

United States -India Science & Technology Endowment Fund (USISTEF)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is the U.S.-India Science & Technology Endowment Fund?

The governments of the United States of America (through the Department of State) and India (through the Department of Science & Technology) have established the **United States-India Science & Technology Endowment Fund (USISTEF)** for:

1. the promotion of joint activities that would lead to innovation and entrepreneurship through the application of science and technology.
2. The aim of the Fund is to support and foster joint applied R&D to generate public good through the commercialization of technology developed through sustained partnerships between U.S. and Indian researchers and entrepreneurs.

The U.S.-India Science and Technology Endowment Fund activities are implemented and administered through the bi-national **Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF)**.

2. What are the objectives of the US-India Science & Technology Endowment Fund?

Through a competitive grants program, the Fund selects and supports financially promising joint U.S.-India entrepreneurial initiatives that address the theme of “*commercializing technologies for societal impact.*” These initiatives can originate from government, academic, non-governmental or commercial entities, and any combination thereof provided they focus on applied R&D, incorporate a business plan and proof of commercial concept, and have significant sustainable commercial potential.

3. What is “societal impact”?

For the purposes of the Endowment Board, societal impact could involve ideas that help poorer or underserved sections of society. Technologies might significantly reduce the cost of a product or service or enhancing the scope of service at the same cost, benefitting the poor or citizens in remote areas (either in the U.S. or India). Or they might create new solutions improving the quality of life for people in either country.

4. What are the program areas for support?

The program is divided into two broad categories:

1. **Healthy Individual:** Supports the development of affordable biomedical devices, diagnostic/preventive/curative measures, or food and nutrition products to improve health. (Drug development and clinical trials are not eligible activities in this category.)

2. **Empowering Citizens:** Supports efforts to reduce the digital/technology divide. This could include information and communication technologies with societal impact in areas such as water, agriculture, financial inclusion, and education, among other areas.

5. Can I apply for two or more different projects in each category?

Yes.

6. What are the eligibility criteria for applying for the Fund?

Proposal must have:

- A. A minimum of one partner from each country (U.S. & India). Bi-national teams applying to the Endowment Fund will work together to commercialize technologies for societal impact. The bi national teams can include:
 - i. Incorporated companies including start-up companies; or
 - ii. Non-incorporated entities; or
 - iii. Individuals or consortia from academia, government laboratories, non-government R&D institutions
- B. Each bi-national team must include at the time of application an entrepreneurial (small-scale as opposed to large-scale) entity that will receive a portion of the grant and take the technology to the market. If partners are planning to form a new venture to commercialize the technology, the proposal should include planned incorporation date and the amount of grants requested for the new entity.
- C. The proposal must address a problem, which has a mass societal impact.
- D. The project should be scalable and sustainable with a business model.
- E. The applicants must make a credible case that the proposed technology can enter the market within 2-3 years.

7. Can small businesses apply for funding under this program?

Yes. Any individual/entity could apply as part of a bi-national team meeting mandatory application requirements (see question 4 & 6 above).

8. Can an application be made for amounts smaller than those indicated in the release?

Yes.

9. What is the percentage of the project cost covered by the grant, and does any investment need to be committed by the researcher and/or the company?

The applicant bi-national team must work out these details and clearly state their plans when submitting their proposal. If awarded, the amount of grant would be decided by the Endowment Board/IUSSTF and might not be equal to the total amount requested in the proposal.

10. Are equipment, fabrication costs, salary, consultancy, etc. covered under this grant?

Yes. Request for grants can be apportioned under these heads with proper justification. However salary for the project coordinators and already existing staff would not be covered. Staff costs clearly attributable to the project could be covered (include those of existing staff who are reassigned to project duties). The decision of IUSSTF/ Endowment Board regarding the budget and its breakup would be final.

11. How is the confidentiality of the project submitted guaranteed?

A Non-Disclosure Agreement will be signed by all reviewers with IUSSTF to ensure confidentiality. The Endowment Board and its Executive Secretariat IUSSTF will not enter into non disclosure agreements with outside parties.

12. Are consortia acceptable?

Yes. Any individual/entity as part of bi-national team could apply as long as its proposal has the essential commercialization potential (in the specified areas) and meets all the mandatory application requirements (see question 4 above).

13. Is inclusion of an academic partner in one or both countries required?

Inclusion of an academic partner would be acceptable though not mandatory. All identified partners of a team, including academic ones, must have clearly specified roles and contributions.

14. At what stage of development do the devices need to be before submission? Can the submission include something that is mostly finished, or is some amount of basic R&D allowed?

The proposed technology must have potential towards commercialization within two to three years.

15. What are the expectations after the Grant has been awarded?

The grantee will be required to meet pre-determined milestones and grants will be released upon meeting each milestone. Milestones and grant instalments will vary depending on the individual grantee's plan.

16. Would you fund grants to service companies which are based in the United States or India?

Pure service companies that do not leverage significant science and technology innovation will be unlikely to be considered favourably.

17. Are the grants applicable to companies that have already developed a technology and looking at marketing / expanding the Indian / U.S. geography with the help of the grant from the USISTEF?

NO. Pure trading activities are not considered for the grant

18. If the Indian or US partner is a subsidiary or a relative. Do we need to disclose that in the proposal?

Yes, in case the applicant's Indian / US partner is related as a group company or relative, the same needs to be clearly disclosed in the proposal.

19. Are these grants given as debt or equity into the companies?

No, these awards will be pure grants and are not structured as either debt or equity investments.

20. Can I get more information about the process, timeline, formats of the USIST Endowment Fund?

All the information regarding the process, timeline, formats, terms and conditions of the Endowment Fund may be accessed from the website www.usistef.org.

21. What if I need a partner, who can help me or join hands for my application ?

With our new feature of "Find a partner for collaboration", the applicant can now post his requirements that he intends to find in a new partner. Also, he/she can find a suitable partner by filtering through the uploaded profiles based on Country and Category. Please visit <http://iusstf-ef.ciieindia.org/viewprofiles> for more details. Please go through the **Terms and Conditions** before Submitting and/or Searching for a profile under "**Find a partner for collaboration**".

***Note:** The FAQs will not cover every possible contingency in terms of technology, allowable expenses, or other specifics. The Board may refine its position on specific details about various issues. Applicants are encouraged to submit the best possible proposal, bearing in mind that binational benefits, scale, social impact and rapid commercialization are priorities of the Board.*

It may be noted that the U.S.-India Science and Technology Endowment Board may change the processes, timeline, formats and Terms and Conditions at any time without specific notice. The decisions of the U.S.-India Science and Technology Endowment Board will be final.