

F.No.OI-11012/14/2012-EP-I
Government of India
Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs
(Emigration Policy Division)

Subject: Revised Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) Scheme in Indian Missions abroad

1 INDIAN COMMUNITY WELFARE FUND (ICWF).

1.1 The 'Indian Community Welfare Fund' (ICWF) was established in the Indian Missions in 17 Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) countries and Maldives, with the approval of the Cabinet, vide sanction Letter No. OI-11012/25/2007-US(EP-I) dated 12th October, 2009 to meet contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various on-site welfare activities for Overseas Indian Citizens who are in distress. The Scheme was extended to 24 Indian Missions vide sanction Letter No. OI-11012/25/2007-US(EP-I) dated 30th April, 2010. The Scheme was further extended to all Indian Missions in remaining 157 countries all over the world vide sanction letter no.OI-11012/25/2007-US(EP-I) (Part II) dated 24.03.2011. Subsequently, this Ministry received various suggestions from Missions for expansion of the scope of the Scheme. Accordingly, the Scheme has been modified in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs. The modified ICWF Scheme has the following features:

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE SCHEME

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is aimed at providing the following services on a means tested basis in the most deserving cases:

- (i) Boarding and lodging for distressed Overseas Indian workers in Household / domestic sectors and unskilled labourers;
- (ii) Extending emergency medical care to the Overseas Indians in need;
- (iii) Providing air passage to stranded Overseas Indians in need;
- (iv) Providing initial legal assistance to the Overseas Indians in deserving cases;
- (v) Expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased Overseas Indians in such cases where the sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost;

- (vi) **Providing the payment of penalties in respect of Indian nationals for illegal stay in the host country where prima facie the worker is not at fault;**
- (vii) **Providing the payment of small fines/penalties for the release of Indian nationals in jail/detention centre;**
- (viii) **Providing support to local Overseas Indian Associations to establish Overseas Indian Community Centres in countries that have population of Overseas Indians exceeding 1,00,000; and**
- (ix) **Providing support to start and run Overseas Indian Community-based student welfare centres in Countries that have more than 20,000 Indian students presence.**

1.3 TARGET BENEFICIARIES

Overseas Indian workers duped by unscrupulous intermediaries in the host countries, runaway house maids, those who become victim of accidents, deserted spouses of Overseas Indians or undocumented Overseas Indian workers in need of emergency assistance or any other Overseas Indian citizens who are in distress would be the main beneficiaries of the Fund. The Fund will also be utilized to meet the expenditure for airlifting the mortal remains of Overseas Indian citizens to India on a means tested basis, on the recommendation of the respective Heads of Missions. It is also meant for release of Overseas Indian nationals from detention centres as well as serve as support to Overseas Indian community centres and student welfare centres.

2 SOURCE OF FUNDING

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) set up in the Missions will have the following source of funding:

- I Funds raised by the Indian Missions by levying a service charge on Consular Services as under:
 - (i) For Passport, Visa, OCI and PIO Cards – Rs.100/- per document rounded off in local currency.
 - (ii) For attestation of employment document – Rs.100/- per worker, rounded off in local currency.
 - (iii) Attestation of other documents and other miscellaneous consular services rendered by Mission (other than in death cases) – Rs.100/- per worker,

rounded off in local currency. The rates of the service charge may be revised by this Ministry in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs from time to time.

II Voluntary contributions by Indian community.

The Missions will issue proper receipt for the contributions received from the Indian Community, giving the names and the addresses of such contributors.

III Budgetary support from the Government of India, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA).

Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs would provide budgetary support for setting up the ICWF in the 157 Indian Missions to the tune of Rs.5 lakh. The MOIA contribution will be initially for three (3) years or till the period the Fund becomes self sustaining, whichever is earlier. The amount will be released annually and would be limited to meet the deficit in the financial resources of the Missions, with due regard to the utilization of the amount released during previous years.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE ICWF

3.1 The Heads of Missions may constitute a three member Committee for administration of the Fund with officers dealing with Labour, Consular, Community Welfare or Administration matters to review the Fund periodically.

3.2 OPERATION OF THE FUND:

The operation of the Fund will be as follows:

- (i) The Principal Chief Controller of Accounts would draw the accounting procedures in consultation with CGA for operating the fund with the approval of the Competent Authority and inform the modalities to the Ministry and the Missions.
- (ii) A separate Personal Deposit Account entitled 'ICWF Account' will be opened in each Mission for the purpose as prescribed in the Civil Accounts manuals.
- (iii) The existing welfare Funds operating in some of the Missions shall be merged with the new ICWF after the performance audit of existing Fund by the O/o Principal Chief Controller of Accounts.
- (iv) Daily collection of surcharge will be deposited in the bank account on the next working day by the Accountant.

- (v) A separate Cash Book will be maintained specifically for the purpose with all receipts and withdrawals to be reflected in it, on the lines of the Cash Book already being maintained under the existing procedures of Cash and Accounts.
- (vi) A separate Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) of appropriate level, say the Head of Chancery (HOC) will operate the PDA and will be responsible for all the transactions from the Fund with one other signatory to be decided by the HOM.
- (vii) The expenditure / withdrawal from the Fund will be preceded by recommendation from the officer in charge of the Consular and Labour wings, on case to case basis subject to the approval of the Heads of Missions.
- (viii) Every six month, a statement of collection and utilization of the Fund will be submitted to the MOIA by the Missions.**

3.3 IMPREST

The Heads of Missions may decide an appropriate advance sum as the Imprest amount under the custody of DDO or an officer from the Labour Wing in the Mission, to be decided by the HOM. A separate account of expenditure of Imprest will be maintained in the Imprest Advance Register reflecting the details of expenditure, amount of advance recouped from time to time, etc. The Register with all relevant details of expenditure on account of disbursement will be put up for periodical scrutiny of the HOM, with the period of scrutiny not being more than 3 months at a time, will be decided by the HOM.

3.4 AUDITING OF THE FUND

The auditing of the Fund will be as under:

- (i) A six monthly inspection will be carried out by a team comprising two Gazetted officers other than those associated with the Fund.
- (ii) The Inspection team will report directly to the HOM.
- (iii) The Missions will prepare a detailed account of the expenditure incurred out of the Fund and send it for the perusal of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs on an annual basis. On expiry of the Financial Year, the Missions will forward a Utilization Certificate to the Ministry.
- (iv) Audit of the ICWF may be done by C&AG (a six monthly review could be undertaken and release of funds for subsequent year should be based on

report of this review). The Pr. CCA may exercise normal controls as envisaged under the extant accounting procedures.

3.5 DISBURSEMENT

The procedure for disbursement from the Fund will be as under:

- (i) The Heads of Missions will consider requests, written or verbal, depending upon the seriousness or sensitivity of the circumstances on case to case basis.
- (ii) The Officer in charge of Labour Wing or the officer designated for the purpose by the HOM, will examine the case and forward his recommendation for HOM's approval.
- (iii) Assistance towards boarding expenses per head will be fixed to a limit as approved by the HOM subject to a maximum of **30 days**.
- (iv) ***The payment of penalties for cases of illegal stay shall be limited to a maximum of USD 1000 per case after HOM satisfies himself that the Indian national is not intentionally at fault.***
- (v) ***In respect of Indian nationals in jails/detention centres, the payment of small fines/penalties shall be a maximum of USD 2500 per case after HOM satisfies himself that such payment would lead to release of Indian nationals.***
- (vi) ***For both (iv) and (v) above, the reasons for the HOM's satisfaction will be recorded in brief on the file of the Post/Mission.***
- (vii) ***Disbursement guidelines for Overseas Indian Community Centres and Student Welfare Centres will be circulated separately.***

4. REQUIREMENT OF PRIOR APPROVAL IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES

The Heads of Missions/Posts are empowered to disburse from the ICWF, as indicated in para 3.5 above, for providing services on a means tested basis in the most deserving cases, as set out in para 1.2 above. However if the HOMs/Posts consider it necessary to deploy the Fund for other services in most deserving cases, not indicated in para 1.2 above or for any other purpose, the prior approval of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs shall be obtained.

5. AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEME

Amendments for governing the functioning of the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) can be carried out by Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in

consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Expenditure after taking into account the views of the Missions concerned.

6. APPROVALS OBTAINED

The ICWF Scheme was finalized after extensive inter-ministerial consultations between the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Integrated Finance Division and the Principal Controller of Accounts (MOIA & MEA). The Heads of Missions were also consulted and the concurrence of MEA (CPV Division) and Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure) was obtained. The Scheme was approved by the Cabinet on 20th August, 2009 and the sanction letter on establishment of the ICWF was issued vide Letter No. OI-11012/25/2007-US(EP-I) dated 12.10.2009. The Fund was extended to 24 more Missions, vide Letter No. OI-11012/25/2007-US(EP-I) dated 30.04.2010 as per the original Scheme approved by the Cabinet, with the approval of Hon'ble Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs and with the concurrence of Ministry of External Affairs (CPV Division) and IFD. The Fund was further extended to remaining 157 countries with the concurrence of Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance conveyed vide their I.D. Note No.3(43)/E-Coord/2007 dated 01.03.2011. The modified Scheme issues with the concurrence of IFD vide their Dy. No.4476/Dir(F)/12 dated 04.08.2012.

The Scheme has been extended to all the Indian Missions vide sanction letter No.OI-11012/25/2007-US(I) dated 24.03.2011 as per the original Scheme approved by the Cabinet, with the approval of Hon'ble Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs and with the concurrence of Ministry of External Affairs (CPV Division) and IFD as well as the approval of the Department of Expenditure. Since all the Indian Missions are covered under the Scheme, the Scheme will stand extended to any country not mentioned in the list at Annexure subject to approval of the Ministry of External Affairs under intimation to Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. The Scheme will be implemented in all the remaining Missions subject to the following:-

- (i) The Funding of the Scheme will be from within the budgetary grant of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.
- (ii) The corpus established for the Scheme becomes self sustaining within 3 years.
