science, technology & innovation

Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

15 YEARS OF SUPPORTING INNOVATION

technology innovation AGENCY
Innovating Tomorrow Together

Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), an entity of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) was established in terms of the TIA Act, 2008 (Act No. 26 of 2008), with the objective to stimulate, intensify and exploit technological innovation to improve economic growth and the quality of life of all South Africans.

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)

TIA SEED FUND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

INTRODUCTION

The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) invites public and private organisations to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) for appointment as Seed Fund Implementing Partners.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The TIA Seed Fund Programme (SFP) was established during 2013 in response to persistent gaps identified within the National System of Innovation. Empirical evidence indicates that a significant proportion of innovations fail to progress beyond the proof-of-concept and market assessment stages, thereby limiting their potential for commercialisation and access to follow-on funding.

The Seed Fund Programme was designed to address these challenges by providing targeted early-stage funding and structured support to innovators, researchers, and small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs). Through this programme, TIA aims to enable the development of prototypes, facilitate market validation, and increase the likelihood of successful commercialisation of South African developed technologies.

Partnership Model

The Seed Fund Programme is implemented through a partnership-based delivery model, whereby TIA collaborates with capable ecosystem organisations, so far including universities and their Technology Transfer Offices, Science Councils, Technology based Incubators, and Regional Development Agencies.

Appointed Implementing Partners will work in close collaboration with TIA to identify, support, and advance promising technology-based innovations from proof-of-concept through to market validation and readiness for commercialisation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The primary objective of this call is to **identify and appoint competent Implementing Partners** with the requisite experience and capacity to support early-stage innovators in advancing technology concepts into commercially viable products and services and build pipeline of investor ready portfolio of innovative projects and startups.

REQUIRED PARTNER CAPABILITIES AND SCOPE

TIA seeks Implementing Partners with demonstrated expertise in one or both of the following critical phases of technological development:

- **Proof-of-Concept and Technology Validation:** Partners should be capable of supporting innovators at the proof-of-concept stage, including facilitating customer discovery, technical validation, and early feasibility assessments.
- **Technology Piloting, Market Validation, and Access:** Partners should have the capacity to support technology startups as they pilot solutions, validate market demand, and prepare for scaling and commercial entry.

The support required from Implementing Partners encompasses the essential components of venture building, which are necessary to ensure that technology startups can achieve successful market entry and growth.
Implementing Partners that are targeting **supporting proof of concept and technology validation stages** should be able to provide assistance in the following priority provinces: Mpumalanga, Northwest, Northern Cape, Limpopo, Free State, and KwaZulu Natal. Organisations not based within these provinces are also eligible to apply, provided they present credible and sufficiently resourced strategies to effectively deliver services within these regions.

Implementing Partners will be expected to deliver the following services:

- Pipeline development and deal origination, including pre-incubation and pre-funding support programmes
- Screening and investment readiness support
- Technical, market, Intellectual Property, commercial, and financial due diligence
- Post-investment monitoring, reporting, and portfolio support
- Stakeholder engagement and facilitation of industry linkages

WHO SHOULD APPLY

This call is open to organisations with demonstrated capability in early-stage technology innovation support, including but not limited to:

- Incubators, accelerators, and enterprise development agencies
- Emerging fund managers and ecosystem intermediaries with experience in deep-tech and technology commercialisation

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must:

- Be a legally registered South African entity in good standing, including valid tax compliance status.
- Demonstrate a verifiable track record in early-stage innovation support and technology commercialisation.
- Demonstrate the capacity, resources, and personnel to deliver services to early-stage innovators.
- Commit to complying with the TIA Seed Fund Rules as outlined in the Seed Fund Investment Framework (Annexure B).

EOI SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Submitted EOIs must include the following sections:

- **Organisational Profile and Governance**
  - Registration and statutory compliance documentation
  - Governance structures and conflict-of-interest declarations
  - Investment Committee and/or Board composition

- **Track Record and Regional Delivery Plan**
  - Evidence of prior innovation support and commercialisation activities

- **Capacity and Capability of the Institution**
  - Capacity and capability to conduct assessments of funding applications (assessment and due diligence) indicate partners to assist if your organisation and your team do not have the necessary capability and skills.
  - Team competency (Commercialisation skills and new venture support)

- **Investment Strategy and Portfolio Management**
  - Sourcing approaches; Proposed focus areas; Geographical spread
  - Example of Investments made to date and track record of fund management
  - Share current pipeline of projects (please include projects TRL & MRL outlook
  - IP management and ownership controls and implementation

- **Enterprise and Portfolio Support**
  - Technology development infrastructure and support and/or affiliations;
  - Mentorship and entrepreneurship resources and other support to Innovators (spin-off formation, accounting, auditing, legal, IP and patenting)

- **Finance and Fund Administration**
  - Willingness and ability to Co-fund with TIA funding, this could be funding from other partners your institution have supporting your work aligned to TIA.
  - Cost of providing the service- TIA guidelines set the management fee up to **12% per project/onboarded/ managed**
  - In-house Financial Systems and processes in place

- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Compliance**
  - Detail approach to post-investment monitoring, reporting, and portfolio support, data management, quality assurance, and audit compliance.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Completed application pack must be submitted to: seed.fund@tia.org.za on the **31 March 2026** by close of business. No late submissions will be considered.

- Prosals must align with the TIA Seed Fund Investment Framework.
- The following annexures accompany this call:
  - **Annexure A**: EOI Cover Form and Declarations
  - **Annexure B:** Seed Fund Investment Framework

ENQUIRIES AND BRIEFING SESSION:

- A briefing session will be held online (MS Teams) on the **13 March 2026** at **13:00**
- For enquiries contact: seed.fund@tia.org.za

TIA looks forward to partnering with capable ecosystem organisations to expand inclusive access to early-stage innovation support across South Africa.