



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 PROPOSALS

HOST INSTITUTION FOR A WASTEWATER BIOREFINERY INNOVATION CLUSTER

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

TIA is calling for the submission of applications from public and private organisations that address critical challenges and take advantage of opportunities within the wastewater and biorefinery sectors. This call aims to identify institutions that are able to provide mechanisms to consolidate expertise, infrastructure, and market demand into a collaborative, sustainable, and commercially viable vehicle by way of a Wastewater Biorefinery Innovation Cluster (WWBR-IC).

Applications are invited from any legally recognised South African organisation, including industry, science councils and higher education institutions.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The selection criteria for a host for a WWBR-IC:

- **INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY AND GOVERNANCE**

- Evidence of a stable governance structure, financial management systems, and the ability to host a national coordination hub.
- Demonstrated track record in managing multi-stakeholder, multi-year programmes.

- **INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION AND PPP READINESS**

- For non-industry organisations - At least one committed industry partner, with letters of support outlining intended roles such as technology demonstration, co-funding, off-take, or operational integration.
- Evidence of willingness to enter a public-private partnership structure, including in-kind or cash contributions, access to facilities or process streams, or piloting environments.
- Industry partners must be relevant to priority value streams (biogas, biochar, nutrient recovery, biomaterials, algae, etc).

- **ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH SUPPORT**

- For non-academic institutions - Participation of at least one accredited higher education or research institution, providing technical expertise, postgraduate research capacity, and analytical infrastructure.
- Ability to support technology validation, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and training.

- **SUITABILITY AND RURAL ALIGNMENT**

- Nodes/activities located in rural districts with wastewater treatment works suitable for piloting or upgrading.
- Availability of wastewater streams appropriate for the targeted biorefinery value chains.
- Commitment from local municipalities, including willingness to host pilots, support permitting processes, and participate in a PPP model.
- Demonstrated benefit to marginalised communities through jobs, skills development, and circular-economy opportunities.

• TRANSFORMATION

- Allocation of resources to new and existing transformation initiatives.
- Development of an enterprise and entrepreneur development plan.
- Evidence of interventions targeted towards supporting women, youth and individuals with disabilities.
- Development of a strategy to support SMMEs through the technology development value chain up to commercialisation.

• TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY

- Access to or ability to integrate(d) modular process units.
- Evidence of previous feasibility assessments, baseline studies, or treatment plant audits.
- Fit with national policy directions such as the Waste RDI Roadmap, Bioeconomy Strategy, and circular economy principles.
- Alignment with the priorities outlined in the DSTI's Decadal Plan (2022 – 2032).

• Funding instrument: Conditional grant

• Total funding available: R4,000,000 per annum.

• Funding duration: 36 months with the opportunity for follow-on funding.

Applicants must attend a compulsory briefing session.

ELIGIBILITY

- Must be a legally registered South African entity in good standing, including valid tax compliance status
- Must be registered on the National Treasury's Central Supplier Database.

TIMELINES

- Proposal submission deadline: 17 August 2026
- Award notification issued by TIA: 19 October 2026
- Expected commencement date: March 2027

Applications must be submitted via email to WWBR-IC@tia.org.za. Late applications will not be accepted.

COMPULSORY BRIEFING SESSION

A compulsory briefing session will be conducted on Microsoft Teams (link will be shared upon RSVP) to facilitate and assist applicants to understand the Call requirements. The briefing session will take place on **24 June 2026** from **10h00 to 12h00**.

Individuals that will be attending the compulsory briefing session must send a confirmation email to WWBR-IC@tia.org.za by no later than **19 June 2026**.

ENQUIRIES

For further information regarding the call or the applications process please contact WWBR-IC@tia.org.za.