F. No.R.15015/20/2022-HR-VRDL
भारत सरकार / Government of India
स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय / Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
स्वास्थ्य अनुसंधान विभाग / Department of Health Research
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IRCS Building, Red Cross Building, New Delhi
Dated the …..August, 2026

Call for Proposals - for setting up Viral Research and Diagnosis Laboratories (VRDL) in Medical College/Hospitals/Medical Institutions

India faces a continuous and evolving threat from emerging, re-emerging, and zoonotic infectious diseases, compounded by rapid urbanization, increased human-animal-environment interactions, climate variability, globalization, and population mobility. Timely detection, accurate diagnosis, and rapid response to infectious disease outbreaks are critical for protecting the health of the people and ensuring national health security. Recognizing the need for a robust laboratory-based surveillance system to complement existing epidemiological surveillance, the Department of Health Research (DHR), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, 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.

2. Under this scheme, a network of 167 VRDLs has been established, comprising of 11 Regional Level VRDLs, 27 State Level VRDLs, and 129 Medical College & Research Institute Level VRDLs across 27 States and 5 Union Territories, ensuring equitable geographical access to advanced diagnostic facilities and strengthening laboratory capacity in both endemic and underserved regions. This network is a three-tiered, quality-assured laboratory platform equipped with state-of-the-art laboratory infrastructure for handling infectious pathogens. The laboratory network has played a pivotal role in early detection of viral infections, disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, research, and capacity building outbreak investigation, generating epidemiological data on emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.

3. The scheme has the following objectives:

- To establish capacity for early detection of common and high-risk infectious pathogens across the country.
- To strengthen the ecosystem for syndromic surveillance and early detection of outbreaks of infectious pathogens across the country.
- To undertake research & development on emerging, re-emerging and novel viruses.

4. In order to achieve the above objectives, the Department has decided to invite **proposals/applications** from Medical colleges/Hospitals/Research Institutions for setting up a **Medical College & Research Institute Level - Viral Research and Diagnosis Laboratory (MCL - VRDL)**.

5. Eligibility for Medical College & Research Institute level VRDL:

- State Government Medical Colleges.
- Central Government Medical Colleges and Research Institutes.
- Armed Forces Medical Institutions/Hospitals.
- Railway and other Central Government health institutions.
- High-ranking private medical colleges ranked in the top 50 National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranking.
- The institution should have a dedicated Microbiology department and learned faculty in place.
- The institution should have >200 sq. m. area in the existing building, preferably in the Microbiology Department.

6. Funding Provision:

Financial support for establishment of a new Medical College & Research Institute Level VRDL shall be limited to non-recurring assistance amounting to Rs. 1.55 crore, comprising Rs.66.8 lakhs for Civil Work i.e., infrastructure modification for VRDL establishment, and Rs.88.2 Lakhs for equipment for complete laboratory setup**. No recurring expenditure (yearly budget for staff and Consumables & Contingency) shall be provided and to be borne by the host institution.**

7. Role & Responsibility of Medical College & Research Institute Level Lab:

Medical College & Research Institute Level VRDLs constitute the foundational tier of the network and provide decentralized diagnostic services in a tertiary care hospital setting and to the community. Each Medical College & Research Institute Level VRDL generally caters to approximately two to four districts and ensures timely access to diagnostic services in the surrounding region. The functions of these laboratories are-

- Conduct routine diagnosis of infectious pathogens
- Participate in syndromic and event-based surveillance activities.
- Provide support during outbreaks and epidemics.
- Data to be shared with ICMR

8. Selection Criteria:

i. Mere fulfilment of the eligibility criteria shall not guarantee selection for establishment of a Medical College & Research Institute Level VRDL.
ii. Proposals will be evaluated on a merit basis by the competent technical committee based on predefined criteria. Preference will be accorded to institutions located in geographically underserved regions or districts with limited access to advanced diagnostic facilities, so as to ensure equitable strengthening of the national laboratory network.
iii. The institution should have technical strength, including availability of qualified faculty in Microbiology and allied disciplines, basic laboratory infrastructure, biosafety practices, experience in infectious disease diagnosis, outbreak investigation and public health surveillance, participation in national health programmes, and demonstrated research evidenced through externally funded projects, peer-reviewed scientific publications, patents, collaborations, and other relevant scientific achievements will also be considered.
iv. Additional weightage would be given to institutions with proven capacity to undertake molecular diagnostics, genomic surveillance, multidisciplinary One Health research, quality management systems, and commitment of the host institution to provide the necessary recurring operational support for long-term sustainability of the VRDL.

v. Proposal from Private Medical Colleges ranked in top 50 in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranking will only be considered.

9. Submission of Application:

vi. Applications/Proposals for establishment of Medical College & Research Institute Level are required to be submitted in the prescribed format along with the MoA on a non-judicial stamp of Rs.100/- and site plan of the earmarked area. Format of application/proposal and MoA are given in the scheme guideline are available at DHR Official Website. https://dhr.gov.in/schemes

vii. The state government institutions are required to submit the proposal through the proper channel by the concerned State Health Department. For central Govt. or private institutions, the Head of the institute is competent to forward the proposal and MoA to the DHR.

viii. **The last date of submission of the Proposal is 30th September 2026. No submission after this date will be accepted.**

ix. Hard copy of the proposal and MoA through proper channel should be submitted to DHR on the following address:

Sh. Sanjeev Singh
Under Secretary, Department of Health Research
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
IRCS Building, 1 Red Cross Road
New Delhi - 110001 India

x. For any queries, please write to the email dhrpmuvdl2@gmail.com.

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