science, technology & innovation
Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

technology innovation AGENCY
Innovating Tomorrow Together

TERMS OF REFERENCE

APPOINTMENT OF ONE IMPLEMENTING PARTNER FOR EACH OF TWO LIVING LABS. EACH APPLICANT MAY APPLY FOR ONE LIVING LAB ONLY:

1. Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga

2. Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, North West

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Living Labs Programme

The Living Labs Programme was established in 2019 by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) and implemented by the Innovation for Inclusive Development (IID) Project Management Unit at the Technology Innovation Agency. It was designed to advance Innovation for Local Economic Development (ILED) agenda and expand the spatial footprint of innovation across South Africa. The Programme responds to the need to strengthen local innovation ecosystems and ensure that the benefits of science, technology and innovation extend beyond the formal innovation system to communities that have historically had limited access to innovation infrastructure, capabilities, networks and economic opportunities. Accordingly, the Programme places particular emphasis on rural and underserved township areas, where access to innovation infrastructure, digital technologies, technical capabilities, markets, funding and formal innovation networks may be limited. In these contexts, the Living Lab provides an entry point into the broader innovation ecosystem, de-risk funding/support and creates opportunities for local capabilities and knowledge to shape the development of solutions.

The Programme is underpinned by the following strategic objectives:

a) **To catalyse community-owned industries and local production systems, clusters and value chains** through the exploitation of science, technology and to support small enterprise development, economic participation and job creation; and
b) **To strengthen local systems of innovation** by building local capabilities, capacities, and infrastructure, facilitating knowledge exchange and networks, and promoting local science, technology and innovation activities that can create solutions that respond to poverty, exclusion and barriers to economic opportunity.

1.2 Philosophy

The Living Labs Programme is underpinned by the following principles:

a) Innovation should not be confined to established research institutions, metropolitan and urban centres, or formal technology enterprises. It should also draw on the knowledge, capabilities, challenges and opportunities present within local communities. This is particularly important in rural and underserved areas, where

communities often have limited access to innovation infrastructure, digital technologies, technical expertise, markets, funding and formal innovation networks. The Programme therefore seeks to expand access to, and participation in, the broader innovation ecosystem.

b) Communities should not be passive recipients of innovation interventions, but active participants in the innovation process. They should contribute to identifying challenges and opportunities, defining priorities, developing and testing solutions, and shaping the outcomes of interventions implemented in their localities.

c) Innovation should be developed through collaboration among communities and relevant stakeholders, including government, industry, academia, civil society and other local actors. The Living Labs approach provides a platform for stakeholders to combine their knowledge, capabilities, resources and networks to develop solutions that are responsive to local conditions.

d) Solutions supported through the Programme should respond to identified local needs and opportunities and be informed by community lived experiences, local knowledge and evidence, LED strategies, development plans, sector plans and other local development priorities, thereby ensuring that innovation contributes directly to identified economic needs and development objectives.

1.3 Programme Objectives

The objectives of the Living Labs Programme are to:

a) Expand the spatial footprint of innovation by increasing access to innovation infrastructure, technologies, knowledge, networks and support services in underserved and rural communities.
b) Strengthen local systems of innovation by building the capabilities and capacities of communities, innovators, enterprises and local institutions to participate meaningfully in innovation-led development.
c) Promote community-driven and grassroots innovation by enabling communities to identify local challenges and opportunities and participate directly in the development of solutions that respond to their circumstances.
d) Facilitate co-creation and collaboration among communities, government, industry, academia and other relevant stakeholders through the Living Labs' co-creation and Quadruple Helix approach.
e) Support the development and advancement of innovations and enterprises through structured innovation activation, development and support programmes.
f) Catalyse local economic opportunities through the application of technology and innovation to support enterprise development, productive activities, local value chains and job creation.
g) Strengthen linkages between local innovators and the wider innovation ecosystem, including markets, knowledge institutions, investors, funders, industry and other support mechanisms.
h) Promote inclusive participation in the innovation economy, with particular attention to communities and groups that have historically experienced limited access to innovation and economic opportunities.
i) Facilitate the development of locally relevant solutions to systemic and spatial challenges identified through participatory processes and aligned, where appropriate, with local development priorities.
j) Promote the sustainability and institutionalisation of Living Labs as enduring platforms for innovation, collaboration and local economic development beyond individual funding cycles.

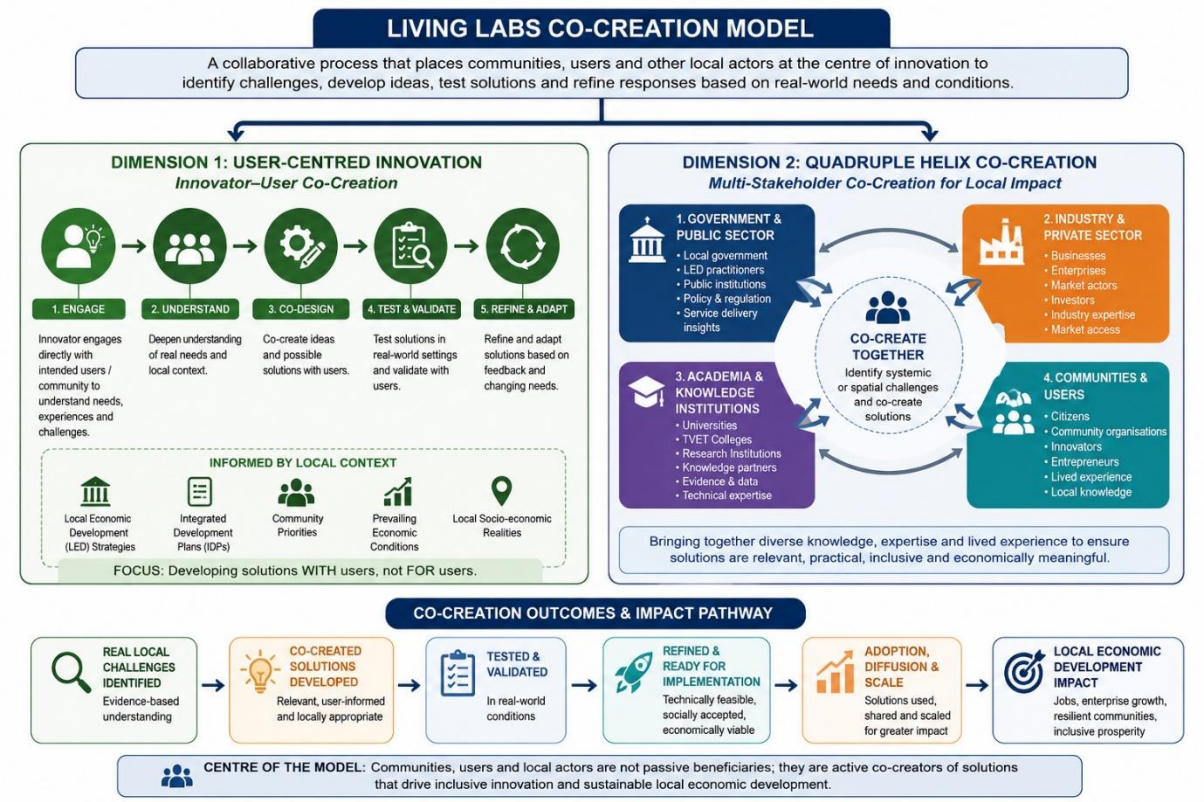
1.4 Definition of a Living Lab

A Living Lab refers to a physical, community-embedded innovation space that provides innovation infrastructure, networks and structured programmes through which communities, innovators, enterprises, government, industry and knowledge institutions collaborate to identify challenges, develop and test solutions, and create economic opportunities.

1.5 The Living Labs Co-creation Model

The Living Labs Programme is founded on a co-creation model, which places communities, users and other local actors at the centre of the innovation process. Co-creation refers to a collaborative process through which different stakeholders contribute their knowledge, experience, capabilities and resources to jointly identify challenges, develop ideas, test solutions and refine responses based on real-world needs and conditions.

The Living Labs co-creation model operates across two complementary dimensions:



Dimension 1: Individual Innovator - Centred Methodology

The first dimension focuses on the relationship between an individual social innovator and the intended users or community. The innovator engages directly with potential users to understand their needs, experiences and challenges and uses this feedback to develop, adapt and validate solutions. This process is informed by the specific economic context of the locality, including relevant LED strategies, Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), community priorities and prevailing economic conditions. The emphasis is on developing solutions with users rather than developing solutions for users without their participation.

Dimension 2: Quadruple Helix Methodology

The second dimension extends co-creation to the broader Quadruple Helix of local actors, including government, local government and LED practitioners, industry, academia and knowledge institutions such as universities, TVET colleges and research institutions, as well as communities and users, including citizens, community organisations, innovators and entrepreneurs. These stakeholders collaborate to identify and understand systemic or spatial challenges affecting the local economy and to co-create appropriate solutions. This process brings together diverse forms of knowledge and expertise, ensuring that solutions are not only shaped by technical and institutional insights but by community lived experience, local economic realities, LED strategies and other relevant development plans.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CALL

The purpose of this Call for Proposals is to appoint one suitably qualified implementing partner for each of two Living Labs: one in Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga, and one in Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, North West. Each applicant may apply for one Living Lab only and must select one of these two districts.

Ehlanzeni District Municipality has a diverse economy anchored in agriculture and agro-processing, tourism, forestry, mining, manufacturing, trade and services. Its location, natural assets and established productive sectors create opportunities for enterprise development, technology adoption and value-chain expansion. However, these opportunities are not evenly distributed across the district. Rural and township communities continue to experience high unemployment, limited enterprise and innovation support, uneven digital connectivity, shortages of technical and entrepreneurial skills, weak links between local innovators and established industries, and constrained access to markets, finance, technology and prototyping facilities. These gaps limit the ability of local enterprises and innovators to develop,

test and commercialise solutions that could strengthen local production and create sustainable employment.

Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, North West: The district's economy is strongly associated with platinum mining, alongside opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, trade and services. The development challenge is to translate this productive base into broader participation, local value addition and sustainable livelihoods, while building a more diversified economy beyond mineral extraction.

From an innovation perspective, the gaps to be assessed and addressed include underserved communities' access to digital tools, technical expertise and shared facilities for developing and testing ideas; practical innovation and entrepreneurial capabilities; and pathways connecting local innovators to industry needs, buyers, knowledge institutions and finance. Strengthening these links is important if local enterprises are to move beyond conventional trading activities into technology-enabled products, services and productive value chains. The IP must validate the nature and extent of these gaps through community engagement, stakeholder mapping and review of district development priorities, rather than assume that all communities face identical barriers.

The establishment of a Living Lab in each targeted district is intended to provide a locally embedded platform that connects communities, innovators, enterprises, local government, industry and knowledge institutions. Each Living Lab will respond to district-specific priorities by widening access to digital and innovation infrastructure; supporting ideation, co-creation, prototyping and solution testing; strengthening technical, entrepreneurial and digital capabilities; and linking local innovators and enterprises to mentors, research expertise, markets, finance and follow-on support. Particular emphasis will be placed on youth, women and persons with disabilities, who frequently face additional barriers to skills development, employment, entrepreneurship, finance, technology, accessible facilities and decision-making networks. Through accessible and targeted outreach, skills development, incubation, enterprise support and market-linkage programmes, the Living Lab will enable these groups to participate meaningfully in local value chains, develop innovations and enterprises, improve their readiness for employment and self-employment, and contribute to a more inclusive, resilient and diversified district economy.

3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Each applicant may apply for one Living Lab only, in either Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga, or Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, North West, and must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

a) The Applicant must be legally registered organisation, tax compliant, and with valid Central Supplier Database (CSD) report and up-to-date CIPC annual returns.

b) For the Mpumalanga Living Lab, the organisation or entity must operate within Ehlanzeni District Municipality and demonstrate an established presence and or track record of implementing programmes within the district. For the North West Living Lab, the organisation or entity must operate within Bojanala Platinum District Municipality and demonstrate an established presence and or track record of implementing programmes within that province.

c) Organisations or entities operating outside the relevant province may apply as part of a consortium, provided they demonstrate an active existing partnership with an organisation operating within the district for which they are applying.

d) Preference will be given to organisations or entities with established operations, or a demonstrated track record, within the district concerned.

e) Demonstrate a clear understanding of the socio-economic context, local economic development priorities and innovation opportunities of the district for which the applicant is applying: Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga, or Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, North West.

f) Have a demonstrable track record of working in rural or township communities and have experience in delivering Innovation Support Programmes (ISP).

g) Demonstrate competence in developing ICT-enabled and context-appropriate innovative solutions that create local economic opportunities.

h) Demonstrate experience in working effectively with local government, communities, innovators, enterprises, industry and knowledge institutions, including universities, colleges and research organisations. Active and established partnerships within the targeted district municipality for which the applicant is applying will be an added advantage.

i) The implementor must demonstrate competence in collaborating with various local actors (especially local government, academia, communities, enterprises and innovators) to develop solutions that can create local economic opportunities.

j) Demonstrate adequate governance, operational management, innovation management, financial management, procurement, record-keeping and internal control systems to manage and account for public grant funding.

k) Demonstrate the organisational and human-resource capacity required to implement the proposed Living Lab within the approved funding period.

l) Highlight experience in developing and maintaining partnerships and leveraging additional funding.

m) Applicants must submit documentary proof of the co-funding.

n) Have secured suitable premises within the targeted municipality from which the Living Lab will operate. The premises must be suitable for occupation, and must not require major construction, extensive structural renovations or significant rehabilitation. Applicants must provide an assessment of the current condition of the premises, together with a clear refurbishment and adaptation plan, pictures of the premises and floor plan. Documentary evidence confirming the applicant's right to occupy and use the premises for the purposes of the Living Lab must be submitted with the application.

Note: Living Labs currently funded through the Living Labs Programme are not eligible to apply.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

For each Living Lab, the appointed implementing partner (IP) will be responsible for delivering the following work packages. All beneficiary targets, inclusion targets and solution-development requirements in this section apply separately to each Living Lab and must not be shared or aggregated across the two districts.

4.1 Project Management and Coordination

Project management refers to the overall planning, coordination, administration, financial management, risk management, stakeholder coordination, monitoring and reporting required to ensure the effective implementation of the Living Lab within the approved scope, budget, timelines and performance requirements.

The IP will be responsible for the overall project management, coordination and administration of the Living Lab intervention throughout the implementation period. The IP must ensure that all work packages are implemented in an integrated, timely, cost-effective and accountable manner and in accordance with the approved project plan, budget, milestones and funding agreement.

The project management function must provide the overall coordination framework for the establishment, implementation, monitoring and close-out of the Living Lab.

The IP will be responsible for:

a) managing the approved project budget and monitoring expenditure against milestones;
b) maintaining a project risk and issue register and implementing appropriate mitigation measures;
c) managing project dependencies, timelines and deliverables;
d) coordinating stakeholder engagements and maintaining effective communication with TIA and relevant stakeholders;
e) maintaining complete and auditable project records and supporting documentation;
f) monitoring implementation progress against approved outputs, outcomes and performance indicators;
g) preparing and submitting narrative, financial and other reports required by TIA on a quarterly basis;

h) preparing and submitting evidence packs for the TIA and DSTI KPIs as and when requested by TIA;
i) facilitating monitoring visits, verification processes and project reviews;
j) maintaining an up-to-date asset register for all assets purchased under the project, including asset tagging and supporting asset verification processes;
k) implementing corrective actions where performance deviates from the approved plan;
l) ensuring compliance with the funding agreement and applicable TIA requirements; and
m) coordinating project close-out, including final reporting, asset verification, lessons learned and sustainability arrangements.

The IP must appoint or dedicate an appropriately qualified Project Manager and administrator with demonstrated experience in managing complex, multi-stakeholder development, innovation, enterprise or local economic development programmes.

4.2 Living Lab Set-up

Funding under this work package shall support the establishment and functional set-up of the Living Lab within the premises secured in the targeted district municipality for which the applicant is applying. The funding is intended to transform the existing premises into a functional, accessible and innovation-oriented environment capable of supporting the delivery of approved Living Lab programmes and activities.

The premises must be functional and structurally sound and must not require major construction, structural alterations or extensive rehabilitation. Funding under this work package shall not be used for major construction, building extensions or significant structural works.

Eligible expenditure may include the following:

Criteria	Area of work
Aesthetics	Interior improvements and finishes required to create a professional, welcoming and innovation-oriented environment, including appropriate furniture, colour schemes, signage, innovation-themed visual materials, artwork, lighting, flooring, ceilings, décor and related improvements.
Creative Functionality	Furniture, fittings and equipment required to establish flexible spaces for meetings, training, workshops, co-working, hot-desking, ideation, networking and co-creation activities.
Technical Functionality	Specialised innovation equipment required to support the approved Living Lab offering, which may include prototyping and demonstration equipment, digital technologies, robotics, drones, virtual or augmented reality, media and content-production facilities, or other relevant innovation technologies.

The final set up and associated expenditure shall be informed by the approved Living Lab programme offering, identified local needs and priorities, target user requirements and the intended activities of the Living Lab.

NB: The premises secured must provide sufficient and appropriate space to accommodate the Living Lab's current programme requirements and anticipated future needs, including the capacity to support the expansion of activities, additional users, equipment and services over the implementation and operational period

4.3 Innovation Activation Programme

The Innovation Activation Programme is a broader outreach and participation programme designed to stimulate awareness, interest and participation in innovation and to strengthen engagement between local communities, innovators and the Living Lab ecosystem.

The Programme shall provide aspiring, emerging and existing innovators, as well as other potential participants, with opportunities to explore innovation, identify local challenges and

opportunities, generate and develop ideas, acquire relevant innovation skills, and engage with the Living Lab and its partners

The IP must reach a minimum of **150 beneficiaries** through appropriate activation activities.

Activities may include but not limited to:

a) Innovation awareness and community outreach;
b) Living Lab open days and demonstration activities;
c) Innovation roadshows and community engagement sessions;
d) Skills development in areas such as ideation, design thinking, problem-solving, prototyping and entrepreneurship;
e) Innovation challenges, solvathons, hackathons and other collaborative problem-solving activities; and
f) Other appropriate activities that promote participation in innovation and engagement with the Living Lab. The programme must be structured to identify participants with potential to progress into Innovation Support Programme.

The Innovation Activation Programme shall be designed as an entry point into the Living Lab's broader innovation support ecosystem. Activities should therefore include mechanisms for identifying participants who demonstrate the potential, commitment or readiness to progress to more intensive support through the Innovation Support Programme (ISP). Participation in activation activities shall not automatically guarantee admission to the ISP.

4.4 Innovation Bridging Programme

The Innovation Bridging Programme is intended for participants from deeply rural and underserved communities where innovation infrastructure is limited and exposure to digital technologies and innovation opportunities remains relatively low. It supports participants identified through the Innovation Activation Programme who show interest in entrepreneurship or innovation, but whose ideas, enterprises or proposed solutions do not yet meet the requirements for progression into the ISP.

The Programme is intended to address situations where the IP identifies participants with potential, but their proposed activities or ideas are not sufficiently innovative, are not clearly linked to ILED or do not yet demonstrate the level of innovation potential required for ISP support. Such participants may have viable livelihood or small business activities but may not yet understand the distinction between conventional business activity and innovation-driven solutions or how innovation can contribute to local economic development.

The Bridging Programme will therefore provide targeted orientation, foundational knowledge and developmental support to enable participants to better understand innovation and ILED, assess and strengthen their ideas, and determine whether they have the potential to progress into the ISP or should be referred to another appropriate support mechanism.

The IP must support **50** beneficiaries.

4.5 Innovation Support Programme

The ISP is the structured, intensive support component of the Living Lab through which selected innovators and emerging enterprises are assisted to develop, validate and advance their innovative products, services, processes or business models.

The IP must support 30 beneficiaries through the ISP. The cohort must meet the following minimum inclusion targets: 80% youth; 50% women; and 5% persons with disabilities.

Support should be tailored to the maturity and needs of each beneficiary and may include:

a) Advanced training (digital skills, design thinking etc);
b) Prototype development and testing;
c) mentorship and coaching;
d) Business/Enterprise development;
e) Development of Market Ready Products;
f) intellectual property support;
g) Enterprise development;
h) Market linkages; and
i) Preparation for investment, commercialisation or follow-on funding.

4.6 Targeted Programmes for Women and Persons with Disabilities

The purpose of these programmes is to address specific barriers that may affect the participation, development and progression of women and persons with disabilities within the innovation ecosystem and to provide support that is responsive to their circumstances. The targeted programmes must therefore complement the core ISP, rather than create a separate beneficiary stream.

The IP must implement a targeted programme to support women and PWD innovators participating in the ISP.

The programme include:

a) research and engagement to identify barriers affecting women's participation in innovation;

b) design of targeted interventions informed by identified barriers and needs;

c) product, service and technology development;

d) training, mentoring, coaching and incubation;

e) innovation and enterprise development;

f) market access and diffusion platforms;

g) development of go-to-market and commercialisation plans;

h) linkages to investors, funders and fundraising opportunities;

i) industry and ecosystem partnerships; and

j) showcasing and promotion of women-led innovations.

This intervention shall be funded only where the IP has identified and confirmed a demonstrated gap in the participation of women and PWDs in existing innovation programmes within the targeted area.

4.7 Quadruple Helix Methodology

The Quadruple Helix Methodology is a collaborative process through which government, industry or the private sector, academia and knowledge institutions, and communities or users jointly identify systemic or spatial challenges and opportunities and develop appropriate innovation-led responses.

This methodology represents the second dimension of the Living Labs co-creation model. The IP must facilitate the development of at least five systemic and/or spatial local economic development solutions through this approach.

The IP is expected to undertake the following activities:

a) describe each solution, including the mechanism for co-defining the problem and co-creating potential solutions;

b) identify potential technology solutions to be adopted;
c) outline the co-creation process to be followed from project inception to completion;
d) provide a detailed cost breakdown for all project components;
e) describe the expected impact of the solutions on local production systems;
f) validate and pilot the proposed solutions;
g) develop a business case or funding proposal for full implementation of the solutions;
h) draw on LED strategies and economic studies to identify priority local industries, sectors or value chains that can benefit township and/or rural communities; and
i) focus on innovations that can catalyse new local industries, sectors or value chains in township and/or rural communities, including opportunities identified through community engagement.

4.8 Follow-on Funding

This work package is intended to create pathways for promising innovations, enterprises and co-created solutions to access opportunities beyond the Living Lab, including markets, investment, partnerships and additional funding.

The IP must identify and establish relationships with relevant:

a) private-sector partners;
b) markets and buyers;
c) investors;
d) development finance institutions;
e) government funding programmes;
f) corporate funding mechanisms;
g) incubators and accelerators;
h) technical and research institutions; and
i) other relevant ecosystem actors.

The IP must develop and maintain a funding and market linkage mechanism and demonstrate the opportunities facilitated for supported beneficiaries and solutions.

4.9 Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the capacity of the Living Lab and its programmes to continue generating innovation and local economic development value beyond the initial grant-funded period.

The IP must develop and implement a sustainability strategy addressing and demonstrate how the Living Lab will progressively become embedded within the local innovation ecosystem rather than remain dependent on TIA grant funding.

5. INVESTMENT PARAMETERS

- The IP will be supported through grant funding, subject to the availability of funding, approval by the relevant TIA structures and the conclusion of a funding agreement.
- The maximum grant amount is R4.7 million per Living Lab. Funding for each district will be allocated against a separately approved project plan and budget, subject to the availability of funding and the applicable TIA approval processes.
- The grant will be disbursed against approved milestones and in accordance with the applicable TIA funding policies, contractual conditions and approved project budget.
- Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate co-funding, resource mobilisation and strategic partnerships that can enhance the implementation and sustainability of the Living Lab.

6. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The maximum contract period for each Living Lab will be **24 months** from the effective date of its funding agreement.

7. NON - FUNDABLE ACTIVITIES

The following is a list of non-fundable activities:

a) Operational activities not related to Living Lab activities

b) Student bursaries, research projects and extended periods of work.

c) Major construction, structural alterations, extensive renovations, rehabilitation of premises, and electric power supply.

d) Expenditure outside the approved project scope; and

e) Expenditure incurred outside the approved implementation period.

8. TEAM COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS

At a minimum, the proposed team should include or have confirmed access to the following competencies:

Role	Responsibility	Minimum Qualifications/Skills/Competencies
Living Lab Manager/ Project Lead	Overall coordination and management of the Living Lab, including implementation of the approved project plan, stakeholder coordination, fundraising, performance management and reporting.	Relevant qualification Project Management, Business Management, Innovation Management, Economic Development or a related field. Minimum of 3 years' relevant experience in programme/project management, stakeholder management and/or innovation ecosystem development Strong leadership, coordination, financial oversight, reporting, fundraising and stakeholder engagement skills.
Project Administrator	Preparing and submitting progress reports and evidence packs, facilitating site visits, coordinating PSC meeting, record keeping and	Relevant qualification in Project Administration, Public Administration, Business Administration, Office Administration or related field. Minimum of 2 years relevant administrative/project

	other applicable administration support	support experience. Strong report writing, document management, record keeping, meeting coordination and Microsoft Office/digital administration skills.
Chief Financial Officer or Accountant	Support with financial management	Relevant BCom Accounting, Financial Management, Accounting Sciences or equivalent qualification. Professional registration with SAICA, CIMA, SAIPA or an equivalent professional body will be an added advantage. Minimum of 3–5 years' relevant financial management experience, including budgeting, financial reporting, expenditure monitoring, reconciliations and compliance. Experience in managing finances for grant-funded or government-funded projects will be an added advantage.
Innovation/ ILED Specialist (added advantage)	Support the identification and development of innovations that respond to local economic development priorities, opportunities and challenges, and provide guidance on the Living Lab innovation pipeline.	Relevant qualification in Innovation Management, Development Studies, Economics, Business Management, Entrepreneurship, Engineering, Science/Technology or related field. Minimum 3–5 years' experience in innovation development, local economic development, entrepreneurship or ecosystem development. Knowledge of innovation processes, Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs), prototyping, commercialisation and/or ILED. Training/certification in innovation management, design thinking or

		entrepreneurship will be an added advantage.
Researcher (added advantage)	Assist with the research component of the project	Relevant Honours degree or higher in Research, Development Studies, Social Sciences, Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation or a related field. Demonstrated experience in qualitative research, data collection and analysis, report writing and research methodology. Training in research ethics, data analysis, monitoring and evaluation will be an added advantage.
Community Engagement and Mobilisation Lead (added advantage)	Lead community outreach, stakeholder mobilisation, beneficiary engagement and participation, including targeted engagement with identified inclusion groups where applicable.	Relevant qualification in Community Development, Social Sciences, Development Studies, Public Management, Communications or related field. Minimum 3 years' experience in community mobilisation, stakeholder engagement and/or participatory development. Strong facilitation, communication, conflict-resolution and stakeholder-management skills. Experience working with underserved/inclusion groups and community-based organisations will be an added advantage
Business / Enterprise Development Specialist	Provide support relating to entrepreneurship, business development, market opportunities, value chains, business models and enterprise readiness.	Relevant qualification in Business Management, Entrepreneurship, Economics, Marketing, Commerce, Development Studies or related field. Minimum 3–5 years' experience in enterprise development, incubation, business advisory services, market access and/or value-chain development.

		Knowledge of business modelling, financial literacy, market research, commercialisation and enterprise readiness. Certification in business coaching, enterprise development or incubation will be an added advantage.
Technical /Innovation Support	Provide or facilitate access to appropriate technical, digital, prototyping or other specialist expertise relevant to the approved Living Lab programme offering.	Relevant technical, engineering, ICT, science, design, manufacturing or other specialist qualification, depending on the Living Lab focus. Minimum 3 years' relevant technical/innovation experience. Demonstrated competency in relevant digital technologies, prototyping, fabrication, product development, technical problem-solving and/or innovation support. Relevant industry certifications, professional registration or technical certifications will be an added advantage.

The applicant may propose a different team structure where it can demonstrate that the proposed arrangement provides equivalent or stronger competencies and is appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposed Living Lab. Where an applicant does not have a dedicated team member for a particular role, the applicant must demonstrate that the proposed project team collectively possesses the required qualifications, experience, skills and competencies to fulfil the functions of the Living Lab.

The applicant must provide curriculum vitae (CVs) and relevant qualification(s) each team member.

Team members identified in the approved project plan are expected to remain actively involved for the duration of the project. Any proposed changes to team structure must be communicated to and approved by the relevant governance structure where such changes may materially affect project implementation.

Where specialist expertise is not available within the core team, the applicant may propose strategic partners, consultants, technical experts, knowledge institutions or other suitably qualified service providers to supplement the team's capabilities. The applicant remains responsible for ensuring that the required competencies are available and appropriately integrated into the implementation of the Living Lab.

9. REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The appointed IP will be accountable for the proper management and utilisation of grant funding and must maintain appropriate governance, financial management, procurement, record-keeping and internal control systems.

The IP will be required to:

a) comply with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement;
b) submit financial and narrative progress reports at prescribed intervals;
c) maintain adequate supporting documentation for all expenditure;
d) maintain accurate beneficiary and programme records;
e) participate in monitoring and evaluation activities;
f) provide evidence of outputs and outcomes;
g) facilitate site visits and verification activities where required; and
h) promptly report any material risks, delays, deviations or changes affecting implementation.

TIA reserves the right to conduct financial, technical and programme monitoring throughout the implementation period.

10. GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

10.1 Technology Innovation Agency

TIA will provide programme oversight, funding, monitoring and technical guidance in accordance with its applicable governance requirements.

TIA will be responsible for:

a) contracting the appointed IP;

b) approving the project plan and budget;

c) programme oversight and monitoring;

d) reviewing performance and financial reports;

e) disbursement of funding;

f) providing technical guidance:

g) conducting due diligence and verification;

h) facilitating relevant stakeholder coordination: and

i) approve deviations on the budget, timelines and/ or scope of work.

10.2 Implementing Partner

The appointed IP will be accountable for the effective delivery of the approved intervention.

The IP will be responsible for:

a) implementing the approved work packages;

b) managing grant funding responsibly;

c) appointing and managing appropriate personnel;

d) coordinating stakeholders;

e) maintaining programme and financial records;

f) monitoring beneficiary performance;

g) reporting to TIA;

h) managing implementation risks; and

i) achieving the agreed outputs and outcomes.

10.3 Project Steering Committee

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) shall be established to provide strategic oversight, governance, guidance and support for the implementation of the Living Lab project. The PSC shall serve as the principal governance structure responsible for overseeing the implementation of the approved Living Lab project plan and ensuring alignment with the objectives and requirements of the Living Labs Programme. The PSC shall comprise representatives of the DSTI and the TIA together with representatives of relevant local stakeholders (local government (preferably an official from the LED office), industry, academia, and community) nominated by the IP.

The PSC shall operate in accordance with ToR approved at its inaugural meeting, which shall define, among other matters, its composition, roles and responsibilities, decision-making arrangements, quorum, meeting procedures and reporting requirements.

The PSC shall ordinarily meet quarterly, or more frequently where required by the implementation of the project or where matters requiring strategic consideration arise.

11. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, DATA AND RECORDS

The IP must maintain appropriate records relating to beneficiaries, supported innovations, expenditure, programme activities and outcomes.

Where intellectual property is generated through activities supported by the grant, the ownership, protection, use and commercialisation of such intellectual property will be managed in accordance with the applicable funding agreement and relevant TIA policies.

The IP must ensure that beneficiary information and other programme data are collected, stored and managed in accordance with applicable legislation and TIA requirements.

12. APPLICATION EVALUATION

12.1 Pre – Screening

All applications received will undergo an initial administrative compliance and eligibility screening to determine whether they meet the minimum requirements of the Call for Proposals. Only applications that satisfy the prescribed pre-screening requirements will proceed to the substantive evaluation stage.

An application may be deemed non-compliant and excluded from further evaluation where:

a) mandatory documentation is not submitted;
b) the applicant does not meet the province-specific presence or track-record requirements in Section 3 and, where applying from outside the relevant province, does not demonstrate the required active local consortium partnership;
c) where the application is submitted as a consortium, the application does not demonstrate an established and active partnership with a suitably constituted local organisation within the targeted district.
d) the applicant has not demonstrated access to secured and suitable premises for the establishment of the Living Lab;

e) the proposed funding exceeds the maximum funding amount specified in the Call for Proposals;
f) the proposed implementation period exceeds the maximum duration specified in the Call for Proposals;
g) the application is incomplete to the extent that the required information cannot be reasonably assessed;
h) the application does not comply with the prescribed application format or submission requirements; or
i) the application is received after the stipulated closing date.

12.2 Technical Assessment

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria in relation to the applicant's selected Living Lab and district. Assessment and recommendations will be undertaken separately for the Ehlanzeni Living Lab and the Bojanala Platinum Living Lab. One implementing partner will be appointed for each Living Lab; the two Living Labs will not be awarded to the same applicant.

Assessment criteria	Assessment focus	Score
1. Relevant experience and track record	Demonstrate current or previous experience in implementing innovation activation, innovation bridging, innovation support programmes, and quadruple-helix methodology, community mobilisation and in working in rural, township or historically disadvantaged communities. Evidence must be verifiable through project summaries, partner references, or other supporting documentation.	10
2. Understanding of the Living Labs concept	Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear and practical understanding of the Living Labs model and its co-creation dimensions and the required work packages to be delivered.	15
3. Understanding of the local context	Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the economic context, opportunities, constraints, innovation ecosystem and local economic development priorities of targeted district municipality.	10

4. Geographical Reach	Demonstrate a credible and practical approach to delivering Living Lab programmes and support services across the targeted district municipality, including mechanisms to ensure equitable reach, accessibility and participation across its local communities.	10
5. Proposed Living Lab programme and implementation approach	Quality, relevance and feasibility of the proposed Innovation Activation Programme, Innovation Bridging Programme and Innovation Support Programme. Strength and quality of business model of the Living Lab demonstrating the extent to which the co-creation model is integrated in the innovation process and the modalities and approaches for delivering the programme.	20
6. Sustainability and leveraged support	Quality of the sustainability plan, including evidence of previous or current ability to attract or leverage additional funding, partnerships, markets, follow-on support and resources beyond TIA funding.	5
7. Programme Delivery Capability	Demonstrate available internal human resource capacity, indicating roles of proposed team members for the programme and any other external expertise that may be required to deliver the programme.	10
8. Governance and grant management	Demonstrate whether the organisation has sound leadership structures, effective internal controls, clear lines of accountability, and appropriate oversight arrangements to support responsible decision-making and stewardship of public resources.	10
9. Premises Readiness	Extent to which the secured premises are suitable, accessible and fit-for-purpose for the proposed Living Lab. Assessment will consider the location within targeted district municipality, accessibility to the targeted communities and beneficiaries, adequacy of available space, and the	10

	feasibility and cost-effectiveness of the proposed refurbishment and adaptation plan.	
Total		**100**

12.3 Pitching Sessions

Applicants who successfully pass the pre-screening and technical evaluation stages will be shortlisted to participate in a pitching session as part of the assessment process.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to present their proposed Living Lab project to the designated evaluation panel. The pitching session will provide applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the Living Lab model, the local context and identified needs, the proposed programme of activities, implementation approach, expected outcomes and the sustainability of the proposed intervention.

The evaluation panel may ask questions and seek clarification from applicants during the pitching session. Applicants may be required to provide additional information or supporting evidence where necessary to substantiate their proposals.

12.4 Due Diligence

Applicants shortlisted following the pitching stage will be subjected to a due diligence assessment to verify the applicant's institutional, financial, operational and implementation capacity and the accuracy of information provided in the application.

Due diligence may include, but is not limited to:

- verification of the applicant's legal registration;
- assessment of financial capacity, financial statements and management accounts
- assessment of governance structures, policies and internal controls;
- verification of the availability, suitability and ownership or lawful use of the proposed Living Lab premises;
- verification of previous and current programme or project performance, where applicable;

- reference and stakeholder checks;
- verification of key personnel, their qualifications, experience and roles in the proposed project;
- verification of information and supporting documentation submitted as part of the application;
- assessment of procurement, financial management, asset management and other relevant operational controls; and
- any other verification considered necessary to establish the applicant's capacity and suitability to implement the proposed Living Lab.

The funder reserves the right to conduct site visits, request additional documentation, obtain independent verification or undertake any other reasonable assessment considered necessary as part of the due diligence process.

Where material discrepancies, misrepresentations, governance concerns, financial weaknesses or other factors are identified during due diligence, the application may be excluded from further consideration.

12.5 Final Approval

The recommended applicant for each district will be subject to the applicable TIA approval processes.

No applicant will have a right to funding solely by virtue of being shortlisted or achieving the highest evaluation score.

13. TIMELINES

Activity	Timelines
Release Call for Proposals	06 November 2026
Call for Proposal closes	04 December 2026 (17:00)

14. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

Applicants are required to complete and submit the prescribed application form and supporting templates made available under the Call for Proposals on the TIA website. Each applicant may submit an application for one Living Lab only and must select either Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga, or Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, North West. An applicant may not apply for both Living Labs. The application must clearly identify the selected district and present a district-specific programme, secured premises, implementation team, project plan and budget.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the Call for Proposals and Terms of Reference prior to preparing and submitting their applications to ensure that the requirements of the programme are fully understood and addressed.

Applications must be submitted electronically to:

Email: livinglabsapplications@tia.org.za

Subject line (use the district for which the application is submitted): *Application – Living Labs Programme – Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga*
or
Application – Living Labs Programme – Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, North West

Applicants are expected to use the prescribed application and project plan templates. Failure to use the prescribed templates will result in automatic disqualification.

15. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Applicants must submit the following supporting documentation as part of their application:

a) Funding proposal in the TIA provided template
b) Project Plan in the TIA provide template
c) Internal Control Systems Checklist
d) CIPC registration documentation. If applying as a consortium, please include the CIPC registration documents of all consortium partners.
e) Track record documentation on ISP, quadruple helix methodology, working in communities. This may include signed programme reports, signed completion reports, contracts, appointment letters, case studies or other relevant evidence.

f) Track record on leveraging third party funding. This may include agreements, award letters, or other verifiable documentation demonstrating funding successfully leveraged or mobilised.
g) Organogram of the Company
h) CVs and Qualifications of all team members listed in application.
i) Refurbishment & Adaptation Plan and Pictures of the secured facility
j) Tax compliance pin (not older than 1 month)
k) CSD Report (not older than 1 month)

Note: Applicants are required to submit only the supporting documentation that is relevant to the requirements of this Call for Proposals and specifically requested in the application. Applicants should avoid submitting excessive, irrelevant or duplicate documentation, as only information relevant to the requirements of the Call will be considered during the screening and assessment. Applicants are encouraged to create clearly labelled folders for each requirement.

16. ENQUIRIES

For further information regarding the Call for Proposals, please send an email to livinglabsapplications@tia.org.za.

17. DISCLAIMER

- The issuing of this Call for Proposals does not constitute an offer of funding or an undertaking by DSTI or TIA to fund any applicant.
- Funding is subject to the outcome of the assessment and approval processes, availability of funds, due diligence and the conclusion of a formal funding agreement.
- DSTI and TIA reserve the right to amend, withdraw or cancel the Call, request additional information, and accept or reject any application in accordance with applicable policies and governance requirements.