

**Dear Sir / Madam,**

It is indeed a matter of great pleasure for us to know of your noble intentions Organisations like yours with dedicated activists at the helm can make it happen and take the movement of eye donation movement forward.

Please find given below A Note on Starting an Eye Bank or Eye Donation Centre. We are inviting you to become a member of Eye Bank Association of India. Once you have become an Institutional Life member we will provide you all promotional materials at subsidized rates and other services.

We would advise you to get the organisation registered with the Directorate of Health Services also under Transplantations of Humans Organs Act 1994. This will enable you to become eligible for grants from the Central Government in future.

Please do revert back in case you need any clarifications.

With best wishes.

Yours Truly  
For Eye Bank Association of India

**G. Ganesh**  
Executive Director

A  
NOTE ON  
STARTING AN EYE BANK  
OR  
EYE DONATION CENTRE



**E.B.A.I.**

LET YOUR EYES CHANGE SOMEONES LIFE

**Eye Bank Association of India**

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**Some early thoughts:** Eye donation and restoration of sight through corneal transplants is a very exciting combination of selfless charity and the miracle of medical technology. And removal of eyes takes only twenty minutes while surgical cornea transplantation can be performed in half hour. Yet it must be remembered that eyes/corneas are human tissues and like other organs (kidneys, heart, etc.) needs sincere and sustained technical expertise and dedicated commitment to quality and systematic procedures to handle. So, there are costs involved. And there is a need for professionals and professional training. Also remember that eyes/corneas cannot be “sold”. This means that the costs of collection, storage and testing for communicable diseases must be met from “other sources”. And lastly, the Government of India with the Transplantation of Human Organs Act 1994 is implementing certain statutory controls over all activities concerning organ processing.

Please also note that eye donation today meets less than five percent of the demand for corneal transplants. So an eye bank vitally needs to budget and plan for public awareness programs and hospital cornea retrieval programs in its neighborhood. The experience of past decades in our country has shown that just opening an eye bank and waiting for eye donors to call for eye collection does not work. Management must move out and interact with society to motivate eye donation.

**Decide your level of operation:** A full fledged eye bank needs staff and facilities to collect eye reliably on a 24-hour basis, the space and equipment to test for AIDS and Hepatitis B contamination and the means to transport them to eye surgeons on a first-come-first served basis. Some of these inputs can be shared (for eg: if the eye bank is situated within a hospital, especially in remote areas where there is a shortage of infrastructure).

But in districts where some eye banks already exists within range of transportation facilities, there is another simpler option- Eye Donation Centers (EDC's).

EDC can be affiliated to the nearby eye banks and perform the supporting role of extending the reach of eye banking facilities to the community. It can effectively focus just on spreading eye donation awareness, respond to telephone calls from donors, motivate eye donation in nearby hospitals and send the collected tissue to the parent eye bank for testing and distribution. Local doctors and social workers can organize EDCs with less costs and overheads.

### **The role of Eye Bank Association of India How can the Eye Bank Association of India (EBAI) help?**

EBAI can essentially act as your guide in setting up an Eye Bank or Eye Donation Centre. We can also advise you on training of staff and initiate you to international standards in eye banking. And most importantly, membership gives you a valuable platform to interact with eye bankers all over India, to share views and problems, and continuously improve systems.

If you are an NGO, an EBAI membership also allows you to apply for Central Government grants. EBAI cannot directly fund any Eye Bank or Eye Donation Center but we can share our own experiences and that of our members in fund raising and locating sponsors.

For eye banks which are (a) **Life Institutional Members of EBAI** and (b) with adequately trained personnel, MK medium to prolong life of excised corneas by 3-4 days is made available through the Ramayamma International Eye Bank, Hyderabad, at cost of **Rs.300/-** per Vial.(Two vials required for pair of corneas)

Another standard (Priced) product made available by EBAI is a special thermocole container and accessories designed and made to international standards that allows safe transportation of eye balls/corneas by road, rail or air (see our brochure on “Thermocole Boxes for safe transportation of Eye balls/corneas”) Cost is **Rs. 600/-** including Postal + other charges.

A quarterly newsletter 'PUNARJYOTI' is also distributed free to members to help you keep in touch with eye banking activities and its well wishers, and to communicate with our members all over India. EBAl also collects and disseminates eye collection/utilization statistics, conceives and implements national awareness programs on TV and through the print media.

**Starting up:**

The steps to be taken can be grouped into the following categories:

1. Licensing / Legal
2. Conceptualization / Organizing
3. Funding / Asset building
4. Staffing / Training

**Licensing/Legal:** The legislation Human Organs Transplantation Act (HOTA) '94 was passed by the Central Government in August 1994 and became immediately, effective in Union Territories, Goa Himachal Pradesh & Maharashtra. All State Governments are to adopt this Act.

It is best to officially write to the Director, directorate of Health Services, or to the secretary, Public Health Department of your state Government to ensure that you comply with official Rules and Regulations regarding eye banking, and obtain registration that may be needed.

Please note that State Governments, even though they have accepted HOTA '94 may not have developed local Rules & Regulations for eye banking. It will still be useful and safer to be in touch with the government. In states where eye banks already exist, you can also try and contact them for additional local guidelines. EBAl can provide the Medical Standards recommended by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt.of India.

**Conceptualisation / Organising:** You will need a committee headed by a knowledgeable person who could preferably is a corneal surgeon. Influential local businesspersons, religious leaders, social workers and social work organization can be other groups that are represented.

One of the first decisions to be made is whether to set up an Eye Bank (EB), or an Eye Donation Centre (EDC), which is affiliated, to a local Eye Bank. The next decision could be where to locate the unit. Should it be a free separate unit or should it be within the premises of an existing hospital or other institutions. The latter location may save some costs, but wherever be the location, we recommend that it SHOULD NOT BE POSITIONED within the operating radius of any existing EB or EDC. The other basic inputs-which are perhaps the most important – (1) is a permanent long-term supply pool of doctors (min. MBBS qualification as per HOTA '94) for performing surgical eye removal reliably on a 24 hour basis, (2) social workers to motivate eye donation amongst the public and local hospital wards. Without these core groups, EBs and EDCs cannot function.

**Funding/Asset building:** We recommend that the following Equipment / personnel be made available:

	Human Resources	
	Eye Banks	Eye Donation Centre
Panel of Ophthalmic Surgeons	1 statutory	-
Medical Director	1 statutory	1 desired
Eye Bank Manager	1 statutory	1 desired
Eye Bank Technicians	1 statutory	1 statutory
Social Worker-cum-Health Educator	1 statutory	1 statutory
Driver-cum-Projectionist	2 statutory	1 statutory

Infrastructure	Physical	
	Eye Bank	Eye Donation Centre
Space	600 sft.	300 sft.
Slit Lamp	2,00,000	----
Refrigerator	25,000	25,000
Four Wheeler	3,35,000	----
Two Wheeler	----	35,000 (Preferable)
Laminar Flow Hood	2,00,000	----
6 sets of instruments	10,000	10,000
Telephone	6,000 (2)	3,000 (1)
Furniture	1,00,000	15,000
Serological Equipment	3,00,000	----
Autoclave	1,00,000	15,000 (Should have access)
Specular Microscope	12,00,000	----
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,76,000</b>	<b>1,03,000</b>

**Costs are approximate and indicative.**

**Caution:** In our experience many eye banks fail to survive because though start-up inputs are provided for adequate care is not taken to ensure the availability of a STEADY POOL OF DOCTORS FOR ENUCLEATION and SOCIAL WORKERS and means to meet public and to work in the ICCU/ surgical/Medical/Trauma wards of local hospitals are very necessary. Organizers must realistically plan and budget for between 50 to 100 eye/cornea collections per year to begin with. This is the toughest activity in planning an eye bank.

**Staffing / Training:** In India the utility rate of collected corneas is between one-third and half that of western nations. Much of tissues collected are not suitable for corneal transplants and methods for collecting, handling, testing and supporting tissues needs to be improved to be closer to world standards. If we fail in this, we are being grossly unfair both to the donors and recipients of corneas. So we recommend training as follows:

- 1) Refresher course for doctors in corneal excision and MK Media usage (1 week)
- 2) Course in general eye banking for eye bank Technicians (3 months)
- 3) Grief Counsellor training (1 month)

You may write to us directly for your training needs.

We recommend that funding be organized through local philanthropists and social work organizations like Rotary, Lions, etc., However, if the Eye Bank is being set up by a voluntary organization registered under Societies Registration Act 1860 the Government of India offers non-recurring and recurring grants under National Program for Control of Blindness (NPCB) and is subject to being a life Institutional Member of the Eye Bank Association of India and some other conditions.

**SUMMARY:** We hope that this brochure gives you most of the preliminary information that you need for planning the setting up of an Eye Bank (EB) or Eye Donation Center (EDC). If you need any further assistance, do write to Eye Bank Association of India at following address.

Eye Bank Association of India, Plot No.12, B.N.R. Colony, Road No.14  
Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034, Ph: 040-23544504 / 23545454  
Email: ebai@vsnl.net; admin@ebai.org; Website: ebai.org

For a detailed **Project Report** on "Setting up an eye Bank or Eye Donation Center" priced at **Rs.150/-** (including courier charge), send us your request along with a demand draft made in favour of "Eye Bank Association of India" payable at Hyderabad. Should you need any on-the-spot assistance, you can even sponsor the visit of one of our senior staff to your premises.