVIEWERS & COMMITTEE
MEMBERS AND OFFICERS DEALING WITH VARIOUS PROGRAMS OF
SERB**

Issues of Conflicts of Interest and ethics in scientific research and research management have assumed greater prominence, given the larger share of Government funding in the country's R & D scenario. The following policy pertaining to general aspects of Conflicts of Interest and code of ethics, are objective measures that is intended to protect the integrity of the decision making processes and minimize biasness. The policy aims to sustain transparency, increase accountability in funding mechanisms and provide assurance to the general public that processes followed in award of grants are fair and non-discriminatory.

Definition of Conflict of Interest

Conflict of Interest means "any interest which could significantly prejudice an individual's objectivity in the decision making process, thereby creating an unfair competitive advantage for the individual or to the organization which he/she represents". The Conflict of Interest also encompasses situations where an individual, in contravention to the accepted norms and ethics, could exploit his/her obligatory duties for personal benefits.

1. Coverage of the Policy

- a) The policy shall be binding on persons applying for and receiving funding from SERB, Reviewers of the proposal and Members of Expert Committees and Programme Advisory Committees. The policy is also binding on all individuals including Officers of SERB and Committees involved in evaluation of proposals and subsequent decision making process.
- b) This policy aims to minimize aspects that may constitute actual Conflict of Interests, apparent Conflict of Interests and potential Conflict of Interests in the funding mechanisms that are presently being operated by SERB. The policy also aims to cover, although not limited to, Conflict of interests that are Financial (gains from the outcomes of the proposal or award), Personal (association of Family members) and Institutional (Colleagues, Collaborators, Employer, persons associated in a professional career of an individual such as Ph.D. supervisor etc.)

2. Specifications as to what constitutes Conflict of Interest

Any of the following specifications (non-exhaustive list) imply Conflict of Interest if,

- (i) Due to any reason by which the Reviewer/Committee Member cannot deliver fair and objective assessment of the proposal.
- (ii) The applicant is a relative or family member (including but not limited to spouse, child, sibling, parent) or personal friend of the individual involved in the decision making process.
- (iii) The applicant for the grant/award is an employee or employer of an individual involved in the process as a Reviewer or Committee Member; or if the applicant to the grant/award has had an employer-employee relationship in the past five years with that individual.



- (iv) The applicant to the grant/award belongs to the same Department as that of the Reviewer/Committee Member.
- (v) The Reviewer/Committee Member is a Head of an Organization from where the applicant is employed.
- (vi) The Reviewer of the proposal /Committee Member is or was, associated in the professional career of the applicant (such as Ph.D. supervisor, Mentor, Collaborator, Co-Investigator etc.)
- (vii) The Reviewer/Committee Member is involved in the preparation of the submitted research proposal.
- (viii) The applicant has joint research publications with the Reviewer/Committee Member in the last five years.
- (ix) The applicant/Reviewer/Committee Member, in contravention to the accepted norms and ethics followed in scientific research has a direct/indirect financial interest in the outcomes of the proposal.
- (x) The Reviewer/Committee Member stands to gain personally should the submitted proposal be accepted or rejected.

3. **Regulation**

The SERB shall strive to avoid conflict of interest in its funding mechanisms to the maximum extent possible. Self-regulatory mode is however recommended for stakeholders involved in scientific research and research management, on issues pertaining to Conflict of Interest and scientific ethics. Any disclosure pertaining to the same must be declared voluntarily by the applicant/Reviewer/Committee Member.

4. **Code of Conduct to be followed by the Applicant to the Grant/Award**

- (a) Conflict of Interest, if present in any form, must be declared by the applicant. If there is no Conflict of Interest, the applicant must explicitly certify that he/she has no conflict of interest in the application for the grant.
- (b) The applicant must refrain from suggesting referees with potential Conflict of Interest that may arise due to the factors mentioned in the specifications described above in Point No. 2.
- (c) The applicant may mention the names of individuals to whom the submitted proposal should not be sent for refereeing, clearly indicating the reasons for the same.

5. **Code of Conduct to be followed by Reviewers/Committee Members:**

- (a) All reviewers shall submit a conflict of interest statement, declaring the presence or absence of any form of conflict of interest.
- (b) The reviewers shall refrain from evaluating the proposals if the conflict of interest is established or if it is apparent.
- (c) All discussions and decisions pertaining to conflict of interest shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.



- (d) The Chairman of the Committee shall decide on all aspects pertaining to conflict of interests.
- (e) The Chairman of the Committee shall request that all members disclose if they have any conflict of interest in the items of the agenda scheduled for discussion.
- (f) The Committee Members shall refrain from participating in the decision making process and leave the room with respect to the specific item where the conflict of interest is established or is apparent.
- (g) If the Chairman himself/herself has conflict of interest, other members of the committee shall elect a Chairman, and decision shall be made by the Chairman in consultation with other Members, and Member Secretary of the Committee.
- (h) It is expected that a Committee member will not seek funding from a Committee in which he/she is a member. If any member applies for grant, such proposals will be evaluated separately outside the Committee in which he/she is a member.

6. **Confidentiality:**

The Reviewers and the Members of the Committee shall safeguard the confidentiality of all discussions and decisions taken during the process and shall refrain from discussing the same with any applicant or a third party.

7. **Code of Conduct for Officers dealing with Programs in SERB**

While it is mandatory for the program officers to maintain confidentiality as detailed in point no. 6 above, they should declare, in advance, if they are dealing with grant applications of a relative or family member (including but not limited to spouse, child, sibling, parent) or personal friend or thesis/ post doctoral mentor or stands to benefit financially if the applicant proposal is funded. In such cases, SERB will allot the grant applications to the other program officer.

8. **Appellate authority:**

Secretary, SERB shall be the appellate authority in issues pertaining to conflict of interest and issues concerning the accountability of the decision making process. The decision of Secretary, SERB in these issues shall be final and binding.



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF VARIOUS COMMITTEES OF SERB
(Taken verbatim from the code of Conduct framed by the Department of Biotechnology for its Task Force)

The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) has a duty to ensure that applications for funding are assessed expertly, objectively and impartially. Review by an appropriately constituted body is therefore seen as an essential element of the Board's decision-making process. For this reason, the SERB delegates authority to make recommendations on applications to an appropriate Committee. The Board relies heavily on the willingness of members of the scientific community to spare their time to serve these Committees and the Board is most grateful to them for the vital role they play in our grant-giving process.

The Board also recognizes the need to protect and preserve the integrity of the SERB's grant-giving processes, and is concerned that members may not breach confidentiality and provide information on Committee discussions, decisions and recommendations especially when under pressure. To assist the Committee members in these situations, a code of conduct has been drawn for members of the Committee.

For the protection of Committee members and referees, and to ensure the impartiality of the peer-review process, if the SERB has reason to believe that a member of the Committee has breached the following code of conduct, then he/she may be asked to resign his/her membership. If concerns of a serious nature come to the attention of the SERB, then an enquiry will be constituted and appropriate decisions taken.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. The Committee Members should be aware that:

1.1 They are covered by the Policy on Conflicts of Interest¹ and are required to declare any interests that could give rise to a conflict of interest with their role.

1.2 They should not offer advice to members of the scientific community on the SERB/Committee policy and practices; for example on application procedures - all such enquiries should be directed to the concerned staff of the SERB.

2. **The following are strictly confidential:**

2.1 The Committee discussions (including the reasons for decisions to fund or not to fund)

2.2 The contents of papers and correspondence relating to applications for funds.



3. The Committee members and referees also have a right to expect that their comments will be treated in confidence; by both the SERB staff and other members of the Committee and that the granting system is fair.

For these reasons:

3.1 Papers and electronic material must be kept secure and not disseminated to anyone but those authorised.

3.2 Proposals must not be discussed with others (including colleagues at the member's organization or referees) without prior permission from the SERB.

3.3 Members of the Committee must not inform applicants of the composition of the Committee or details of other applicants. The SERB will provide details or make them publicly available as appropriate.

3.4 Members of a Committee are not allowed to submit research proposals to the Committee as Principal Investigators or Co-Principal Investigators. Proposals from members will be reviewed by another relevant committee, with *ad hoc* experts if necessary.

3.5 Members of the Committee who are connected² in any way with a proposal must absent themselves from the meeting room during discussion of the proposal and must not be informed of the outcome of the application by other members. The SERB will inform them in due course if appropriate.

3.5 No aspect of the deliberations of recommendations regarding the proposal should be discussed with applicants, either in connection with their own proposal, or any other proposal. Feedback will be provided as appropriate by the SERB, in accordance with the practice. Should this feedback require interaction with a Committee member, this will be conveyed to the member by the SERB. The Committee members should refuse any requests for information or for an explanation of how a particular decision was reached – all such requests must be referred to the SERB

3.6 The identity of referees must be kept confidential at all times.

