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Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education
(An Autonomous Body of the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India)
P.O New Forest Dehradun 248006

Dated the 1st September, 2010

To,

Directors of all ICFRE Institutes

Sub: ICFRE Guidelines for conducting RAG Meetings – Regarding.

Sir,

With reference to above subject, in order to have a standard uniform practice for effective conduct of RAG meetings and encourage maximum technical discussions and inputs from expert RAG members; a guideline (copy enclosed), prepared in view of the best practices followed in different ICFRE institutes in holding of Past RAGs and experiences of other reputed research institutions, has been approved by DG ICFRE.

Institutes are requested to endeavor to hold RAG meeting in best possible professional manner and have the maximum utilization of the annual opportunity of holding RAG and the expertise of participating expert RAG members.

Yours faithfully,

Encls: ICFRE Guidelines

(Ashish Rawat, IFS)

ADG (Research Planning) ICFRE

ICFRE Guidelines for Presentation of Research proposals, other ongoing research issues before the RAG and General directions for the conduct RAG Meeting

The Research Advisory Group meeting (RAG) is mandated to give direction and bring in innovation in the research to be carried out by the institutes. The role of RAG is critically important, particularly to consider and advise on regional research requirements. Therefore, the opportunity of holding the RAG meet is to be utilized to the fullest, in terms of not only the review of progress of ongoing projects, and examination and prioritization of new project proposals of the institute, but also to take maximum benefits of the expertise of RAG members on the following important research issues.

- To decide shedding and divesting non-viable programmes/ projects.
- To consider and advise on regional requirements.
- To ensure balance among research themes of the institute.
- To evolve a balance portfolio of project among disciplines of the institute.
- To utilize the expertise of all scientists i.e. works to be distributed in such a manner that productive potential of researchers may be utilized.
- To review State-wise distribution of field work.

To meet these very important objectives, it is crucial to compose and hold the RAG of the Institute in the best possible professional manner. The RAG must be a composite group, representing the jurisdiction of the institute, of regionally / nationally eminent, subject area expert as well as the noticeable representative of research stakeholders in society, and the professionally reputed representative of research managers.

I. Selection of RAG Members:

Extraordinary care should be taken in identifying such outside RAG experts who can competently and productively contribute on the basis of their expertise. The RAG members should be prominent professionals with a wider, relevant and demonstrated experience in the important forestry research and related developmental research issues of the connected regional importance and should meaningfully represent the realistic spectrum of stakeholders of forestry research. Besides, they should also have experience of the national or international forestry development issues.

In this context, it becomes pertinent to strive and continuously identify the best possible experts. The selection of members should match the mandated research of the institute. To bring the genuine mixture of understanding of science and grassroot work experience, particular attention and efforts are needed in the choice of member representative of voluntary institutions, progressive farmers, NGOs, forest based industries.

Therefore the Institutes, having greater access in its area of work , must give the corresponding in-depth attention in the selection of the representatives of the Progressive farmer/ NGO/ JFM/Local government, grass root level organization/University/Eminent scientist, forester/ forest based industry. The selection should essentially represent a blend of prominence in the research subjects/ the institute

research themes as well as the demonstrated applied understanding of the regional/ national research utility needs of the society.

The proposals for composition of RAG should be submitted, with panel of a minimum three experts for each category of external experts, giving details of their credentials, experience and complete address with contact numbers (a suggestive format is enclosed for ready reference) well in advance to give time for follow up and finalization of an expert RAG composition.

II. Conduct of the RAG meet:

The institute undertaking RAG meetings are encouraged to thoroughly discuss their proposed and ongoing Research projects focusing on the research mandate of Institute and to make innovation in the core research and to meaningfully address the research problems of the maximum number of stakeholders of the forestry research in particular and civil society at large.

Based on the best practices followed during RAG by ICFRE Institutes and also by the other reputed research institutions in presentations and discussions on research proposals , the following guidelines are framed for general conduct of the RAG meet.

A. Preparation of RAG Documents: The RAG meeting documents shall be prepared in such a manner to contain/give the maximum of following information:

- ❖ **The main RAG document:** This document containing the details of the individual new project proposals given to RAG should contain/give the following information:
 - i. Content page/ Index
 - ii. One table in the beginning giving the division/ discipline wise total number of ongoing and new research projects proposals, budget sub totals and additional man power requested.

Name of the Division/ Discipline	Total No. of Ongoing Research Project	Total Budget (In Lakh)	Total No. of New Research Project Proposed	Total Budget (Rs. Lakh)	Additional Man power requested under the new project proposals					Detailed New Projects of division at Page Numbers	
					JRF	SRF	FA/TA/PA/RA/Others	Con	DE O	from	to

- iii. Technical Programme of RAG meet showing each Session, Time (Hrs.) and activity/Engagement.
- iv. Brief Technical summary of Stakeholder's Meet; highlighting the theme wise research problems of the stakeholders.
- v. Pie chart showing Theme wise distribution of total new project proposals for RAG.
- vi. Pie chart showing Division/discipline wise distribution of new project proposals for RAG also showing the number of scientific (Scientist/RO) manpower of each division.

❖ **Additional important information for RAG members :**

Besides the above main document provided well in advance to RAG Members; to facilitate the discussions and maximize the inputs from RAG members, the following important document/information be given separately to RAG members well before the start of the meeting:

- i. The copy of the ICFRE instructions for making RAG presentations and the ICFRE themes list .
- ii. The copy or list of the main points of ICFRE Project submission format, highlighting its main components that need special deliberations in RAG like methodology, utility and importance of research project.
- iii. Table giving the number of ongoing projects and new proposed projects with each scientist of the Institute; categorized & subtotaled division/ discipline wise.

List giving the no. of ongoing projects and new proposed projects with each scientist of the Institute Fig Rs in Lakhs										
S N	Division	Name of Scientist	Designation	Number of Ongoing projects			Number of New Project Proposal			
				As PI		As Co-PI/ Associate	As PI		As Co-PI	Associat e
				Total No	Budget		Total No	Budget		

- iv. The theme (ICFRE themes) wise list of New Research Proposals with brief technical essence of referees comments:

S N	Project title	Name of PI	One main ICFRE theme as applies/ otherwise other novel theme	Name of the Division/ Discipline	Durati on	Budget Rs in Lakhs	Objectives		Summary of the referees comments
							Short term	Long term	

- v. **Documents for ongoing projects:**

a. Theme wise list of ongoing Projects.

S N	Projec t title	Name of PI	One main ICFRE theme as applies/ otherwis e other novel theme	Name of the Division/ Discipline	Durati on	Budget Rs in Lakhs	Objectives		Brief of the significant progress made in the project	Brief of annual review by M&E
							Short term	Long term		

B. Director's introductory presentation for RAG:

Director of the institutes will discuss the role of RAG. They may highlight briefly on the infrastructure and progress of ongoing projects, publication and other salient achievements of the Institute, the optimum use of the scientific manpower in the Institute and the future plans and policy of the institute for taking up research in the jurisdiction. For this purpose an indicative list of slides based on the best practices in the ICFRE Institutes is given below:

Introductory presentations decided by the Director and the Group Coordinator Research of the institute as far as possible shall include -

- ❖ Mandate of Institute and Thrust areas to accomplish the mandate.
- ❖ Institutes Jurisdiction and organization Chart.
- ❖ The ICFRE thrust area and themes list.
- ❖ Role of Divisions/ Disciplines.
- ❖ STRENGTHS – division wise Scientists and Technical Manpower, the Laboratories and other technical facilities.
- ❖ **Salient Achievements:**
 - Summary of major achievements of the Institute and table or graph showing discipline wise number of projects completed.
 - Brief of the ONGOING RESEARCH and table or graph showing discipline wise number of ongoing projects
 - Funding agency wise National and International Funded number of ongoing Research Projects with total outlay.
- ❖ Extension Activities of the Institute including recent Publications etc. *The division/ discipline wise number of Paper publications in the ongoing projects with special mention of the papers in the international/ National Scientific Journals of repute or other salient achievements.*
- ❖ Gists of Stakeholders meet (*Project specific comments of stake holders meet on ongoing projects.*)
- ❖ FUTURE PLANS
- ❖ **New Project Proposals:**
 - Division- wise new projects proposed
 - Pie chart showing Theme wise distribution of new project proposals for RAG
 - Pie chart showing Division/discipline wise distribution of new project proposals for RAG along with number of scientific and technical manpower of each division.
 - Brief on uniqueness of the new project proposals.

Miscellaneous:

- There will be a maximum of 20 minutes for presentation and discussion of each new project and a maximum of 15 minutes for presentation and discussion each on-going project. The guidelines for making presentation before RAG of new research proposals and the ongoing research projects are annexed as Annexure I and Annexure II respectively.
- If the number of projects are not very large; RAG may decide and increase the length of discussions for optimum utilization of the time available for RAG meet.
- **Feedback of RAG members:** Besides the scoring for ranking the new project proposals, and review of ongoing research; the feedback of RAG members should also be taken in a feedback form for their general suggestion on effective conduct of RAG meet, the research directions etc.
- The modifications suggested on ongoing projects after review of RAG shall be sent to ADG(M&E) for placing consolidated review before the RPC.
- The proceedings of the RAGs should reach ICFRE within 15 days after the completion of RAG meeting.
- The complete address with email and phone numbers of RAG members to be circulated among members.

Guidelines for the Presentation of New Research Proposals:

Presentation given by PI:

It is essential that presentation of ongoing/Proposed projects is made by each Principal Investigator (PI) in a focused manner to facilitate clear understanding of the key points of the proposals by RAG members and equally importantly to maintain sufficient time for discussion of RAG member in order to get maximum inputs by the members. Therefore, in sync with the scale & magnitude of the project; it becomes crucial that PI should present his project proposal effectively in the given time (a minimum 5 min to a maximum 10 min); and **10- 15 slides** leaving sufficient time for deliberation. The readable font (14 and above) with uncluttered slides should be used to make the presentation comprehensible, instead of using small font and too much unfocussed details.

The outline of the presentation of the research proposal should essentially include the slides giving following information:

- I. **Title Slide and abstract:** These first title and second slide will give (1 Slide)
 - i. Title of the project, Names of the project leader with specialization, and Co-PI, The division / discipline, The Period, Cost and Research Theme of the project.
 - ii. Abstract: **Purpose of the project.**

- II. **The Problem Statement and the Literature Review:** These very important slides should
 - a. Provide bulleted background information,
 - b. in a manner to be appealing also to the RAG members representing the general stakeholders like from NGO, grassroot levels, and
 - c. should help to understand - the need of the proposal , the overview of the origin of the problem and the solution strategy: (Max. 4 Slides)
 - i. A clear description of the problem to be investigated with the location and scope of research.
 - ii. Reference and Origin of problem.
 - iii. Problem Documentation: Brief summary of the literature reviewed.
 - iv. **Solution Strategy:** The research questions that will guide the research process and a statement as to how the research project will contribute to the solution of the problems so identified.
 - v. The scientific or the policy relevance of the Research problem to be investigated.

- III. **Research Objectives:** This slide will give (1 Slide)
 - i. Short Term Objectives - Specific Objectives defining the parts of the research which are **directly addressable by the methodology.**
 - ii. Long Term Objectives - The overall aims of the research project; and

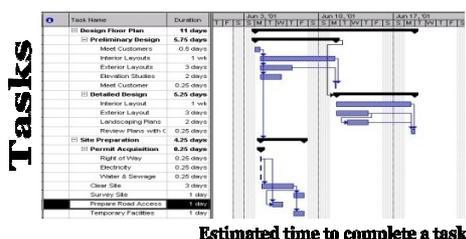
- IV. **RESEARCH METHODS:** These slides should describe in detail the research design, methodology and procedures to be followed to achieve each research objective. (Max 3 Slides)
 - i. The hypothesis to be tested or the research questions (if not given in previous slides) to be answered.
 - ii. The variables or factors to be measured or otherwise addressed by the research.
 - iii. Where applicable, a description of the population and samples to be used in data gathering, including explanations of sampling or selection procedures duly verified.

- iv. The methods to be applied in collecting primary and secondary information, indicating instruments to be used ; sources of information; and the means by which any relevant biases in these methods would be overcome.
- v. The procedures and techniques for processing and analysis of information.

V. Action Plan shown in chart form:

(1 Slide)

The action plan shown in a single chart form e. g. a Project Timeline Chart in excel or otherwise with a vertical axis representing the tasks that make up the project and a horizontal axis representing the total time span of the project, broken down into Quarter.



VI. The Project Budget

(2 Slide)

- i. Brief significant role of PI and co-PIs.
- ii. Additional staff requirement Justification.
- iii. Purchase of new instruments/ major equipments with approx. cost and justification.

Budget Head <i>(only show head in which fund requested)</i>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Subsequent years	Total <i>All figures to be given In Rs Lakhs</i>
Grand Total					

VII. PREDICTED RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION: These slides should define the final deliverable and its significance specified and would include: **(Max 3 Slides)**

- i. User Target Group (the identified and assessed stakeholders).
- ii. New knowledge in the scientific area under inquiry.
- iii. Anticipated output of the Project and its Practical Utility (State in brief and clear terms main accomplishments and utility thereof).
- iv. Spell out Extension and Patenting possibilities.
 - a. Extension training, Seminars, and publications- should describe the ways in which the project’s findings will be disseminated.
 - b. How in applicable cases the research findings would be attractively communicated catering to the needs of end users of the research and public in general.
- v. Technical essence of the Peer reviews of the research proposal.

Guidelines for the Presentation of ongoing projects for review of RAG:

PI should present significant project progress effectively in the given time (5 min); and **max 10 slides**. The readable font (14 and above) with uncluttered slides should be used to make the presentation comprehensible, and unfocussed details should be avoided.

The outline of the presentation of the ongoing research projects should essentially include the following slides / information:

- I. Title Slide and abstract:** This slide will give **(1 Slide)**
 - i. Title of the project, Names of the Principal Investigator and Co-PI, the division / discipline, Project period /Cost of the project, year of RAG approval. Scope and location of research.
 - ii. Abstract: **Purpose of the project-** A one small paragraph summary of the project idea.

- II. The Problem Statement –** **(1 Slide)**
 - i. A clear description of the problem being investigated and Area of study as applicable.
 - ii. The hypotheses tested and/ or research questions being answered.
 - iii. Predicted outcomes.

- III. Research Objectives:** This slide will give **(1 Slide)**
 - i. Short Term Objectives - Specific Objectives of the research being directly addressed by the methodology.
 - ii. Long Term Objectives - The overall aims of the research project; and

- IV. Research methods followed:** These slides should describe in detail the research design and procedures being followed to achieve each research objective. **(2 Slides)**
 - i. The variables or factors measured or otherwise addressed by the research.
 - ii. Where applicable, a description of the population and samples used in data gathering, including sampling or selection procedures.
 - iii. The methods applied in collecting primary and secondary information, indicating sources of information.
 - iv. The processing and analysis of information.

- V. Progress of the project: These should include:** **(2 Slides)**
 - I. The solution achieved of specific problems upon which the research is focused;
 - II. New knowledge in the scientific area under inquiry gained or developed;
 - III. Methodological development in the field of inquiry.
 - IV. **Results and dissemination** through extension and publications.
 - V. Significance of outcomes.
 - VI. Review comments of Monitoring & Evaluation.

- VI. Modifications, if any, requiring approval of RAG (with justification):** **(1 Slide)**

Annexure

Details of the proposed external members for the Composition of RAG of the Institute

	The Category of Member	No	Name and Address	Expertise Details	Any Special Achievements/ Credentials of person	Director's Remarks on selection of the representative
I.	Representative of the Universities imparting education in forestry and allied subjects at the level of Dean or Head of the Department	1				
		2				
		3				
II.	Representative of prominent NGO in the field of forestry	1				
		2				
		3				
III.	Eminent scientist	1				
		2				
		3				
IV.	Representative of Progressive Farmer	1				
		2				
		3				
V.	Representative of JFM / Local Government / grass root level organization	1				
		2				
		3				
VI.	Representative of forest based industries NTFP/ Composites/	1				
		2				
		3				
VII.	Representative Eminent Forester	1				
		2				
		3				
VIII.	Representative of funding organizations	1				
		2				
		3				
IX.	Representative of ICAR	1				
		2				
		3				