

Engagement of Designers for Innovation & Research Centre

(Handicrafts, Handlooms & Production Tools)

Meghalaya boasts a wealth of traditional handicrafts and handloom heritage, with a remarkable handicraft and handloom clusters spread across the region. This rich tradition is prevalent in nearly every district of the state, and the skilled artisans have been honing their craft for generations. Meghalaya is renowned for its expertise in:

- ▶ Weaving
- ▶ Cane & Bamboo Craft
- ▶ Wood carving
- ▶ Black Pottery

Despite the existence of multiple handicraft and handloom clusters and skilled workforce, the state lags behind its neighbouring states in terms of market share. The state possesses ample raw material resources, yet it struggles due to several challenges.

In the context of Meghalaya state, artisans face problems to characterized by limited exposure to the latest tools, technology, and emerging trends in their respective crafts. This lack of access to contemporary resources hampers their capacity to innovate, adapt, and produce products that align with evolving consumer preferences and industry standards. As a result, Meghalaya's artisan community faces hurdles in competing effectively in the market, capitalizing on its rich cultural heritage, and ensuring the sustainability of traditional craftsmanship.

Under the RAMP Scheme, the Directorate of Commerce & Industries has established a centralized **“Innovation and Research Centre (I&RC) for Handloom & Handicraft”** at the Directorate of Commerce and Industries premises at Lower Nongrim Hills, Shillong, Meghalaya

Objective:

- ▶ **Market research:** Continuous market research will be conducted to track new market trends and forecast future demand. This research will also help to identify the types of decorative and utility products that are being produced in other states and countries, their market acceptance, and the types of products and technologies that can be innovated and introduced in Meghalaya, considering the availability of raw materials, traditions, culture etc.
- ▶ **Product innovation & diversification:** The primary objective of the innovation and research centre is to develop a diversified collection of innovative products that meets market demands, both utilitarian and decorative. Products like bamboo brushes, flasks, cups, floor tiles etc. are already popular in other states and around the world but state has less exposure towards new innovations, and the centre will focus on developing series of successful products to further increase their appeal to consumers.
- ▶ **Quality Control & Competitive pricing:** The centre will help MSMEs achieve both high-quality products and greater market share through its quality standards assistance and competitive pricing strategies.

- ▶ **Product Packaging & Branding:** The centre will help MSMEs learn about creative packaging and branding to make their products more competitive. The centre will conduct research and innovation in this area to develop new and effective packaging and branding solutions for MSMEs.

The **Innovation & Research Centre (I&RC)** invites applications from **qualified and experienced designers** to develop **context-specific, future-ready designs** for handicrafts, handlooms, and production tools rooted in the cultural, material, and skill ecosystems of **Meghalaya**.

This engagement follows a **portfolio-based selection process**, where applicants are required to independently carry out research and submit **project-specific design portfolios** for evaluation by an expert Jury.

Scope of Work (To Be Completed Before Hiring)

Timeline: 1 Month

Interested designers must independently undertake the following as part of their **application submission**:

Local Research & Documentation

- Conduct **desk research** on Meghalaya's traditional handicrafts, handlooms, materials, motifs, tools, and techniques.
- Undertake **field research** involving interactions with artisans and master craftsmen.
- Document:
 - Existing products and techniques
 - Tools currently in use
 - Production challenges, inefficiencies, and gaps
- Identify future requirements related to:
 - Emerging consumer and market trends
 - Functional and utility improvements
 - Sustainability and scalability

Design Development

Based on the research, applicants must develop **original designs**, which may include:

- Handicraft products
- Handloom products
- Improved or new production tools

Each design submission must include:

- Detailed drawings and/or CADs
- Material specifications
- Production feasibility notes
- Intended use, price range, and target market
- Design rationale linked to local context

Submission Requirements (Mandatory)

Applicants must submit a **project-specific portfolio**, including:

- Background research documentation

- Design concepts and final designs
- Design specification sheets
- Brief write-up explaining relevance to Meghalaya's crafts ecosystem

Generic portfolios will not be accepted: Only submissions developed specifically for this Innovation & Research Centre project will be considered.

Selection Process

- All submitted portfolios will be evaluated by an **Expert Jury**.
- Designs will be assessed on:
 - Cultural and contextual relevance
 - Understanding of local skills and materials
 - Innovation and functionality
 - Production feasibility
 - Market potential
- Only **selected designers and designs** will be formally engaged under the project.

Eligibility

- Relevant qualification
- Craft Designers
- Textile / Handloom Designers
- Product & Tool Designers
- Designers with experience in:
 - Indigenous or traditional crafts
 - Artisan-led production systems
 - Sustainable materials and practices
- Preference will be given to designers with:
 - Field-based research experience
 - Prior work with tribal or indigenous communities
 - Sensitivity to cultural and social contexts

Nature of Engagement

- Project-based engagement under the Innovation & Research Centre
- Selected designers will be involved in subsequent phases including:
 - Prototype development
 - Product finalization
 - Training of master craftsmen

Scope of Work during the project

Phase 1: Prototype development

Timeline: 2nd Month onwards

Objective: To convert **approved paper designs into functional prototypes**.

Key Activities

1. **Designer-Prototype Expert Collaboration**

- Designers work closely with:
 - Prototype making experts
 - I&RC technical team
 - Master craftsmen
- Joint workshops to:
 - Interpret designs
 - Identify production challenges
 - Finalize materials and dimensions

2. **Prototype Creation**

- Development of:
 - Handicraft prototypes
 - Handloom samples
 - Tool prototypes (for improved efficiency, ergonomics, or quality)
- Iterative refinement based on functionality and usability.

Deliverables

- i. Physical prototypes
- ii. Prototype documentation (materials, process steps, improvements)
- iii. Costing estimates per product/tool

Phase 2: Product development

Timeline: 3rd Month onwards (**Ongoing**)

Objective: To refine prototypes into **market-ready products** using the expertise of master craftsmen.

Key Activities

1. **Prototype Testing & Refinement**

- Master craftsmen validate:
 - Production feasibility
 - Time requirements
 - Quality consistency
- Designers incorporate feedback for final modifications.

2. **Product Finalization**

- Finalize:
 - Design specifications
 - Production SOPs
 - Quality standards
- Shortlist products with:
 - Strong aesthetic appeal
 - Replicability
 - Commercial potential

Deliverables

- i. Final product designs
- ii. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- iii. Production-ready specification sheets

Phase 3: Training of Master craftsmen in selected products

Timeline: 4th month onwards

Objective: To ensure **design integrity and quality replication** through structured skill transfer.

Key Activities

- Designers conduct hands-on training sessions for master craftsmen.
- Training covers:
 - Design intent and variations
 - Production techniques
 - Finishing standards
 - Tool usage and maintenance
- Development of **training manuals and visual guides**.

Deliverables

- i. Trained master craftsmen
- ii. Training manuals and guides
- iii. Quality control checklists

Remuneration:

Designers shall be paid based on each set of designs selected during the hiring process. The payment per design has to be quoted by the designer along with the portfolio submission and quoted cost should be inclusive of the scope of work assigned under the contract as written above.

Payment will be made in 4 milestones:

Milestone 1: Selection of 240 designs

Milestone 2: Completion of 240 Prototypes

Milestone 3: Completion of 180 Products

Milestone 4: Completion of Master Craftsmen Training

How to Apply

Interested designers should submit their brief profile to:

Email : meghalaya.ramp.scheme@gmail.com

Shortlisted designers shall be communicated individually informing about the Jury date

Portfolio submission and Jury: 1st week July 2026

Venue of Jury:

Directorate of Commerce & Industries,
Lower Nongrim Hills, Shillong, Meghalaya-793003