

INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EoI)

Food and Diet-Based Approaches for Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases

Under the SEHAT Mission (Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation)

Context

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and related metabolic disorders, are major public health challenges in India. While dietary factors are established determinants of NCD risk, there is a need to generate stronger evidence on which foods, dietary approaches and food-derived interventions can effectively prevent or manage NCDs, and for whom they work.

The **SEHAT Mission (Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation)**, a joint national mission of ICMR and ICAR, seeks to strengthen the evidence linking agriculture, food, nutrition and health. Within this framework, there is a need to identify and evaluate promising food- and diet-based approaches that can translate India's agricultural and food resources into measurable health benefits.

ICMR invites researchers and institutions across India to submit **Expressions of Interest for research studies evaluating food- and diet-based approaches for the prevention and/or management of NCDs.**

The proposed research may include, but need not be limited to, **microbiome-directed foods, prebiotics, probiotics or post biotics, bioactive-rich foods, biofortified crops, traditional and indigenous foods, millets and other crops, novel food products, minimally processed or reformulated foods, dietary patterns, or other innovative food-based approaches with potential relevance to NCD prevention or management.**

The focus of the EoI is specifically on specific **foods and/or dietary patterns as the intervention.** Proposals centred primarily on physical activity, exercise, sleep, behavioural interventions or other non-dietary approaches will not be considered under this call.

Research Question

Which food- and diet-based approaches, derived from or linked to India's agricultural and food resources, can effectively prevent or manage NCDs and related metabolic risk?

Objectives

The initiative aims to:

1. Identify and evaluate promising foods, dietary approaches and food-derived interventions for the prevention and/or management of NCDs and related metabolic risk factors.
2. Generate evidence on their effects on health outcomes, including obesity/ adiposity, glycaemic control, blood pressure, lipid profile, inflammation and other relevant metabolic or functional outcomes.
3. Understand the mechanisms and pathways through which food-based interventions may influence health, including where relevant gut microbiome, metabolomic, inflammatory and other biological pathways.
4. Evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, scalability and public health relevance of promising food- and diet-based approaches in Indian populations.

Scope of the Eol

Proposals may focus on, but are not limited to:

- **Microbiome-directed foods** and food-based approaches targeting the gut microbiome;
- **Prebiotics, probiotics, post biotics and other food-derived bioactive components**;
- **Traditional, indigenous and region-specific foods or dietary practices** with potential health benefits;
- **Millets, pulses, cereals, fruits, vegetables, oilseeds and other agricultural commodities** with potential for NCD prevention or management;
- **Biofortified or nutrient-enhanced crops and foods**, where relevant to NCD outcomes;
- **Novel or innovative foods/food products** developed for specific metabolic or health outcomes;
- **Dietary patterns or food combinations** designed to modify metabolic risk;
- Food-based approaches targeting **obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular risk, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, metabolic dysfunction or other NCD-related outcomes**;
- Other innovative **agriculture-linked food or dietary interventions** with a clearly defined pathway to health impact.

Who Can Apply?

Researchers and institutions across India, including ICMR/ICAR institutes, CSIR institutes, DBT Institutes, universities, medical colleges, agricultural universities, public research institutions and other eligible research organisations, are invited to submit Eols.

Multidisciplinary collaborations involving expertise in **agriculture, food science, nutrition, medicine, microbiome science, public health, biochemistry or related fields** are encouraged.

Suggested Study Approaches

The proposed research may include:

- Human intervention studies
- Randomized controlled trials;
- Controlled feeding studies;
- Community-based dietary interventions;
- Mechanistic studies linked to human health outcomes;
- Translational studies evaluating promising foods or food-based interventions.
- Animal studies with clear relevance to human health or NCDs;
- Any other study

Proposals should clearly describe the food/dietary intervention, target population, NCD/health outcome, study design and expected pathway to health impact.

Review and Selection

All submitted EoIs will be reviewed by a **Technical Advisory Group constituted by ICMR**. Proposals will be considered based on scientific merit, novelty, strength of rationale, relevance to NCD prevention/management, potential health impact, feasibility and alignment with the objectives of the SEHAT Mission.

Shortlisted applicants may subsequently be invited to develop a **detailed research proposal** for further consideration under the SEHAT Mission.

What Should the EoI Include?

The EoI should be brief and include:

1. Title of the proposed research
2. Name and affiliation of Principal Investigator and collaborating investigators
3. Food/dietary intervention proposed
4. Rationale and existing evidence
5. Target NCD/population
6. Proposed study design and key outcomes
7. Potential mechanism/pathway of health impact
8. Agriculture/food-system linkage
9. Expected public health relevance and potential for translation/scale-up
10. Key references

Last date for submission: **23 October, 2026**

Please submit the EoI online through the Google Form <https://forms.gle/a1VAdJ24TVsS8xZu6>

Please note: ***Only shortlisted PIs will be contacted via email for data submission.***

Submission Timeline:

- Start Date: 30th September, 2026
- End Date: 23rd October, 2026

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