CITIES OF TOMORROW (CoT) R&D PROGRAMME
GRANT CALL 1
FOR VERTICAL 5: CITY IN NATURE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Please note that the FAQs will be updated periodically. Please refer to the CoT V5 1st Grant Call website and IGMS website for the latest version of the FAQs.

1. **GENERAL**

1.1 **Will there be subsequent grant calls launched under CoT V5? When will they be launched?**

There will be one or more subsequent grant calls launched under CoT V5. More information will be released at a later date.

1.2 **Will the CoT Directorate organise networking meetings to foster collaboration among the research community?**

There will be a virtual grant call briefing held on 20 Feb 2023, which will be attended by interested grant call applicants across the research community. Beyond this, there are currently no further plans to organise networking sessions specific to CoT V5.

1.3 **Will the proposal submission be considered for potential funding support if member(s) of the project team is not registered in the IGMS system by their Institution(s) within the proposal submission deadline?**

While the proposal may still be considered, the team member who was not successfully registered under IGMS may not be considered as part of the project team during the evaluation process.

Applicants are strongly advised to avoid submitting their application at the last minute in case of technical issues with the IGMS website.

1.4 **How focused must the research be? Should the proposal address all the research objectives and deliverables articulated in a Call Topic, or can the proposal address part of them? Can the proposal include other research objectives besides those mentioned in each Call Topic, if the project teams assess these to be relevant?**

Proposals should address all the research objectives and deliverables articulated in a Call Topic, and may also include additional scope as deemed relevant, keeping in mind the budget ceiling of the Call Topic. Nonetheless, proposals that address only part of the

research objectives and deliverables articulated in a Call Topic will still be considered and will be evaluated accordingly.

We strongly encourage researchers in project teams to collaborate with other researchers of different fields/expertise to address all the research objectives and deliverables articulated, particularly for Call Topics that are multi-disciplinary in nature.

Please refer to Annex C of the Grant Call Information Sheet for detailed information on each Call Topic.

1.5 How many projects will be awarded under each Call Topic, and how will the budget for each Call Topic be distributed between the awarded projects?

Multiple projects may be awarded under a Call Topic if the projects complement one another in addressing the Call Topic through different angles/components.

The stipulated budget for each Call Topic is a budget ceiling, and will encompass the collective budget of all awarded projects under the Call Topic.

1.6 Will government agencies and other institutions share the data required to carry out the research for CoT V5 projects?

As part of the "Data Requirements" section of the Full Proposal Template (Form A), applicants should clearly identify the source of essential data required for the proposed project during proposal submission. Applicants may also indicate whether they already know that the required data exists.

While the CoT Directorate may help to facilitate data sharing between agencies and other institutions where appropriate and relevant, please note that access to data is ultimately subject to permission from the respective data owners.

1.7 If a proposal spans two different Call Topics, how should applicants design and submit the proposals, including designing the budget?

Proposals should be crafted in response to what is asked for in each relevant Call Topic. Should applicants wish to submit a proposal that spans two different Call Topics, please submit two different applications (including budgets) for each of the relevant Call Topics.

1.8 Will the recording or slides of the research community briefing be shared?

Slides from the grant call briefing session will be made available on the CoT V5 1st Grant Call website, as well as on IGMS under the "Related Documents" section of the various CoT V5 Grant Call Topics. Additional Q&As arising from the briefing session will also be updated as part of the Grant Call FAQs on the CoT V5 1st Grant Call website and on IGMS. Recordings from the briefing session will not be provided.

1.9 Will previous research projects (e.g., CoT R&D Programme (RIE2020) and other government agency-funded projects) with positive research outcomes be given priority to develop further under CoT V5?

Proposals that leverage on good outcomes of past research will often be more compelling than proposals that start from scratch. However, each proposal will be assessed accordingly through the evaluation criteria, including those that are completely novel.

1.10 Will NParks facilitate the application for permits and provide support for projects to be undertaken at agency-managed sites?

NParks will facilitate the process, for example, by providing the relevant contact points of the owner agencies of particular sites, so that project proponents can initiate the process of obtaining the necessary permissions and permits to proceed with the project. However, project proponents are ultimately responsible for applying for and ensuring the validity of permits, and the final decision for the granting of permits lies with the agency responsible for each respective site, at its own discretion.

Agencies, at their discretion, may also provide on-site support to facilitate project activities at their agency-managed sites.

Any sites that are critical for project success should be identified specifically in the proposal submission stage.

1.11 Can the project team propose a research topic outside of the five Call Topics for the CoT V5 1st Grant Call?

No, as the five Call Topics have been conceptualised in consultation with participating government agencies, to address priority knowledge gaps and R&D needs under CoT V5.

Nonetheless, project teams are welcome to propose additional novel ideas (i.e., additional project objectives and deliverables), which are deemed by the project team as relevant and important to addressing the Call Topics, as part of their proposals.

1.12 Can proposals on monitoring methods/ technologies that validate, benefit and impact multiple Call Topics be submitted for this grant call?

For the CoT V5 1st Grant Call, such proposals will only be considered insofar as they are relevant and part of a larger proposal to address one of the five Call Topics.

1.13 Can a Lead PI submit proposals for more than one Call Topic?

Yes, a Lead PI may submit proposals for more than one Call Topic in the grant call.

1.14 When will the results from the CoT V5 1ˢᵗ Grant Call be concluded? *(02 March 2023)*

We hope to commence awarding projects under the CoT V5 1st Grant Call from August 2023 onwards. Please do note that the results for all the Call Topics will not be announced at one go, as the timeline for project award frequently varies across the Call Topics. For each topic, applicants will be individually informed on the outcome of their respective applications, once assessed and decided upon.
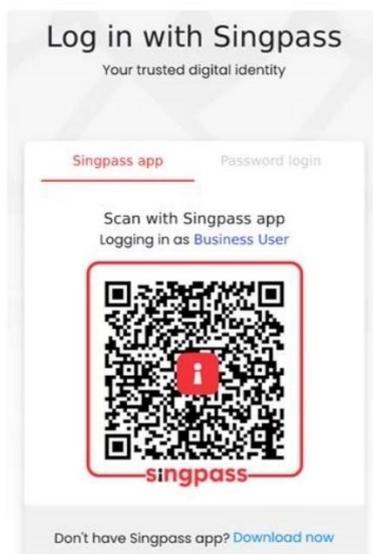
2. USING IGMS

2.1 I am a local PI with access to CorpPass. How do I register an account on IGMS?

(1) Go to the URL: https://researchgrant.gov.sg/eservices/account/login
(2) Choose the 'Host Institution Users' option.

Host Institution Users

- Principal Investigator
- HI Administrator
- Office of Research/ Director of Research
- HI Finance/ HI Human Resource
- Data Administrator/ HI Audit

(3) Sign in using your Singpass. This will lead you to your corporate account on IGMS.

(4) For first time login, user will be directed to IGMS registration page.
(5) Fill in all necessary details.

(6) Click on "**Retrieve**" button to receive an activation code (the code is valid for 10 minutes and will be sent to the e-mail registered)

(7) Key in the activation code and click on **"Next"** to complete the registration
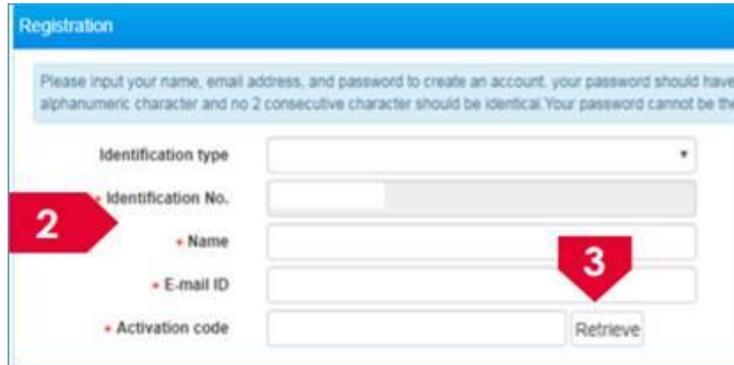
2.2 Does a Co-I need to register for an IGMS account?

The Lead PI will submit the online application in IGMS but he/she will need to add the relevant Co-I(s) as research team member in IGMS. All Co-I(s) must be registered in IGMS before they can be added as a research team member.

2.3 Are the proposal and budget templates available on IGMS for download? Is there any specific format for CV to be submitted?

To download the Full Proposal and Budget Templates, applicants will need to click "Apply" and login to IGMS. Under the "Research Details" tab, look for the "Research proposal" section to download the templates from "Please click here".

The instruction to prepare CV can be found under the "Research Team, Collaborators, Referees" tab, at the "Research team" section. Click "Add" or the "Lead PI Name" to download the document from "Please click here" under "Attach CV". The instructions can also be found in Annex A (last page) of the Full Proposal Template (Form A).

2.4 Must the Lead PI in the Host Institution submit the grant application? Can any other member of the project team submit the grant application?

No, the grant application is to be completed and submitted in IGMS by the Lead PI, and endorsed in IGMS by the Director of Research (or equivalent) from the Lead PI's Host Institution.

2.5 **The direct cost is fixed at 100% and the indirect cost (IRC) is fixed at 30% on IGMS. In the IGMS system, these funding support percentages are applied to all budgets by default, even the budgets of private sector Lead PI/Co-I who are (i) not eligible for 100% support for direct costs and are (ii) not eligible for support for IRC.**

Due to these default settings, the private sector Lead PI's/Co-I's budget indicated in IGMS will be higher than that in the Budget Template (Form B). Will this disqualify our application?

We are aware of this current constraint in the IGMS system, and applications will not be penalised for this. However, applicants should reflect the correct figures in the Budget Template (Form B) that is submitted in IGMS. The information in the Budget Template (Form B) shall be the one taken into consideration.

3. **ELIGIBILITY**

3.1 **What are the eligibility requirements for the Lead PI?**

The eligibility requirements for the Lead PI are as follows:
(1) Have a minimum of 9 months employment with the Host Institution, starting 3 months from the closing date of the Grant Call;
(2) Must be based in Singapore; and
(3) Not be debarred from submitting new grant applications for national grants.

Please also refer to Section 4. Eligibility of the Grant Call Information Sheet for the general eligibility requirements, as well as the additional requirements for Lead PIs from private sector entities.

3.2 **Are Research Fellows (in IHLs) allowed to apply as Lead PIs/Co-Is/Collaborators, or are only tenure track faculty members allowed to apply?**

Yes, Research Fellows are allowed to apply as Lead PIs/Co-Is/ Collaborators, as long as endorsed by their institutions.

Please also refer to Question 3.1. for a related query on the eligibility requirements to be a Lead PI.

3.3 **Are researchers from industry companies and overseas organisations (i.e., international researchers) eligible to apply as Co-Is?**

Researchers from both locally-based and overseas IHLs/public RIs and private sector entities, including industry companies, are eligible to apply as Co-Is. This will be at the discretion of the Lead PI, who is responsible for coordinating and organising the project team.

Please note Co-Is (and Collaborators) from overseas organisations (i.e., entities that are not Singapore-based) are not permitted to receive, directly or indirectly, any part of the

funding, whether in cash or in the form of assets acquired using the funding or otherwise unless expressly approved by the grantor. The exception is for travel expenses for the overseas-based Co-Is (and Collaborators) to come over to Singapore, which should be identified and budgeted for upfront in the Other Operating Expenses vote to be incurred by the Host Institution.

Please refer to Question 4.6. for a related query on the eligibility of overseas organisations to receive funding support from the grant.

3.4 Can government agency staff be listed as Co-Is or Collaborators in a submitted proposal?

The Call Topics under CoT V5 have already been conceptualised in consultation with various participating government agencies, to address their priority knowledge gaps and R&D needs. These agencies have been listed as Lead/Member Agency under each Call Topic, and will be involved in evaluating submitted proposals, and driving and participating in awarded projects.

As such, government agencies should not be listed as Co-Is or Collaborators in submitted proposals (unless expressly stated otherwise during the launch of the grant call), nor directly involved in the preparation of any proposal.

Please direct all enquiries on the Grant Call, including technical details of individual Call Topics, to the CoT Directorate at CoTV5@nparks.gov.sg. Should the project team wish to involve an agency that is not already listed as Lead/Member Agency, please state your intention in your proposal submission. If your proposal is shortlisted, CoT Directorate will facilitate the process to check if the agency is agreeable to be involved and to onboard them accordingly.

3.5 Where can the criteria to qualify as Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Large Local Enterprises (LLEs) be found?

The definitions of SMEs and LLEs can be found in Annex E of the Grant Call Information Sheet.

3.6 Are A*STAR research institutes eligible to apply for the grant call? *(02 March 2023)*

Yes, A*STAR research institutes are public research institutes and hence, eligible to apply for the grant call.

Please also refer to Section 5. Funding Support of the Grant Call Information Sheet for the funding support eligibility for various entity types.

3.7 **Are subsidiaries of non-Singaporean universities that are based in Singapore (including those with partnerships with local IHLs) eligible to participate in the grant call as a Lead PI, Co-I or Collaborator?** *(13 March 2023)*

Subsidiaries of non-Singaporean universities that are based in Singapore (including those with partnerships with local IHLs) are eligible to participate in the grant call as Lead PI, Co-I or Collaborator. These subsidiaries would be considered as non-Singaporean entities based in Singapore. In accordance with the relevant prevailing NR Fund guidelines:

- PIs and Co-Is from non-Singaporean entities based in Singapore will qualify for funding support of 30% of the approved qualifying direct costs of a project.
- Collaborators from non-Singaporean entities based in Singapore are not permitted to receive, directly or indirectly, any part of the funding, whether in cash or in the form of assets acquired using the funding or otherwise unless expressly approved by the grantor.

Please also refer to para 6.5 of the Grant Call Information Sheet on the additional requirement for a Singapore Technology Licensing Office to be appointed in projects funding non-Singaporean entities.

4. **FUNDING SUPPORT**

4.1 Will proposals need to adhere to the Research Grant Terms and Conditions?

Yes. An awarded project will be bound to the Terms and Conditions.

Please note that the Terms and Conditions may be subject to revisions, in accordance with the latest NRF guidelines.

4.2 What is the mechanism for fund disbursement?

Fund disbursement will be via reimbursement, on a quarterly basis.

4.3 What is the funding support criteria for polytechnics?

Polytechnics are statutory boards under the Ministry of Education. In accordance with the relevant prevailing NR Fund guidelines, all statutory boards, including polytechnics, are not entitled to funding support for:
(1) Expenditure on manpower (EOM)
(2) Indirect costs

4.4 What is the funding support criteria for Singapore-based private sector entities?

In accordance with the relevant prevailing NR Fund guidelines, Singapore-based private sector entities will qualify for tiered funding support of up to 70% of the approved qualifying direct costs of a project. Specifically,

(1) 30% for all non-Singapore entities (including non-Singapore not-for-profits);
(2) 50% for Singapore Large Local Enterprises; and
(3) 70% for Singapore Small Medium Enterprises, start-ups and not-for-profits.

Please refer to Annex E of the Grant Call Information Sheet for the definitions of the different private sector entity types.

4.5 Does the stipulated budget for the Call Topics correspond to the cost of a project before, or after the tiered funding support levels have been applied (for projects with Singapore-based private sector entities)?

The stipulated budget for the Call Topics corresponds to the total supportable costs of a project. For projects with Singapore-based private sector entities, this corresponds to the cost of a project after the relevant tiered funding support levels has been applied.

4.6 Are overseas organisations eligible for any funding from the grant?

Overseas organisations are not permitted to receive, directly or indirectly, any part of the funding, whether in cash or in the form of assets acquired using the funding or otherwise unless expressly approved by the grantor.

The exception is for travel expenses for Visiting Professors/Experts (e.g., overseas-based Co-Is and Collaborators) to come over to Singapore for the research work, which should be identified and budgeted for upfront in the Other Operating Expenses (OOE) vote to be incurred by the Host Institution.

4.7 Can the Host Institution that receives the funding for an awarded project subsequently disburse the funding to local Collaborators, and/or Co-Is and Collaborators from overseas organisations, for the project?

In accordance with the relevant prevailing NR Fund guidelines:

(1) Collaborators are not permitted to receive, directly or indirectly, any part of the funding, whether in cash or in the form of assets acquired using the funding or otherwise unless expressly approved by the grantor.

(2) Overseas organisations (in the capacity of Co-Is and Collaborators) are also not permitted to receive, directly or indirectly, any part of the funding, whether in cash or in the form of assets acquired using the funding or otherwise unless expressly approved by the grantor. The exception is for travel expenses for Visiting Professors/Experts (e.g., overseas-based Co-Is and Collaborators) to come over to Singapore, which should be identified and budgeted for upfront in the Other Operating Expenses vote to be incurred by the Host Institution.

4.8 How will funding be allocated in the following scenario?

A project team with (1) a Lead PI from a Singapore-based IHL/public RI, (2) a Co-I from a non-Singapore private sector entity based in Singapore, and (3) another Co-I from a non-Singapore private sector entity <u>not</u> based in Singapore (i.e., overseas organisation).

Funding for this project scenario will be allocated as follows:

For (1), i.e., Lead PI from a Singapore-based IHL/public RI –
- 100% of the approved qualifying direct costs from the Lead PI's respective component of the project.

For (2), i.e., Co-I from a non-Singapore private sector entity based in Singapore –
- 30% of the approved qualifying direct costs from the Co-I's respective component of the project.

For (3), i.e., Co-I from a non-Singapore private sector entity <u>not</u> based in Singapore –
- A non-Singapore private sector entity not based in Singapore (i.e., overseas organisation) will not receive any funding support unless expressly approved by the grantor.

All of the funding will be awarded through the Host Institution of the Lead PI.

4.9 Can subcontracting services (e.g., outsourced manpower/research services) be budgeted for under a proposal? If yes, do tiered funding support levels (%) apply to the subcontractors?

Subcontracting out the whole or substantial part of the research work is not permitted. In general, most of the funding should go to work done by the researchers explicitly listed in the proposal.

Where allowed with appropriate justifications, the full cost of subcontracting services are to be budgeted under Other Operating Expenditure (OOE). For the avoidance of doubt, subcontractors are not considered part of the project team and hence, are to be paid 100% (i.e., the tiered funding support levels do not apply to them).

Work to be done under subcontracting services and the costs required should be clearly indicated in the proposal submission (i.e., in the Full Proposal and Budget Templates). The proposal will be evaluated accordingly during the proposal evaluation process.

4.10 Can the funding be used for transporting samples collected in Singapore to an overseas Co-I for conducting lab analysis?

Overseas Co-Is are not permitted to receive, directly or indirectly, any part of the funding, whether in cash or in the form of assets acquired using the funding or otherwise unless expressly approved by the grantor.

In general, funding should also not be used to purchase any services from overseas organisations. Should the required services only be available overseas, the appropriate justifications must be provided, subject to the CoT Directorate's approval.

4.11 Can the salaries of Lead PI/Co-Is/Collaborators be funded under a project?

No, the salaries of Lead PI/Co-Is/Collaborators are considered as non-fundable direct costs, and should not be included under EOM budget.

Please also refer to the List of Non-Fundable Direct Costs from the "Guidelines for the Management of Research Grants" for other types of staff not supported by the funding.

4.12 Under the "Overseas Travel" cost category, who can overseas travel be budgeted for?

Travel may be budgeted for the Lead PI, Co-I(s), and research personnel (e.g., Research Assistants, Research Associates and Research Fellows).

4.13 What are the items that can be budgeted for under the travel expenses for Visiting Professors/Experts (e.g., overseas-based Co-Is and Collaborators) to come over to Singapore?

Subject to approval, short-term travel expenses for Visiting Professors/Experts (e.g., overseas-based Co-Is and Collaborators) to come over to Singapore can be budgeted

for. Any such travel expenses should be in line with the travel policy of the Lead PI's Host Institution.

4.14 Can the funding be used to purchase equipment for the project?

Yes, the funding can be used to purchase Equipment, which are supportable direct costs. However, in accordance with the prevailing NR Fund guidelines, please note that:

(1) The purchase of Equipment should be justified (e.g., Equipment is currently unavailable in the Host Institution).
(2) There is a requirement to share Equipment purchased using NR Funds with other researchers in Singapore.

Please refer to the Grant Call Information Sheet, as well as "Guidelines for Management of Research Grants", for further guidelines on Equipment.

5. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

5.1 The Grant Call Information Sheet mentions that a copy of the application should also be sent by email to the CoT Directorate. Is this a required step to be done after the application in IGMS has been successfully endorsed by the Director of Research (also in IGMS)? If yes, must this step be done by 31 March 2023, before 2pm, or can this step be done after the deadline?

Please note that the application will only be considered valid if the submission is completed in IGMS, including endorsement by the Director of Research (also in IGMS) by the submission deadline (31 March 2023, 2:00pm, Singapore time).

A copy of the application should be sent via email to the CoT Directorate after this.

5.2 What should be indicated as the Topic Code, as part of the required naming convention for softcopy attachments?

The Topic Codes refer to e.g., CoT_V5_GC2023_01, CoT_V5_GC2023_02, etc. These can be found in Annex C of the Grant Call Information Sheet, which provides the detailed information on each Call Topic.

5.3 For A*STAR research institutes (RIs), can the proposals be signed and endorsed by the respective RI's equivalents of the Head of Department and Director of Research, or should it be done at the whole of A*STAR-level?

The proposals from A*STAR RIs can be signed and endorsed by the equivalents of the Head of Department and Director of Research in the respective RI's management.

5.4 **Must the Full Proposal Template (Form A) and Budget Template (Form B) be submitted in Microsoft Word and Excel format respectively?**

Yes, the Full Proposal Template (Form A) and Budget Template (Form B) should be submitted in Microsoft Word and Excel format respectively. This should be done via IGMS. Please refer here for assistance in adding signatures into the documents.

5.5 **Can an Institution's Research Office submit the consolidated copies of the applications for all of the Institution's Lead PIs via email to the CoT Directorate, or should the Lead PIs submit their respective copy of the application via email to the CoT Directorate individually?**

The Institution's Research Office can submit the copies of the individual applications for all of the Institution's Lead PIs via email to the CoT Directorate. Please send a zipped folder with each copy of the application in a separate sub-folder.

5.6 **In some grant applications, members of the research team can be designated roles other than Lead PI, Co-I or Collaborators – e.g., Team PIs, (who are led by the Lead PI, and in turn, lead individual teams to independently achieve certain specific research objectives). Can we do such categorization in CoT V5 grant applications by defining Team PIs in the application file, in addition to Lead PI and Co-Is?** *(02 March 2023)*

For CoT V5 grant calls, applicants would be required to list their project team members in the application documents using the nomenclature provided i.e., as **Lead PI**, **Co-Is** or **Collaborators**.

If the project team wishes to assign certain researchers involved as Team PI, we suggest that they are listed as **Co-I (Team PI)** in the application documents.

5A. FULL PROPOSAL TEMPLATE (FORM A)

5A.1. For Form A, does the "% of time committed on the project" refer to the individual's time spent on the proposed project relative to i) the individual's total work time, or; ii) the other team members' time commitment on the project (where it should add up to a total of 100% for all the team members)?

The "% of time committed on the project" in the Full Proposal Template (Form A) refers to the individual's time that would be spent on the proposed project relative to the individual's total work time.

5A.2. Is there a limit to the number of Co-Is or Collaborators for a proposal?

No, there is no limit. Additional lines may be added to Section 1 of the Full Proposal Template (Form A), where necessary.

5A.3. Where can the instructions for CVs be found?

The instructions for CVs are in Annex A (i.e., last page) of the Full Proposal Template (Form A).

5B. <u>BUDGET TEMPLATE (FORM B)</u>

5B.1. Is signatory in the Budget Template (Form B) necessary before submitting it on IGMS?

Yes. It is necessary for the Budget Template (Form B) to be endorsed before submission on IGMS. E-signature is acceptable.

5B.2. For the Budget Template (Form B), are signatories only required from the Lead PI and Director of Research (DOR) of the Host Institution? Can additional endorsement signatories be added in the Budget Template (Form B), if endorsement from other parties (e.g., Lead PI's Head of Department) are required based on the Host Institutions' internal processes?

Yes, signatories are only required from the Lead PI and DOR of the Host Institution.

The requirement for endorsement by the DOR of the Host Institution is consistent with other similar grants, and additional endorsements should not be inserted into the submitted form.

5B.3. For the "Detailed Budget Breakdown" in Form B (Section 3), should private sector Lead PIs/Co-Is state the full cost for each line item, or the reduced cost based on their tiered funding support levels (i.e., 30%/50%/70%)?

Private sector Lead PIs/Co-Is should state the full cost for each line item in the "Detailed Budget Breakdown" section.

Based on this, the funding amount that they are eligible for will be automatically calculated under the "Total Supportable Costs" column of the "Breakdown of Project Costing" section.

5B.4. If the Lead PI and Co-Is are from the same institution, should the Co-I's budget be parked under the Lead PI in the Budget Template (Form B)?

Yes, the budget should be indicated by institution in the Budget Template (Form B). The Co-I's budget for their respective component of the project should be indicated under the Lead PI, if they are from the same institution.

6. EVALUATION & AWARD

6.1 How will technical peer reviewers be identified? Can applicants recommend names for suitable technical peer reviewers? *(02 March 2023)*

Technical peer reviewers will be identified, based on their domain expertise in the field(s) covered by the Call Topic. Applicants are invited to recommend potential suitable peer reviewers for the CoT Evaluation Committee's consideration, in the "Suggested Names of Technical Peer Reviewers" section of the Full Proposal Template (Form A), and in the IGMS application. The final decision on the peer reviewers will be decided by the Evaluation Committee.

Please also refer to Section 12. Submission Instructions of the Grant Call Information Sheet for further details on recommending suitable peer reviewers.

6.2 Will applicants have the opportunity to respond to comments or queries from the technical peer reviewers and/or Project Evaluation Panel? *(02 March 2023)*

Applicants will have the opportunity to provide clarifications on their proposals during the Project Evaluation Panel stage. During this stage, shortlisted applicants will present their proposals to the Project Evaluation Panel, who will also seek clarifications from applicants on various aspects of their proposals where required.

6.3 It was mentioned that projects will be awarded under the CoT V5 1st Grant Call from August 2023 onwards. Are there any requirements for the project start date to be within a certain period from the issuance of the Letter of Award? *(02 March 2023)*

In general, projects are expected to commence promptly following the issuance of the Letter of Award. While there are no fixed requirements for the project start date, this should be discussed and agreed between the project team and the agencies involved, during the project award stage.