



Mauritius Research and Innovation Council

Public Sector Transformation Scheme

Guidelines to Applicants

Issue 01 Rev 0

Date: 26 February 2021

PRIVACY STATEMENT

The information requested on these proposal forms is solicited by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC). It will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals and may be disclosed to qualified experts and the staff of the MRIC as part of the review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards. To perform its contractual obligations, the MRIC collects, processes, and stores personal data (including sensitive personal data) of its data subjects. MRIC treats these personal data collected as private and confidential. The MRIC abides by all data protection laws as may be applicable, including the Mauritian Data Protection Act 2017 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR"). We have implemented organisational, physical and technical safeguards thus ensuring protection (of personal data collected) from: unauthorized access, misuse and/or unauthorized disclosure. We are also committed to being transparent about how personal data of our data subjects are collected and used. For more information, please refer to the MRIC Privacy Statement on our website: www.mric.mu

Note:

- (1) Proposals not meeting the proposal content requirements which are listed and explained in this solicitation will not be considered.
- (2) The MRIC reserves the right to revise and amend the terms and conditions laid down in this solicitation as and whenever necessary.
- (3) The decision of MRIC is final and no request to review the decision will be entertained
- (4) MRIC is under no obligation to fund any application or any number of specific applications on a given topic.

List of Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this solicitation:

1 Project Leader - the single individual designated by the applicant in a grant application as the key person who is responsible for the overall direction of the project. The Project Leader must be employed by Company or Start-Up submitting the project proposal. For administrative purposes, all correspondence will be addressed to the Project Leader. If the Project Leader is not a citizen of Mauritius, the Project Leader is required to provide the Council with copies of the passport, Residence/Occupation Permit and/or work permit covering the duration of the project period and ensure that at least one the team members is of Mauritian nationality.

All correspondences and queries will be addressed to the Project Leader.

2 Research - Any activity which is a systematic, intensive study directed toward greater knowledge or understanding of the subject studied, or a systematic study directed specifically toward applying new knowledge to meet a recognised outcome.

3 Development - a systematic application of knowledge toward the production of useful materials, devices, systems, processes or methods, including design and improvement of prototypes to meet specific requirements.

4 Innovation - "Innovation" means both radical and incremental changes to products, processes or services, including the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations.

5 'In kind' contribution – The term 'In kind' includes:

- specialised equipment/facilities;
- space, including utilities;
- human resources directly involved in the project.

List of Abbreviations

CV	Curriculum Vitae
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
MRIC	Mauritius Research and Innovation Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSTS	Public Sector Transformation Scheme

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC) is a corporate body set up on the 1st of September 2019 through the proclamation of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council Act 2019. The activities of the Council are focused on the promotion, coordination and the encouragement of exploitation of research and innovation outcomes, with a view to sharpening the competitive edge of industries for sustainable economic and social growth. To this end, the Council operates several Research and Innovation Grant Schemes.

Under this proposal solicitation, in line with the emphasis on digital transformation in the public sector, the MRIC invites companies including start-ups to develop applications for the public sector.

2 SCHEME DESCRIPTION

2.1 Aim

The aim of this scheme is to facilitate the interaction of companies including start-ups with the public sector, in view of promoting public sector transformation initiatives that address current service delivery, processes and policy challenges.

2.2 Objective

The objective is to support innovative projects that will enable, through a collaborative approach, the development, pilot testing and evaluation of new solutions to deliver better outcomes in the public sector.

By supporting innovative projects, this Scheme seeks to:

- create opportunities for new partnerships between government and other organisations;
- strengthen the innovation capability in the public sector by facilitating pilot testing;
- promote project outcomes and solutions across the public sector, to encourage inter-departmental collaboration that can solve complex policy challenges; and
- share the outcomes of projects and propagate new approaches, tools, and across the public service.

2.3 Emphasis

Project proposals will be accepted in areas where opportunities exist to develop innovative technology-based ideas for either new or improved products, processes or services that will enhance public sector operations and outcomes. Funding being requested through the PSTS should focus on outputs of the project that can meet the following criteria:

- (i) provides a solution to a clearly identified existing issue/problem within a Ministry or Department;
- (ii) delivers a product or service for testing and validation within a short to medium term;
- (iii) can be implemented with minimal changes after the testing/validation period; and
- (iv) has the potential to be scaled up and/or adapted across several Ministries and Departments.

2.4 Project Duration, Funding and Disbursement Schedule

Under this scheme, the maximum duration of a project is of 24 months for a funding not exceeding MUR 2 million.

Awards will be made on a competitive basis. No awards will be made to applicants who are already recipient of **full** project funding from other agencies for the same or any similar project.

For the first milestone, funding will be released upon signing of the contractual agreements by all parties concerned to enable the grant recipient to initiate the project.

Further successive disbursements will be made to the grant recipient on a milestone basis, upon receipt of a satisfactory progress report for each of the specified milestones together with a certified statement of accounts and invoices, showing how the funds have been utilised.

The Budget should reflect costs for work to be done only after the effective date of the award. Any costs incurred prior to the issuance of an award document will not be covered by the grant.

Budgets for each proposed activity must be justified and related to the specific needs of the project.

2.5 Project Monitoring

The MRIC will be responsible to monitor the proposed activities of the project on a milestone basis as specified in the application. Any decision on major issues related to the project will be addressed by the MRIC.

3 ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Eligibility of Applicant

The following are eligible to apply for funding under the PSTS:

- A Company;
- A Start-Up.

The above needs to be duly registered with the Registrar of Companies in the Republic of Mauritius.

Collaboration with a Ministry or Department is mandatory.

The applicant **may** also wish to collaborate with:

- secondary and tertiary/higher education institutions (public or private) and polytechnics, that are registered and officially accredited with the relevant authorities;
- any other local/overseas Company(ies) (Micro, Small, Medium, Large);
- Non-Governmental Organisation(s) (NGO(s)).

No awards will be made to applicants who are already recipient of full project funding from other public agencies for the same or any similar project.

3.2 Eligibility of the Project Leader

The Project Leader must be employed by the local Company or Start-Up submitting the application. The individual who is proposed as the Project Leader at the time of the submission of the application is expected to be the Project Leader at the time of the inception of the project. A change in Project Leader prior to an award could affect whether an award will be made.

3.3 Other Eligibility Criteria

The application should also meet the following criteria for eligibility:

- Relevance to the objective of the scheme
- Relevant to the Government programme 2020-2024
- Relevance to the particular needs of the Public Sector
- Particular added-value elements
- Capacity to innovate
- Capacity Building

3.4 Management of Funds under the Public Sector Transformation Scheme

The Company or Start-Up, in which the Project Leader is employed, must provide satisfactory evidence that it will exercise management, control and audit of the performance of the funds to be allocated under this scheme. Regardless of the proportion of the work or funding of each of the participants under an award, the Company or Start-Up is to be the grant recipient with overall responsibility for performance.

4 METHOD OF SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Applications will be screened by the MRIC to determine responsiveness to the specific requirements of the solicitation.
- Each application will be evaluated on its merits through a panel of experts which will be set up by the Council.

4.1 Administrative Screening

MRIC will review each application to determine if it satisfies all the requirements described in this guideline.

- Non-responsive applications will not be considered.
- *Due diligence* will be conducted at the time of Administrative Screening. The application form will be assessed to ensure it meets the eligibility requirements.
- Where necessary, the MRIC reserves the right to request a *site visit* of the project premises to assess whether the Company or Start-Up has the necessary infrastructure to carry out the proposed project.

4.2 Merit Review

Responsive applications will be competitively evaluated in a process of merit review. As pointed out in Section 4 above, a panel of experts **will** be selected in relevant fields to evaluate the applications.

Applications may be required to make a presentation to the panel.

In all instances, applications will be handled on a confidential basis and care taken to avoid conflicts of interest. Evaluations will be confidential to the MRIC.

4.3 Evaluation Criteria

The criteria for assessment of applications will include, where applicable, the following:

- (i) Compliance to requirements and strategic fit - projects must clearly target a current or emerging need in the public sector or in an area of Government service delivery;
- (ii) Innovativeness of the technology and/or envisaged product/process/service;
- (iii) Uniqueness/ingenuity of the proposed concept or application as an innovative and sustainable concept;
- (iv) Feasibility and viability of the technology and/or envisaged product/process/service being developed;
- (v) Structure and processes required to implement the technology, the product or service;
- (vi) Potential impact of the proposed technology and/or envisaged product/process/service in improving the efficiency and efficacy of the public service;
- (vii) Potential to be scaled up and/or adapted across several Ministries and Departments;
- (viii) The potential impact of the technology innovation on the economy and society;
- (ix) Where applicable, the competence, capability and readiness of the team from Company or Start-Up and the collaborating entity to implement the innovation.

4.4 Selection for Award

Based on the evaluation by the panel, there may be different recommendations:

- (i) Approval for full funding, or
- (ii) Approval for partial funding, or
- (iii) Not approved.

In case of partial funding, the Project Leader will be convened to a meeting at the Council to explore the feasibility of carrying out the project within the funding proposed by the MRIC. The Project Leader will have to submit a revised proposal along the lines of any agreement reached.

In case of full funding, there may be an optional meeting to discuss the modalities of implementation and funding.

Should the MRIC not be able to fund a project, the Project Leader will be informed of the Council's decision.

5 APPLICATION PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Contact with MRIC

Request for copies of this solicitation as well as questions relating to this scheme may be addressed: either by email on psts@mrhc.mu

Or by post to the

The Executive Director
Mauritius Research and Innovation Council
Level 6, Ebene Heights,
34 Cybercity, Ebene 72201
Mauritius

Proposals originating from Rodrigues may send their queries to:

MRIC Rodrigues Branch
Port Mathurin
Rodrigues

Potential applicants may also request a meeting with the MRIC to discuss the key requirements for preparation of their application form.

5.2 Application Preparation

- Applications should be submitted using the online Public Sector Transformation Scheme - Application Form. The CVs of the Project Leader, team members from the Company or Start-Up, and members from the collaborating entity(ies) should be included with the application.
- The application form must contain adequate information to be reviewed as an innovative project.

MRIC reserves the right not to submit to technical review any proposal which it deems to have insufficient scientific or technical information.

5.3 Submission of applications

Under this scheme, applications should be submitted within the specified deadline. Evaluation and processing may require up to three (3) months for completion.

No information or proposal status will normally be available during the evaluation and processing period.

6 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION, RIGHTS IN DATA AND INVENTIONS

6.1 Proprietary Information in Applications - Information contained in unsuccessful applications will remain the property of the applicant, but MRIC will retain file copies of all applications.

Applicants should limit proprietary information to that deemed essential for proper evaluation of the application. Proprietary information may be included in the body of the application or set apart from other text. Any proprietary information included in the application form must be clearly marked by sentence or paragraph, as proprietary. Confine it to those critical items that, if disclosed, could jeopardise the obtaining of patents or could reveal trade secrets or commercial or other financial information that could adversely affect the competitive position of the applicants.

Proprietary information submitted to MRIC will be treated in confidence, to the extent permitted by law, if it is clearly identified. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, MRIC will limit dissemination of properly marked information to its employees and, as necessary for the evaluation of the application, to outside reviewers on a confidential basis.

6.2 Rights in Results Developed under this grant –

The Company or Start-Up may retain rights in technical data, information, know-how, inventions, including software developed under this grant. The Final Report delivered under this grant, including technical data, may be made available to the public by the MRIC except for that portion of the report containing technical data properly identified and marked. Such data must be clearly labelled as proprietary and marked with a legend similar to the following:

"The following is proprietary information, which (name of grant recipient) requests not to be released to persons outside the MRIC and other organisations involved in the evaluation and monitoring of this project, for a period of four years from the expiration of Grant No....."

The Council may assist the grantee in identification and protection of Intellectual Property Rights developed as a result of funding provided under this scheme.

Sharing of Intellectual Property Rights among the collaborating partners will be subject to consortium agreements that most closely meet their requirements.

7 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Awards

Awards will be made normally for up to a twenty-four (24) months period.

Prior to any award, the MRIC may require certain organisational, management and financial information for administrative purposes to ensure that the applicant adheres to certain business and financial standards. When requested, this information should be returned to the requesting office as expeditiously as possible. All information received will be dealt with strictest confidentiality.

7.2 Grantee Commitments

In the event of an award, the grant recipient will be required to make certain legal commitments through acceptance of the terms and conditions of the funding agreements. A copy of the funding agreement may be made available upon request.

Extension

The period of performance is normally up to 24 months. In exceptional cases, depending on the nature of the project, the MRIC may decide to grant an extension for the successful completion of the project. In such a case, the grant recipient should make a request for extension with proper justifications, at least two (2) months prior to the project completion date. **However, no additional funding will be provided.**

Budget Reallocation

Any redefinition and reallocation in the agreed tasks and associated budget described in Section D of the Application Form can only be carried out in consultation with MRIC which, if satisfied, will authorise the necessary amendments.

7.3 Reports

Final Report. One (1) copy of a comprehensive Final Report must be submitted to MRIC within 30 days after the end of the funding period.

All Final Reports must carry the following acknowledgement on the cover page: *"The material is based upon work supported by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC) under grant number Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MRIC."*

The Final Report shall include:

- a verbatim statement of the project objectives;
- a summary description of the project activities carried out;
- the project outcomes and results; and
- the potential or actual applications of the project.

The balance of the report should describe in detail the above topics as well as any problems addressed during the technical feasibility.

The Final Report delivered under the grant may be made available to the public by the MRIC, except for that portion of the report containing technical data properly identified and marked. To the extent permitted by the Act of the Council, except for evaluation purposes, MRIC will not release properly identified and marked data and information outside the Government of Mauritius without the approval of the grantees for a period of four years from the expiration of the grant award.

An acknowledgement of the support and disclaimer must also appear in publications of any materials, whether copyrighted or not, based on or developed under the PSTS - supported projects.

7.4 Dispute Settlement

Any dispute or difference arising out of the interpretation or implementation of the project shall be settled amicably or through recourse to arbitration.

7.5 Additional Critical Information

- **Management Responsibility** - The performance of the Project Leader and other employees or consultants who carry out the proposed work is to be managed by the applicant organisation concerned receiving the grant under the Public Sector Transformation Scheme.
- **Accuracy of Information** - The proposing organisation and the Project Leader are responsible for the accuracy and validity of all the administrative, fiscal, and scientific information in the proposal.
- Deliberate withholding, falsification, or misrepresentation of information could result in administrative action such as declination of a proposal or the suspension and/or termination of an award as well as possible criminal penalties.
- **Audits** - Projects are subject to regular technical and financial audits by MRIC or independent assessors to be appointed by MRIC. Unsatisfactory reports may lead to termination of the award and reimbursement of funds.
- **Changes in Project Leader, Organisation, or Research/Project Collaborator status** - Any changes of the Project Leader must be requested in writing at least 30 days prior to the change (except in exceptional

circumstances) and must be approved by the MRIC. MRIC should be notified promptly if there is any change in the name, address and status of the applicant or if the Collaborating Partner changes.

- **This Scheme Solicitation is intended for Informational Purposes and Reflects Current Planning.** If there is any inconsistency between the information contained herein and the terms of any resulting PSTS grant, the terms of the grant are controlling.

8 APPLICATION FORM/PROPOSAL FORMAT GUIDELINES

- The Application Form can be filled from the website www.mricpsts.org
- Each completed application form should be submitted with
 - i. Letter/Email of support from Head/CEO of applicant Start up/Company;
 - ii. A signed Collaborative Agreement between key collaborating partners;
 - iii. The CVs of the Project Leader and all key persons involved;
 - iv. Relevant authorisation/clearance (or evidence of initiating the process)
 - v. A copy of the last audited financial statements/Cash Flow Balance

The following points may be taken into consideration when filling the application form:

A. Abstract

- Identify the problem or opportunity and project objectives.
- Describe the project anticipated results and **potential applications of the initiative.**
- Be brief, clear, concise and intelligible.

In the event of any award, this information may be made public.

B. Background

- Describe the overall background and technical approach to the problem or opportunity and how the proposed project will provide the anticipated results.
- Highlight the innovativeness and originality of the project.
- State the anticipated results and potential commercial applications if the project is successful, including the significance of the base to attract, beyond the funding period, follow-on investment for product or process development and to stimulate or achieve innovation.

C. Project Aim and Objectives

List the aim and explain the specific objectives to be accomplished in the course of the project, including the questions it will try to answer which determine the feasibility of the proposed approach.

D. Detail of planned activities

Outline the project activities as follows:

- Name of Activity/short description of activity;
- Duration in month;
- Clear Deliverables;
- Cost.

E. Projected Impact of the Project

In this section, provide a description of the impact that the project may have on the operations or service delivery of the public body. The impact can be tangible or intangible. Kindly substantiate with before and after figures projections as far as possible

