



IDRC · CRDI

International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Grants to Institutions

A Guide to Administrative Procedures

Grant Administration Division

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Introduction

IDRC has approved a project grant to your institution, and funds have been committed to support your research. This brochure was written to help you understand the administrative procedures that must be followed with regard to IDRC-funded projects. Please read this brochure carefully in conjunction with the grant agreement you received from IDRC and ensure that everyone administering IDRC funds in your institution does so as well.

The attachments that accompany the grant agreement cover the specifics of your institution's contractual agreement with IDRC. It is important that you carefully review the various clauses and conditions. Please pay particular attention to the section that addresses allowable expenses because problems in this area can lead to delays in project payments. Note that only expenses incurred during the project period can be reimbursed. Also included in this section is important information with regard to the use of grant funds to cover expenses for air travel and per diems, the exclusion of payments for custom and import duties and taxes, and the items that can be included as indirect project costs.

You should also pay particular attention to the schedule of project milestones. These milestones are significant events that are planned during the life of your project and are used by IDRC to schedule project payments. Typically, these milestones are technical or financial reports, but they can also be such project activities as workshops or publications. Attachment B to the grant agreement includes a table with the project milestones for your project. It is critical that milestones be met during your project to avoid delays in project payments and subsequent disruption to your research. Reaching these milestones on time will also help ensure that your project will not exceed the duration of the grant agreement.

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IDRC discourages extensions and encourages sound project management practices to prevent delays in reporting. However, if you encounter significant difficulties or delays in the execution of your project, please contact IDRC immediately to discuss your situation so that an amendment to your grant agreement can be considered.

IDRC is concerned that research results are shared broadly throughout the research and development community. Therefore, the attachments to the grant agreement include clauses related to the dissemination of research results and to intellectual property rights. These clauses help ensure that your work is both protected and made available to others working in related fields of research.

If you have further questions about procedures and conditions, or about what you are required to do, please contact either the responsible officer or the administrative contact person identified in your grant agreement for help.

IDRC accountability

IDRC requires that a minimum standard of accountability be met because it is directly responsible to the taxpayers and agencies that provide the funds it uses to support research. The research that IDRC supports is a partnership with your institution. IDRC depends on its partners to provide accurate and timely financial and technical reports to allow it to account for the funds it spends to support development research.

Management philosophy

IDRC regards project administration as an integral part of the research process. Accurate and timely financial and administrative information ensures that your project activities have access to the resources they need to proceed on time and within budget. This information helps you monitor the progress of ongoing activities and also allows IDRC staff to see how your project is evolving with regard to its research, administrative, and financial aspects.

IDRC is aware of the problems that can arise during the implementation of projects and recognizes that the institutions it funds have different accounting systems and administrative procedures. IDRC is therefore as flexible as possible in its requirements and its program officers and administration staff are committed to work as a team with you and your administrative and financial staff to provide ongoing support for your research.

Recipient accountability

Recipients are expected to manage the technical aspects of the activities they undertake with the grants they receive from IDRC and to exercise adequate financial controls. Collaboration between researchers and their administrative counterparts is essential to ensure that both the substantive and financial aspects of projects are administered effectively.

The grant agreement you received from IDRC specifies the type and frequency of the technical outputs and financial reports (milestones) that must be submitted. Project milestones are significant events such as scheduled reports, meetings, or workshops that mark progress within your project. If you encounter

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significant difficulties during the execution of your project, please contact IDRC immediately to discuss your situation so that an amendment to your grant agreement can be considered.

Normally, you must submit at least two documents annually: an interim technical report, which marks the project's technical progress; and a financial report, which outlines the financial status of the project. These are usually submitted at the same time. You will also have to submit final technical and financial reports as a condition for receiving the final payment from IDRC after your project is completed. Grants for research-support projects also require the submission of satisfactory technical and financial reports on completion of project activities. The responsible officer and administrative contact person at IDRC are always available to answer any questions you might have.

Technical Reporting

Your technical report should provide details on the progress you have made toward reaching the project's stated objectives. This report should allow IDRC staff to assess both the technical progress of your project and the purpose and relevance of all project expenditures to date. If your work is being undertaken in collaboration with other organizations, it is generally expected that all technical reports will be prepared jointly. You will likely be required to provide both interim and final technical reports.

In an interim (or progress) report, you should provide a concise description of the activities that were planned and completed during the period covered by the report (see Guidelines in [Appendix 1](#)). Clearly specify the exact time period that the report covers, and for each project objective provide details of the work carried out, the results obtained, the activities planned for the next period, an evaluation or assessment of the progress made, and an outline of any problems that were encountered and the actions you plan to solve them. You should also report briefly on administrative aspects such as changes in staffing, organizational changes in the institution, the status of any trainees supported by the project, and future training requirements. You may submit your interim reports either electronically or in the number of hard copies stipulated in your agreement.

In the final technical report you are expected to explain what was achieved with the money and time spent on your project and to draw lessons from the experience (see Guidelines in [Appendix 2](#)). IDRC places a high value on these reports and may use them to publicize or disseminate the results of the project. Scientific papers are not a substitute for the final project narrative. Copies of such scientific outputs of the project should be submitted separately and synthesized or referenced in the final technical report. If scientific outputs of the project are submitted separately from the final technical report, they should meet the scientific standards of the research discipline(s) involved in the project. Copies of research instruments such as questionnaires, interview guides, and any other documentation judged useful for understanding the project should be appended to the final technical report, especially if they are not included in any of the scientific outputs of the project. You may submit your final reports electronically; however, normally five hard copies of each volume must be submitted on or before the planned completion date of your project.

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If you require additional information on either the interim or the final technical reports, please contact the responsible officer named in your grant agreement.

Financial reporting

Recipient organizations are expected to administer and manage most items covered in the grant budget. The items you must administer are included in the recipient-administered portion (RAP) of the budget that forms part of the grant agreement. A second section of this budget, called the Centre-administered portion (CAP) may be included in Attachment C of your grant agreement. IDRC holds CAP funds on your behalf and spends them at your request. You do not need to account for these funds in your financial report.

IDRC supports project costs in eight categories: personnel; consultants; evaluation; equipment; international travel; training; research expenses; and indirect costs. (Specifics on the costs that can be included in each category are outlined in [Appendix 3](#).) If you require additional information on any of the budget categories, please contact the administrative contact person named in your grant agreement.

IDRC never pays the entire cost of the research. Recipient institutions are expected to contribute to their projects, and these contributions must be certified in the financial report you submit. IDRC strongly encourages recipient institutions to use form FR5 (see [Appendix 4](#)).

Financial reports must be submitted to IDRC in the currency used in the budget attached to your grant agreement. Forms for this purpose are found in [Appendix 4](#). The final financial report is due on or before the planned completion date of your project (if expenditures take place up to the completion date of your project, IDRC will accept submission of the financial report within 60 days of project completion).

The financial report must provide enough detail for both you and IDRC to assess the project's financial situation. Interim financial reports must outline both the actual and forecast expenditures (for interim reports) of your project. Before rolling up the expenditures into the eight IDRC budget categories (form FR3), you must itemize your expenditures in the financial report following the format used in the budget that was included with the grant agreement sent to you by IDRC (see forms FR2, a-h).

[Appendix 4](#) includes forms IDRC has designed to make it easier and faster for you to prepare your financial reports. Each form captures specific financial information.

- FR1 — Project Information Summary. Identifies your project and the period covered by the report, other summary information, and certifies the accuracy of the report.
- FR2, a-h — Detailed Expenses and Forecast Worksheet. Provides details of all items of expenditures in each budget category and projects future expenditures, including notes to explain variations from the original budget.
- FR3 — Expense and Forecast Summary. Summarizes or rolls up budgets, expenses and forecasts of expenditures to the budget category level.

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- FR4 — Cash Receipts and Foreign Exchange. Records all payments received from IDRC and the corresponding exchange calculations.
- FR5 — Notice of Receipt of Parallel Funds and Payment of Local Contributions. Reports funds received from other donors as well as local contributions to your project.

Certification of financial report

All financial reports submitted to IDRC must be signed by both the project leader and the chief financial officer (or his/her authorized representative) of the recipient institution. Failure to include both signatures will result in significant delays in project payments.

Projects with funding from several donors

In some cases, your project may draw funds from several donors. When additional resources are provided directly by another donor to your project, you should itemize in your financial report to IDRC the level of resources received from each donor (see form FR5). If global project reporting is used (i.e., when funds are used and reported without regard to donor source), you may not be able to use the forms provided with this brochure. In such cases, use the format of the budget found in Attachment C of your grant agreement.

Importance of reports

Further grant payments are triggered by the satisfactory achievement of the milestones in Attachment B of your grant agreement. These milestones can be based either on events or reports. IDRC analyzes the technical and financial reports that you submit to determine their technical and financial accuracy and completeness. Because these documents are a condition for further advances of funds or for the final project payment, missing or insufficient documentation will lead to delays in project payments.

The technical report is reviewed in detail by the responsible officer identified in the grant agreement. This officer assesses the progress that the project is making in achieving its stated objectives and determines whether satisfactory progress has been made to justify making additional project payments from a research perspective.

IDRC's analysis of financial reports focuses on three different aspects (grant receipts and exchange rates; variances in actual and forecast expenditures and explanations of these variances; and cash flow) to determine the amount of the next payment.

If questions are raised in either of these IDRC reviews, either the responsible officer or the administrative contact person will seek clarification from you. After you have provided all missing information, IDRC's analysis will be completed and the next payment processed, if warranted.

Project closure

IDRC expects your institution to submit a satisfactory final technical report on or before the planned completion date of your project. When required, the final financial report must arrive at IDRC within 60 days of the planned completion date of your project. This delay gives recipients plenty of time to close

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its books and process any residual project expenses. Read carefully your schedule of milestones in Appendix B of your grant agreement to ensure that the financial reporting delays are not built in your planned project completion date.

The final financial report must cover all funds expended by the project and be in the same form and detail as outlined in the grant agreement. The final technical report should review the research undertaken with project funds and include, among other things, the research results dissemination plan. Following review and approval of both reports, IDRC will make the final payment (if applicable) and proceed with project closure. After this, no other funds can be made available to your project.

Please note that IDRC may close the project at any time if you fail to comply with the terms of your agreement, including meeting reporting and other milestone deadlines.