Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
National Science, Technology and Innovation Plan

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Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Economy And Planning

National Science, Technology and Innovation Plan

Projects Setup Regulations

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Contents

Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has developed a long term vision of science, technology and innovation (STI) to create a "knowledge-based economy and society through a globally competitive national STI ecosystem", thus achieving the Kingdom's strategic goal of becoming one of the advanced countries in science, technology and innovation by 1445H (2025). One of the factors hopefully ensuring the achievement of this ambitious vision is the ongoing and growing support of the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, to the STI sector, and the Saudi government's determination to engage the Kingdom's natural resources-based economy in comprehensive economic development, fueled with innovation and creativity, where the growing national human potential is invested according to a sound strategic plan.

Accordingly, the Royal Decree issued in 1406H (1985) directed KACST to "propose a national policy for the development of science, technology, and innovation, in addition to developing the necessary strategy and plan to implement this policy". KACST's achievements in this context began with the development of "the National Policy for Science and Technology in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 1423H (2002). It would embody the Kingdom's vision and its fundamental strategic plans, ensuring the continuous sustained developmental efforts to enhance the STI ecosystem activities, all the while providing a framework of appropriate priorities, options and policies for each planning phase, building the Saudi knowledge-based economy and society.

To ensure the achievement of the national policy of science and technology strategy strategies, a national science, technology and innovation plan (NSTIP) was developed. The NSTIP consists of (8) strategic programs diverging into a number of projects to be co-executed by all national public and private Saudi economic sectors, so as to ensure the realization of the Kingdom's long-term vision, which reflects the vision of The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques of building a "knowledge-based economy and society through a world competitive national STI ecosystem" by 2025.

These regulations are part of a series of publications of the NSTIP General Secretariat, aiming to organize the administrative, technical and financial procedures of the national science, technology and innovation plan, and to determine the commitments and responsibilities of all parties involved with the implementation of its programs and projects.

Chapter I: Concepts and terms

Article 1: Purpose

These regulations are meant to establish the technical and financial procedures that need to be followed to prepare and submit the National science, technology and innovation plan programs and projects.

Article 2: Concepts and terms

Unless otherwise implied by the context, the following concepts and terms shall be defined as follows:

- **KACST**: King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology.

- **NSTIP**: National Science, Technology and Innovation Plan.
    - **Supervisory committee**: The committee supervising the national science, technology and innovation plan.
- **Preliminary committee**: A sub-committee reporting to the supervisory committee.
- **General secretariat**: the NSTIP General Secretariat.
- **Stakeholder**: Ministry or university or body of legal personality benefitting from NSTIP funding of a research or operational project, where the project is essentially being implemented within its facilities and buildings, which also includes individual parties in a direct funding contract.
- **Unit**: the stakeholder's science and technology unit.
- **Stakeholder's authority**: The stakeholder's official to whom the unit reports.
- **Scientific committee**: An expert committee reporting to the unit, to review and evaluate research projects.
- **Technical committee**: An expert committee reporting to the unit, to review and evaluate operational projects.
- **Financial committee**: An expert committee reporting to the unit, responsible for evaluating and approving tenders for the procurement of equipment and supplies approved for a given project, in coordination with the head researcher of research projects, or project manager of operational projects.
- **Strategic technologies**: Technologies determined by the NSTIP to be a strategic priority for the future of KSA development.
- **Program:** A set of research or operational projects related to any of the NSTIP programs.
- **Project:** A project can be either a research or an operational project:
    a. **Research project:** A project dedicated to the thorough and comprehensive study of a specific topic. Conducting such a project requires the participation of a number of experts. It can be basic, applied or developmental research:
        a.1.   Basic research: Experimental or theoretical work essentially conducted to acquire new knowledge related to phenomena and facts that can be grasped, which is not intended for any specific application.
        a.2.   Applied research: Initial investigation seeking new knowledge aimed essentially at implementing a practical objective or purpose.

a.3. Developmental research: A concerted effort to apply current knowledge derived from research or scientific expertise, to the production of new materials such as new products and equipment, intended to innovate new services, systems and operations, or drastically enhance existing ones.

b. **An operational project**: A project that is not a research activity in nature and that achieves the goals of any of the programs of the NSTIP five year plans, such as the ones involved with the development of science, technology and innovation (STI) policies and regulations, or the development of research or service facilities such as laboratories, incubators, experiment stations etc…

- **Unit director:** The person in charge of running the stakeholder's science and technology unit, who must be a Saudi national.
- **Program director:** The person in charge of managing and overseeing any of the unit's programs.
- **Project manager:** The person in charge of the administrative and financial aspects of the project.
- **Research proposal:** The comprehensive scientific and systematic description of the problem's: nature, importance, set solution objectives, qualified human resources, work methods, implementation time frame, requirements and capabilities-including financial cost- necessary to implement the suggested proposal, results and outputs of this research, and potential stakeholders benefiting from such research.
- **National task teams:** Single or multiple stakeholders' expert teams formed by the chairman of the supervisory committee to carry out a specific task.
- **Task team:** A task team including all individuals working on the project.
- **Research team:** A research team consists of the head researcher and the research associates only.
- **Head researcher:** A person with scientific and technical qualifications responsible for all scientific and technical activities of the research project.
- **Research associate:** A person with scientific and technical qualifications who participates in the research/activity being carried out, responsible for his specific assignment which relates to his area of expertise and experience.
- **Research assistant:** A person with scientific and technical qualifications assigned with activities that support the research team, such as conducting

experiments, performing lab analysis, data collection, and other activities required by the project.

- **Graduate students:** Students enrolled in Masters or PhD or equivalent program in Saudi colleges and universities, or students on scholarships in new universities that don't have graduate programs in special and justifiable cases, whose area of study is directly related to their assigned work in the project.
- **Undergraduate students:** Undergraduate students or students of an equivalent program seeking to earn a Bachelor's or equivalent degree, whose area of study is related to the project.
- **Technical personnel:** Individuals with the technical and practical experience and qualifications necessary to perform the technical tasks required by the project.
- **Administrative personnel:** Individuals qualified to carry out different administrative tasks such as copying, secretarial work, accounting and coordination activities.
- **Craftsmen:** Artisans and craftsmen.
- **Consultant:** A qualified expert at providing consulting services or studies in the area pertaining to the project.
- **Review team:** A team consisting of 3-5 specialist and experts in the area pertaining to the operational project, in charge of reviewing the project proposals.
- **Evaluator:** Expert in charge of evaluating the performance of each project phase according to the specified requirement.
- **International evaluation:** An international body contracted to evaluate research project proposals and related annual and final technical reports.
- **Funding:** Financial support provided by the NSTIP to the stakeholder to implement a specific project among those approved by the supervisory committee according to the articles of these regulations.
- **Research project contract:** A formal document signed by the stakeholder's authority and the head researcher or the project manager to conduct the research project.
- **Operational project contract:** A formal document signed between KACST and the authority benefitting from one of the operational projects of the NSTIP programs and projects.
- **Project duration:** The time period set for the implementation of the project.

- **Forms:** Forms adopted by the NSTIP General Secretariat.
  - **Scientific integrity rules:** Guidelines approved by the supervisory committee circulated to reporting units and bodies.
- **Scientific meetings:** Includes conferences, seminars, workshops, scientific summits, etc…
- **Scientific contributions:** Includes scientific papers, fliers and the chairmanship of scientific meeting sessions.
- **Online e-portal:** The official NSTIP electronic portal.
- **Administrative expenses:** Refers to the 7% percentage added to the approved budget, and allocated to the unit to monitor the stakeholder's funded projects.

Chapter II: Technical preparation and submission of a project proposal

Article 3: General guidelines for the preparation of a proposed project

a. Research project:
- Ensure that the suggested project proposal falls under the assumed strategic priorities of the NSTIP strategic technologies program:
  http://www.kacst.edu.sa/ar/research/Pages/default.aspx
- The project must yield an expected return on KSA development and society.
- The project budget cannot exceed 2 million SAR.
- The project duration may not exceed 24 months.
- If the project requires costly supplies or equipment, the proposal must include complete information regarding the equipment, the reason justifying the need for this equipment and the other projects that will use the equipment.
- A researcher may not participate in more than three research projects.
- Research project proposals must be submitted through the unit.
- The project plan of action must be developed using the PMP methodology and appropriate software programs.

b. Operational project:
- Ensure that the operational project falls within one of the core NSTIP programs.

- The project must fall within the area of expertise and responsibilities of the stakeholder implementing the project.
- The project must have a positive return on both the NSTIP and the stakeholder implementing the project.
- The project plan of action must be developed based on the PMP methodology using the appropriate software programs.
- The operational project proposal must be submitted through the stakeholder's science and technology unit.

Article 4: Terms and conditions for project funding

a. Research project:
- The topic of the submitted research project must be aligned with the adopted strategic priorities of the NSTIP strategic technologies program:
  http://www.kacst.edu.sa/ar/research/Pages/default.aspx
- The research proposal must be submitted through the NSTIP e-portal:
  http://nstip.kacst.edu.sa
- The elements of the research project proposal must be entirely submitted in English, while the title, abstract and the names of the research team members must be submitted in both English and Arabic.
- If the research proposal was previously submitted to the general secretariat, and rejected, it cannot be resubmitted without revision based on the technical or financial comments provided to the researcher when the proposal was first submitted. A research proposal rejected twice by the general secretariat in not eligible to be submitted again
- All participants in the research proposal must be listed (researchers, technical and administrative personnel).
- The research proposal must include a detailed budget, showing all project requirements in terms of human and non-human resources, as well as equipment, supplies and installations.
- The research proposal may not be similar to a project previously funded by KACST or other stakeholders.
- The research proposal may not have been previously approved for funding and then cancelled.
- The research proposal may not be sent to another stakeholder while applying for the general secretariat funding.

- The "Scientific Integrity Rules" issued by the supervisory committee must be complied with.

http://www.kacst.edu.sa/en/about/stnp/Pages/forms.aspx
- The "Bioethics regulations" must be respected when handling living creatures or parts thereof or their genetic materials http://www.kacst.edu.sa/ar/depts/bioethics/1/Regul/Bioethic.Rgl.fin.bks.pdf
- The comprehensive KSA NSTIP IP policy published by the supervisory committee must also be complied with http://www.kacst.edu.sa/en/about/stnp/Pages/forms.aspx.

b. Operational project:
- The operational project must serve one of the NSTIP main programs' goals.
- The project must serve the stakeholder and fall within its area of core responsibilities.
- The project must be submitted through the NSTIP e-portal:
http://nstip.kacst.edu.sa
- The project duration must be specified.
- The names and roles of all participants in the project must be listed.
- A detailed budget spanning over the duration of the implementation phase must be included in the proposal.

Article 5: Project submission procedures

a. Research project:
- The researcher submits the research proposal to the unit of the stakeholder with which he is affiliated through the NSTIP e-portal (http://nstip.kacst.edu.sa) within the set deadlines for submission.
- The unit's scientific committees go over the project proposals and review them to verify that the applications and paperwork are complete, preparing recommendations for each proposal.
- The unit forwards the suitable proposals to the general secretariat classified in categories that correspond to the strategic technologies program, the research proposal status (new or revised), along with a request to enroll the project and support it using the forms approved by the general secretariat.

- The general secretariat verifies that the submitted proposals meet all the application criteria and requirements before sending them to be evaluated.
- The general secretariat notifies the units of the projects forwarded for evaluation, and those held back because they failed to meet all the application criteria.
- The general secretariat submits the evaluation results to the NSTIP preliminary committee.
- The preliminary committee goes over the results of the evaluation, and makes the necessary decisions accordingly, and then submits its recommendations to the supervisory committee.
- The supervisory committee enrolls the programs approved for funding with their allocated budgets based on the preliminary committee's recommendations.
- The general secretariat advises the stakeholder's unit of the supervisory committee's decisions on the proposed research projects.
- The chairman of the supervisory committee reports to the Ministry of Finance the projects approved for support at the stakeholders' facilities.
- The Ministry of Finance deposits the approved funds in the SAMA stakeholder account.
- The stakeholder's authority and the head researcher sign the project contract once the required funds are made available.
- The unit requests that the head researcher provides a detailed plan and determines the project kick off date within sixty days of the date the head researcher signs the contract.

b. Operational project:
- The unit determines the order of priorities in terms of implementing the stakeholder's approved program projects in the NSTIP during the fiscal year.
- The unit submits the suggested operational project via the NSTIP e-portal (http://nstip.kacst.edu.sa).
- The general secretariat evaluates the proposed operational projects with the help a review team of experts in the project's domain, and draws its recommendations based on the review results.
- The review team must comply with the "Statement of Principles for Scientific Merit Review" of the Global Research Council.
- The general secretariat reports it recommendations regarding the evaluated operational projects to the NSTIP preliminary committee.

- The preliminary committee reviews the general secretariat's recommendations on the proposed projects then submits them to the supervisory committee for approval.
- The general secretariat informs the stakeholder's unit of the supervisory committee's decisions.
- The unit develops a detailed plan for the enrolled projects, listing all the technical specifications and the financial requirements within the limits of the allocated funds, using PMP methodology. It then submits this plan to the general secretariat.
- The chairman of the supervisory committee addresses a request to the Ministry of Finance to approve the project budget.
- The Ministry of Finance transfers the funds to the relevant stakeholder and deposits the funds in the appropriate account.
- The general secretariat and the unit sign the operational project contract.
- The general secretariat monitors the project until the final report is submitted and approved.

Article 6: Conditions to be met by the research team

a. General conditions:
- The head researcher in the project must be affiliated with the stakeholder submitting the project.
- The research team must be limited to the names provided in the research proposal application form.
- The size of the research team must be justified, as well as the role of each team member.
- The domain of expertise of all participants in the research activity must be directly related to the research project theme.
- The roles and responsibilities of team members must be identified according to the definitions listed in the "special conditions" item of this article.
- A deputy head researcher must be named when submitting the project application.
- A team member cannot combine two functions in the same project. In case of a necessity, such as the head researcher performing also project management duties, the compensation is determined per one function only.

- The head researcher is prohibited from altering the research project in any way once the supervisory committee announces its approval to fund it, unless the head researcher obtains written consent from the unit, taking into consideration the rules of changing the task team stated by these regulations.
- The research team is required to include at least one graduate student, which does not include new universities or research institutions which currently do not offer graduate programs.
- A researcher may not head more than three projects concurrently.
- The research associate may participate in more than three research projects within the strategic technologies program on the following conditions:

  a. The researcher may not be the head researcher in more than three projects.
  b. The researcher may not be involved in more than five researchers in total.
  c. The overall amount of compensation for research projects in which the researcher participates and earns cannot exceed more than three per month.
  d. The researcher must receive a "highly recommended" evaluation at least once in one of the NSTIP funded "strategic technologies program" projects.
  e. The unit is in charge of following these procedures.

b. Special conditions:
- Head researcher: Must hold a PhD and be a faculty staff member or one of the researchers at the stakeholder, he must be in charge of the scientific or technical aspects of the project, in addition to the administrative aspects in the absence of a project manager.
- Project manager: Must be PMP certified or hold a certification of attendance of a PMP training course, and must carry out the following:
  o Manage the program according to PMP technical rules and methodology.
  o Coordinate efforts among project team members to ensure that the project deadline is met.
  o Periodically report to the unit on the project.
  o Open an account for the project and use the account for project spending.

- o Be in charge of purchasing project supplies and equipment etc…
- o Administratively manage all project team members with the exception of researches such as: research assistants and technical and administrative personnel etc…
- Research associates: Must hold a PhD or Master's degree. The research project must be directly related to their area of expertise, and they must be in charge of the technical tasks assigned by the head researcher according to the project plan of action.
- Research associates may be sought from institutions other than the stakeholder implementing the project in the Kingdom provided a written authorization is obtained from the employer stakeholder, and both the unit conducting the project and the general secretariat are notified.
- Graduate students: their assistance may be sought according to item (a) (general conditions), provided they are responsible for the activities identified by the head researcher according to the project plan of action on the following conditions:
  - o Must be students in Saudi universities and colleges and preferably Saudi nationals.
  - o Major must be related to the project topic.
- Undergraduate students: Undergraduate students may be added to the research team, to carry out the tasks assigned by the head researcher following the project plan of action.
- The project manager must be affiliated with the stakeholder submitting the project.
- The project manager of an operational cannot be the manager of any other project.
- Consultants: A consultant may be recruited from the Kingdom or abroad to work in the project on the following conditions:
  - o The consultant must be highly qualified and experienced to work on the research project.
  - o The number of consultants must be limited to two per research project per year.
  - o The consulting period may not exceed 15 days/year per consultant.
  - o The research application must include the consultant's CV and a letter stating the consultant's consent to work on the project.

Chapter III: Financial preparation of the project

Article 7: Payment and compensation of the research team

1. This article applies to the following staff of the strategic technologies program projects:
   - Faculty, research staff and graduate students (or students of equivalent programs), in addition to researchers, research assistants, technical and administrative personnel and accountants.
   - Project managers and PM assistants.
   - Consultants, evaluators and staffers assigned to provide special expertise related to the project.
2. Compensations and remunerations will be given based on the human resources budget in payments as follows:

Due time	Details	Payment
Once contract is signed and implementation plan is approved and the first technical interim report of the project is submitted.	Compensation and remuneration of project staff for the first 6 months of the year, with the exception of researchers.	**First**
Once the first annual technical and financial reports are submitted.	Compensation and remuneration of project staff for the next 6 months of the year, with the exception of researchers.	**Second**
Once the annual technical and financial reports are approved.	Researchers' remuneration for the 1st year.	**Third**
Once the second technical interim report is submitted and approved.	Compensation and remuneration of project staff for the first 6 months of the 2nd year, with the exception of researchers.	**Fourth**
Once the 2nd technical and financial reports are submitted.	Compensation and remuneration of project staff for the next 6 months of the 2nd year, with the exception of researchers.	**Fifth**
Once the final technical and	Researchers' remuneration for the 2nd year.	**Last**

financial reports are approved as well as an electronic version of the project scientific deliverables.		

3. The total amount of payments received by any research team member (head researcher, associate researcher) and project manager in terms of research project compensation may not exceed the equivalent of the compensation for three projects per month.
4. Technical reports need to be approved before any payment is made to the research team, as stated in the contract.
5. A research team member may not receive two compensations at the same time for the same research project.
6. No payments shall be made before the actual project kick off date.
7. No payments shall be made before the contract is signed.
8. Project spending is made using the strategic technologies budget. Compensation for the project staff is made based on the progress achieved and the roles and responsibilities of each. Actual compensation amounts will be determined by the supervisory committee.

http://www.kacst.edu.sa/en/about/stnp/Pages/forms.aspx

Article 8: General rules regarding the research projects budget

1. The project budget may not exceed 2,000,000 SAR.
2. A 7% item is added to the overall budget of each project for the unit's administrative expenses.
3. Special rules regarding the suggested budget items for the project:
    - Human resources: If the overall amount of funds allocated to the HR budget item exceeds 40% of the total budget proposal, the head researcher must provide a detailed explanation for this excess.
    - Equipment and materials: If a device needed for the project costs more than 100,000 SAR, the head researcher must include a detailed description of the device.

- Travel and miscellaneous expenses: if travel and miscellaneous expenses exceed 10% of the budget, the head researcher needs to provide details of this item.
- For a research project proposal to be accepted the head researcher must provide all the budget details as stipulated by this article.

4. The project budget does not cover for car expenses. In the case of a necessity a car can be leased for the period needed after the unit approves.
5. The project budget cannot be increased after the contract is signed.

Article 9: Rules of training and legation of the research team

1. The research team staff can participate in scientific meetings, and conduct domestic or international field trips related to the project depending on the project progress in accordance with the approved budget plan and the general secretariat forms.
2. Training is only allowed for the Saudi members of the research team.
3. If the project requires taking a number of training courses that are related to the research, the following must be taken into consideration:
   a. Training must be already included in the project budget.
   b. The training candidate must show an invitation from the institution providing the training as well as the training program.
   c. More than one researcher may participate in the enlisted training program within the project plan of action and upon the stakeholder's approval.
   d. A new training request may not be accepted unless a mission form for one of the previous assignments of the researcher is submitted.
   e. Training expenses shall be covered according to the regulations of the Ministry of Civil Service
   http://www.mcs.gov.sa/EmploymentInformation/EmploymentFall/Training/Pages/default.aspx
4. The research team members and assistants may participate in scientific meeting on the following conditions:
   a. The candidate must prepare a scientific contribution that is related to the project theme.
   b. Only the research team and the research assistants can participate in scientific meetings with the approval of the head researcher.
   c. Contribution to scientific meetings is limited to the first work authored per each scientific contribution. Proof that the institution hosting the event has accepted the scientific paper must be provided.

d. The participant in the scientific meeting must report on his participation to the meeting upon his return, including documents, recommendation, etc…

e. The support provided by the NSTIP for the project must be recognized when the results of the research project are published in scientific papers or scientific meetings or any other publications with the following form: "This project was supported by the NSTIP strategic technologies program number (XXX) in the Kingdom."

f. New requests to participate in a scientific meeting will not be accepted unless the mission form of previous missions assigned to the researcher is provided, in addition to a copy of the scientific contribution after its publication in scientific meetings.

g. A participation request form must be submitted at least 30 days before the actual event, using the general secretariat's approved forms.

h. Participation in scientific meetings must be within the project budget constraints.

i. The scientific integrity rules issued by the NSTIP supervisory committee must be followed in scientific contributions.

http://www.kacst.edu.sa/en/about/stnp/Pages/forms.aspx

Rules regarding scientific trips:

1. Field and scientific trips must be related to the research project and included in the project budget.
2. New requests will not be accepted unless a mission form of previous assignments enlisted to the researcher is submitted.
3. The head researcher must identify the trip destination, cost, duration as well as the number of participants in the trip, and the estimated costs for the trip.
4. The number of days spent on field and scientific trips may not exceed 60 days for each team member per year.
5. Up to 90% of advances can be spent on the delegation account for each delegated researcher. The remainder is disbursed after the mission forms are submitted.

Article 10: Contracting human resources

1. Human resources can be contracted to work on a research project provided the following:
   - Recruitment applications for the project are submitted via the head researcher to the unit.

- The recruitment must be in line with the project's budget and may not exceed the project duration.
    - The authorization of the stakeholder's authority must be obtained for the recruitment.
- The salary, allowances and the due grade of the employee must be determined by the stakeholder's relevant department.
- The contract between the unit director and the contracting party must be signed indicating the first day of work. The unit must have a copy of the contract.
- The unit director and the head researcher must sign a contract using to the NSTIP approved project implementation contract form.

Chapter IV: Regulations guidelines

Article 11: In the absence of a specific article

1. In matters where there is no specific related article in these regulations, KACST effective rules, or any stakeholder effective rules, or decisions issued by the supervisory committee shall be followed.

Article 12: The right to interpret or amend article items:

1. The supervisory committee has the sole right to interpret or amend any items in these articles. Subsequent decisions or regulations issued by the supervisory committee related to projects' progress shall be considered an integral part of these articles.

Article 13: Applying the regulations:

1. These regulations apply to all projects with NSTIP support, effective from the date these regulations are adopted, and shall supersede any previous regulations or instructions, overriding any conflicting rules or exemptions.
2. These regulations shall be updated every five years from the date they are issued or as needed.