National Technology Innovation Framework (NTIF)

Information and Communication Technology Agency

Results Area:
Promote Tech Research, Development, Innovation & Commercialization

ICTA Innovation Lab Grants

Guidelines for Proposal Submission

September 2021

ICTA
ideas actioned

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICTA	-	Information Communication Technology Agency
NTIF	-	National Technology Innovations Framework
UMIC	-	Upper Middle-Income Countries
RDIC	-	Research ,development, Innovation & Commercialization.
LKR	-	Sri Lankan Rupees
R&D	-	Research and Development
UGC	-	University Grants Commission
OVAA	-	Other Value-Added Activities
PAT	-	Performance Achievement Template
PI	-	Performance Indicator
HEI	-	Higher Education Institute
CDEO	-	Chief Digital Economy Officer
TDF	-	Technology Diffusion
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. The National Technology Innovations Framework (NTIF) will pay heed to expand, diversify and develop the Technology Innovation sector in Sri Lanka to drive economic growth through Technology based industrial and service sector activity and to support the program of digitizing Sri Lanka

2. The ICTA Innovation Labs program will be partially funded by the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) through the Ministry of Technology, **via the Technology diffusion project pipeline.**

Result Area : Promote Tech Research, Development, Innovation & Commercialization

3. The research output of Sri Lankan universities needs to be increased urgently. Research products from Sri Lankan universities are totally inadequate for an aspiring UMIC. For instance, the number of citations per million inhabitants shows Sri Lanka at 138 positions out of 204 countries, which is three times less than Thailand and five times below Malaysia. While South Korea had about 4,500 patent applications per million inhabitants in 2014, Sri Lanka had only 22. The promotion of research is an urgent next step in the development of higher education in the country. First (3.1), research is a vital and distinguishing mandate of universities. Second(3.2), academics engaged in research are more likely to be more up-to-date in their discipline than other academics, and therefore better able to teach the current state of knowledge to students. Third (3.3), research and innovation make a vitally important contribution to economic and social development in the modern world. This benefit is maximized when research outputs lead systematically to practical and relevant applications for economic development.

4. Objective results are stated in point 3: To develop a culture of research, development, innovation and commercialization in (RDIC) higher education institutions.

Promote Research, Development and Innovation

5. GoSL currently funds research through a variety of institutions. However, the allocation for research has historically been small, with Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) considerably below 0.25 percent of GDP, which is the lowest category among countries in international classifications. The Government will scale up RDIC resources, with assistance from the Bank operation, to promote academic research and develop research and innovation activities and Industry collaboration in higher education institutions under two sub-result areas.

- **Sub-Result Area 3.1: Promoting academic research through ICTA innovation lab facilitation grants**

ICTA technology diffusion strategy is seeking to promote academic research through a system of competitive grants to facilitate innovation labs that will carry out collaborative research projects with industry involvement. There will be three types of grants under different scales based on the capital investment requirement for the Lab equipment.

- **Innovation commercialization enhancement**: ICTA innovation lab grant will be facilitated to eligible higher education institutes under the agreement of these facilities being incorporated for Industry enhancement and with clear pipeline for commercialization of research, development and innovation.

6. This document aims to provide *Guidelines for the Proposal Preparation for the* ICTA innovation labs grant.

7. Grants will be made available in 3 rounds, the first round commencing in 2021 according to the Table 1 below.

Table 1: Grant types and the grant size of ICTA Innovation labs

Grant Type.	**2021**		**2022**		**2023**	
	Value per grant Rs (Mn)	No. of grants	Value per grant Rs (Mn)	No. of grants	Value per grant Rs (Mn)	No. of grants
Type A Innovation labs with low capital investment for lab equipment requirement	**-**	**-**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**5**
Type B Innovation lab with mid-range capital investment for lab equipment	**-**	**-**	**10**	**2**	**10**	**2**
Type C Innovation labs with High capital investment for lab equipment requirement	**-**	**-**	**20**	**1**	**20**	**1**

The Grant will be funded percentage wise in the following manner,

- 40% percent of the grant Value – Initial stage after the evaluation process and the legal documentation
- 50% percent of the grant Value – This will be funded after the PO process once the invoices are produced the ICTA
- 10% percent of the grant Value – The final Portion of the grant will be funded only after the goods have been received

2. ELIGIBILITY

13. This competitive grant scheme under ICTA Innovations lab is open to all 15 public universities including affiliated institutes under the purview of the UGC, and non-state HEI's subject to meeting the following eligibility criteria.

- The University or Institute should consist of an adequate infrastructure facility to support planned innovation Lab establishment.

14. The proposals should be submitted by the eligible Higher Education Institutes, with the endorsement of the Head/s of the relevant Department/s, Dean/s of the relevant Faculties or/and Director of the Institute (where relevant) and the Vice-Chancellor/s. There is no limit on the maximum number of proposals that can be submitted by any University. However, the *maximum number of ICTA innovation Lab grants awarded to any University including the affiliated Institutes will be limited to 1 under this grants program).*

15. Funds will be provided, using a competitive mechanism for ICTA Innovation labs grant and only the winners of the competition will benefit from this grant scheme.

3. ELIGIBLE ACTIONS

16. The ICTA innovation lab grants are available for the Higher Education Institutes to build an industry partnered research culture and to commercialize their research findings along with a suitable entrepreneur or firm/industry. In all University Business linkages, researchers from a University/Institute under the UGC must be the team leader. Multidisciplinary research commercialization teams and collaborations with researchers from industry are encouraged, however payments for the industry researchers are not allowed under the grant.

17. The ICTA Innovation lab grant facilitates and encourages the eligible research commercialization teams to commercialize an outcome of a research with a partner such as an industry in order to improve the economic, social and cultural development of Sri Lanka. It is expected that the output and outcome of the commercialization activities undertaken by the research commercialization teams will ultimately be beneficial to the Sri Lankan Society.

18. The ICTA innovation lab grant will support properly designed strategic and comprehensive proposals submitted with a three-year plan by eligible University/Higher Education Institutions. The focused research area and the sub research areas must be identified in the proposal. The functionality and the commitment of the active stake-holders must be indicated in the proposal. All proposed actions should align with the ICTA National Innovation framework. ICTA innovation lab operations should be solely the responsibility of eligible University/Higher Education Institutions.

19. Innovation and creativity in formulating the outcomes is encouraged and will be highly valued. It is essential that all the actions in Table A are designed to achieve the desired performance indicators.

20. Relevance and impact of the commercialization output of the proposed actions to the society and socio-economic development of Sri Lanka should be clearly identified in the proposal. It is important to highlight the necessity to utilize the funds from a loan to the Government of Sri Lanka towards this commercialization endeavor. Where relevant, significance of the commercialization endeavor to the other industries, human resource development in R&D, institutional strengthening in R&D infrastructure, benefits to the national and international researchers and general public, and benefits to the undergraduate programs should be described in the proposal.

4. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

22. The budget ceiling for different grants under ICTA Innovation Labs are given in Table 1 and the total grant size should not be exceeded by the planned actions. The eligible expenditure to be proposed for the ICTA Innovations Labs will be limited to the items described in the following sections under four cost components: **Goods (Upto 100% of the total), Services (Non-Consultancy Services (maximum 20% of the total)]**

23. **Other Value-Added Activities (OVAA) Should not be considered for the grant budget and this falls under the operation cost that has to be supported by the eligible HEI. OVAA are "workshops and training" and "other items"** such as the normal expenditures of the research program, such as repair, maintenance of equipment and technology and research vehicles; fuel; office supplies; utilities; consumables; bank charges; advertising expenses; salaries, allowances, and benefits of research staff such as research assistants and survey enumerators; communications; travel of staff for research purposes such as surveys (including per diems and accommodation where needed).

24. It is strongly recommended that the proposal must consider the institutional commitment and capacity in proposing the budget and not merely based on the allowable ceiling. The proposals should be accompanied by strong arguments and justifications of their needs.

I. Goods

25. Goods to be procured under the ICTA Innovation Labs include all relevant research materials such as equipment, furniture, books, journals, software etc. which will be kept at the eligible HEI. Support for procuring new research equipment may be proposed under this component. Furniture purchases are limited to items required to produce the research output of relevant program winners. Purchase of vehicles is not allowed, however specialized vehicles for research purposes (such as tractors) are allowed.

II. Services

- **Consultancy services: This is not included in the grant** A person provides an intellectual service. There is a knowledge dimension in his/her service. E.g. an expert to train researchers/staff to use high end equipment or a patent attorney to protect intellectual property.

26. Payment for national and international consultants will be not be eligible under this grant

- **Non-Consultancy Services:** Services that are not intellectual services.

27. These are contracted on the basis of performance against a measurable physical output, where performance standards can be clearly identified and consistently applied. For example: aerial photography, satellite imagery, mapping and similar operations. These services are eligible under the clause of providing proof of direct contribution towards the said research study.

III. Works- This not included in the grant but this cost and proof funds to support this cost or the proof of availability of an adequate physical facility should be provided by the eligible HEI

28. Any sort of civil works to be carried out under the project, construction, renovation or expansion/upgrading of the existing physical facilities, construction of new buildings and Purchase of land should not be considered under the grant budget.

IV. Other Value-Added Activities (OVAA) – This not included in the grant but this cost and proof funds to support this cost should be provided by the eligible HEI

29. OVAA include the relevant expenditures of the research project such as reasonable costs of goods and services required for day-to-day implementation, including maintenance of equipment, fuel, office supplies, utilities, consumables, office maintenance, payments for research staff such as research assistants and survey enumerators, activity coordinators, academic and research staff travel and accommodation and per diems, advertising expenses, communications expenses, travel of academic and research staff and associated per diems. The percentage of OVAA cannot be included in the grant. A plan for the first year must be clearly identified in the PAT/PP preparation. At the beginning of the second and third years plans for the expenditures under the OVAA should be clearly identified for the respective years.

30. The monthly allowance of full time Post- Doctoral fellows, Research Assistants and Project Assistants will also come under this category.

31. Other actions that fall under this component are as follows.

- Operational assistance (for example technical assistance, labor cost)
- Research expenses such as questionnaire preparation, translation
- Any expenses on focus group discussions and field work
- Short term domestic training (i.e. less than 3 months)
- Registration and tuition fees for M.Phil./ degree programs at the University where the research is being done
- Fees for publishing research papers
- Attending Workshops/Seminars for dissemination of research findings
- With a completed working paper submitted to the OMST, a researcher can attend an overseas conference to present a conference paper once.
- Framework contracts (where suppliers are identified at the beginning of the year to provide the chemicals required, at an agreed price, during the course of the year) for workshops seminars purchases of consumables
- The costs of conducting training, workshops, seminars, symposia.
- Out-sourcing scientific analysis (such as chemical and biological analysis) and relevant professional services (such as language editing)
- Local travelling, field visits/excursions directly relevant to the proposed actions

NOTE:

Foreign partnerships are possible under the grant however cost must be borne by the Eligible HEI and the foreign party.

Any external Industry partnership is allowed under this grant with conditions that do not affect the functionality of the ICTA Innovations lab process.

Eligible HEI has the full authority to obtain external funds to support operation cost of the ICTA Innovations Lab facility.

5. BUDGETING GUIDELINES

32. In allocating funds under the ICTA Innovation labs, all eligible Higher Educational Institutions can obtain funds according to Table 1.

33. This grant can only be used to for facilitation of the Innovations lab excluding the infrastructure. The operational cost of the facility is the sole responsibility of the eligible higher education institute. Institute has the full authority of obtaining external funds for research/project-based requirements that will be carried out in said facility.

34. Expected yearly operational cost and the planned source of funds should also be included in budget details to provide a clear understanding & proof that the eligible institute has the capacity to support the LAB facilities required running cost.

35. The proposed budget should be based on solid rationale reflecting an efficient and effective use of proposed investment as well as the existing resources to achieve the objectives. The proposals should be accompanied by strong arguments and justifications of their needs.

6. STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSAL AND SCORE CARD

35. *Proposal should be limited to a maximum of 20 pages (excluding appendices)* printed in A-4 paper format, single spaced using Times New Roman font (font-size – 12). Each sub heading below from 1-14 must start on a new page.

Layout of the Proposal

1. Title page
2. Research team
3. Cover Letter
4. Lab Proposal summary
5. Current Research facilities
6. Statement of need
7. Research Interest
8. Methods and strategies
9. The potential research product/process/idea with commercial value
10. Time sequence of project actions
11. Economic/market and social relevance
12. Budget justification
13. Institutional commitment
14. Implementation schedule
    - Table A – Proposed Budget
    - Table B – Overall Activity Plan
15. Performance Indicators
    - Table C – Overall Performance Indicators
16. Appendices:
    - Table D.1 - Research output
    - Table D.2 - Physical Resources Available for the proposed Research
    - CV of the in-charge faculty

36. The proposal and the scoring system for each individual criterion are given below to enhance the transparency of the evaluation process. The italicized font differentiates the instruction to the reviewer from the proposal writer.

37. Each criterion will use a five-scale scoring (1-5) where 1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent. The score will be multiplied by its respective weight factor to get the total weighted score.

1. Title page

   University/Institute:
   Area of specialization of the proposed lab (identify the relevant classification in the first three columns and fill in column four of the Table in Annex4):
   Grant type: ICTA Innovations Lab

   Name/s of reviewers who should NOT review the proposal can be incorporated in the cover letter

2. Research team
   Information of the Innovations Lab In charge and all involved faculty in the Innovation labs project (Give the following information on this section and attach the curriculum vitae of the members of the research team.)
   Name:
   ID number:
   Present position/designation:
   Highest academic qualification:
   Field of specialization:
   Official address:
   Mobile Phone:
   Email address:
   ……..…
   ……..……
   …….
   Reviewer: Rate the competence of the research team (Weight factor = 10)
   1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent

3. Cover letter
   Cover letter addressing funder should be included in this section.
   Information Communication technology Agency Sri Lankan

4. Lab Proposal Summary
   Please provide an overview of the funding proposal. All identified the crucial points in each of the latter sections should be included in the summary section. Introduction of the proposed innovation lab, the general description of the research focus & the University/ Departments history
   ……....
   .....
   .....
   Reviewer: Rate the comprehensiveness of the Lab Proposal Summary
   (Weight factor = 5)
   1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent
5. Current research facilities
   Descriptive detail of the available facilities in the field of interest.
   ……
   ……
   ……
   Reviewer: Rate the functionality and capacity of the current research facilities (Weight factor = 10)
   1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent
6. Statement of need
   Elaborate the purpose and the requirements of funds with supportive examples
   ……
   ……
   ……
   Reviewer: Rate the criticality of the requirement
   (Weight factor = 5)
   1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent

7. Research interest
   Provide a Descriptive detail of the Main Research area sub research areas that will be focused in the ICTA Innovation Lab
   If your needs statement describes what issues there are, your goals and objectives section need to tell the grantee what your solutions are
   ……
   ……
   ……
   Reviewer: Rate the comprehensiveness and compatibility of the research focus with the ICTA goals & the GDP impact.
   (Weight factor = 15)
   1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent

8. Methods and strategies
   Describe the methods and strategies that will be carried out to achieve the milestones very clearly and rationally in full detail.
   ……
   ……
   ……..
   Reviewer: Rate the appropriateness & practicality of the methods and strategies (Weight factor = 20)
   1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent

9. The potential research product/process/idea with commercial value
   Explain the research solutions and state any outcomes arising from previous research such as patents, publications or communications. **Proposals which have research solutions leading to export-oriented goods, works or services or in-country service with foreign exchange earning potential and proposals with direct impact to countries economic research index growth will be given preference and a higher value grant**.
   Note: "Foreign exchange earning potential" is different to "foreign exchange saving potential". The research team must make every effort to show that there is innovation. Research geared towards import substitutions will not be considered for additional funds.
   Describe the technology developed (product or process) and how you intend to commercialize. Commercially viable ideas with either industry/public policy partner are acceptable as well.
   ……
   ……
   ……
   Reviewer: Rate the strength of the relevant research product/process and rationale for the commercialization. Check whether it can lead to an export oriented good or a service with foreign exchange earning potential
   (Weight factor = 15)
   1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent

10. Time sequence of milestones

    Give a time sequence of all milestones with outline estimation in months for the next three years. Describe how the milestones will be set up and how it will be implemented under a given time frame. Limit the number of actions to five. *(Table. B – Milestone map)*

    …….
    …….
    ……..

    Reviewer: Rate the chance of success of the project (Weight factor = 5)
    1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent

11. Economic/market and social relevance

    State the economic and social relevance of the outcomes of the commercialization on the wider scientific community and /or society. Include targeted beneficiaries as well as indirect benefits to the stakeholders. This should include showing how any expensive equipment can be used for undergraduate teaching and learning. State very clearly how the benefits of this commercialization support the University through royalty or other benefits. This section can be supported by the IP policy of the University or the license agreement. The proposal will demonstrate the commitment of research team and the university to use the part of income generated to maintain and develop the equipment & facilities required for future research work.

    ……..
    .....
    .....
    .....

    Reviewer: Rate the value of the commercialization endeavor (Weight factor = 5)
    1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent

12. Budget justification

    Indicate a budget justification for your actions (include justification for any consumable, equipment, etc.). Proposal should show how adequate physical space can be made available for equipment. Where relevant state how resources from the collaborative party/industry will be used for the implementation of the proposed commercialization.

    ……..
    .....
    .....

    Reviewer: Rate the value for money and check whether the proposal is technically and financially fully self-contained (Weight factor = 10)
    1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =Excellent

13. Institutional commitment

    Include a statement from an academic administrator (Head or Dean) on the provision of available facilities and faculty cooperation to conduct this research & agreement to carry out all operational cost relevant to ICTA Innovation lab functionality. Include a statement from the UBL on the willingness towards the commercialization endeavor

    ……...….
    …….
    ……

    Recommendation of the Head/s of the relevant Department/s,
    Recommendation of Dean/s of the relevant Faculties or Director of the Institute (where relevant)
    Recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor
    Certification by UBL/ HEI commercial support
    Reviewer: Institutional commitment is a necessary requirement for funding. Proposals under ICTA Innovation labs should have the endorsement of all relevant academic administrators

14. Implementation Schedule

    In order to undertake the research project successfully the following implementation schedule will be followed as in Table A and B.

    Proposed Budget (Table A) and Overall Activity Plan (Table B)

    The Proposed Budget (Table A) and Overall Action Plan (Table B) should be presented using the standard formats given in pages 13 and 14.

Person in Charge

Provide the name and designation of the researchers(s) who will be mainly responsible for the implementation of the actions (not for sub action) given in Table A and B.

Table A. Proposed Budget

Action	**Sub-action**	**Estimated Cost (LKR)**			
		GOODS	**NON- CONSULTANCY SERVICES**	**OTHER VALUE-ADDED ACTIVITIES (OVAA)**	**TOTAL**
1. ……	1.1				
	1.2				
	1.3				
	Subtotal for action 1				
2…….	2. 1				
	2.2. ……				
	2.3				
	Subtotal for action 2				
3. …….	3.1……				
	3.2. ……..				
	Subtotal for action 3				
4……...	4.1				
	4.2				
	4.3				
	Subtotal for action 4				
5…….	5.1				
	5.2				
	Subtotal for action 5				
Total					

- Actions are processes of the research project helping the researches to achieve the output and finally an outcome
- Do not exceed more than 5 actions

Table B. Milestone map

Milestones	**Main Actions**	**Year 1**				**Year 2**				**Year 3**			
		Q1	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**
1. ……..	1.1.. ……												
	1.2. ……												
	1.3. ……												
2……..	2.1. ……												
	2.2. ……												
	2.3												
3. …….	3.1. ……												
	3.2. ……												
4……..	4.1……..												
	4.2……												
	4.3……												
5…….	5.1……												
	5.2…….												

15. Performance Indicators

38. A set of key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used to assist implementation and to measure the overall performance of the Innovation Lab. Each KPI will be measured annually using the Template depicted in Table C. Baseline values should be zero. The KPIs relevant for the ICTA innovation Lab should be identified on the contents of the focused research area. If an indicator is not relevant to the focused research area, write zero without changing the format. The achievement of the targets specified in Table C. will be considered for the future funding under the ICTA Innovation labs.

Table C. Overall Performance Indicators

No.	Indicator	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Final	Evidence*
1	Number of national patents	0					
2	Number of international patents	0					
3	Number of industrial designs	0					
4	Number of national copyrights (e.g. software)	0					
5	Number of international copyrights (e.g. software)	0					
6	Number of national trademarks	0					
7	Number of international trademarks	0					
8	Number of Patent Cooperation Treaties (PCTs)	0					
9	Number of license agreements	0					
10	Number of assignments of IP	0					
11	Number of commercialized products	0					
12	Number of industry-university linkages (MOU or agreements) for research commercialization	0					

Baseline, end of year 1-3 are not cumulative. The final KPI is cumulative

* Evidence need not be filled at the proposal writing stage

During implementation, the performance indicators will be divided into the following categories and will be monitored quarterly.

(a) **Outcome indicators**. These are indicators which mark the completion of a research and innovation activities and are (mainly) in the control of the research team. For instance, a research activity completed and submitted for a patent, copyright or trademark, can be an outcome. A research activity completed and negotiations commenced for license agreements can be another outcome.

(b) **Final results indicators**. These are indicators which mark the full completion of a research commercialization activities, but which contain elements that are outside the control of the research team. For instance, the obtaining of a patent, copyright or trademark, can be a final result. This is because obtaining a patent, copyright or trademark, can take considerable time, and is based on factors outside the control of the research teams.

(c) **Downstream benefits**. These are direct spin-off benefits from the research activities. For instance, if a patent were to generate an income, either as a one-time fee, or a stream of royalties, this would be a spin-off benefit. If a research activity were to enable a company to introduce a new or improved product to the market that would also be a downstream benefit.

At the stage of proposal writing, the teams are asked to propose only the outcome indicators which they plan to achieve under this Innovation labs program. Final results indicators and downstream benefits will be monitored during implementation as it is of importance to us, the university and the country.

13. Appendices

39. The proposal should contain the Table D.1 and the Curriculum vitae of the In charge faculty as appendices. *Any other tables/graphs that the proponent may consider relevant could also be included as appendices.*

Table D.1 Research output of the Innovation lab research team (During the years 2017-2021)

Output	**ICTA Innovation Lab In charge**	**Faculty member 1**	**Faculty member 2**	**Faculty member 3**	**Total**
Number of research papers published in peer reviewed indexed international journals					
Number of research papers published in peer reviewed local journals					
Number of other research publications (monographs, books, book chapters etc.) by reputed publishers					
Number of research papers presented and abstract published in academic symposia, professional bodies at international level					
Number of research papers presented and abstract published in academic symposia, professional bodies at national level					
Number of journals where the researcher served as an editor					
Number of applications for patents, copyrights, trademarks, industrial designs etc.					
Number of innovations commercialized					

CV of the Innovation Lab research team

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

40. The score card given in section 6 will be used by the reviewers during the desk evaluation and the discussion stage. The weight factor for each criterion is given within parentheses in section 6.

41. The scoring system for each individual criterion will use a five-scale scoring (1-5) where 1=very poor, 2 =poor, 3 =fair, 4 =good, 5 =very good. Reviewers' guidelines for five scale scoring is given in Annex 5.

42. The score will be multiplied by its respective weight factor as given above to obtain the actual mark and simple addition of the actual mark for each section will give the total mark.

Section	Weight (A)	Score (B)	Actual mark (A x B/5)
Research team	10	4	8
Lab Proposal Summary	5	3	3
Current Research facilities	10	3	6
Statement of need	5	3	3
Research Interest	15	4	12
Methods & strategies	20	4	16
Potential Research product/Process/ Idea	15	3	3
Time sequence of project actions	5	3	3
Economic/market and social relevance	5	3	3
Budget justification	10	4	8
Total score	100		65

8. SELECTION PROCESS

43. The necessary conditions for a proposal to be shortlisted for progression to the "discussion stage" are:

(a). The assigned score for each criterion is at least 3 (at least 60% of the points allotted for each criterion) **AND**

(b). The total score is at least 65 out of 100

44. The decision for the discussion stage will however depend on the number of available grants for the ICTA Innovation Labs Grants.

45. Overall final score for the proposal would be the average total scores of the desk and discussion stage. Evaluation in the discussion stage will also follow the same format given in section 7.

Final Score = (Desk evaluation actual mark + Discussion stage actual mark)/2

The final score must be a minimum 70 out of 100 to receive a grant under ICTA Innovation Labs.

The evaluation of proposals will be based on the following principles:

- Objectivity
- Fairness
- Competence
- Professionalism
- Relevance to the results to be achieved.

46. The evaluation process should not only be fair and objective, but also should be transparent. Any potential conflict of interest should be prevented in the evaluation process. Hence, the reviewers will not be allowed to evaluate the proposals submitted by his/her own university or the institution that he/she has affiliation, financial connection or personal interest. It has to be emphasized that the process is subjected to be observed and audited by independent, external experts at a later stage.

47. An Expert Panel will be convened for the proposal evaluation of ICTA innovation Lab Grant. The expert panel will consist of 5 members inclusive of technical experts in the relevant domains selected and appointed by ICTA.

- ICTA representatives -2
- Domain Expert
- Independent researcher
- Technology expert

48. The evaluation process for the ICTA Innovation Lab Grants involves the following steps:

- Submission of the Proposal
- Eligibility Check
- Desk Evaluation of the Proposal
- Discussion stage for clarifications and re-evaluation
- Recommendation of the ICTA Innovation Lab Grant Academic Review Panel
- Ratification by the ICTA

49. *Proposal Submission* should be done according to the Guidelines for submission of ICTA Innovation Lab Grants proposals, and the structure of the proposal is described in Section 6 of the Guidelines. The proposal should not exceed 20 pages excluding appendices.

50. *Eligibility Check* of the proposing research team will be conducted by the ICTA TDF team and those satisfying the eligibility criteria will be forwarded for desk evaluation.

51. *Desk Evaluation of the proposal* will be undertaken by ICTA Innovation Lab Grants Academic Review Panel (ARP) selected and appointed by ICTA Internal team. The ARP will consist of minimum 5 members including *subject specialist, Technical expert, Independent researcher & ICTA representatives.* During the desk evaluation, the reviewers evaluate the proposals according to a set of evaluation criteria stated in this document and recommend whether to proceed or not to the next stage (i.e. Discussion stage). *Reviewers' Comments* will be provided to all the proponents who have submitted proposals.

52. Subsequent to the desk evaluation, discussion will be conducted with the selected proponents by the ARP that has conducted the desk evaluations of the proposal. The discussion stage would normally be conducted through face-face onsite evaluation or video conferencing considering the current situation.

53. The main objective of the *discussion stage* is to assess the conformity between the written proposal and the ground realities, and to draw a final judgment on the feasibility and implement ability of the proposed plan.

In particular, the discussion stage has the following objectives:

- Validation of the information included in the proposal;
- Clarification of issues that would have arisen during the desk evaluation;
- Check the availability of researchers throughout the project duration;
- Assessment of the University/Institute/Faculty commitment to the project actions outlined in the proposal.

54. Accordingly, during the *discussion stage,* the reviewers will look for documentary and factual evidence to verify information provided in the proposal. The review report will act as guides during the discussion stage. The reviewers will make suggestions/recommendations for further improvements of the proposal so as to ensure that the proposal would be able to achieve the anticipated objective of ICTA Innovation Lab Grants of the NTIF. A feedback will be provided to the proponent during the discussion stage.

55. *Recommendation* to award a grant will be made by the ARP based on all the above evaluations, and this will be forwarded to the ICTA Innovation Lab Grants Board for ratification.

56. *Ratification* of the ARP recommendation will be done by the ICTA ratification at aggregate level. The ICTA Ratification team will consist of CEO, CDEO, Director TDF & legal officer of ICTA. Reviewers will be invited for clarifications if required.

9. SCHEDULE FOR THE COMPETITION

ACTIVITY	TO BE COMPLETED
Invitation for proposals	November 2021
Submission of Proposals	**December 31 2021**
Desk Evaluation	January 2022
Discussion stage	January 2022
Announcements	February 2022
Legal Activities	March 2022
Award of Grants	April 2022

10. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

57. The proposal with a covering letter signed by Head/s of Department/s, the Dean of the relevant Faculty/ies or/and Director of the Institute (where relevant) and the Vice-Chancellor must be received by the ICTA on or before the stipulated deadline. Submission can be done in person, by messengers or by mail. The same proposal in PDF format should be uploaded to the Document Management System (DMS) provided by ICTA on or before the deadline. Only one file can be uploaded to DMS. Proposals received beyond the deadline or sent by email will not be considered. Proponents are strongly encouraged to submit their proposals in advance of the deadline.

58. The document should be uploaded to a folder created under the HEI name. link to the folder should be shared via email to tdf@icta.lk with the subject as 'ICTA Innovation labs Grant proposal submission'

Link-
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1S7dJFEwd1zXwEgrQWXNvvbwsk5SQHQik?usp=sharing

59. Proposals should be submitted in their final form, and no additional written or other information will be considered in the evaluation process.

60. One copy of the proposals should be submitted to the following address.

ICTA Innovation Lab Grant Program- Technology diffusion
Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA)
490 R. A. De Mel Mawatha, Colombo 3.

11. MONITORING & EVALUATION

60. The Monitoring and Evaluation are indispensable elements for the effective and efficient implementation of the ICTA Innovations Lab program. The development of a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) program will ensure that waste of resources during ICTA Innovations Lab implementation is prevented, that the project will stay on course, and that the objectives are achieved within the planned time frame. Moreover, it will set the standards for a LAB implementation, where transparency and accountability are comprehensively incorporated into the functionality. Further, a sound M&E system would undoubtedly benefit the management in particular and all stakeholders in general. Hence, the ICTA Innovations Lab program will pay a special attention to the M&E process.

61. Monitoring and Evaluation of ICTA Innovation Labs will be conducted through the following means:

1. Submission of Half Yearly Progress Reports
2. Annual Evaluation

The *Half Yearly Progress Monitoring* is aimed at consolidating the progress achieved during the previous six months. Each HEI receiving a ICTA Innovations Lab grant is expected to submit *Half Yearly Progress Reports* to the ICTA Tech Diffusion team according to a format provided. This report shall include brief descriptions on major achievements, obstacles encountered and actions taken to overcome them. The available data on Performance Indicators (PIs) should also be included in the report. Further, the deviation(s) from the Performance Achievement Template (PAT), if any, should be discussed in detail and reason(s) for such deviations should be established with certainty. The ICTA TDF (Technology Diffusion) Team will assess the degree of compliance by the grantee to the PAT. If and when there is a major deviation, the ICTA TDF Team may recommend the necessary corrective action(s).

62. The *Annual Evaluation* will be conducted at the end of each year against a set of indicators. The primary objective of the *Annual Evaluation* is to recommend the corrective measures that need to be taken before entering the next year of implementation. The *Annual Evaluation* will produce a concrete recommendation affecting process implementation for the future. In particular, the *Annual Evaluation* will

- assess the grantee's capacity to implement the plan;
- assess the feasibility to achieve the performance indicators within the given time frame;
- recommend the necessary corrective action to improve performance.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Reviewer's Guidelines for Five Scale Scoring

	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Average/fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)
University strength on proposed area – competence of the research team	There are at least 10 publications and/or innovations and 5 staff members in the focused research area (peer reviewed indexed journals, books or monographs published by recognized publishers)	There are at least 8 publications and/or innovations and 4 staff members in the focused research area (peer reviewed indexed journals, books or monographs published by recognized publishers)	There are at least 6 publications and/or innovations and 3 staff members in the focused research area (peer reviewed indexed journals, books or monographs published by recognized publishers)	There are at least 4 publications and/or innovations and 2 staff members in the focused research area (peer reviewed indexed journals, books or monographs published by recognized publishers)	Less than 3 publications and/or innovations and 2 staff members in the focused research area (peer reviewed indexed journals, books or monographs published by recognized publishers)
Lab Proposal summary-comprehensiveness of the lab proposal	Clearly and concisely states the grant proposal requirement & focus highlighting the sub section crucial points.	adequately communicates the grant proposal requirement & focus highlighting the sub section crucial points.	Briefly communicates the grant proposal requirement & focus with unclear sub section points.	Vaguely summarizes the grant proposal purpose with unclear sub section detail.	The grant proposal requirement & focus is not identified nor clearly communicated.
Current Research Facilities-functionality and capacity of the current research facilities	Provides a detailed description of the available facilities and their functionalities with a comprehensive list of all available equipment	Provides an adequate description of the available facilities and their functionalities with a list of only the major equipment	Provides a brief description of the available facilities and their functionalities	Very brief and inadequate description of the available facilities and their functionalities	Does not provide an description of the available facilities and their functionalities

Statement of need- criticality of the requirements	The requirement is very clearly communicated with relevant evidence and justifications.	While not very clear, the requirement is adequately communicated with relevant evidence and justifications.	The s requirement is marginally identified and briefly communicated with relevant evidence only being briefly presented.	The requirement is very vaguely identified and elusively communicated and evidence is not provided.	The requirement is not identified nor clearly communicated.
Research Interest- Comprehensiveness and the compatibility of the research focus with ICTA goals and GDP impact	Main Research area and the sub research areas are clearly identified and supported with relevant justifications	While the main research is clearly identified and supported with justification the sub research areas do not have a justification.	Though the main research area is identified supported justification is briefly communicated	The focused research area is not supported with a justification	The focused research is not clearly communicated
Methods and strategies- appropriateness & practicality of the methods and strategies	Describe the methods and strategies that will be carried out to achieve the milestones very clearly and rationally in full detail.	Adequately describe the methods and strategies that will be carried out to achieve the milestones clearly and rationally.	Describe the methods and strategies that will be carried out to achieve the milestones, rationality briefly.	Vaguely describe the methods and strategies that will be carried out to achieve the milestones, rationality is not clear.	Does not describe the methods and strategies that will be carried out to achieve the milestones well and rationality of relevant selections are not presented.
The potential research focus/ process/ idea with commercial value.	Provides a thorough explanation about the context for the research study. The solution is very clearly communicated with relevant evidence and justifications.	Provides an adequate explanation about the context for the research study. While not very clear, the solution is adequately communicated with relevant evidence and justifications.	Provides a brief explanation about the context for the research study. The solution is marginally identified and briefly communicated with relevant evidence only being briefly presented.	Very brief and inadequate explanation about the context for the research study. The solution is very vaguely identified and elusively communicated and evidence is not provided.	Does not provide an explanation about the context for the research study. The solution is not identified nor clearly communicated.

Time sequence of milestones- the chance of success of the project	Very clearly describe how the actions will be set up and how it will be implemented under a given time frame.	While not very clear, adequately describe how the actions will be set up and how it will be implemented under a given time frame.	Briefly describe how the actions will be set up and how it will be implemented under a given time frame.	Does not sufficiently describe how the actions will be set up and how it will be implemented under a given time frame.	Does not describe how the actions will be set up and how it will be implemented under a given time frame.
Economic/market and social relevance - the value of the commercialization on endeavor	Outcomes of the project have a high relevance and impact on the economy and society.	Outcomes of the project have considerable relevance and impact on the economy and society.	Outcomes of the project have some relevance and impact on the economy and society.	Outcomes of the project has little relevance and impact on the economy and society.	Outcomes of the project have a no relevance and impact on the economy and society.
	Has very clearly indicated the potential significance of the research output to the industries and to the HEI.	Has adequately indicated the potential significance of the research output to the industries and to the HEI.	Has briefly indicated the potential significance of the research output to the industries and to the HEI.	Has vaguely indicated the potential significance of the research output to the industries and to the HEI.	Has not indicated the potential significance of the research output to the industries and to the HEI.
Budget justification - the value for money and practicality of the proposal	Very clearly indicate the budget justification for all equipment, focused research area related expense & data analysis etc. in the proposal.	Adequately indicate the budget justification for all equipment, focused research area related expense & data analysis etc. in the proposal.	Briefly indicate the budget justification for all equipment, focused research area related expense & data analysis etc. in the proposal.	Budget justifications for the items in the proposal are not clear or valid.	Budget justifications for the items in the proposal are not presented.

*Note: "Foreign exchange earning potential" is different to "foreign exchange saving potential". The research team must make every effort to show that there is innovation. Research geared towards import substitutions will not be considered for additional funds.

Annex 2. ICTA – Key Steps