



## Country sheet India

The aim of this leaflet is to provide background information to researchers within the University of Cambridge who may be planning a research project with partners in India. It contains information about the logistics of setting up health research projects with partners in India.

This document is the first in a planned series of country packs.

If you have any suggestions, please feel free to contact the authors via the GCRF shared mailbox: [GCRFTeam@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:GCRFTeam@admin.cam.ac.uk).

### Contents

Contents.....	1
About India.....	3
Language.....	3
Telephone and Internet access.....	3
Common holidays.....	3
Political landscape.....	3
Legal system.....	3
Cambridge in India.....	4
Research Projects.....	4
Cambridge India Research Foundation.....	4
DBT – the Department of Biotechnology, India.....	4
Other links and partnerships.....	4
Connections with institutions.....	5
Current Partner Institutes.....	5
Lecturer exchanges schemes.....	5
Other exchanges schemes.....	5
Health Research in India.....	5
Burden of disease.....	5
Research priorities.....	5
Research Institutes.....	5
Ethics, Insurance and Regulatory requirements.....	6
Regulatory and Ethics.....	6

Nagoya Protocol.....	6
Sponsorship and oversight of International Studies.....	6
Insurance of International Studies.....	6
Applying for Grants.....	7
Finding a partner in India.....	7
Finance.....	7
Price level and costing.....	7
Due Diligence.....	7
Trusted Research.....	7
Financial guidelines.....	7
Approvals and payment in advance of need.....	8
Tax.....	8
Finance monitoring and reporting.....	8
Restrictions on expenditure.....	8
Human Resources.....	8
Exchange visits.....	8
Visas.....	8
Income tax implications.....	9
Safeguarding and working abroad.....	9
Data Management.....	9
Personal data.....	9
Data Management.....	9
Other.....	9
Intellectual Property.....	9
Export control.....	10
Procurement.....	10
Communication.....	10
Meetings conventions.....	10
Use of titles and names.....	10
Events and Venues.....	10
Travel to India.....	10
Government guidance.....	10
Support for British nationals abroad.....	11
Immunisations.....	11
Climate.....	11

Other travel guidance .....	11
Travel by Air, Rail and other means.....	11
Personal care and safety.....	11
Specific guidance for women.....	12
Emergency numbers .....	12
Useful links.....	12
Contributors and reviewers .....	13

## About India

India is a country in South East Asia with c. 1.38bn inhabitants. The country is formed of 28 states<sup>1</sup>, each with a State Government. India is a Lower Middle Income Country on the list of DAC recipients, with a Gross National Income per capita of \$2,020 (Source: World Bank, figure from 2018). The capital of India is New Delhi, in the state Haryana.

The currency in India is the Indian Rupee (INR, ₹), which is about 0.010 GBP (as of June 2020). Large monetary amounts are often expressed in lakh Rupees, which is 100,000 Rupees (£1,020).

### Language

The official language in India is Hindi. There are 22 other official languages. English is the second national language and it is spoken widely in large cities and on academic campuses, although it is important to be aware that not all people in India can speak or understand English.

### Telephone and Internet access

The country code for India is +91. Many people have access to a smart phone, including in rural areas, but data access may be patchy in some places. Personal landlines and Ethernet at home are less common.

### Common holidays

There are three official national holidays in India: Republic Day (26 January), Independence Day (15 August) and Gandhi Jayanti (2 October). Celebrations of other holidays vary by State.

These include religious holidays such as Eid e Milad (Autumn) and Eid al-Adha (Summer), Diwali (November), Christmas and Easter. Some states also celebrate New Year (1 January) and May Day (1 May).

### Political landscape

The Bharatiya Janata Party, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been the ruling party since 2014.

National elections are held every five years. They are usually held over several weeks, with groups of states having different polling dates.

Presidential elections are held separately, also every five years. The president is a ceremonial lead.

### Legal system

The legal system is based on the 1950 constitution and English common law.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Economist Intelligence Unit](#) India page, with information on Politics, Economy, Risks and more.

## Cambridge in India

### Research Projects

The University of Cambridge is involved in multiple research projects with collaborators in India, across a wide range of academic disciplines. Some current key projects include:

- The [Cambridge-Chennai Centre Partnership on Antimicrobial Resistant Tuberculosis](#) was set up in 2015, funded by a £2M MRC award. The programme is led by Prof Sharon Peacock, Prof Ken Smith and Prof Andres Floto in Medicine.
- [TIGR<sup>2</sup>ESS](#) (Transforming India's Green Revolution by Research and Empowerment for Sustainable food Supplies) is probably the largest research programme in collaboration with India (£7M GCRF grant), led by Prof Howard Griffiths in Plant Sciences. The programme includes more than ten partner institutions in India.
- The [NIHR Global Health Research Group on Neurotrauma](#) is a £1.7M international programme, led by Prof Peter Hutchinson in Medicine. The collaboration includes several institutions in India (among partners in other LMICs).
- Multilingualism and Multiliteracy: raising learning outcomes in challenging contexts in primary schools across India (£559K ESCR/DfID funded), and led by Prof Ianthi Tsimpli in the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics
- Accountability from the grassroots in India – raising children's foundation learning outcomes, led by Dr Sabates Aysa (Education), and funded by ESCR/DfID (£658K)
- Cambridge Centre for Crop Sciences (C3S), now branded [Crop Science Centre](#) is closely associated with Indian partners, and grew from the India-UK agreement on collaboration in crop sciences.

### Cambridge India Research Foundation

In 2019 the University set up a not for profit company (Section 8 Company) in India: Cambridge India Research Foundation (CIRF). The primary aim of CIRF is to promote activities within India, to enable tax-efficient giving by alumni and others, and to be a conduit for funds within India. It is expected to become fully operational in late 2021.

### DBT – the Department of Biotechnology, India

The Department of Biotechnology, along with its parent ministry the Department of Science & Technology, and the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Indian Government, has been central to many Cambridge-India collaborations. Joint projects have included both research projects, mobility programmes for students, postdocs and faculty, and longer-term joint faculty posts with the University.

### Other links and partnerships

The Strategic Partnership Office (SPO) works to build stronger and broader relationships with partners in India, implementing the Cambridge-India strategy developed by the University's SLT, the V-C's Circle of Advisors in India, and key leads in both Cambridge and India.

The Centre for Science and Policy (CSaP) has hosted multiple Policy Fellows from India, including members of State Governments. Cambridge Judge Business School (CJBS) hosts several executive education programmes specifically for Indian civil servants, business leaders and senior teachers.

## Connections with institutions

The Research Office has a list of all recognised partners in India and they will be able to advise which Institutions the University already works with.

### Current Partner Institutes

All new partnerships that involve transfer of funds require Due Diligence checks, see separate section below. The [due diligence](#) website provides further guidance (Raven protected).

The [All India Institute of Medical Sciences](#) (AIIMS), are a partner institution in the Neurotrauma Group. It was ranked first of all medical colleges in India in 2020 by the National Institutional Ranking Framework.

[Christian Medical College, Vellore](#), are a partner institution in the Neurotrauma Group. It was ranked third among medical colleges in India in 2020 by the National Institutional Ranking Framework.

[National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis](#), are a partner institution on the Cambridge-Chennai Centre Partnership.

The [Serum Institute India](#) are a partner on the affordable meningitis vaccine programme.

### Lecturer exchanges schemes

The [Cambridge-Hamied Visiting Lecture Scheme](#) is managed by the Strategic Partnership Office and can provide financial support to senior scholars wishing to visit and work with colleagues in Cambridge or in India.

### Other exchanges schemes

The Careers Service runs a [Global Health Internship scheme](#). The scheme is currently closed.

For more information about Student internships and International Development, visit the dedicated Careers Services [pages](#).

## Health Research in India

### Burden of disease

The life expectancy in India is 70 for women and 68 years for men (Source: health data India<sup>2</sup>). The top three causes of death are ischemic heart disease, chronic obstructive pneumonic disease (COPD) and stroke, followed by infectious diseases, neonatal defects, NCDs and road deaths. Mental health problems are prevalent too, with a high rate of suicide among farmers. India does not yet have universal health coverage, although healthcare is free for those below the poverty line.

### Research priorities

India-specific health goals are stipulated in the [National Health Policy 2017](#) and include targets on life expectancy, child mortality, immunisation and tobacco use, as well as goals on reduction of both infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases.

### Research Institutes

There are over 400 State Universities and about 360 Private Universities in India<sup>3</sup>, see the University Grants Commission [website](#).

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<sup>2</sup> Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, data from 2017

<sup>3</sup> There were 412 State Universities as of 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2020

There are about 42 Central Universities, funded directly by the Department of higher Education. Central Universities fall under the University Grants Commission.

About 16 of India's universities are [Indian Institutes of Technology](#) (IITs). Set up in the 1950's, these IITs are funded by the central government.

## Ethics, Insurance and Regulatory requirements

### Regulatory and Ethics

International research studies carried out overseas will need confirmation from the [University of Cambridge research ethics](#) that the standards for ethical review have been met. Additionally, the ethics committee maintains oversight of the related research activities taking place in the UK.

Clinical research in India is covered under the [Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940](#), amended June 2005<sup>4</sup>.

The ethics review process for health research is managed per institution, hence timelines and requirements will vary. Many institutions have adapted the [ICMR common ethics application form and annexes](#). Guidelines on ethical review can be found on the website for the [ICMR Bioethics Unit](#).

Further information about regulatory requirements in India can be found on the [NIH ClinRegs pages](#).

### Nagoya Protocol

The Nagoya Protocol is an international agreement to ensure the fair and equitable access and benefit sharing when using genetic resources. There is a legal obligation for researchers to comply with the Protocol. Researchers planning fieldwork in India that may involve the collection of genetic material or traditional knowledge can find more information about the Nagoya Protocol and how to comply in the Research Office pages [here](#).

### Sponsorship and oversight of International Studies

All international health related research projects (within the Clinical School, School of Biological Sciences and all GCRF funded studies) which involve humans, their tissue and/or data, must be registered with the [clinical school research governance office](#).

The role of a sponsor is to take overall responsibility for managing the process of setting up, running and reporting (integrity and data safety) of research studies. Additionally, the sponsor has financial oversight of studies, and provides indemnity to participants and researcher(s) as necessary. The Research Governance Team in the Clinical School facilitates and processes sponsor responsibilities for research studies, on behalf of the University.

### Insurance of International Studies

The University arranges [insurance](#) to provide financial compensation for accidental and unforeseen loss of or damage to assets, and indemnity to pay compensation to employees and third parties for legal liability for death, injury or financial loss caused by University activities. For studies involving humans, confirmation of insurance is required as part of the ethics approval. Overseas studies where legislation requires a specific local policy to be arranged will attract an additional premium which is passed on to

the department or research grant. The department will be advised of the cost and must agree to pay the premium prior to the cover being arranged.

The Insurance team can be contacted via [insurance@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:insurance@admin.cam.ac.uk)

## Applying for Grants

### Finding a partner in India

Finding a partner in India may be different to finding a partner in the UK, or other European country. Not all Investigators in India have the same academic freedom and new collaborations may require input from senior Institutional members before any work can start. This process may take time. It is important to allow sufficient time to build the new partnership(s) before any projects start. Some of the existing partnerships have been leveraged via Cambridge alumni who returned to India.

## Finance

### Price level and costing

The price level in India is very different to the UK and it varies across regions. When costing projects, please liaise with the partner institutions for guidance on the required budget. You may also need to ensure partners include overheads and indirect costs into their proposed budget. Indirect costs are usually expected to be a percentage of staff effort, see funder-specific guidance.

### Due Diligence

To help ensure the stability and financial probity of your collaborators and partners, due diligence is undertaken to gather details of their organisation governance, financial management and policies in place. Different levels of due diligence checks are needed depending on the type of engagement and level of risk. Please visit the Research Office Due Diligence webpage for more details about what to take into consideration and the [due diligence step-by-step process](#) to follow when working and sub-awarding to new partners (a list of existing partners can be found [here](#)).

### Trusted Research

Prior to engaging a prospective partner, it is worth considering whether there is any publicly available information about a partner institution or its area of business/ operation that might give you cause for concern? In view of that information, what might be the broader application or unintended consequences of working with them in the proposed area of research? For further guidance around the application of your proposed research in the context of international collaboration, see the following advice from the [Trusted Research](#) from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI). It includes information about various ways to protect research with links to useful resources.

### Financial guidelines

There are a few on-line resources to look at financial stability and risk.

Transparency International reviews perception of corruption in the public sector across the globe. You can review information about India, including their ranking and score on the index [here](#).

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. India has been a member since 2010.

## Approvals and payment in advance of need

Most partner institutions in India will require payment in advance of need. The process for upfront payments will be reviewed by the Contracts Teams on a case by case basis. The specific details of the payment schedule should be stipulated in the contract.

Some organisations may require official clearance under the [Foreign Contribution \(Regulation\) Act \(FCRA\)](#)<sup>5</sup> before receiving payments from abroad. Local government approval may also be needed to accept funds, e.g. when institutions also receive state grants. These approvals can sometimes take a long time to be processed. The FCRA portal can be found [here](#).

## Tax

Value Added Tax (VAT) in India is managed at State level.

## Finance monitoring and reporting

Most research grant funders expect regular financial reporting. In particular when the project includes payments in advance of need, it is recommended to have a robust financial monitoring process. There are currently no generic reporting templates, but the Global Health Research manager can advise.

## Restrictions on expenditure

Some institutions in India have caps on some expenditure types, i.e. the number of conferences a researcher can go to, or a maximum allowed cost for a course. In the past, it has been reported that researchers could not access the project funds because of these restrictions. This can sometimes lead to underspend on the grant. It is therefore important to discuss potential restrictions on access to funds.

## Human Resources

### Exchange visits

If you plan exchange visits for researchers to come to the UK to work on the project, it may not be appropriate to expect people to cover their costs and claim expenses in retrospect. It is also important to note that some institutions may pause salary payments when their employees stay in the UK for an extended period.

The University of Cambridge does allow payments of subsistence allowances to cover subsistence, without the need for receipts (see University Finance pages [here](#)), although not all funders allow *per diem* expenses as eligible costs.

When inviting senior partners or lecturers to the UK, it may be expected that the project covers the costs for their spouse to come along.

### Visas

Visas are required both for Indian nationals travelling to the UK, and vice versa.

UK visas can be arranged via the official [UK Government website](#). It is recommended to apply for a Standard Visitor Visa. The applicant will need a Visa support letter. Applicants will also need the address where they will be staying and details of any costs that will be covered by the host. Biometric information will need to be taken at a Visa Application Centre.

People staying in the UK for more than 6 months will need a valid Tuberculosis certificate from a recognised testing centre.

Visitors will also require an ATAS certificate.

Indian visas can be arranged via the official [Indian government website](#). It is recommended to apply for a Business Visa. Applications should be submitted at least 3 weeks before the intended travel date. Biometric information will usually be taken on arrival in India.

### Income tax implications

The UK and India have a [Tax treaty](#) to avoid double taxation of income.

If an Indian researcher stays in the UK for an extended period of time to work on a research project, this may affect their income tax due in India. An individual is considered a Non Resident Indian (NRI) if he/she has lived in India for less than 182 days of the financial year.

For a University of Cambridge employee, any overseas work lasting more than six months (183 days) in any 12 month period is classed as an Overseas Assignment. Additional costs may be incurred when an international payroll mechanism is required. Please see the University's Global Mobility and Overseas Assignments page, [here](#). For further information, please contact the [Global Mobility Coordinator](#).

There is a [separate page](#) for International students and students working abroad.

### Safeguarding and working abroad

The University has a [Safeguarding and working away](#) page, with links to travel insurance, high-risk locations and other useful information.

## Data Management

### Personal data

India does not currently have a Data Protection Act. A proposed Bill has been submitted to parliament in December 2019, but has not yet been incorporated into law (as of June 2020). The European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) may apply if the University is the data controller. University policies on governance of personal (identifiable) data, can be found [here](#).

### Data Management

All details on data ownership and sharing should be stipulated in the collaboration agreement. Data management should follow the funder requirements as well as any applicable institutional policies, e.g. with regard to Open Access. Data sharing may be restricted by Institutional policies or national guidelines. Any restrictions should be addressed when setting up the agreement.

## Other

### Intellectual Property

The University published guidance on intellectual property rights:

<https://www.research-operations.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies/intellectual-property-rights>

UK Government guidance on intellectual property in India:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/intellectual-property-rights-in-india>

## Export control

Information about Export Controls can be found in the Research Office pages, [here](#).

## Procurement

India has a free market however there are few import restrictions, particularly relating to products of animal origin. If your project includes transfer of consumables, it may be useful to check whether import licenses will be required.

## Communication

Although most institutions will have employee email addresses, many partners will use platforms such as Google to send and receive emails. Whatsapp is also very well-used and may sometimes be preferred over emails.

When building new partnerships, it is important to allow plenty of time for relationship building and gaining mutual trust.

## Meetings conventions

Most professionals carry business cards and it is advisable to carry business cards when meeting with potential new partners and other stakeholders from India.

## Use of titles and names

Naming conventions vary across regions. The English naming convention is becoming more common, but traditionally many regions use multiple names, or only one. Surnames are often written as initials. In Southern India, the family name or father's name is listed before the given name, e.g. R. Ramanjit.

The Sikh convention uses "Singh" (meaning "Lion") as the middle name for all men and "Kaur" (meaning "Princess") as the middle name for all women.

Most people will use their given name after their academic title, e.g. Dr Gita or Professor Rekha. In some areas it is custom to address senior ranked women with Madam (Ma'am or Mam) and senior men with Sir, added after their given name (e.g. Dr Anuprita, Mam).

## Events and Venues

When organising events in India, venues often include the use of banners and flower decorations as part of the standard event package, these will need to be costed into your application. It is usually the custom to invite a senior member of the institution to open and close the proceedings.

It is important to be aware that consumption of alcohol is not usually acceptable and even illegal in some states. Many people in India eat a vegetarian diet, but meat is eaten in various places across the country.

When booking venues for events, you may be charged separately for WiFi services, which are sometimes supplied by external companies.

## Travel to India

### Government guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/india>

## Support for British nationals abroad

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide>

## Immunisations

When travelling to India, a booster/vaccination for Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid and Hepatitis A is recommended. These travel vaccinations are available through the [NHS Travel Vaccinations scheme](#). You will need to get these at least four weeks before your intended travel date. The Typhoid vaccine can be in short supply, so it is advisable to contact your GP as early as possible before the intended travel date.

## Climate

The average annual temperature in India is around 25-27 degrees Celsius. January is usually the coolest month with temperatures of 4-10 degrees Celsius. May-July is the hottest period. Temperatures are known to rise to 47 degrees Celsius. Monsoon season usually lasts from June to September.

## Other travel guidance

The Indian Rupee (INR) is a closed currency, meaning that is not available to banks outside India. You can exchange British Pounds to Rupees upon arrival in India. Not all shops and restaurants can accept card payments, so it is advisable to have cash. When travelling to rural areas, you could bring a receipt book to keep track of your expenses, as many shops and restaurants cannot provide printed receipts.

It may be useful to buy an Indian pay-as-you-go SIM card on arrival, to avoid roaming charges.

Indian sockets are 230Volt and will fit most European two-pin plugs, but not UK plugs.

## Travel by Air, Rail and other means

India has 34 International Airports and 123 National Airports.

There is an extensive rail network, with sleeper trains between major destinations. A detailed map of the rail network can be found [here](#).

Major cities also have an underground network, or Metro. You can pay per trip.

Wayfinding signage in most large cities is in English as well as Hindi, but this is not always the case in rural areas.

Traffic drives on the left. Hiring a car to self-drive is not recommended. There are rural bus services and taxi services. Ubers and Taxis can be pre-booked, and Auto-rickshaws can be hailed on the street.

Road accidents are the biggest causes of injury so take care when travelling. Where possible travel in a well-maintained vehicle and wear your seatbelt.

## Personal care and safety

It is advised not to drink tap water and it is best to avoid uncooked food and drinks (including ice cubes) as well as street foods. Food poisoning is very common for visitors.

It may be useful to bring mosquito repellent as malaria and other vector-borne diseases are prevalent in parts of India. It is recommended to cover the ankles and feet to protect against mosquito bites. Antimalarials may also be required but this depends on the season and the location of stay.

A face mask may be recommended when going to a large city such as Delhi, although effectiveness against air pollution is not proven.

Crime against foreigners is infrequent but, as in any big city, be aware of your surroundings and take care of your belongings. Be vigilant of suspicious packages, as you would at home. You will notice a higher level of security checks at hotels than is normal in the UK, but just follow the staff's instructions. It is a good idea to carry your Photo ID.

### Specific guidance for women

Women in India tend to dress modestly, particular outside the main cities. Most traditional clothes cover the legs and everything below the neckline, but exposed arms are more common. The genders relate differently in most parts of India, and the basis of the culture is still quite traditional.

In many areas, women don't usually travel alone. When travelling by metro (underground), the front coach is dedicated to 'women-only'.

At Delhi International Airport there is a service called 'Sakha cabs' - The cabs are driven by female drivers and the services are provided to female commuters only.

### Emergency numbers

National emergency number: 112

Police: 100

Fire: 101

Ambulance: 102

Women Helpline: 1091

Tourist Helpline: 1363 or 1800111363

### Useful links

Human rights watch:

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/india>

Maps of India:

<https://www.mapsofindia.com/>

British Council office in India:

<https://www.britishcouncil.in/>

UK Science and Innovation Network:

<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/uk-science-innovation-network-in-india>

UKRI India office:

<https://www.ukri.org/our-work/collaborating-internationally/our-international-offices/ukri-india/>

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