The IITM High Risk High Reward Mobility Grant
An exclusive program to promote research collaborations with the finest universities across the globe

Executive Summary:

Visibility in global rankings has become important in branding institutions, which in turn can lead to multiple benefits including top research collaborations, opportunities for international funding, and an increase in international students and faculty. While there are multiple rankings using several parameters to come up with a single number to rank global institutions, it is now a well-established and accepted fact that perception plays a major role in the global rankings.

Top quality publications, particularly the ones involving collaborators from top ranked institutions implicitly help in improving perception and therefore, international collaborations with top institutions are crucial. These will lead to joint publications which are known to garner more citations, increase impact, improve quality, and garner larger readership, thus helping in building up perception.

An internal survey conducted at IIT Madras, where 135 faculty responded, provided crucial insights (attached herewith as an Annexure) which informed the aim and design of this program in its entirety. The survey revealed that most faculty believe that international collaboration is important, necessary, and complementary to their research at IITM. Initiating, fostering, and enhancing collaborations with top ranked institutions would have clear benefits in terms of improved visibility for research and overall publication statistics. Data published in various journals indicate that citations and collaborations are indeed correlated. The survey further revealed that flexible mobility funding is one of the major limitations to initiating and continuing research collaborations with prestigious institutions.

This program is designed to address these limitations and in so doing encourage top quality peer reviewed publications through flexible mobility and ultimately lead to an improved perception of our institution worldwide. It is believed that the financial outlay involved has a potential for high rewards from the program.

Program benefits:

The High Risk High Reward Mobility Grant seeks to strengthen existing and/or initiate collaborations with top research universities/institutions (preferably within the top 25 QS ranked universities or institutions of international repute). A collaboration with a researcher with impeccable credentials may also be considered. The grant aims to increase and improve international mobility for conducting research with top institutions across the globe and intends to provide financial support for faculty travel and stay for up to 2-3 months at top collaborating institutions. The program requires one PhD student to travel with faculty and to spend 6 – 12 months at the collaborating institution. Complete financial assistance for the student's travel and stay at the collaborating institute will be available under this program.

It is envisaged that the program will encourage research collaborations and the mobility of IITM faculty and PhD students with the aim of enabling new world class research collaborations and initiatives which will further enhance research activities at IIT Madras.

Program Objectives:

- Provide a platform for long-term research engagement.

- Opportunity to initiate joint guidance for Masters/Ph.D. programs

- Pioneering collaborative research leading to top quality peer-reviewed joint publications

- Knowledge exchange beyond the host institution to include additional collaborators/institutions

- Opportunity to explore bilateral regional grants

Selection procedure:

Application requirement:

All faculty members are eligible to apply for a grant through this program. A proposal in the prescribed format may kindly be uploaded on the link given on the GE website. The last date to apply is **Tuesday, 30 November 2021, 5pm IST.**

Applicants are requested to upload the following as a single document in PDF format:

- **A cover letter** with the applicant's and the collaborator's name, title, department, contact information, title of the proposal and a crisp abstract of the proposed research (not exceeding 250 words).

- **A proposal narrative** should contain a clear executive summary highlighting the importance of the proposed field of study in the global/international context, the novel aspects of the project, and why the proposed collaborating institute is a preferred location for this research. The format of the narrative part of the proposal is flexible and may include the goals of the proposed research and identify the collaborative aspects outlining how research carried out at the proposed institution is complementary and pertinent to the research idea being proposed at IIT Madras. A brief description of the approach to be adopted to achieve the proposed goals, a detailed work plan, and a crisp and clear statement about "how the proposed project will strengthen and advance existing or foster new long-term international collaboration" should be included (not exceeding 5 pages; 1.5 line spacing, 12-point font size for entire proposal; headings in bold; Times New Roman font; align left format, and 2.5 cm left and right margins).

- **A summary** of the proposed research is additionally required in language that does not require reviewers to be experts in the area of proposed research (maximum one page summary excluding the proposal narrative of 5 pages).

- **A detailed budget** clearly outlining projected cost of air fare, per diem, accommodations with proper justifications. Partial support from the host institution is an added advantage but not a requirement. The formal approval of the amount of budget would be based on an independent assessment of accommodation cost and other expenses by the office of the Global Engagement.

- **The proposal** submitted should be jointly signed and endorsed by the faculty member at IIT Madras and the partner from the proposed collaborative institution. A formal letter of consent from the proposed collaborator should also be submitted.

- **An abbreviated curriculum vitae** of the IIT Madras faculty member and the proposed collaborator should be submitted (not exceeding 3 pages).

- **The name and other details of the proposed PhD student**. Please note that the proposed student must have cleared the comprehensive examination to be considered for this program.

Selection process

1. After an initial screening of the application at IIT Madras for scope, objectives, proposed research, ranking/international standing of the proposed institution, and importance of the research in the context of global standing, the proposal will be sent to 3 experts (national and international) for review.

2. The experts will be requested to provide assessments of the proposal based on the scientific merit of the proposal, research feasibility, complementarity of research carried out by the IIT faculty member and the proposed collaborator.

3. Before the proposal can be considered for the second stage, it is required that all the questions and concerns raised by the reviewers are adequately addressed to the satisfaction of the reviewers.

4. The selected PIs, after assessment as mentioned in (2 and 3), will be called for a presentation in front of national and international subject experts with a background in the proposal area.

5. The proposed student on this project will be separately interviewed and assessed by an independent committee comprised of IIT Madras faculty members. Any concerns from the committee in this regard should be addressed by the PI.