



Ministry of Higher Education,  
Research & Innovation

# **Strategic Research Projects Program (SRPP)**

## **Guidelines**

November 2021



## Contents

|                                                                                                                                |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>1. Introduction</b> .....                                                                                                   | 3  |
| <b>2. Definitions</b> .....                                                                                                    | 4  |
| <b>3. Program Objectives</b> .....                                                                                             | 6  |
| <b>4. Program General Requirements</b> .....                                                                                   | 7  |
| First: General Conditions.....                                                                                                 | 7  |
| Second: Entities Responsible for the Implementation of Studies and Research.....                                               | 7  |
| <b>5. Program Workflow</b> .....                                                                                               | 8  |
| <b>6. Financial Requirements</b> .....                                                                                         | 9  |
| First: Research Project Budget.....                                                                                            | 9  |
| Second: Budget Categories .....                                                                                                | 10 |
| Third: Financial Movement between the Categories of the Budget Approved by the Ministry .....                                  | 11 |
| Fourth: Financial Movement between the Categories of the Approved Budget from the Main partner's Budget.....                   | 11 |
| <b>7. Main Partner's Institution KPIs</b> .....                                                                                | 12 |
| <b>8. Roles and Responsibilities of the Members of Strategic Research Projects Program Committee</b> .....                     | 13 |
| <b>First: Roles and Responsibilities of Strategic Research Projects Program Committee</b> .....                                | 13 |
| Second: Tasks of Research Focal Point .....                                                                                    | 14 |
| Third: Tasks of Financial Focal Point .....                                                                                    | 15 |
| Fourth: Tasks of Technical Focal Point.....                                                                                    | 15 |
| <b>9. Selection Criteria of the Principal Investigator and the Research Team</b> .....                                         | 16 |
| <b>10. Tasks of the Principal Investigator</b> .....                                                                           | 17 |
| <b>11. Conditions and Criteria for the Replacement of the Principal Investigator and Research Team Members</b> .....           | 17 |
| <b>12. Research Proposals Submission Conditions</b> .....                                                                      | 18 |
| <b>13. Research Proposals Evaluation</b> .....                                                                                 | 19 |
| First: The General Framework of Research Proposals Evaluation .....                                                            | 19 |
| Second: Evaluating the Criteria of Research Proposals Relevance to the Institutional Challenges and the Impact of Outputs..... | 20 |
| Third: Evaluating the Criteria of Research Excellence.....                                                                     | 21 |
| <b>14. Strategic Projects Research Contracts</b> .....                                                                         | 22 |



|                                                                                                                           |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| First: The General Framework of Research Contracts.....                                                                   | 22        |
| Second: Research Contract Extension .....                                                                                 | 22        |
| Third: Suspension or Termination of Research Contract .....                                                               | 23        |
| <b>15. Progress and Final Reports for Approved Projects .....</b>                                                         | <b>24</b> |
| <b>16. Research Proposals Management Platform.....</b>                                                                    | <b>24</b> |
| <b>17. Copyrights and Usufructs .....</b>                                                                                 | <b>25</b> |
| <b>18. Ethics of Work and Research.....</b>                                                                               | <b>26</b> |
| <b>19. Appendixes.....</b>                                                                                                | <b>27</b> |
| Appendix no. (1) Identification of National Priorities Form .....                                                         | 27        |
| Appendix no. (2) The General Framework of the Pre-Proposal .....                                                          | 27        |
| Appendix no. (3) The General Framework of the Full Proposal .....                                                         | 27        |
| Appendix no. (4) Pre-Proposal Evaluation Form.....                                                                        | 28        |
| Appendix no. (5) Criteria of Research Proposals Relevance to the Institutional Challenges and the Impact of Outputs ..... | 29        |
| Appendix no. (6) Research Excellence Criteria.....                                                                        | 30        |
| Appendix no. (7) Content of Progress Report.....                                                                          | 30        |
| Appendix no. (8) Content of Final Report .....                                                                            | 31        |



## 1. Introduction

Strategic Research Projects Program (SRPP) is one of the important research support and funding programs provided by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI). The program, in line with Oman vision 2040, aims to serve the strategic directions and focuses on the national priorities on various social, economic and service sectors, for instance, health, food and water security, energy security, water research and artificial intelligence technology. It is hoped that the results of this program will play a major role in making decisions based on scientific evidence as well as increasing efficiency and productivity by providing new solutions for the challenges the government faces.



## 2. Definitions

The terms below shall have the given definitions unless the context requires otherwise:

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Innovation                    | An innovative concept characterising the work with uniqueness and authenticity.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Invention                     | The innovator's idea that provides a practical solution to a specific technological problem, whether the invention is a product or related to an industrial product or process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Principal Investigator (PI)   | The researcher holding PhD or its equivalent (senior specialist or higher for medical doctors), and will be responsible for all the research activities listed in the contract signed between the main partner and the entity to which the PI belongs, or directly between the main partner and the PI.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Co-Investigator               | The researcher who is affiliated with a local or international research institution and helps the PI in developing or implementing the research project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Patent                        | It is an inclusive legal document constituting a rebuttable presumption of its holder's right in protecting the invention from using by others in the Sultanate of Oman.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Conflict of Interest          | A situation in which a person has a professional or personal interest sufficient to influence the objective exercise of his/her official duties. This may involve personal or professional relationships between any of the investigators, peer reviewers such as being a close relative, present or past co-worker, co-author, collaborator, subordinate, supervisor...etc. This equally include any relationship between the researcher and a member in Strategic Research Program Committee or the Evaluation Committee. |
| Copyright                     | The right granted to the creative individuals for their artistic and literary work including books, music, oil paintings, sculptures, films as well as computer programs, data bases, ads and digital mappings. This also includes scientific research findings and explorations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Main partner                  | The government institution (a ministry or an authority) responsible for the overall management of the strategic research projects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Contract                      | The research contract signed between the two parties, including those signed between MoHERI and main partner.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Project Period                | The agreed time-frame for implementing the research project as per the research contract.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Research Project Team         | All researchers, research assistants, technicians and other employees in charge of implementing the research project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Research Assistant-technician | The employee who is directly participating in the research project on a temporary contract, for a specific period, providing that it doesn't exceed the research project period. Postgraduate students are allowed to apply for this role.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Research Project              | The funded research activities as per the terms and conditions of the signed research contract.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |



|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Creator                                       | Any creative individual producing an innovative work in literature, art, or science, regardless of its kind, importance, purpose or how it is expressed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Work                                          | An innovative product in the literary, artistic or scientific domain, of whatever type, way of expression, importance or purpose.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Intellectual Property                         | A set of inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, logos, names, pictures and other mind creations that are protected by various rights such as those related to patents, copyrights, utility models, industrial designs, trademarks and others granted for individuals, institutions, or countries for their creative works.                                            |
| Project Intellectual Property                 | The intellectual property that arises directly from starting the research project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Research Information Management System (RIMS) | An electronic platform in Oman Research Portal to receive and evaluate research proposals, fully manage research projects until they are completed successfully and track their performance indicators.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Ethical Approval                              | An ethical approval letter on the research methodology that preserves the dignity of living things (humans, animals, plants) according to science safety standards. Prior to project initiation, the research team should apply for the ethical approval (if required) from the concerned authority, in coordination with the Strategic Research Projects Program Committee.     |
| Research Institution                          | The institution which conducts the research project, either a government or an academic institution, and is electronically linked to MoHERI.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| CO Principal Investigator (CO- PI)            | The researcher holding PhD or its equivalent (senior specialist or higher in the medical field) and is affiliated with the same local research institution to which PI belongs. CO- PI will be responsible for all research activities enlisted in the signed research contract, in case PI has been absent or has stopped working on the project or managing it for any reason. |
| Research Project Outcomes                     | The research project outcomes, including the intellectual property which can be protected by law.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Copying                                       | Making one exact replica or more of the original work, performance, voice recording, radio program either directly or indirectly, by any means such as printing, filming, recording or saving it, temporarily or permanently.                                                                                                                                                    |
| Publishing                                    | Offering hard or electronic copies of the work, performance, voice recording or radio program for the general audience by any means for the purpose of sale, rent or transfer of ownership or possession, including publishing research.                                                                                                                                         |
| Institutional Focal Point                     | An employee for the main partner, acting as a liaison between his institution and MoHERI as well as coordinating, managing and following-up with all research projects.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Ministry                                      | Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, which administers and sponsors the Strategic Research Projects Program.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



### 3. Program Objectives

1. Discussing the challenges that are placed at the top of the national priorities and concern government institutions. They are raised through competitive research proposals to suggest scientific and practical solutions and contribute in achieving sustainable development goals in all scientific, social, economic and intellectual fields.
2. Increasing the number of research papers in the Sultanate and promoting research excellence according to the international standards in research.
3. Building national capacity in research and innovation.
4. Fostering constructive cooperation within the research ecosystem (government institutions, academic institutions and private sector) to enhance knowledge-transfer.
- 5- Contributing in building a robust knowledge-based economy to enhance and diverse income sources in the Sultanate, generate wealth and provide job opportunities.
6. Offering recommendations to help decision-making entities in formulating or updating general policies and legislations.
- 7- Providing an integrated platform to disseminate research topics of central importance with relevant authorities, receive proposals from institutions or individuals, adhere to the highest standards of quality and follow-up the work progress to achieve the desired objectives.



## 4. Program General Requirements

### First: General Conditions

1. The concerned governmental entity shall have a serious desire in managing research projects and adopting their outputs.
2. Commitment should be expressed in writing with a concrete contribution in the collaborative funding program specified in section (6).
3. Strategic Research Projects Program Committee shall be formed by a decision of the unit head, comprising at least five members, who are qualified in scientific, practical and professional terms. The committee shall be responsible for the tasks specified in section (8).
4. An institutional research focal point shall be assigned to be manage and follow-up research work with the Ministry, and shall be a member in the Strategic Research Projects Program Committee and responsible for the tasks indicated in section (8).
5. A financial focal point shall be assigned to manage and audit expenses and be committed towards the tasks indicated in section (8).
6. A technical focal point shall be assigned and have the tasks specified in section (8).
7. A description of the research challenge shall be prepared at the time of submitting the proposals, along with the mechanism followed to adopt the outputs after completing the research project to measure the applicability of the outcomes according to the following table:

| During research proposal submission              | After completing the research project and adopting its outputs |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Description of the current challenges (problems) | Description of the situation                                   | The mechanism followed to adopt the outputs:<br>Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Developing a new policy or decision</li><li>- Modifying/developing particular procedures</li></ul> |

### Second: Entities Responsible for the implementation of Studies and Research

1. Government institutions
2. Universities, colleges and local research centres (governmental and private)
3. International research institutions. Researchers can participate as members in the research team (an associate researcher or consultant) based on project requirements with the following conditions:
  1. PI and Co-PI belongs to a research institution inside the Sultanate of Oman.
  2. Research is conducted mainly in the Sultanate.
  3. Cost of consulting services shall not exceed the financial cap (2,000 OMR).



## 5. Program Workflow

Applications for research proposals will be received according to the final evaluation from the institutions at the end of January of each year, according to the mechanism shown in figure (1).

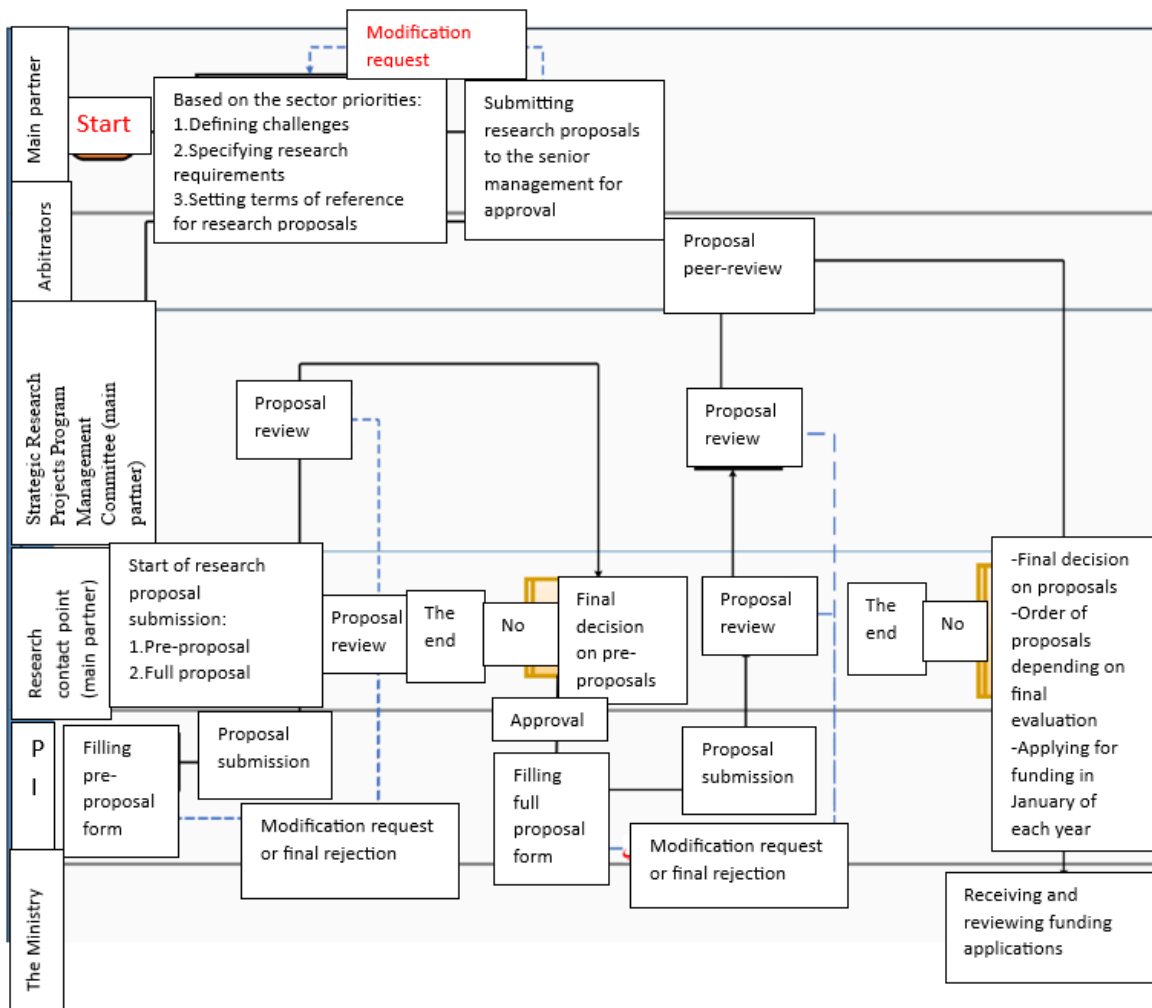


Figure (1)



## 6. Financial Requirements

### First: Research Project Budget

1. The Ministry contributes in funding:
  - 50% of the project cost.
  - An amount not exceeding than 50,000 OMR for each project, according to the budgets allocated by Ministry of Finance.
  - The main partner shall cover the remaining cost of the project by providing financial or in-kind contribution, with a written confirmation from Chair of Strategic Research Projects Program Committee or from the top management of the main partner's institution, according to the table below:

Table (1)

| Examples | Project Total Cost (OMR) | Ministry Contribution | Main partner Contribution |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
|          | 60,000                   | 30,000                | 30,000                    |
|          | 120,000                  | 50,000                | 70,000                    |

2. The approved budget for projects shall be transferred to the main partner in one lump sum, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance.
3. The total approved budget for research projects cannot be increased after signing the contract with the main partner.
4. After completion of the research project, the institution shall return the unspent funds to the Ministry.



## Second: Budget Categories

Table (2): Items of the Approved Research Projects Budget

| Category                                                                           | Condition and Financial Cap                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Equipment and Facilities</b>                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of equipment should be limited to those available in research institutions through (I-Lab) platform.</li> <li>• If there is a need to purchase equipment from the project budget, the following must be considered:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Total cost should not exceed 50% of the total approved research project budget.</li> <li>2. Description of devices and equipment should be included in MoHERI (I-Lab) platform through the link:<br/><a href="https://trc.ilab.agilent.com/landing/1759">https://trc.ilab.agilent.com/landing/1759</a></li> </ol> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Materials and Supplies</b>                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shall not exceed 70% of the total approved budget.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Research Assistant/Technician/Postgraduate student/post-doctoral researcher</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority is given to Omanis.</li> <li>• Financial cap shall not exceed 10 OMR/Hour or a total of 10,000 OMR.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Data collection</b>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial cap shall not exceed 10 OMR/Hour or a total of 10,000 OMR.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Consultant or consultation services</b>                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial cap shall not exceed 2,000 OMR.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Travel and conferences</b>                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering costs of participating with a research paper from the funded research project outputs in local and international conferences, with a disclosure of the Ministry's support (acknowledgment).</li> <li>• Financial cap shall not exceed 2,000 OMR.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Administrative costs</b>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To cover administrative expenses, such as internet services fees, postal charges, online subscriptions, stationaries, document printing and others.</li> <li>• Financial cap shall not exceed 2% of the total approved budget.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Dissemination Cost</b>                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering the cost of scientific resources or publishing project outputs in peer-reviewed journals or as a chapter in a book, but this doesn't include printing and publishing books.</li> <li>• Financial cap shall not exceed 2% of the total approved budget.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Research team</b>                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payments are not allowed to be given the PI, Co-PI and research co-investigator.</li> <li>• Payments are allowed to be given to the research assistant or technician, undergraduates, postgraduates and post-doctoral researcher.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Postgraduate scholarships</b>                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding does not include postgraduate students and postgraduate scholarships.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |



### **Third: Financial Movement between the Categories of the Budget Approved by the Ministry**

- The institution is allowed to make financial movement between the categories of the approved research project budget, considering that they don't exceed the financial cap set for any research project (50,000 OMR) or for any other budget category according to the table (2) above.
- Financial movement between the approved projects in the program are allowed (only for the approved research projects in the same cycle), provided that the financial transfer doesn't exceed 20% of the total cost of the research project receiving this transfer, and doesn't exceed the financial cap of any other research project (50,000 OMR).

### **Fourth: Financial Movement between the Categories of the Approved Budget from the Main partner's Budget**

- All Financial movements between the budget categories of the approved research project or between other research projects are conducted under the regular procedures of the main partner's institution.



## 7. Main Partner's Institution KPIs

Research KPIs will be monitored periodically, updated and submitted annually to the Ministry, and include the following:

| KPIs of the main partner's institution in research and innovation throughout the year             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                                                                                 | Funding allocated for research and innovation from the main partner's institution                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2                                                                                                 | Funding allocated for research and innovation from government or private sectors or international institutions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 3                                                                                                 | Institution's research capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratio of PhD researchers (employees) to the total number of employees in the institution.</li> <li>• Ratio of the Research and Studies Unit staff to the total number of employees in the institution.</li> <li>• Total number of new PhD graduates, indicating the funding source and the university</li> </ul> |
| 4                                                                                                 | Number of patents and excellence awards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 5                                                                                                 | Number of published papers in indexed and peer-reviewed journals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 6                                                                                                 | Citation rates of published papers in indexed and peer-reviewed journals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 7                                                                                                 | Number of submitted and implemented policies, recommendations and scientific solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 8                                                                                                 | Number of workshops, conferences, training programs and awareness sessions on the project outcomes and outputs, held for the institutions and community in the field of research and innovation                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 9                                                                                                 | Number of effective collaborations achieved locally, regionally and internationally                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 10                                                                                                | Number of successfully completed projects out of the total number of the research projects implemented in the main partner's institution.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| KPIs of the main partner's institution in Strategic Research Projects Program throughout the year |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1                                                                                                 | Number of research proposals submitted for competition in each cycle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2                                                                                                 | The proportion of budget allocated for the projects of the program from the overall institution's budget                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 3                                                                                                 | Amount of the external funding allocated for the projects of the program throughout the year along with the entities contributed in funding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 4                                                                                                 | Number of researchers, students, research assistants and technicians participating in the projects of the program.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 5                                                                                                 | Number of patents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 6                                                                                                 | Number of the published papers, for the projects of the program, in indexed and peer-reviewed journals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 7                                                                                                 | Citation rates of published papers, for the projects of the program, in indexed and peer-reviewed journals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 8                                                                                                 | Number of submitted and implemented policies, recommendations and scientific solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 9                                                                                                 | Number of workshops, conferences, training programs and awareness sessions held for the institutions and community regarding the program activities and outputs                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 10                                                                                                | Number of effective collaborations achieved locally, regionally and internationally                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                   | Number of successfully completed projects out of the total number of the research projects funded by the Ministry.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



## 8. Roles and Responsibilities of the Members of Strategic Research Projects Programs Committee

### First: Roles and Responsibilities of Strategic Research Projects Program Committee

1. Setting the institution's strategic research priorities (Appendix no. 1), while considering the following:
  - The harmony between the institution's strategic research priorities and the national and sector priorities.
  - Engagement with other collaborators in the program to determine main research challenges and matters that require a research study.
  - Detailed planning to address these research priorities and the supervision of the implementation of research projects.
2. Managing Research Projects
  - Reviewing research proposals and evaluating them according to their relevance to research priorities.
  - Confirming the approval of the research project and that it receives the required ethical approval, as needed.
  - Providing an enabling and supportive environment for the successful implementation of the research projects.
  - Following up the work-flow to help overcome the challenges hindering research projects.
  - Reviewing progress and final reports prepared by the research teams for final approval.
  - Evaluating the performance of the approved research projects in the program using KPIs and quality standards of outputs.
3. Ensuring the adoption of research outputs
  - Using the outputs in practice.
  - Following up and applying approved recommendations and decisions based on these outputs.
  - Leveraging outputs in building knowledge-based economy (transforming them to products and commercial services).
4. Ensuring the compatibility of the program and research activities with the laws, rules and regulations in the Sultanate of Oman.
5. Supervising the workshops on research projects and their outputs, with the participation of local and international specialists.
6. Preparing an annual report on the work progress in the program and submitting it to the Ministry.



## **Second: Tasks of Research Focal Point**

1. Communicate with the Ministry and share up-to date information and data.
2. Undertake initiatives on raising awareness on the program and coordinate with the concerned parties, either researchers or relevant authorities, in all that serves the program.
3. Help researchers and encourage them to submit research proposals that serve the program objectives, connect researchers with relevant institutions that may adopt these proposals and work with both researchers and institutions to facilitate the researchers' task.
4. Prepare announcements for submitting research proposals that solve sector challenges and issues depending on the institutional/national research priorities to be presented to the Strategic Research Projects Program Committee for approval.
5. Submit funding applications to the Ministry through (RIMS) after ensuring that research proposals meet all conditions, and approve the final shortlist made by Strategic Research Projects Program Committee.
6. Follow-up the work flow and ensure that research projects submission requirements are met according to the time-frame and the approved research contracts from an administrative and financial perspective, along with the initial review of progress and final reports prepared by research teams.
7. Discuss and give an overview of the work flow in research projects with the committee at the relevant institution on a regular basis. This also includes presenting the outputs of the completed projects for approval, in order to submit the recommendations to the concerned authorities for the benefit of the local community.
8. Keeping electronic copies (or hard copies if needed) for all documents, communications, files and reports related to the program for future reference.



### **Third: Tasks of Financial Focal Point**

- 1- Communicate with the Ministry and share up-to date information on financial procedures.
- 2- Prepare and review the budgets proposed for the research projects.
- 3- Follow-up payments and financial movements, according to the budget categories and the specified timeline.
- 4- Engage with the research teams to ensure that payment procedures are carried out according to the approved budgets.
- 5- Review and approve interim financial reports.
- 6- Submit the financial audit report at the end of each research project.
- 7- Follow up and return all unused funds to the Ministry.

### **Fourth: Tasks of Technical Focal Point**

Cooperating with the IT professionals at the Ministry to:

1. Fulfil the requirements of linking the main partner's institution electronically to the Ministry in case it is not linked.
2. Share up-to date information and suggest proposals to enhance and develop the electronic platform.
3. Solve the technical problems faced by researchers, reviewers and research institutions.
4. Train users of the electronic platform at the main partner's institution and other relevant research institutions.



## 9. Selection Criteria of the Principal Investigator and the Research Team

1. The PI must have PhD, at a minimum, or its equivalent (senior specialist or higher for medical field), in an academic or research domain closely related to the research topics or items to be studied.
2. The PI must be affiliated with an academic or research institution, based in the Sultanate of Oman.
3. The PI must have no record for non-compliance of Omani laws or the Ministry's regulations.
4. The selection criteria of the PI apply for the Co- PI too, and the latter shall replace the PI in case of absence/withdrawal/resignation.
5. There is a possibility of forming research teams that include experienced researchers, post-doc fellows, postgraduates and graduates. Non-academic employees can be also engaged as members in the team, such as technicians or support staff like secretariates or consultants according to the institution's own procedures.
6. The research team can join a co-investigator or more, provided that he is affiliated with a national or international research institution, and helps the PI in developing and implementing the research project.
7. It is allowed to have other researchers (except PI and Co-PI) from other local or international institutions and not necessarily from the same research institution.
8. Committees' members and research focal point are not allowed to members in the research teams or act as PIs or participants in the projects.



## **10. Tasks of the Principal Investigator**

1. Draft, submit, and modify the research proposal, as well as following-up its workflow.
2. Manage and lead the research project to achieve approved objectives.
3. Ensure that the research team members are competent and qualified, and given specific tasks to be responsible for.
4. Ensure that the research team adheres to the research contract in terms of expenses, implementation plan, timeline, submission requirements and outputs.
5. Ascertain that the research team is aware of the updates, regulations, rules and procedures of the research projects in the relevant authority.
6. Ensure that all research project activities align with the legal and ethical procedures followed in the research institution and in the Sultanate of Oman in general.

## **11. Conditions and Criteria for the Replacement of the Principal Investigator and Research Team Members**

1. The replacement of the Principal Investigator (PI), his Co-PI, or any member of the research team shall fall under the research institution's responsibility, while obtaining prior approval from the main partner and then updating the changes in the electronic platform (RIMS).
2. Co-PI takes the responsibility of leading the research project until the PI is replaced.
3. The research institution can nominate a substitute for the PI other than the Co-PI while providing all the necessary supporting information as long as the substitute meets the eligibility criteria to act as PI, has the experience and able to lead the research project.



## 12. Research Proposals Submission Conditions

1. Research proposals are submitted by the researchers through RIMS according to Appendix no. (2) and Appendix no. (3). Requests through emails or letters are not accepted.
2. Research proposals should comply with the challenges posed in the research proposals submission announcement in each cycle.
3. The researcher, in case he is a PI, is not entitled to submit more than one research proposal in each cycle. The researcher can be a member in any research project submitted in the same cycle, provided he is not a Co-PI.
4. The PI and his Co-PI must belong to the same research institution.
5. In case there is an international cooperation in the submission of research proposals, the PI and his Co-PI must be from the same research institution in the Sultanate of Oman.
6. If the research project requires obtaining ethical approvals, it is the PI's responsibility to request these approvals from the relevant authorities. The Strategic Research Projects Program Committee is responsible to ensure that the research proposals obtain approvals prior to commencing the project.
7. The research project implementation period shall not exceed a maximum of 2 years from the time the main partner receives the approved budget.
8. The desired outputs of the project proposal shall be made clear. The proposal shall also clarify how the challenge posed in the announcement is addressed.
9. There should be a clear vision on the mechanism for implementing the research project outputs in practice within a specific timeframe.



## 13. Research Proposals Evaluation

### **First: The General Framework of Research Proposals Evaluation**

1. The pre-proposals are evaluated according to the criteria listed in appendix no. (4).
2. Research proposals are evaluated and chosen based on the criteria of research excellence in appendix (5), its relevance to the institutional challenges and the impact of outputs, as indicated in appendix (6).
3. The priority is given to the topics and research projects that serve a number of national priorities or intersect with various strategic directions and achieve more than one objective.
4. The research team shall have the necessary qualifications, experiences and research accomplishments to meet the research project requirements.
5. International reviewing methods related to the evaluation process are followed, while keeping the identity of researchers anonymous.
6. Experiences of the research team are evaluated by Strategic Research Projects Program Committee.
7. Local, regional and international research collaborations are essential to build research connections, use research competencies and transfer knowledge.
8. The evaluator shall not evaluate any criterion if he does not have the enough knowledge and experience on its field.
9. The Strategic Research Projects Program Committee shall set a minimum qualifying score for funding the submitted proposals, and withhold funding if proposals do not satisfy the minimum requirement.
10. Neutrality shall be considered along with all necessary measures and precautions to prevent any violations or conflict of interests when choosing reviewers. This also applies to the roles and responsibilities assigned to the main committee, and the Ministry is fully entitled to be aware of all the details of choosing reviewers, including their educational background, evaluation results and recommendations, if ever required.



## **Second: Evaluating the Criteria of Research Proposals Relevance to the Institutional Challenges and the Impact of Outputs**

### **1. Criteria (Appendix no. 5)**

- Contribute to building knowledge-based society and serve the social and economic development priorities as well as the general policies in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Have clear objectives, methodology and expected outcomes.
- Have a clear vision on the practical implementation of the research project outputs within a specific time-frame.
- Have a clear time frame proposed for the implementation of the project, along with the required financial resources.
- Ensure that the research team is qualified, experienced, publish in scholarly journals and have a distinguished academic background.
- Strengthen local, regional and international research collaborations.
- Build research capacity and develop local competencies in the research field.

### **2. Evaluation Process**

- The Strategic Research Projects Program Committee at the main partner's institution is responsible for the evaluation process, and a sub technical committee can be formed according to the following:
  1. The number of reviewers shall not be less than 3 to reach a fair evaluation, and it is possible to increase the number, as required.
  2. The evaluation mechanism and selection of reviewers shall be approved by the main committee, and be documented in meetings minutes.
  3. The evaluation committee shall take notes of all the details related to the evaluation process in their meetings, and submit the meetings minutes to the main committee for approval.
- The most relevant proposals are selected based on calculating the average of the evaluation scores for all reviewers.
- Members of The Strategic Research Projects Program Committee shall not make any discussions during the evaluation process which may negatively affect the neutrality of the evaluation. Discussions shall only be made after indicating the average score of each research proposal.



## **Third: Evaluating the Criteria of Research Excellence**

### **1. Criteria (Appendix no.6)**

- The creativity and novelty in the idea of the research
- The comprehensiveness of literature review
- The clear description of the challenge is addressing
- The quality and clarity of the defined objectives and to what extent they are connected with the methodology.
- The quality and clarity of the research methodology, work plan, and implementation phases within a specific time frame.
- The importance and applicability of the expected outcomes of the proposal.

### **2. Evaluation Process**

- Evaluating the criteria of research excellence is the responsibility of the peer reviewers who have research achievements and evident scientific contributions.
- The number of reviewers shall not be less than 3, and it is possible to increase the number, as required, depending to the variety of the research topics and their nature. The number though should not be increased to more than 5, provided that one of them should be from a research institution outside the Sultanate of Oman.
- International reviewing methods related to the evaluation process are followed, while keeping the identity of research team anonymous.
- Peer reviewers shall not be members in the Strategic Research Projects Program Committee.



## 14. Strategic Projects Research Contracts

### **First: The General Framework of Research Contracts**

1. It is a research and financial agreement between the Ministry and the main partner, governing the relationship between the two parties to all that relate to research projects which are under implementation. The contract includes conditions, terms, submission requirements, and obligations that the two parties shall fulfil to achieve the purpose of the contract.
2. The Ministry shall draft the research contract and set terms of reference that are relevant to the nature of projects and to the submission requirements after the final approval of the proposals.
3. The research contract shall be effective from the date the main partner receives the approved budget.
4. The main partner shall make the research contract with the research institution for each project, to organize the work-flow, preserve rights, avoid future conflicts and determine their solutions, if ever occurs.

### **Second: Research Contract Extension**

1. The main partner shall not agree on extending the research contract period, except in rare cases and if absolutely necessary, by providing the reasons that interrupt the work-flow.
2. The maximum extension period shall not exceed six months, after obtaining prior approval from the main partner at least three months before the expiration of the pre- agreed period. The remaining budget of the research project can be used during the extension period; and completing these projects, as per the contract, is considered part of the KPIs that are taken into consideration when funding any new research project in the future.



### **Third: Suspension or Termination of Research Contract**

A party to a research contract may submit a request to terminate the research contract permanently by providing a written notice to the other party in one or more of the following cases:

1. If there is a breach of any obligation arising from the guidelines, terms and conditions of the contract and failure to adopt any reforms, if applicable, within the time period agreed upon in the contract from the date of receipt of notice from the other party requesting such a reform.
2. If either party to the contract becomes insolvent, bankrupt, or is in the process of liquidation, unless it is voluntary for purposes of reorganization.
3. If the Ministry has reasonable and convincing reasons to believe that the requirements of the research contract signed between the two parties will not be met.
4. If there are force majeure reasons which prevented either party from performing an obligation arising from the guidelines or terms and conditions of the research contract. Accordingly, the other party shall be notified immediately, specifying the circumstances that are believed to constitute force majeure, thus making it impossible to achieve the objectives specified in the research contract, along with an estimated time period for the occurrence of similar circumstances. If these circumstances continue for more than six months (or according to the period stipulated in the research contract), neither party may, upon notification to the other party, terminate the research contract.



## 15. Progress and Final Reports for Approved Projects

- The PI is responsible for submitting progress and final reports through RIMS, according to the time frame and the implementation plan of the project, given that the duration of submitting the first progress report does not exceed 1 year.
- Submission of progress reports ([Appendix no.7](#)) and final reports ([Appendix no.8](#)) and their evaluation are carried out as the following:
  - 1. Initial Evaluation:** It is made by the research contact point who will evaluate the report in the electronic system to ensure that it satisfies all requirements and financial procedures.
  - 2. Technical Evaluation and Approval:** The Strategic Research Projects Program Committee will evaluate the submitted report to check its conformity with the submission requirements and the agreed outputs at each phase, as per the research contract, in terms of the content and quality of the reports and their adherence to the set criteria and scientific integrity.

## 16. Research Proposals Management Platform

The Ministry established Research Information Management System (RIMS) to provide the following services:

- Announcing the submission of research proposals.
- Submitting the research proposals using the system forms of the pre-proposals and full proposals.
- Documenting all data related to proposals and their evaluation, as well as the approved research projects
- Following-up on the implementation of the approved projects and receiving progress and final reports.



## 17. Copyrights and Usufructs

- The Ministry encourages researchers to publish their research outcomes after obtaining the approval of the relevant authorities, provided that this does not affect any related copyrights.
- The researcher or research team may request the signing of a non-disclosure agreement with the mentors, experts, and supporters of the research work until the outcomes of the research are revealed or published, with the need to adhere to the guidelines of information confidentiality that is directly or indirectly related to the research work in progress.
- When the outputs or achievements, resulting from the research funded through this program, are published (in journals, conferences, patents, presentations, etc.), the research team must disclose the support provided by the Ministry in a written “acknowledgement” or through the use of logos in the case of visual presentations. The acknowledgment can be expressed as “The research project that led to these outcomes was funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation in the Sultanate of Oman within the Strategic Research Projects Program under Research Contract No. (..).”
- Intellectual property rights and the outcomes of funded research belong to the researcher or research team, unless otherwise stipulated in the contractual agreement between the Ministry and the main partner. The researcher and research team may be excluded from the use of intellectual property in special cases for national interest.
- Researchers are committed to:
  1. Abide by the laws, legislations and regulations related to copying and publishing protected materials in accordance with the Copyright and Related Rights Law issued by the Royal Decree (65/2008) and the Industrial Property Rights Law issued by the Royal Decree (67/2008).
  2. Abide by strict regulations and procedures during the stages of the research project (starting from submitting the proposal and ending with applying the results and transforming them into a commercial product or service) to reduce the risk of taking any legal responsibility.
  3. Adhere to the procedures and regulations related to the use of third-party copyrighted materials.
  4. Define clear procedures and responsibilities to assist the research team in making legal use of the materials at their disposal.
  5. Quote from research and scientific papers published locally (or by local researchers).
  6. Promote the awareness of the importance of protecting intellectual property rights.



## 18. Ethics of Work and Research

All workers and researchers must adhere to the following principles when conducting research supported by the Ministry:

- Being committed to ethical conducts, guidelines and legislations.
- Ensuring that research is compatible with Omani culture, traditions, religious beliefs, and national security regulations.
- Following existing practices that preserve and respect other participants' rights.
- Acknowledging the contribution of other research in the research project, through accurate referencing, whether the original sources are published, being journalistic or under-review.



## 19. Appendixes

| <b>Appendix no. (1) Identification of National Priorities Form</b> |                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                                                  | Title of the challenge or the national priority     |
| 2                                                                  | The national priority according to Oman Vision 2040 |
| 3                                                                  | Sector of the research challenge                    |
| 4                                                                  | Research challenge description                      |
| 5                                                                  | Objectives                                          |
| 6                                                                  | Proposed research methodology                       |
| 7                                                                  | Desired outcomes                                    |
| 8                                                                  | Main partners and beneficiaries                     |
| 9                                                                  | Research proposal type (pre-proposal or full)       |
| 10                                                                 | Research proposals submission deadline              |

| <b>Appendix no. (2) The General Framework of the Pre-Proposal</b> |                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                                                 | Research proposal title                                                    |
| 2                                                                 | A description summarizing the research proposal objectives and methodology |
| 3                                                                 | A list of the expected outputs of the research project                     |
| 4                                                                 | The time period required to implement the research project                 |
| 5                                                                 | Project budget distribution and the total amount required                  |

| <b>Appendix no. (3) The General Framework of the Full Proposal</b> |                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                                                  | Research proposal title                                                                                                        |
| 2                                                                  | An executive summary                                                                                                           |
| 3                                                                  | The introduction with enough elaboration on literature review                                                                  |
| 4                                                                  | Research objectives                                                                                                            |
| 5                                                                  | A list of the expected outputs of the project                                                                                  |
| 6                                                                  | Research methodology including work plan, implementation phases and resources                                                  |
| 7                                                                  | The time frame with specified phases and interim submission requirements                                                       |
| 8                                                                  | Detailed financial distribution of the research budget                                                                         |
| 9                                                                  | The research team members with their assigned tasks                                                                            |
| 10                                                                 | Local and international collaborations in the project, if any, along with their related official correspondences               |
| 11                                                                 | Description on the contribution to capacity-building, including postgraduates and lab technicians participating in the project |



| <b>Appendix no. (4) Pre-Proposal Evaluation Form</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p>The evaluation should be made according to the following ratings:<br/>           (9-10) Meeting all aspects of the criteria<br/>           (7-8) Meeting some of the aspects of the criteria successfully, with a potential for development<br/>           (5-6) Meeting some of the aspects of the criteria in general, with some shortcomings<br/>           (3-4) Having serious weak points related to the criteria<br/>           (1-2) Addressing the aspects of the criteria unsatisfactorily</p> |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | The significance of the proposal to the Sultanate of Oman and the extent to which it addresses the challenge posed in the announcement                                |  |
| 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Novelty and scientific rigour                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Clarity of research objectives, methodology and expected outcomes                                                                                                     |  |
| 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Applicability of the research project outputs                                                                                                                         |  |
| 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | The extent to which the expected outputs have an impact on various levels (example: health, social, economic, environmental)                                          |  |
| 6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | The suitability of the time period in terms of: the possibility of meeting project objectives, applying the methodology and achieving the expected outcomes.          |  |
| 7                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | The engagement in various local and international collaborations in the research proposal (list of collaborations including their number and strength of cooperation) |  |
| 8                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | The suitability of the proposed budget to conduct the project                                                                                                         |  |
| <b>Total Score</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| <b>The general recommendation to fund the research proposal</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes<br><input type="radio"/> No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| <b>In your opinion, what is the estimate budget to conduct this project?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| <b>Remarks</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                       |  |



**Appendix no. (5) Criteria of Research Proposals Relevance to the Institutional Challenges and the Impact of Outputs**

The evaluation should be made according to the following ratings:  
 (9-10) Meeting all aspects of the criteria  
 (7-8) Meeting some of the aspects of the criteria successfully, with a potential for development  
 (5-6) Meeting some of the aspects of the criteria in general, with some shortcomings  
 (3-4) Having serious weak points related to the criteria  
 (1-2) Addressing the aspects of the criteria unsatisfactorily

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1                      | The extent to which the research proposal is relevant to the national and sector priorities                                                                                 |  |
| 2                      | Contribute to build knowledge-based society and serve the priorities of economic and social development and general policies in the Sultanate of Oman                       |  |
| 3                      | Have a clear vision on the applicability of the research project outputs during an expected time frame                                                                      |  |
| 4                      | The suitability of the proposed time frame for implementing the project with the objectives, methodology and expected outcomes                                              |  |
| 5                      | The suitability of the proposed research project budget with the value of the expected outcomes (research effectiveness and efficiency)                                     |  |
| 6                      | The research team possess qualifications and experiences, publish in scholarly journals and have a distinguished academic background.                                       |  |
| 7                      | The extent to which the research resources are relevant (research team, equipment, facilities and services) to research proposal scope                                      |  |
| 8                      | Local, regional and international research collaborations                                                                                                                   |  |
| 9                      | The suitability of the research project to build research capacity and develop local research competencies                                                                  |  |
| 10                     | The desire of the main partner or the institution implementing the research project to provide financial or in-kind contribution (not less than 50% of the proposed budget) |  |
| 11                     | The desire of the PI to adopt and implement the expected outcomes of the research project                                                                                   |  |
| <b>Total Score</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| <b>Recommendations</b> |                                                                                                                                                                             |  |



| <b>Appendix no. (6) Research Excellence Criteria</b>                                             |                                                                                                                 |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| The evaluation should be made according to the following ratings:                                |                                                                                                                 |  |
| (9-10) Meeting all aspects of the criteria                                                       |                                                                                                                 |  |
| (7-8) Meeting some of the aspects of the criteria successfully, with a potential for development |                                                                                                                 |  |
| (5-6) Meeting some of the aspects of the criteria in general, with some shortcomings             |                                                                                                                 |  |
| (3-4) Having serious weak points related to the criteria                                         |                                                                                                                 |  |
| (1-2) Addressing the aspects of the criteria unsatisfactorily                                    |                                                                                                                 |  |
| 1                                                                                                | Novelty in the idea of the research                                                                             |  |
| 2                                                                                                | The comprehensiveness of the literature review                                                                  |  |
| 3                                                                                                | Clarity of challenge description                                                                                |  |
| 4                                                                                                | Quality and clarity of the objectives and the extent to which they are relevant to the methodology              |  |
| 5                                                                                                | Quality and clarity of the research methodology, work plan, implementation phases during a specified time frame |  |
| 6                                                                                                | The significance of the expected outcomes and their applicability                                               |  |
| <b>Total Score</b>                                                                               |                                                                                                                 |  |
| <b>Recommendations</b>                                                                           |                                                                                                                 |  |

| <b>Appendix no. (7) Content of Progress Report</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                                  | Title page                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2                                                  | Contents list                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 3                                                  | An executive summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4                                                  | The introduction: a summary of what was achieved and what is currently in progress, in order to link between the different phases of the project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 5                                                  | Body of the report: It contains the main submission requirements that was agreed upon in the research contract and includes the stages of work and completion as well as the activities such as field visits. The body also includes interim results and associated recommendations and outputs, besides linking the current interim outcomes to the previous and expected future ones. |
| 6                                                  | The conclusion: A summary of the outcomes and recommendations emerged from the research project for this phase                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 7                                                  | A list of sources and references                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 8                                                  | Appendixes and documents: include statistics, initial data and information, documents, questionnaires and copies of published research papers. All this information shall be included in the final pages of the report and be referred to and cited in the body of the report.                                                                                                          |



| <b>Appendix no. (8) Content of Final Report</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                               | Title page: includes the logo of the institution or the entity to which the research is submitted and which will evaluate it. It also has the title of the research project, name of the PI and the team contributed in preparing the report as well as the reference number of the research contract. It is preferable to mention the number of the work stage that the report targets. |
| 2                                               | Contents list                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 3                                               | An executive summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 4                                               | The introduction: it provides a comprehensive description on all research work stages, along with a literature review to link between project objectives and outcomes. It also gives an overview of the overall achieved outcomes.                                                                                                                                                       |
| 5                                               | Body of the report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 6                                               | The conclusion: A summary of the outcomes and recommendations emerged from the research project in general, besides all what is related to applying the outputs in reality or how to be a content of research in further advanced stages.                                                                                                                                                |
| 7                                               | A list of sources and references                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 8                                               | Appendixes and documents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |