

SAMRC-TIA Seed Fund Guidelines (2021/22 FY)

The purpose of the SAMRC-TIA Seed Fund (SAMRC-TSF) is to assist researchers and innovators from Science Councils and SMMEs with financial support necessary to adequately advance and further develop research outputs towards new or improved products. The SAMRC-TSF is aimed at increasing the pipeline of commercially viable health technologies in South Africa, by providing seed capital to de-risk these inventions and positioning them for follow-on funding. Similar to other SAMRC funding mechanisms, the SAMRC-TSF will be provided for an agreed set of focused activities, with clear deliverables, achievable within a period of 12 months.

Selection criteria

Qualifying applicants include researchers / inventors who aim to further develop their IP or technology towards new or improved products. The following criteria apply to the selection of fundable projects from Science Councils and SMMEs as part of the SAMRC-TSF:

- Under-developed ideas that when properly prepared and presented hold significant potential for further investment by TIA or other investors.
- Competitive intellectual property position where the applicants have the freedom to operate and commercialise their proposed opportunity.
- Opportunities that involve technology development, customization, localization, enhancement, integration and/ or validation.
- Applicants from SMMEs must have a valid tax clearance certificate at the time of the application and award.
- Applicants may not be insolvent, under debt counselling or black-listed before or at the time of investing.
- The market need, stage of development, planned fundable activities, and team's ability to execute the project within the stipulated timeline must be clearly articulated in the application.
- Projects with a clear socio-economic impact (contribution to solving societal challenges and delivery of a decent standard of living as per the National Development Plan 2030) will be prioritised.
- Women and people living with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

The technology should be at Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 3 or above to be considered for the SAMRC-TSF programme. The funding excludes early stage projects, especially projects in basic idea, or basic research, and/or concept formulation phases (TRL 1 and 2). Table 1 provides a general guideline on Technology Readiness Levels.

Table 1: Technology Readiness Levels

| Technology Readiness Level | | Description |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Basic Technology research | Basic science. Not application-focussed. Principles are observed and reported on. |
| 2 | Concept formulation | Some practical applications identified materials or processes required and confirmed. Technology and hypothesis formulated. Research plans and protocols are developed, peer reviewed and approved. |
| 3 | Analytical and experimental critical function or research proof of concept established | Laboratory measurements validate analytical predictions of separate technology elements. Hypothesis tested. |
| 4 | Validation in laboratory environment | Test results confirm design and meet technical performance. Hypothesis refined. Formulations tested. |
| 5 | Laboratory scale validation in relevant environment | Validation under relevant operational conditions, mimicked in the laboratory. |
| 6 | Integrated prototype system verified in relevant environment | Prototype demonstration in the operational environment. E.g. Phase 1 trials |
| 7 | Integrated pilot system demonstrated in operational environment | Integrated full scale pilot systems demonstrated in an operational environment or site. |
| 8 | Actual system completed and validated through test and demonstration | Actual product completed and qualified through certification, tests and demonstrations. |
| 9 | Proven system and ready for full commercial deployment | Product proven ready through successful operations in operating environment. |

Fundable and non-fundable research activities under the SAMRC-TSF

The following is a list of fundable activities that the applicants may undertake to bring them closer to proof-of-concept (fundable activities can be outsourced to a service provider):

List of fundable activities:

- development of initial product, process (comprehensive technology package) and prototype development;
- sourcing of intellectual property opinions;

- production of market samples and/or associated testing;
- refining and implementing designs;
- conducting field studies to test the assumptions made about the technology, market and/or customer needs;
- supporting of certification activities and specification sheet development;
- piloting, and technology scale-up;
- techno-economic evaluation studies;
- detailed primary market research; and
- business plan development.

List of non-fundable activities:

- salary contributions to the SFP Implementing Partner's staff members who are key investigators on the project and/or who form part of the general operating budget staff;
- early stage research projects;
- equipment, except for specialized equipment that is within the budget constraints and required to enable qualifying activities;
- working capital; and
- operational costs not associated with the project.

The investment parameters for funding are as follows:

- funding will be provided by way of grants;
- protected or protectable intellectual property is required;
- up to **R650 000** (Six Hundred Fifty Thousand Rands), including VAT, will be provided per project;
- projects must be for a duration of 12 months and can be extended to a maximum of 18 months; and
- TIA reserves the first right of refusal to fund further development of the outputs of the project.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of applications to the SAMRC TTO is the **15th September 2021**