



**Department of Health Research
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Government of India**

Call for Proposal - for setting-up Virus Research and Diagnosis Laboratories (VRDL) in Government Medical College/AIIMS/Research Institutions/Army Hospitals/Railway hospitals/AYUSH centres

Emerging/re-emerging viral infections pose a continuous threat to the public health system of all countries globally. During the past few years, India has witnessed several outbreaks of emerging/ re-emerging viral infections. Annual epidemics of Dengue, Chikungunya, Influenza, Rotavirus, Measles-Rubella, Japanese encephalitis, etc. are reported from all parts of the country. Besides that, in the past two decades, India has witnessed acute outbreaks or threats of infiltration of new or exotic viruses such as Nipah virus (2001; 2007; 2018 & 2019); SARS-CoV (2003); Avian Influenza H5N1 (2006); ECSA strain of chikungunya (2006); pandemic influenza (2009); Ebola virus (2013); Zika virus (2016). Yellow fever virus and MERS-CoV (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-coronavirus) are the other potential viral agents which pose a serious threat to the country. The recent COVID-19 pandemic is still an impending threat of rising infections among the population. To avoid such outbreaks, there is a vast need of straightening the existing laboratory network by adding more laboratories touching every corner of the country.

2. The Department of Health Research (DHR) has a scheme “Setting-up of nation-wide network of laboratories for managing epidemics and national calamities” mandated to develop high-quality Viral Research and Diagnosis Laboratory (VRDL) platform for early detection of infectious disease caused by emerging/re-emerging viral pathogens and undertaking research. Under this scheme, a network of 144 VRDLs has been established, and these VRDLs are equipped with state-of-art laboratory infrastructure for handling infectious pathogens. The laboratory network has proved beneficial for public health response in the early detection of viral infections, outbreak investigation, and generating epidemiological data to attract appropriate action.

3. The scheme has the following objectives:

- Creating infrastructure for timely identification of viruses and other agents causing morbidity significant at public health level and specifically agents causing epidemics and/ or potential agents for bioterrorism.
- Developing capacity for identification of novel and unknown viruses and other organisms and emerging/ re-emerging viral strains and develop diagnostic kits.
- Providing training to health professionals.
- Undertaking research for identification of emerging and newer genetically active/modified agents
- Continual improvement in quality systems in public health laboratories for viral diagnosis.

4. In order to achieve the above objectives, Department has decided to invite

proposals/applications from Government Medical Colleges/AIIMS/Research Institutions/Army Hospitals/Railway Hospitals/AYUSH centers for setting-up a **Medical College Level - Viral Research and Diagnosis Laboratory (MCL - VRDL)**.

5. Envisaged Role of Medical College Level (MCL) Lab:

Each medical college lab will cover a cluster of 3-4 districts for diagnosis of referred human samples and will perform testing of infectious disease. In case of any outbreak/epidemic, these medical college-level labs will carry out the initial diagnosis/ screening at the most peripheral areas & nearest to the site of the outbreak. The medical college labs are expected to identify all listed common viruses up to Risk Group -2 (RG-2). Unknown/uncommon pathogens or pathogens rated to the RG-3 category will not be allowed to handle at MCL and should be reported to the regional level lab or highest authority for direction. Besides that, MCL undertakes various research studies on public health issues.

6. Eligibility for Medical College level VRDL:

- Any Government Medical College/AIIMS running UG/PG (medical courses) duly recognized by the National Medical Commission (NMC)/Medical Council of India (MCI).
- Govt. research institutions, Railway hospitals, AYUSH hospitals providing medical and health services, etc.
- The institution should have a dedicated Microbiology department and qualified faculty in place.
- The institution should have >200 Sq meter area in the existing building preferably in Microbiology Department.

7. Funding Provision:

The Non-recurring cost of a Medical College Level Lab would be about Rs. 1.507 crores for the development infrastructure, which includes civil work, furnishing & furniture (Rs.62.5 lakhs), and equipment (Rs.88.2 lakhs). The recurring cost of a Medical College level Lab per annum is Rs 46.4 lakhs, towards staffing (Rs.31.4 lakh), Consumables & Contingencies, and Training (Rs.15 lakhs).

8. Submission of Application/proposal and MoA:

- i. Applications/Proposals for the establishment of Medical College Level Labs are required to be submitted in a prescribed format along with the MoA on the non-judicial stamp of Rs.100/- and the site plan of the earmarked area. The format of application/proposal and MoA are given in the scheme guideline that can be downloaded from <https://dhr.gov.in/schemes/establishment-network-laboratories-managing-epidemics-and-natural-calamities>
- ii. The state government institutions are required to submit the proposal through the proper channel by the concerned State Health Department. For central Govt. institutions, the Director or Head of the institute are competent to forward the proposal and MoA to the DHR.
- iii. **The last date of submission of the Proposal is 15th March 2023.**
- iv. Hard copy of the proposal and MoA through the proper channel should be submitted to DHR at the following address:

Sh. Mohan Lal

Deputy Secretary
Department of Health Research
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
IRCS Building, Redcross Road
New Delhi - 110001 India

- v. For more details, you may please visit the DHR official website
<https://dhr.gov.in/schemes>
- vi. For any query, you can write an email jitendra.narayan@gov.in or
drneetu.vijay@icmr.gov.in.