

## **GUIDELINES FOR RIGHT TO INFORMATION FELLOWSHIP**

The Department of Personnel and Training (DOPT), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India, is the nodal Ministry for the Right to Information Act. It is also administering a Plan scheme titled 'Improving Transparency and Accountability in Government through effective Implementation of the Right to Information Act'. The primary goal of the scheme is to contribute towards more accountable and transparent government and it has several components including programmes for awareness generation, training and e-governance initiatives for RTI for achieving the purpose.

Under this scheme, DOPT proposes to offer 4(**Four**) short-term fellowships to researchers from the field of media / journalism/ Civil Society Organisations associated with RTI / RTI Trainers to conduct field based research on themes relating to RTI. It is hoped that the research output will enhance our understanding of the status of the implementation of the act, including its successes, constraints in its implementation and how those are being / could be overcome and what more needs to be done to help achieve the objectives of the Act.

### **Who can Apply/**

The fellowship is open to individuals in the age group of 25 to 40 years from the field of journalism (newspaper/ magazine/ radio/ TV), Civil Society Organisations associated with RTI and researchers & trainers in the field of RTI. The applicant should have proven credentials in his / her professional area, have some prior experience of work relating to the Right to Information and should have an aptitude for research.

### **Suggested Areas of Study and Research Output**

RTI fellowships would be granted for researching any theme relating to RTI with the objective of contributing towards better understanding of the successes of RTI and/ or constraints in its implementation and how implementation of the Act could be strengthened? Some examples of themes that could be selected are given below. These are only in the nature of examples and applicants may choose any theme relating to RTI as long as they are able to justify that it would meet the objective of the scheme.

- (a) Issues relating to awareness generation and accessibility for seeking information in the remote areas/villages.
- (b) Role of civil society in strengthening RTI regime and how government may coordinate with the efforts of the CSOs.
- (c) Successes of RTI in improving transparency and accountability.
- (d) Issues in functioning of Central Information Commission /State Information Commissions.

- (e) Ensuring Implementation of provisions and guidelines regarding pro-active disclosures.
- (f) Best practices from the field.

The proposal should clearly indicate the monthly as well as final output that will be delivered at the end of the fellowship. It could be in the nature of a monograph of 10,000 words which is ready for publication, or features/news stories /investigative stories that could be printed / published as a journalistic piece in national /international media or, in the case of professionals from the field of audio-video media, it could even be short video films or stories. The copyright of the research output will vest in Government of India who may publish the research output and /or may use it in any other way for the purpose of strengthening the working of the RTI regime in the country. Government of India may, however, upon request, permit the Fellow to use the output for publication etc., if government itself does not publish / make use of the output within one year.

### **Duration**

The fellowships would be for a duration of three months.

### **Compensation and funding**

- a) Each selected Fellow will receive a total stipend of upto Rs. 2.00 lakhs (subject to tax deduction at source), including a grant of upto Rs.50,000 for books, research material, travel, printing, production of creatives etc on production of actual bills.
- b) The stipend will be disbursed as follows:-
  - (i) Rs.50,000 – On acceptance of the 1<sup>st</sup> monthly progress report by an expert group
  - (ii) Rs.50,000 – On acceptance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> monthly progress report by an expert group
  - (iii) Rs.50,000 – On acceptance of the final output by competent authority in DOPT.
  - (iv) Upto Rs.50,000 – For books, research material, travel, printing, production of creatives etc on acceptance of the final output by competent authority in DOPT and on production of the actual bills.

### **Selection**

RTI fellows will be selected on the basis of appraisal of the application and the research proposal and/or interviews /presentation of the proposal. The proposals will be evaluated on the basis of evaluation criteria detailed below.

Application for fellowship should be accompanied by the following documents:

- a) A comprehensive proposal (not more than 6-8 A4 size pages) outlining the subject to be researched, the research plan and the monthly and final deliverables.

