

F. No 1/6/2012 –IR
Government of India
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
Department of Personnel and Training,

North Block, New Delhi-110001
Dated: 22.8.2014

Office Memorandum

Subject: Guidelines for grants to ATIs and SICs under the various components of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "Improving Transparency and Accountability in government through effective implementation of Right to Information Act" for the year 2014-2015

1.0 Introduction

The Right to Information Act was enacted in 2005 with the objectives of making the governance more transparent and accountable. In the last 8 years, an elaborate institutional mechanism has been set up, including setting up of Information Commissions, designation of large number of officers as CPIOs/ SPIOs and Appellate Authorities and laying down of detailed guidelines and instructions for dealing with RTI requests, in line with the mandate of the Act. A web portal "RTIonline" has also been launched to facilitate online filing of RTI applications with facility for online payment of RTI fees.

Under the XI th five year plan, a centrally sponsored scheme was launched in 2008 with the primary objective of creating awareness and for training of officers, both in central and state governments for 2 years. A new scheme titled 'Improving transparency and accountability in government through effective implementation of Right to Information Act' was approved for the remaining two years of the 11th Plan period (2010-11 and 2011-12). Guidelines for sanction and release of funds to SICs and ATIs for two components of the scheme namely 'awareness generation and capacity building' were issued vide O.M. No.1/6/2010-IR dated 16.8.2010. The guidelines were revised vide O.M. of even number dated 18th July, 2013. Most of the ATIs availed of the grants given by this Department for the various activities under the various components of the plan scheme.

Keeping in view the feedback received from the ATIs, the guidelines on the various components of the plan scheme for which financial support would be provided by DOPT to the ATIs and SICs are further revised as follows:-

2.0 Awareness Generation for RTI:

Both Central and State Governments are obligated to create awareness about the provisions of the Act. Financial assistance under this component will be provided to supplant these efforts of State Governments:

- (i) **RTI Week Celebration:** RTI Week is celebrated every year during 5th – 12th October. SICs will be provided financial assistance of up to Rs. 3.00 lakh each based on their proposal, for taking up various activities which may include conducting workshops, seminars, press-meets, competition in colleges on RTI related themes, etc. Although expensive publicity through print/electronic media will not be supported, funds may be used for displaying hoarding, etc, for publicizing the RTI Act.
- (ii) **Innovative Awareness Generation Programmes:** ATIs will be provided up to Rs 4.00 lakh each, based on their proposals, for innovative awareness generation activities which may include nukkad natak, use of local folk troupes, development of publicity material in local languages, distance learning programmes, online certificate courses in regional languages, etc. for awareness generation regarding RTI.
- (iii) **Organization of Workshops / Seminars:** ATIs will be provided a sum of Rs. 1.00 lakh per workshop / seminar organized on RTI related themes such as best practices and success stories on RTI, suo motu disclosure, etc on the basis of a proposal. The workshop may include Public Authorities of State/Centre, media persons, Civil Society Organisations , etc.
- (iv) **Publication of guidebooks:** ATIs will be provided funds for getting guidebooks published in regional languages.
- (v) **Help Line in ATIs:** ATIs may set up help line for answering queries of the general public regarding RTI Act in the respective regional language. Funds would be granted to ATIs based on their respective proposal **subject to a maximum ceiling of Rs.4,00,000 per annum in the first year which would include rental charges for a telephone line, computer system for data storage, salary for the person manning the helpline and stationery, etc. The grants for the subsequent years would be restricted to Rs.2,00,000/- per annum.** Such help lines could be set up in collaboration with NGOs working in the field of RTI.

3.0 Support for Capacity Building -Training of SPIOs/CPIOs and First Appellate Authorities (FAA).

State ATIs will be supported for undertaking training of SPIOs/CPIOs and AAs in a cascade model. In the first instance, ATIs will train District Resource Persons (DRPs) who will in turn train SPIOs/CPIOs and AAs in the districts.

- a) **Training of DRPs:** This training will be organized at the ATIs. It is planned that 3 DRPs per district will be trained in a year. Financial assistance will be provided for these trainings up to Rs. 1000 per participant per day for a 2-3 day residential course. Selection of DRPs will be made by ATIs.
- b) **Training of CPIOs/SPIOs, AAs and staff of State /Central Govt Offices:** These training programmes will be conducted at the district headquarters by the DRPs under the overall supervision of the ATIs. Each course will be non-residential and will be of 2 day duration. Financial assistance up to Rs 750/- per participant per day will be provided to ATIs based on a detailed proposal. This will cover all the incidental expenses involved in the training such as on refreshments for the participants, honorarium to DRPs, hiring of audio visual equipment and other contingencies. The training programmes must also include a segment on record management.
- c) **Training to Nodal Officers(RTI) of State Public Authorities:** ATIs shall organize one day training programmes for atleast 25 RTI nodal officers of public authorities in each programme regarding the implementation of DOPT guidelines dated 21st November 2013 on suo motu disclosures, particularly on implementation of templates for disclosures at various levels. Financial assistance up to Rs 750/- per participant per day will be provided to ATIs.
- d) ATIs may avail an additional assistance of up to Rs. 3.0 lakhs for preparation of training material and for meeting administrative contingencies based on their proposal and the training load.

4.0 Simplification of processes for filing of RTI – The facility of filing RTI applications and appeals online through RTI online web portal has been launched and is being implemented in all the Ministries/Departments of Government of India situated in New Delhi. The same facility can be extended to the State Government offices by sharing with them the software developed by NIC (Headquarters), New Delhi. The ATIs may play the role of catalyst in the implementation of the facility in the Public Authorities located in the state. Proposals in this regard are invited from ATIs and funds would be granted on the basis of such proposal.

5.0 Improved record management /Suo motu disclosure– In order to attend to RTI requests promptly, it is necessary to index and store records properly. Similarly, suo motu disclosure would help in disseminating as much information as possible to the public which would obviate the need to seek information through RTI. GOI has issued guidelines on suo motu disclosure

under Section 4 of RTI Act, 2005 to be followed by the Ministries/Departments of GOI. It would be desirable that such guidelines are adopted by the State Governments as well. DOPT would grant funds under this scheme as follows:-

- i) If any State Government is willing to implement these guidelines in their respective Public Authorities, ATIs can do the necessary handholding of the PAs. Proposals are invited from ATIs in this regard and financial assistance required for such handholding shall be provided to the ATIs based on their proposals.
- ii) ATIs can also conduct audit of suo motu disclosure of Public Authorities in their respective states either themselves or through an NGO/agency. Funds would be granted to ATIs to conduct such audit based on their proposals.

6.0 Institutional mechanism for collaborative working with CSOs and Media: DOPT would provide funds upto Rs.5 Lakhs (in each case) for field based study/research on RTI. The ATIs may invite proposals for field based study/research on RTI from Civil Society Organisations or individuals. Proposals found suitable may be submitted to DOPT for final selection. Funds would be granted by DOPT only for the selected proposals. Mentoring for the study/research would be provided by the ATIs.

The terms of payment for the research work will be as follows:-

- (1) On acceptance of the research proposal : 20% of the approved amount.
- (2) On submission of draft report : 60% of the approved amount.
- (3) On acceptance of final report: 20% of the approved amount.

The timelines for the research work is as follows:-

Submission of draft report: 5 months from the date of acceptance of proposal.

Submission of final report: Within a month from the date of submission of draft report.

7.0 Sanction and release of Financial Assistance:

SICs and ATIs are required to submit detailed proposals for seeking financial assistance for 2013-14 under the scheme, as per proforma at Annexure 1. The proposal must include detailed cost estimates for various activities and the time-lines for physical achievement. Scheme Monitoring Committee (SMC) will review the proposals and sanction assistance.

Funds will be released to ATIs and SICs directly as per the following:

- (i) Funds will be released only if UCs for funds provided to the SIC (for awareness generation activities) or the ATI (for training/ awareness generation/capacity building), as the case may be, for 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-2012 and 2012-13 have been received.
- (ii) Subject to (i) above financial assistance would be released in one installment immediately upon sanction, and receipt of UCs(in GFR 19 A format), receipt of financial and physical progress.
- (iii) The UCs for the grants that would be given in the financial year 2013-14 would become due in March 2015. **However, further funds in 2014-15 would be released only on receipt of UCs and statement of physical achievement for the financial year 2013-14.**

8.0 The first meeting of the SMC is scheduled for the third week of September, 2014. **All complete proposals received in DOPT by 15th September, 2014 will be processed and put up before SMC.** SICs and ATIs are requested to submit their proposals in the prescribed proforma as soon as possible. In case, any information/clarification is required, Shri Sandeep Jain, Director (IR) may be contacted. Contact details are given below.

9.0 These guidelines are in supersession of OM No. 1/6/2012-IR dated 18th July, 2013.

10.0 Proposals may be sent in the prescribed proforma (Annexure) to Shri Sandeep Jain, Director (IR), Room No. 279, Department of Personnel and Training, North Block, Telephone 23092755, email osdrti-dopt@nic.in

Sarita Nair

(Sarita Nair)
Under Secretary (IR)
Tel No 23040401 Fax 23092755
e-mail- usir-dopt@nic.in

To

1. Secretary (State Information Commission) (all State Information Commissions as per list attached)
2. Director- General/ Director (State Administrative Training Institute) (all ATIs as list attached)
3. Controller of Accounts, Department of Personnel and Training, North Block, New Delhi
4. Director(Fin.Pers), Ministry of Home Affairs, North Block, New Delhi
- ✓ 5. NIC-DOPT, North Block, New Delhi for uploading on DOPT's website.

Application Proforma

**Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Improving Transparency and Accountability
in Government through effective Implementation of Right to Information Act**

To be submitted in five copies.

The format given below should be neatly typed on separate sheets giving item-wise information

Application in an incomplete form will not be entertained

A	
1	Component for which assistance sought (Para of guidelines to be mentioned)
2	Institution- SIC/ATI/CTI

B. Details of Institution	
1	Name of the Institution
2	Particulars of the Institution
i	Complete postal address
ii	Telephone Nos.
iii	Fax Nos.
iv	E-mail Address
3	Particulars of Nodal Officer
i	Name
ii	Designation
iii	Tel and Fax No. (Including mobile no.)
iv	E-mail id
4	Bank Details:
i	Bank Name and Branch
ii	Name of Account Holder
iii	Account No.
iv	IFSC Code
v	MICR Code

Note: A cancelled cheque leaf may be enclosed.

C. Details of Proposal		
1	Proposed Activities	
2	Time Lines	
3	Detailed estimates of expenditure activity wise	
4	Total amount of grant required	

D. It is certified that:-

- 1. All funds released under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes on 'Strengthening, Capacity Building and Awareness Generation for the effective implementation of the RTI Act 'and "Improving Transparency and Accountability in Government through effective implementation of RTI Act" in the previous years have been fully utilized for the purpose for which they were released and Utilization Certificates have been submitted alongwith statement of physical achievement**
- 2. Once the estimates of expenditure are approved as reasonable and the grant assessed on the basis of these estimates, they shall not be modified by the institution without prior approval of the sanctioning authority of the grant.**

(Signature) _____
 Name of the Officer _____
 Designation _____

Note: Should be signed by DG/Director in case of ATI and by Secretary in the case of SIC