

National Science, Technology and Innovation Plan

Administrative, technical and financial Regulations

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Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has developed a long term vision of science, technology and innovation (STI) to create a “knowledge-based economy and society through a globally competitive national STI ecosystem”, thus achieving the Kingdom’s strategic goal of becoming one of the advanced countries in science, technology and innovation by 1445H (2025). One of the factors hopefully ensuring the achievement of this ambitious vision is the ongoing and growing support of the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, to the STI sector, and the Saudi government’s determination to engage the Kingdom’s natural resources-based economy in comprehensive economic development, fueled with innovation and creativity, where the growing national human potential is invested according to a sound strategic plan.

Accordingly, the Royal Decree issued in 1406H (1985) directed KACST to “propose a national policy for the development of science, technology, and innovation, in addition to developing the necessary strategy and plan to implement this policy”. KACST’s achievements in this context began with the development of “the National Policy for Science and Technology in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 1423H (2002). It would embody the Kingdom’s vision and its fundamental strategic plans, ensuring the continuous sustained developmental efforts to enhance the STI ecosystem activities, all the while providing a framework of appropriate priorities, options and policies for each planning phase, building the Saudi knowledge-based economy and society.

To ensure the achievement of the national policy of science and technology strategy strategies, a national science, technology and innovation plan (NSTIP) was developed. The NSTIP consists of (8) strategic programs diverging into a number of projects to be co-executed by all national public and private Saudi economic sectors, so as to ensure the realization of the Kingdom’s long-term vision, which reflects the vision of The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques of

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building a “knowledge-based economy and society through a world competitive national STI ecosystem” by 2025.

These regulations are part of a series of publications of the NSTIP General Secretariat, aiming to organize the administrative, technical and financial procedures of the national science, technology and innovation plan, and to determine the commitments and responsibilities of all parties involved with the implementation of its programs and projects.

Chapter I: Concepts and terms

Article 1: Purpose of the regulations

These regulations are meant to organize the NSTIP administrative, technical and financial procedures, and to determine the commitments and responsibilities of all parties involved with the implementation of its programs and projects.

Article 2: Concepts and terms

Unless otherwise implied by the context, the following concepts and terms shall be defined as follows:

- **KACST:** King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology.
- **NSTIP:** National Science, Technology and Innovation Plan.
- **Supervisory committee:** The committee supervising the national science, technology and innovation plan.
- **Preliminary committee:** A sub-committee reporting to the supervisory committee.
- **General secretariat:** the NSTIP General Secretariat.
- **Stakeholder:** Ministry or university or body of legal personality benefitting from NSTIP funding of a research or operational project, where the project is essentially being implemented within its facilities and buildings, which also includes individual parties in a direct funding contract.
- **Unit:** the stakeholder's science and technology unit.
- **Stakeholder's authority:** The stakeholder's official to whom the unit reports.
- **Scientific committee:** An expert committee reporting to the unit, to review and evaluate research projects.

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- **Technical committee:** An expert committee reporting to the unit, to review and evaluate operational projects.
- **Financial committee:** An expert committee reporting to the unit, responsible for evaluating and approving tenders for the procurement of equipment and supplies approved for a given project, in coordination with the head researcher of research projects, or project manager of operational projects.
- **Strategic technologies:** Technologies determined by the NSTIP to be a strategic priority for the future of KSA development.
- **Program:** A set of research or operational projects related to any of the NSTIP programs.
- **Project:** A project can be either a research or an operational project:
 - a. **Research project:** A project dedicated to the thorough and comprehensive study of a specific topic. Conducting such a project requires the participation of a number of experts. It can be basic, applied or developmental research:
 1. Basic research: Experimental or theoretical work essentially conducted to acquire new knowledge related to phenomena and facts that can be grasped, which is not intended for any specific application.
 2. Applied research: Initial investigation seeking new knowledge aimed essentially at implementing a practical objective or purpose.
 3. Developmental research: A concerted effort to apply current knowledge derived from research or scientific expertise, to the production of new materials such as new products and

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equipment, intended to innovate new services, systems and operations, or drastically enhance existing ones.

- b. **An operational project:** A project that is not a research activity in nature and that achieves the goals of any of the programs of the NSTIP five year plans, such as the ones involved with the development of science, technology and innovation (STI) policies and regulations, or the development of research or service facilities such as laboratories, incubators, experiment stations etc...
- **Unit director:** The person in charge of running the stakeholder's science and technology unit, who must be a Saudi national.
 - **Program director:** The person in charge of managing and overseeing any of the unit's programs.
 - **Project manager:** The person in charge of the administrative and financial aspects of the project.
 - **Research proposal:** The comprehensive scientific and systematic description of the problem's: nature, importance, set solution objectives, qualified human resources, work methods, implementation time frame, requirements and capabilities-including financial cost- necessary to implement the suggested proposal, results and outputs of this research, and potential stakeholders benefiting from such research.
 - **National task teams:** Single or multiple stakeholders expert teams formed by the chairman of the supervisory committee to carry out a specific task.
 - **Task team:** A task team including all individuals working on the project.
 - **Research team:** A research team consists of the head researcher and the research associates only.
 - **Head researcher:** A person with scientific and technical qualifications responsible for all scientific and technical activities of the research project.

- **Research associate:** A person with scientific and technical qualifications who participates in the research/activity being carried out, responsible for his specific assignment which relates to his area of expertise and experience.
- **Research assistant:** A person with scientific and technical qualifications assigned with activities that support the research team, such as conducting experiments, performing lab analysis, data collection, and other activities required by the project.
- **Graduate students:** Students enrolled in Masters or PhD or equivalent program in Saudi colleges and universities, or students on scholarships in new universities that don't have graduate programs in special and justifiable cases, whose area of study is directly related to their assigned work in the project.
- **Undergraduate students:** Undergraduate students or students of an equivalent program seeking to earn a Bachelor's or equivalent degree, whose area of study is related to the project.
- **Technical personnel:** Individuals with the technical and practical experience and qualifications necessary to perform the technical tasks required by the project.
- **Administrative personnel:** Individuals qualified to carry out different administrative tasks such as copying, secretarial work, accounting and coordination activities.
- **Craftsmen:** Artisans and craftsmen.
- **Consultant:** A qualified expert at providing consulting services or studies in the area pertaining to the project.
- **Review team:** A team consisting of 3-5 specialist and experts in the area pertaining to the operational project, in charge of reviewing the project proposals.

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- **Evaluator:** Expert in charge of evaluating the performance of each project phase according to the specified requirement.
- **International evaluation:** An international body contracted to evaluate research project proposals and related annual and final technical reports.
- **Funding:** Financial support provided by the NSTIP to the stakeholder to implement a specific project among those approved by the supervisory committee according to the articles of these regulations.
- **Research project contract:** A formal document signed by the stakeholder's authority and the head researcher or the project manager to conduct the research project.
- **Operational project contract:** A formal document signed between KACST and the authority benefitting from one of the operational projects of the NSTIP programs and projects.
- **Project duration:** The time period set for the implementation of the project.
- **Forms:** Forms adopted by the NSTIP General Secretariat.
- **Scientific integrity rules:** Guidelines approved by the supervisory committee circulated to reporting units and bodies.
- **Scientific meetings:** Includes conferences, seminars, workshops, scientific summits, etc...
- **Scientific contributions:** Includes scientific papers, fliers and the chairmanship of scientific meeting sessions.
- **Online e-portal:** The official NSTIP electronic portal.
- **Administrative expenses:** Refers to the 7% percentage added to the approved budget, and allocated to the unit to monitor the stakeholder's funded projects.

Chapter II: Administrative and technical responsibilities

Article 3: Administrative and technical responsibilities of the supervisory committee

The NSTIP supervisory committee is in charge of developing the strategic and five year national STI plans, as well as monitoring the development of these plans in a manner that avoids duplication and ensures the concentration of all efforts, as well as the integration and coordination of all the different areas' various activities. The responsibilities of the supervisory committee can be summarized as follows:

The supervisory committee will:

- 1- Supervise the development of the national STI policy, and follow up its implementation, developing required STI plans for the policy's implementation, monitoring these plans and implementing and evaluating the results of such plans.
- 2- Ensure the full coordination and integration of the NSTIP with national developmental plans and sector specific strategic plans.
- 3- Coordinate with the Ministry of Finance the budgets of NSTIP projects and programs.
- 4- Adopt projects priorities and approved budgets for the national plan's fiscal years.
- 5- Ensure the integration of all research activities between KACST and other universities, avoiding duplication of efforts as much as possible.
- 6- Enhance the private sector's performance and participation in the implementation of the national plan's projects.
- 7- Form the necessary national sub-committees and task teams.

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- 8- Approve the studies, components and development phases of the five-year plans.
- 9- Oversee the preparation and development of project implementation mechanisms.
- 10- Ensure the alignment of the various activities carried out with the NSTIP approach and time frame.
- 11- Adopt projects approved for funding according to the allocated budgets.
- 12- Set the required marketing mechanisms for R&D outputs of NSTIP projects.

Article 4: Administrative and technical responsibilities of the preliminary committee:

The preliminary committee is in charge of all preliminary activities supporting the supervisory committee, ensuring that all the performance needs of the supervisory committee are met. The responsibilities of the preliminary committee can be summarized as follows:

The preliminary committee will:

1. Prepare the supervisory committee meetings, and follow up the implementation of the committee's resolutions.
2. Provide information needed by the supervisory committee pertaining to its areas of expertise.
3. Suggest to the supervisory committee national sub-committees and task teams.
4. Explain the strategic objectives and policies to relevant stakeholders.

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5. Advise stakeholders on technical issues regarding the preparation of various planning elements.
6. Review programs and projects provided by stakeholders, coordinate among them and ensure their alignment with the NSTIP vision and strategies, before submitting them to the supervisory committee for approval.
7. Manage procedures for submission and recommendation of the NSTIP strategic technologies programs research.
8. Periodic follow up of the various plans' progress and implementation, in addition to preparing performance evaluation reports, which include any necessary corrective actions, to be submitted to the supervisory committee.
9. Analyze NSTIP numerical results, and use them to develop various policies and plans.
10. Apply the outputs of STI qualitative and quantitative indicators in the development of the long-term vision and its related strategic plans.

Article 5: General secretariat administrative and technical responsibilities:

The NSTIP general secretariat is an administrative unit reporting to the president of KACST, established to carry out all the necessary executive and consulting tasks to assist the NSTIP supervisory and preliminary committees in carrying out their activities to supervise, plan, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the NSTIP. The NSTIP general secretariat is in charge of the following. It will:

1. Monitor the progress of the projects being carried out by various public stakeholders and universities within the NSTIP framework, and advise on technical and administrative issues when needed.
2. Supervise and coordinate the activities of the various subcommittees and national task teams assigned by the NSTIP supervisory or preliminary committee with specific activities.

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3. Receive, review and complete the project proposals evaluation procedures, and report recommendations to the preliminary committee.
4. Receive and review technical and financial reports of the NSTIP supported projects, and submit recommendations to the preliminary committee.
5. Monitor and evaluate annual performance reports of the various units, and submit recommendations to the preliminary committee.
6. Advise the NSTIP supervisory and technical committees on technical issues.
7. Formulate the rules and regulations needed to ensure the implementation of NSTIP projects in a professional high quality manner, submitting recommendations to the preliminary committee.
8. Promote society's knowledge and awareness of the NSTIP.

Article 6: Administrative and technical responsibilities of the stakeholder's authority:

1. Issue the order to form the stakeholder's science and technology unit.
2. Appoint the stakeholder's science and technology's director.
3. Approve appointments for stakeholder's funded projects.
4. Disburse and sign checks, adopt proposals and sign financial contracts of a value greater than 1 million SAR and up to 5 million SAR.
5. The stakeholder's authority can delegate some of his responsibilities to the unit's director.

Article 7: Administrative and technical responsibilities of the unit's director:

1. Overall supervision of the unit's responsibilities.
2. Ensure that all research and operational projects meet the submission criteria of the stakeholder.
3. Financial supervision over the unit in accordance with the authority allowed by the regulations.
4. Approve delegation, training and participation with scientific meetings that relate to the stakeholder's funded projects.
5. Submit unit's annual performance reports to the general secretariat.

Article 8: Administrative, financial and technical responsibilities of the unit:

1. The science and technology unit is a specialized unit established by the stakeholder, and is directly in charge of carrying out the administrative, technical and financial activities of the projects. The unit is also responsible for the planning, management, and coordination of the programs and projects pertaining to the stakeholder's science and technology activities, ensuring that such activities are aligned with the NSTIP priorities and direction. The unit reports directly to the general secretariat, and is equipped with all the necessary means and requirements for it to carry the following administrative, financial and technical responsibilities:
 - Form scientific committees to review projects before submitting them to the general secretariat.
 - Administrative and technical supervision of the science and technology's five year plans projects and programs of the relevant stakeholder to which it reports.
 - Act as the contact point with the general secretariat, providing the latter with all the required and needed reports, data and information regarding the projects.

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- Develop science and technology plans, strategies, programs and projects for the stakeholder in accordance with the NSTIP priorities and approach.
- Monitor the implementation of programs and projects, ensuring that their goals are met.
- Ensure that researchers observe the copyrights and patents resulting from NSTIP funded projects.
- Monitor science and technology developments, identifying potential opportunities in international agreements, investing and developing such opportunities into specific programs and projects with clear goals.
- Full utilization of all the stakeholder's resources and equipment.
- Full use of any scientific and technical aid, research and training grants as well as consulting offered by world organizations, bodies and associations to develop the stakeholder's human resources.
- Provide researchers with science and technology services.
- Review and check periodic financial reports and submitted disbursement vouchers, checking all related observations.
- Verify that disbursement vouchers are available when disbursing due payments.
- Stay on approved budget tracks for various projects.
- Match the projects account balance with funds provided by SAMA (Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency).
- Oversee that the budget is implemented according to the project terms.

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- Prepare financial forms and records related to the follow up of the projects work.
- Record all financial transactions within the general secretariat's approved financial program.
- Train project accountants, lead them and instruct them on their work.
- Prepare the unit's periodic financial reports (monthly spreadsheet, closing account, project detailed files) and submit them to the secretariat.
- Ensure compliance with the scientific integrity guidelines.

2. Research projects financial and procedural responsibilities:

- Receive project proposals submitted by researchers through the NSTIP e-portal.
- Check that research proposals meet all the criteria set by the rules and regulations issued by the general secretariat.
- Review and evaluate projects proposed by the scientific committee reporting to the unit, verifying that they meet all the general secretariat's submission requirements.
- Forward research proposals meeting all submission requirements to the general secretariat to be reviewed.
- Submit annual technical and financial reports of the funded projects meeting all submission requirements to the general secretariat.
- Technical and financial monitoring of projects funded by the stakeholders, including communicating with researchers to send detailed plans of the projects approved by the supervisory committee, study and review such plans, checking that all forms and needed paperwork is complete.

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- Coordinate with the general secretariat to follow up on the submitted funding request with the Ministry of Finance, so it can be deposited into the relevant SAMA account.
- Prepare and sign research project implementation contract with the head researcher for projects with budgets worth less than 1,000,000 SAR, in accordance with the approved contract forms approved by the general secretariat, sending a copy of the contract to the secretariat.

3. Procedural and financial responsibilities related to operational projects:

- Draft operational projects proposals in accordance with the stakeholder's approved programs in the STI five year plans.
- Report to the general secretariat the details of proposed projects according to priorities, using to the approved forms.
- Make necessary changes to the operational project proposal based on the recommendations of the general secretariat's review team.
- Submit to the general secretariat a comprehensive detailed study of the technical specifications of the project, and its requirements, in addition to a PMP implementation plan, once the supervisory committee approves the project proposal.
- Follow up with the general secretariat on the funding request submitted to the ministry of finance so that it is deposited in the relevant SAMA account
- Organize the implementation priorities of the stakeholder's NSTIP approved programs projects throughout the year.
- Develop financial and technical annual reports on the funded projects that meet all the submission criteria, to the general secretariat.

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- Give a presentation of the progress of the various projects in front of the preliminary committee or its representative in the case it's so requested.

4. Financial competency of the unit's director:

- Develop and sign project contract with the head researcher to carry out projects with budgets equal to less than 1 million SAR using the NSTIP contract forms approved by the general secretariat.
- Approve payments, sign checks, approve proposals and sign financial contracts of a value less than 1 million SAR.
- Approve the payment for the unit's administrative and technical requirements from the administrative expenses account (7%) added to the budget approved for the project within the limits of his disbursement authority.
- Approve the disbursement of an IMPREST fund to the program director no greater than 100,000 SAR, to be replenished whenever it is about to be depleted, once all the payment vouchers are submitted to be reviewed and verified by the unit.
- Approve the disbursement of an advance to the head researcher or project manager not to exceed 30,000 SAR, to be replenished whenever it is about to be depleted once all the payment vouchers are submitted to be reviewed and verified by the unit.
- When necessary, a project advance is given to the head researcher or project manager that shall not exceed 50,000 SAR, to be repaid as soon as the purpose for the advance is completed. No additional loan is allowed until the previous one is paid in full.

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5. Disbursement mechanisms at the science and technology unit:

- The unit and its entire staff shall be treated as a research team, meaning it shall follow the effective disbursement procedures for projects.
- The unit director shall be treated as a head researcher, and the programs directors as research associates. Any expertise needed can be sought in additional areas such scientific meetings from within the Kingdom or outside and these experts shall be treated as consultants.
- It is prohibited to combine two remunerations to work in the unit.
- The purchases and needs of the unit can be covered by the administrative expenses account (7%) from the percentage added to the approved budget for the projects, taking into consideration the financial authority of the unit director.
- The unit shall organize scientific and training meetings to support the NSTIP programs, covering such expenses with the administrative expenses account.

Chapter III: Budget and spending

Article 9: Project spending rules:

1. A ratio of 7% will be added to the budget approved for each project funded in the unit's account to follow up on the stakeholder's project.
2. The stakeholder's authority is responsible for all spending related to stakeholder's approved project, based on the following rules:
 - Funds allocated for the second year shall be disbursed once the annual financial and technical reports are submitted and approved.
 - The annual financial and technical reports must be approved before the research team, participants and project manager are remunerated.
 - No remuneration shall be granted to the research team for project extensions periods.
 - Two remunerations may not be combined by any team member participating in any given project.
 - The overall allocated remunerations to any research team member (head researcher, research associate and project manager) for his participation in research projects, shall not exceed the value of three projects remunerations per month.
 - The disbursement of the consultant's compensation shall be approved after a comprehensive report is submitted by the head researcher on the work achieved through the consulting period, and approved by the unit.
 - The project budget does not cover cars. When necessary cars can be leased for the period needed pending the unit's approval.

Article 10: Payment authority:

1. The authority to approve payments, sign checks, accept offers, sign contracts and award suppliers is as follows:

Official position	Authority limits	Authorized to sign
Head researcher/ project manager	Up to 30,000 SAR	Head researcher/ project manager
Unit director	More than 30,000 SAR up to 1000,000 SAR	Unit director and unit finance officer
Stakeholder president or his representative	> 1000,000 SAR <5,000,000 SAR	Stakeholder authority or unit director
Competition	5,000,000 SAR	Stakeholder's authority, unit director, unit's finance officer.

Article 11: Supplies procurement rules:

1. Supplies that do not exceed 30,000 SAR in value:
 - Supplies and equipment are directly purchased by the head researcher either from inside the Kingdom or overseas.
 - The value of the overall purchases should not exceed 30,000 SAR, and should be limited to items purchased in small quantities and to urgent need where time is of essence.
2. Supplies that exceed 30,000 SAR in value but are worth less than 1 million SAR.

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- A request to purchase the supplies and equipment is submitted along with three offers to the unit for it to carry out the following procedures:
 - a. A procurement committee is assigned, consisting of the head researcher (project manager in the case of operational projects) in addition to members from the financial committee to review and choose the best offer.
 - b. The head researcher (project manager in the case of operational projects) using the forms approved by the stakeholder, specifies the name of the company with the best offer, along with the number of the offer, the period of supply, then signs it and sends it to the unit.
 - c. A letter of award for the supplies and equipment is drafted by the unit director.
 - d. Once he is awarded the contract, the supplier provides the various supplies and equipment over the specified period of time. The supplying company must send the original bill to the head researcher (project manager in the case of operational projects) to be in turn submitted to the unit.
 - e. Once all the supplying, receipt & delivery procedures and official company paperwork are completed in accordance with the stakeholder's regulations, payment is made through the unit.

3. Supplies exceeding 1 million SAR and less than 5 million SAR in value:

- For supplies and equipment that are worth more than 1 million SAR and less than 5 million SAR, the procedures set by this article shall be followed, with the exception that the selection of offers, the awarding of the supplier and the approval of due payments must be approved by

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the stakeholder's authority, in addition to drafting a contract binding both the supplier's company and the stakeholder's authority.

- The contract installments or payments due to third outside parties are made through the unit, once all the official procedures of the committee, taking into consideration the authority of the stakeholder's authority.

4. Supplies exceeding 5 million SAR in value:

- If a project requires the provision of equipment or supplies or materials worth a value exceeding 5 million SAR, procurement must be done through public competitive bidding according to the stakeholder's rule.

Article 12: Rules of tendering for procurement contracts

1. The head researcher of research projects or the project manager of operational projects must provide at least three offers to purchase the project's needed supplies, in case they are worth more than 30,000 SAR.
2. It is sufficient for the head researcher of research projects or the project manager of operational projects to propose a single offer when there's an exclusive supplier of the needed supplies. In this case, the representative company's tender is submitted along with documents proving the exclusive nature of the company agency and a letter explaining the situation.
3. The unit will do the necessary to award the contract for the supplies after reviewing all the offers, taking into consideration the items of article 11 of these rules.
4. Supplies may not be purchased until the unit awards the contract.

Article 13: Request to change the equipment offered in the project:

1. If the project requires any equipment other than those included in the proposed research project, the head researcher of research projects or the project manager of the operational projects shall take the following steps:
 - Submission of a request to change, justifying the need for the change requested, and providing detailed information regarding the alternative equipment.
 - The unit is in charge of reviewing the request and processing it.
 - In case the request to change the equipment is approved, the procedures described in article 11 shall be followed, provided that the request to change does not affect the overall equipment budget item of the project.

Chapter IV: Additional Rules

Article 14: The researcher's obligations:

1. The researcher pledges to abide by:
 - The principles of scientific integrity issued by the general secretariat <http://www.kacst.edu.sa/en/about/stnp/Pages/forms.aspx>.
 - The comprehensive NSTIP IP policy published by the supervisory committee: <http://www.kacst.edu.sa/en/about/stnp/Pages/forms.aspx>
 - Bioethics regulations when handling living creatures, parts thereof or their genetic material <http://www.kacst.edu.sa/ar/depts/bioethics/1/Regul/Bioethic.Rgl.fin.bks.pdf>
2. The researcher is responsible for all the consequences of any violation of the above.

Article 15: Scientific Publishing:

1. If the project is not classified as confidential, and there's a desire to publish some or all of the research results, the stakeholder's IP rights as well as those of the participants in the research project must be respected first, and any patents resulting from the project need to be filed before proceeding to any scientific publishing.
2. Any publication resulting from any project or related to any research project results must include credits to the contributions of individuals and stakeholders involved with the project, including the role of the NSTIP.
3. The support provided by the NSTIP for the project must be recognized when the results of the research project are published in scientific papers or scientific meetings or any other publications with the following form: "This project was supported by the NSTIP strategic technologies program number (XXX) in the Kingdom".

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4. The results of a project shall not be published nor shared with others unless authorized at the beginning of the project, or prior consent is obtained.
5. The stakeholder has the right to conceal the results of a project if this is in the public interest, in which case the reports are classified as confidential.
6. When publishing research project results, scientific periodicals listed in the international information bases such as ISI, SCOPUS, in addition to other world databases, must be selected.
 - In case a project requires experimenting on living creatures or on the environment, the required authorizations must be obtained from the relevant authorities in advance and before conducting any experiments. The general secretariat is not responsible for any such experiments.

Article 16: Liability for damages:

1. The general secretariat shall not be held financially or legally liable for any accident, or bodily or health injuries, or human loss, or any claims resulting from any activity or experiment conducted by the research project funded by the general secretariat, whether these damages or claims, or some of these damages or claims, pertain to the party benefitting from the grant or any other request. The head researcher must obtain the necessary licenses and permissions from the relevant authorities to conduct any experiment with possible negative effects of humans, animals or the environment.

Article 17: Collecting information and the information confidentiality:

1. Collecting information and confidentiality:
 - If the research involved surveying to collect information, the researchers take full responsibility for the collection of information

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related to a project, without any responsibility on behalf of the general secretariat. Furthermore, the researchers shall not insinuate to any participants with the survey that they are collecting the information for the general secretariat. When the project does need information collection, it must be stated as so in the project's introduction. In cases of necessity, the head researcher shall seek the authorization of the general secretariat to refer to it in the survey. NSTIP support for the project does not imply its approval of the survey plan or the survey content or data collection methods.

2. Confidential information:

- Confidential information include all data, details, work plans, task team composition, technical and financial and administrative documents, correspondence, internal publications, consultations, meetings minutes, forms, designs, proposals, achievements, research project outputs and inputs, and inventions that may result from the project, in addition to the work environment, executive plans, control mechanisms, and quality management related to the committee or secretariat or research project.
- All the information related to the submitted projects is considered confidential according to the effective laws in the Kingdom, and the staff working at the unit shall not disclose any of this confidential information in any way, unless prior written consent is obtained from the general secretariat.

3. Term of confidentiality:

- The confidentiality of approved research proposals' data is binding for five years from the date of submission of the application.

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- The confidentiality of the data of approved research proposals is binding from the date the application is submitted and for the five years subsequent to the date of final completion of the project.

Article 18: Ownership of the equipment, devices and installations:

1. All the equipment, devices and installations insured or made for the project will be obtained using funding provided for the project in the head researcher's trust, to be used throughout the implementation of the project. The head researcher commits to ensuring the maintenance, safety and delivery of all equipment, devices and installations to the stakeholder upon completion, as it will be its owner.

Article 19: In the absence of a specific article:

1. In matters where there is no specific related article in these regulations, KACST effective rules, or any stakeholder effective rules, or decisions issued by the supervisory committee shall be followed.

Article 20: The right to interpret or amend article items:

1. The supervisory committee has the sole right to interpret or amend any items in these articles. Subsequent decisions or regulations issued by the supervisory committee related to projects' progress shall be considered an integral part of these articles.

Article 21: Applying the regulations:

1. These regulations apply to all projects with NSTIP support, effective from the date these regulations are adopted, and shall supersede any previous regulations or instructions, overriding any conflicting rules or exemptions.
2. These regulations shall be updated every five years from the date they are issued or as needed.