



Tamil Nadu Forest Department
Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation
Vandalur, Chennai- 600048
Phone – 044 2987 2331
Email – aiwcrte@tn.gov.in
Web site – www.aiwc.res.in



Notification No. 05/2026-2027 Dated 29-07-2026
SPECIAL RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAMME (2026–2028)
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Background

Proposals are invited under the AIWC Special Research Grants Programme (2026–2028), a competitive funding initiative under the Tamil Nadu Endangered Species Conservation Fund. The initiative is designed to support innovative, field-based, and conservation-oriented research on threatened faunal/floral species in Tamil Nadu. The programme aims to encourage high-quality scientific research that contributes directly to evidence-based conservation planning, species recovery, and long-term biodiversity persistence.

This initiative is intended to support researchers, postgraduates, and conservation professionals working on applied scientific research with measurable conservation outcomes.

Programme Highlights

- **Programme Period:** 2026–2028
- **Project Duration:** 12–24 months
- **Maximum Funding:** Up to ₹20 lakh per project
- **Programme Focus:** Threatened faunal/floral species and applied conservation science
- **Application Schedule:** **For Stage I**

Opening of online submission of proposals: 01.08.2026, 1000 hrs

Closing of online submission of proposals: 14.08.2026, 1800 hrs

Applications will not be accepted after the Closing date

The tentative timeline for processing the project proposal is as follows:

Activity	Duration	Tentative Timeline
Scrutiny of Concept Notes	2 Weeks	17.08.2026 to 31.08.2026
Submission of Detailed Proposals-For Stage II	2 Weeks	01.09.2026 to 15.09.2026
Scrutiny and Finalization of Detailed Proposals	2 Weeks	16.09.2026 to 30.09.2026
Commencement of the Project	—	First week of October 2026 (Tentative)

Eligibility

Applications are invited from:

- Postgraduates and PhD holders
- Independent or affiliated with recognized academic, research and conservation Institutions

(Each applicant shall submit one application only)

Research Focus Areas

Proposals should align with one or more of the following:

- Population assessment and monitoring of threatened faunal/floral species
- Species ecology, behaviour, and habitat-use studies
- Threat assessment including habitat loss, invasive species, climate change, and anthropogenic pressures
- Conservation genetics and species recovery planning
- Human–wildlife interactions and coexistence research
- Applied conservation interventions with measurable conservation outcomes
- Community-linked conservation and outreach initiatives focused on threatened fauna/flora

Priority will be given to:

- Field-based and data-driven studies
- Projects addressing critical knowledge gaps
- Research on endemic or lesser-known threatened faunal/floral taxa
- Studies with direct conservation and management implications

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated through a competitive review process based on:

- Scientific merit and methodological rigour
- Conservation relevance and potential impact
- Feasibility of implementation
- Innovation and practical applicability
- Capacity and institutional support
- Budget justification and cost-effectiveness

Application Process

The AIWC Special Research Grants Programme application process is proposed to follow a structured, competitive model inspired by international conservation grant frameworks.

Applications to be submitted:

- Through the official AIWC website portal, via a dedicated Google Form integrated with document upload support

The application process will be conducted in two stages

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest / Concept Note

Applicants will first submit a short concept note through the online application portal.

Required Information:

- Applicant details
- Institutional affiliation
- Project title
- Focal threatened faunal/floral species/taxa
- Study landscape/location
- Research problem and justification
- Objectives of the study
- Proposed methods (brief)
- Expected conservation outcomes
- Estimated budget summary
- Project duration

Documents to Upload:

- 2-page concept note (Maximum 1500 words)
- Short CV (Maximum 700 words)
- Institutional affiliation proof (wherever applicable)

Following the preliminary screening by the Scientific Advisory Sub-Committee (SASC) and co-opted experts, the shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a detailed research proposal as part of Stage II. Applicants who are not shortlisted will be informed of the outcome via email. During the review process, applicants may also be contacted for clarification or requested to revise their proposals, if required.

Stage 2 – Detailed Proposal Submission

Shortlisted applicants will receive an invitation to submit a detailed proposal (4000- to 5000-word limit)

Required Components:

- Introduction
- Objectives
- Detailed methodology
- Work plan and timeline
- Analytical approach and expected outcomes
- Budget breakdown with justification
- Risk assessment and mitigation strategy
- Ethical approvals / permits, wherever applicable
- Letter of support from supervisor or institution, wherever applicable

Evaluation Process of the detailed proposal:

Applications will undergo:

1. Administrative screening
2. Technical review by Scientific Advisory Sub-Committee (SASC) expert members or co-opted experts.
3. Final review and decision by SASC.

Applicants may be contacted for clarification or revision during the review process.

Applicants selected will be notified through email, along with further instructions regarding the subsequent stages of the process. Funding will be issued through AIWC to support the approved research work. AIWC will periodically monitor the progress of the research, and the continuation of funding will be contingent upon satisfactory progress and periodic assessment. Applicants who are not selected will also be informed of the decision via email.

Submission Requirements

Applicants may use Artificial Intelligence (GenA)-assisted tools (e.g., language editing, formatting, literature organisation, or technical assistance, etc.) in the preparation of proposals. However, the intellectual content, scientific rationale, study design, originality of ideas, data interpretation, and overall proposal development must remain the sole responsibility of the applicant(s). AI-generated content submitted without adequate review, verification, or scientific accountability may lead to disqualification during the review process.

Applicants must ensure that:

- All submitted content is original and scientifically accurate.
- References, citations, and factual claims are properly verified.
- AI tools are not used to fabricate data, references, methodologies, or results.
- Proposals demonstrate independent critical thinking, feasibility, and conservation relevance.

AIWC reserves the right to screen applications for plagiarism, fabricated information, or unethical use of AI-generated content and reject applications without assigning reasons.

Implementation and Review:

- The call for proposals will be circulated through the AIWC website, institutional networks, and social media platforms.
- Selected projects will undergo periodic monitoring through progress reports and technical reviews.
- AIWC will revise programme guidelines, timelines, and funding structure based on institutional review and feedback.

UDHAYAN
Principal Chief Conservator
of Forests & Director,
AIWC (R,T & E) Vandalur