ICAR-Natural Resource Management Division

Call (Second) for Proposals under Competitive Research Grants under National Mission on Natural Farming

Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare strives to support the Natural Farming (NF) research and ideas which are of problem solving in nature and address the issues of regional importance under Competitive Research Grant (CRG) under National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF). The Natural Resource Management (NRM) division of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi through Project Coordination Unit at ICAR-Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research, Modipuram has been identified to undertake research on NF through Competitive Research Grants in the identified thematic areas. The Mission supports inter-institutional and intra-institutional multi-disciplinary research projects on NF.

Interested Central and State Agricultural Universities, ICAR Institutes and other government recognized institutions, non-governmental organizations, engaged in research are eligible to apply. Practicing farmers, community-based organizations such as FPOs, PACS, etc. that have formal collaborations with recognized research institutions or government bodies in the field of agricultural research, development or extension scientists from recognized institutions in India are invited to submit proposals. The proposals are to be submitted online through https://nmnfresearch.in/. The last date for submission is **11 February 2026 (5.30 PM).** Relevant guidelines and proforma for submission are attached and also available in proposal submission portal. In case of any clarification, please write to nmnf.nrm@gmail.com.

Project Coordination Unit
ICAR-Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research, Modipuram under
ICAR-Natural Resource Management Division
E mail: nmnf.nrm@gmail.com

Competitive Research Grants under National Mission on Natural Farming

General Guidelines

1.	Name of the programme	**Competitive Research Grant (CRG) for furthering Natural Farming**
2.	Sponsor of the programme	Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, implemented by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research
3.	Aim of the programme	To support collaborative, on-field, multidisciplinary research for wider spread of Natural Farming in India
4.	Nodal Unit	Project Coordination Unit, ICAR-Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research, Modipuram under NRM Division, ICAR
5.	Mode of Submitting Research Proposals	The Nodal Unit shall invite research proposals periodically as per the budget availability. The duration of research proposals will be coterminous with the Mission period.
6.	Eligibility Criteria for the Proposals	

A. All the Central and State Agricultural Universities, ICAR Institutes and other government recognized institutions, non-governmental organizations, engaged in research are eligible to apply. Practicing farmers, community-based organizations such as FPOs, PACS, etc. that have formal collaborations with recognized research institutions or government bodies in the field of agricultural research, development or extension are also eligible.
B. The proposal submitted needs to engage with the specific priority research area(s) of NF (As given in **Annexure- 1**).
C. Priority will be given for those projects which are collaborative, on-field and address multiple questions and are conducted on farmers' fields. Research on validation of single practices or assessing their individual impacts in conventional research designs may be avoided considering the integrity of various components in agroecology.
D. The period of the project should be of maximum 2 years duration (coterminous with the scheme period).
E. The proposal should demonstrate novelty in its approaches/ methodologies to tackle the prioritized issue(s)/problem(s) and suggest solutions for NF.
F. Proposals should be submitted in the prescribed proforma (As given in **Annexure-2**) and not in any other format.
G. No proposal will be considered in absentia of the scientist(s)/ researchers who is proposing the proposal.
H. Equipment/Implements may be considered in the proposal and only the minor equipment/ implements should be proposed on a requirement basis. For the field and lab support, however, laborers and YPs/ interns can be proposed. Master/Doctoral student fellowship can also be proposed in place of YPs.
I. One scientist/ researcher can apply for one project as PI only.
J. Preference to Scientists/ researchers having experience in NF research will be given.
K. Multi-disciplinary/ inter-institutional projects in farmers' field with participatory approach will be preferred.
L. Short-term and low budget (< Rs. 15 lakhs) with output and outcome-oriented projects will be preferred. Maximum Budget ceiling: Rs 50 lakhs per project for 2 years.

M. Field experiments should have a minimum experimental area of one acre in plains and half acre in hilly areas.
N. Research may also explore agro-ecological interactions among the elements of a landscape and its production systems.

Objectives of Competitive Research Grant

1. To Identify and develop solutions for emerging challenges in states implementing NMNF
2. To further enhance scientific collaboration and research to advance Natural Farming in India.
3. To study and refine farming practices across diverse agro-climatic zones to optimize productivity and sustainability.

Concerns of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

The rights on any intellectual property shall be vested in the ICAR, who shall be the absolute and full owner. All issues of IPR, Commercialization, Data Management and Publication, if any arise from the project, will be dealt with as per prevailing set guidelines of ICAR/ DARE/ Government of India.

Annexure-1

Thematic Areas for Natural Farming Research

S.No.	Research Theme	Objective statement	Areas of Research	Remarks
1	Crop Productivity, Quality & profitability	To evaluate the comparative productivity, quality, and profitability of natural farming (NF) practices across different agro-climatic zones.	• Comparative study on productivity, quality & profitability • Impact of NF practices on the • Nutritional content of produces • Impact of NF protocols of soil management • Impact of NF on pest, insect & disease management • Impact on water management • Multivariate cropping models, agro-biodiversity enhancement practices etc. • Assessment of pest & disease incidences in NF, and its impact	In the major cropping systems across all agro-climatic/ agro-ecological zones. Quality analysis in standard and recognized labs at SAUs/ICAR institutes
2	Soil health and fertility	To assess the effects of NF practices on physical, chemical, and biological properties of soil and the potential for soil carbon sequestration across agro-climatic regions	• Impact of NF on soil health and fertility - physical, chemical and biological properties • Assessment of Nutrient mineralization pattern / nutrient & hydrological cycles in NF • Nutrient and water budgeting • Soil fertility and yield relationship • Potential for Soil carbon sequestration in NF	All the Agro-climatic regions

3	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	To evaluate the role of NF in enhancing pollinator diversity, above and below-ground biodiversity, natural enemies, and ecosystem services and to develop frameworks for ecosystem service analysis	• Impact of NF on pollinator diversity and other biodiversity elements • Comparative study on below and above ground biodiversity including natural enemies • Framework for analysis and role of NF in maintaining ecosystem services such as pest control, nutrient cycling etc. & its impact • Impact of nature positive solutions for NF in farming systems	All the Agro-climatic regions
4	Climate Change mitigation and adaptation	To develop frameworks for analyzing carbon footprints, emissions, and energy use in NF systems, and assess their resilience to climate variability across agro-climatic zones	• Framework for C footprint analysis, emissions and energy use • Climate resilience assessment of NF	Agro-climatic zones
5	Multivariate cropping & Round the year green cover	To study the effectiveness of off-season practices and strategies for achieving year-round green cover in NF systems.	• Assessment of multivariate cropping during summer/fallow in irrigated region • Pre-monsoon Dry sowing (PMDS) in rainfed areas, • Round the year green cover etc. in different agro-climatic regions • Assessment of different resource conservation strategies of NF	All the agro-climatic regions
6	Socio-economic and policy	luate the socio-economic viability, nefit analysis, influence on agri-s opportunities, gender roles, nity ownership, local food systems, p potential zones for NF adoption	• Comparative assessment of economic viability, cost benefit analysis, agri-business scope etc. • Socio-cultural influence of NF such as gender roles, community ownership etc. • Impact of NF in local food systems, and nutrition etc. • Mapping of potential zones/ crops adaptive under NF	

Annexure-2

Format for Submission of Proposal under Competitive Research Grant (CRG), National Mission on Natural Farming

1.	Title of the project	:	
2.	Priority area (**As given in Annexure 1**)	:	
3.	Participating Institutes 3.1 Name of the Lead/Sole Institution (in case of single-institution project proposal): 3.2 Name(s) of the Cooperating Institution (s) (*Please give the details of the lead/sole and cooperating institutions as **Appendix 1** in the given format*)	:	
4.	Lead and Participating Scientists/ researchers 4.1 Name and designation of the Principal Investigator (PI) i.e., the Lead Scientist from the Lead Institution and the Cooperating Investigators (CIs) from the lead Institute 4.2 Name(s) and designation(s) of the Principal Investigator (s) CCPI) i.e., the Lead Scientist (s) from the Cooperating Institution(s) *(Please give a brief CV of the PI and each CCPI and the area of specialization of each PI and CCPIs in the prescribed format **(Appendix 2)***	:	
5.	Please give brief review of previous activities/research with references in the thematic area applied for	:	
6.	The knowledge/research gaps identified on analysis of the status of research in achieving the objectives (give in brief as bullet points)	:	
7.	Objectives of the project (not more than Four) 7.1 Objectives 7.2 How the achievements of these objectives will add to scientific advancement and/or technological advancement in the Natural farming under which the project is being proposed?	:	
8.	*Give the list of research questions (maximum 4) to be answered through the project.*	:	
9.	State your working hypothesis of your project based on the analysis of gaps	:	
10.	Give the details of planned activities under each Objective with time frame (not more than four in any objective).	:	
11.	Give detailed technical programme (Attach as a separate file, **Appendix 3**)	:	

12.	Give the major expected outputs of the project	:	
13.	Give activity against year-wise deliverables, outputs and outcomes in the proforma **(Appendix 4)**	:	
14.	a.Total budget (**Rs. in lakhs)** b. Summary budget tables	:	

14.1 Breakup of budget for each of lead/cooperating institutions year-wise

Particulars	Institute 1	Institute 2	Total
Non-Recurring			
Recurring			
Total (A+B)			

14.2 Consolidated project budget year wise

#	Particulars	Year 1	Year 2
A.	Non-Recurring		
B	Recurring		
C	Total (A+B)		

15. Number of YPs/Interns/Fellowships required for the lead and each participating institution.

Sl. No.	**Institution**	**YPs/Interns/ Fellowship**	**Nos.**	**Remarks**
1.				
2.				
3.				

16. Institute-wise list of equipment. Please give detailed justification for any equipment costing more than 1 lakh. *Please note that in the list of equipment only the generic name of the equipment is allowed and no brand name or name given by any company will be accepted. It will be the sole responsibility of the PI to ensure that this directive is followed.*

Lead institution

Sl.No.	Name of the Equipment	Cost in INR		Justification
1.				
2.				
3.				

Partner 1

Sl.No.	Name of the Equipment	Cost in INR		Justification
1.				
2.				
3.				

Partner 2

Sl.No.	Name of the Equipment	Cost in INR		Justification
1.				
2.				
3.				

17. Scaling potential of technologies generated from the project including economic analysis.

18. Please describe if any IPR issues are involved in using a technology/ methodology/ product/ knowledge/ software/ equipment used for research under the proposed project. Please certify that the ICAR will be free from any IPR related encumbrances if the proposed project is approved and funded under the CFH.

19. Certificate and Signature with date (PI and the CCPIs)

20. Recommendations from the Head of the institutions from Lead and Partner institutions. (Signature and seal with date of the Heads of institutions/organizations involved in the Project as Lead and Partner institutions)

21. Registration Certificates/ MoU /evidence of collaboration with institutions *etc* in case of NGO, Practicing farmers, community-based organizations such as FPOs, PACS, etc.

22. Recommendation from the State Nodal Officer, NMNF

Appendix 1

Details of Lead / Cooperating Partner Institution

1. Name:
2. Name of institution/organization:
3. Full address with phone number/fax number/e-mail id and website:
4. Full address, designation, phone number/fax number/email id of the head of the institution/organization
5. Research Staff strength (category - wise of the institution (as on Particular date))
6. Mandate of the Organization/institution
7. Please give five achievements of the institution/organization in the field or closely related field of the project proposal as bullet points with appropriate references.
8. Number of scientists & technicians working in the field or closely related field of the sub-project (Scientist and Technicians)
9. How many multi- institutional research projects are currently in operation in the organization/institution
10. Certificate from Head of the Institution

Appendix 2

Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the PI/CCPIs

Photo

1. Name:
2. Designation:
3. Address:
4. Mobile
5. E-Mail
6. Date of Birth:
7. Name of Institute / Centre Postal Address of the Institution with Tel/ Fax No. and Email:
8. Highest Qualification:
9. List not more than 5 major achievements in the past five years
10. List not more than 5 best publications in the past five years
11. List the 5 best publications in the whole career i.
12. List not more than two best multi-disciplinary/multi-institution projects in which the scientist has worked as PI and as partners
    i. Name of the Project
    ii. Partner Institutions

12. List of projects in which the PI/CCPI has been working right now. Provide each of the following information.
    a) Name of the project:
    b) Objectives:
    c) Working as PI/CCPI/CoPI:
    d) The objectives/activities that you are handling (in not more than 5 bullet points):
    e) Source of funding and total budget:

Declaration

Certified that information given above are correct to the best of my knowledge.

(Name and Signature of PI/Co-PI)

Appendix-3

Detailed technical programme

Appendix 4

Year-wise Activities, Deliverables and Outcomes

(Please give only two years in one page)

Objective	Activity	Year 1		Year 2	
		Deliverable	Outcome	Deliverable	Outcome