

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are RISP minimum requirements?

RISP minimum requirements are *key strategic aspects* of the RISP mandate. The minimum requirements outline the expectations of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) and RISP PMU with regard to the proposed initiatives. The minimum requirements are outlined in the Call for Proposals. These requirements form an integral part of the proposal evaluation process. Applicants must ensure that their proposals comply with all RISP minimum requirements before submission. Proposals that do not meet the RISP minimum requirements will be disqualified.

The following are respective **minimum requirements** for the three separate and independent elements within the RISP:

1.1 REGIONAL INNOVATION NETWORKING PLATFORMS

The Proposals must clearly articulate how the following RISP Minimum Requirements for Regional Innovation Networking Platforms will be met:

- **Mechanisms for meaningful participation of previously disadvantaged individuals (i.e. black owned technology SMMEs, small businesses owned by females and people living with disabilities).**
- **Co-funding contribution, preferably in cash, from local or regional partner(s). There should already be a written confirmation of this contribution.**
- **Structured and relevant Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) capacity building programmes (e.g. technical training, innovation related interventions, networking events/forums, mentorship programmes, workshops etc.) aimed at enabling improved innovation driven industrial competitiveness. Financial support will not cover the cost of international conferences and traveling, as well as business incubation activities or general SMME development services (such as financial management, accounting, human resources, customer care, report writing, business writing skills etc.)**
- **Support mechanisms for improved innovation partnership deals (e.g. access to information, business strategy, legal/IP templates, funding proposals etc.).**

1.2 FEASIBILITY STUDY OR BUSINESS PLAN

The following are RISP Minimum Requirements for feasibility study or business plan support for technology incubators, science parks or other innovation enabling mechanisms:

1. **The proposal must demonstrate linkages and synergies to relevant development plans (3 spheres of Government) such as provincial plans and Municipal IDPs.**
2. **Applicants must submit evidence of firm commitment from key regional institutions or stakeholders (e.g. Provincial/local government and institutions, private business etc.) to implement the business plan/outcome of the feasibility study if shown to be feasible.**
3. **Applicants must also submit evidence of co-funding contribution(s) (in cash) from local or regional partner(s) to support the feasibility study or the development of a business plan. There must already be a written firm confirmation/letter of this contribution. In the event that the proposal is approved, evidence of the co-funding will be required prior to final signature of the contract with the RISP PMU**

4. A detailed budget breakdown must be submitted by the applicant, including sources of co-funding and its related expenses.

In addition, the proposal must articulate the following requirements of the relevant facility:

- Meaningful participation of relevant provincial or local government authority (preference will be given to secured funding contributions).
- Mechanisms required supporting science, technology and innovation related entrepreneurship and incubation.
- Mechanisms for meaningful participation of Black-owned technology SMMEs, including businesses owned by females and people living with disabilities.
- Inclusivity and relevance to South Africa's (and region's) developmental context.
- Demonstrate strong linkages with local universities, science councils and/or other STI institutions.
- Promote partnerships and collaborations, including securing co-funding.
- International (and local) benchmarking and best practice with focus on (but not limited to):
 - Relevant Incentives, where they exist and are applicable.
 - Offerings, product and services.
 - The role of key actors.
 - Lessons learnt and challenges.
- Identification of potential sectors, products and services.
- The proposal should outline how the applicant's initiative would leverage the relevant innovation mechanisms and instruments.
- A detailed budget breakdown must be submitted by the applicant, including sources of co-funding and its related expenses.

2. What is a co-funding contribution for RINPs?

Co-funding contribution is a *verifiable* financial contribution directed at co-funding interventions and activities (including administration costs) outlined in the Proposal. Applicants are expected to commit both cash and quantifiable in-kind contributions towards their proposals. Applicants can also secure co-funding contributions from their stakeholders or other funding instruments. All co-funding contributions must be *clearly unpacked* in the proposals.

Applicants are expected to co-fund their proposals in line with the following sliding scale:

- **First-time applicants without prior RISP funding support** : 15% of the total requested funds must be a cash contribution.
- **Second-time applicants with prior RISP funding support**: 30% of the total requested funds must be contributed, with half of the contribution being in cash.
- **Applicants applying for a third time or more with previous RISP funding support**: 50% of the total requested funds must be contributed, with 70% of the contribution being in cash.
- **Applicants applying more than five times with previous RISP funding support**: 50% of the total requested funds must be contributed, with 100% of the contribution being in cash. The following will also apply:
 - The applicant must demonstrate strong regional ownership, evidenced by a cash funding contribution from regional stakeholders.
 - Additionally, the applicant must have fully met all RISP requirements and KPIs.

NB: Co-funding contribution must be quantifiable and supported with auditable evidence

3. Does the RISP grant cover the cost of non-technological innovation SMME/Enterprise development?

No: The RISP grant does not cover the cost of implementing *non-technological* enterprise development services/training activities such as business support, financial, marketing, accounting etc. Although in some instances these activities may form part of the proposal, applicants are expected to cover these costs, or partner with appropriate entities to implement non-technical activities.

RISP will only cover the costs of implementing innovation related activities, interventions and programmes aimed at benefitting technology SMMEs and innovators. RISP does NOT cover general business incubation services or costs

4. Is a Regional Innovation Networking Platform (RINP) a business incubator?

No: A RINP is not an incubator. A RINP, by and large, is aimed at *enabling innovation in the regions* through the mobilization of regional actors (including incubators), capabilities and other essential resources (including funding). Both technology and business incubators could form part of this *RINP network*.

5. Does the RISP grant funding cover the cost of hosting events such as workshop, training, seminars etc.?

Yes: But RISP will only cover the costs of hosting events aimed at enabling or promoting *regional innovation support, dissemination of technology and innovation information, and technical training programmes*. These interventions must benefit technology SMMEs and innovators.

N.B: Applicants are cautioned against excessive budgeting on these activities. The budget must be reasonable and realistic.

6. Does the RISP grant funding cover the cost of international travel?

No: The RISP grant does not cover the cost of international travel.

7. Does the RISP cover the cost of salaries?

No: The RISP grant will not cover the cost of salaries. The grant can only cover the cost of project management/administration. This cost will be capped at 15% of the requested budget.

8. What kind of activities or interventions can the RISP grant funding support?

A good RISP initiative must be designed and configured based on the regional context. We acknowledge that regions are distinct and thus interventions would be different. We expect proposals to respond to identified needs, challenges or opportunities within their regions.

Typical *innovation-enablement related activities* (implemented by RINPs) that RISP has previously funded include (to name a few) bootcamps, hackathons, innovation challenges, mentorship programmes, technical training programmes (AutoCAD, 3D machining etc.) and design thinking workshops.

N.B: Applicants are cautioned against excessive budgeting on these activities. The budget must be reasonable and realistic.

9. Can a Regional Innovation Networking Platform (RINP) be an online Platform?

No: A Regional Innovation Networking Platform (RINP) is not exclusively an Online Platform. However, an online Platform could be one of the offerings of a RINP. If an Online Platform is proposed as one of the RINP offerings, the applicant must take cognizance of the existing platforms (e.g. the Innovation Bridge Portal) to avoid duplication of efforts. The cost for developing such online platform should be kept minimal.

10. Does the RISP grant funding cover the cost of implementing business plans for science and technology parks, techno parks, innovation hubs or other innovation enabling mechanisms?

No: The RISP grant does not fund implementation of business plans for science and technology parks, techno parks, innovation hubs or other innovation enabling mechanisms, regardless of whether the Business Plan was funded by the RISP or not. The RISP funding is limited to the costs of undertaking feasibility studies and development of business plans.

11. Does the RISP grant (for RINPs) cover the cost of protecting Intellectual Property (IP) for individual innovators and technology SMMEs?

No: The RISP grant will not cover the cost of protecting IP for individual and technology SMMEs. Applicants are encouraged to liaise with organisations that offer IP protection costs.

12. Does the RISP grant cover the cost of hosting conferences, forums and related events?

Yes: The RISP grant will only cover the cost of hosting conferences, forums etc. aimed at enabling or promoting regional innovation support, innovation related dialogues, dissemination of technology and innovation information, and technical training programmes. RISP supported events must result in action and intervention plans.

N.B: Applicants are cautioned against excessive budgeting on these activities. The budget must be reasonable and realistic.

13. Does the RISP grant cover the cost of office infrastructure (such as computers, furniture, software packages (such as SAP), office rental etc.)?

No: The RISP grant will not cover the cost of purchasing office infrastructure.

NB. Under exceptional circumstances, the RISP grant may be used to cover the cost of purchasing one computer to be used for the implementation of the proposed Platform/initiative. The budget for purchasing a computer will be capped at R6 000.

14. Does the RISP cover the cost of developing a RINP's branding, promotional materials and website?

Yes: However, branding and website development is covered on the premise that a RINP (as a *networking platform*) must exist even beyond the RISP grant funding. As a result, the RISP grant will only cover the cost of developing a website and branding if evidence is provided on how it will be maintained beyond the RISP funding.

N.B: The budget for branding and website development will be capped at R15,000 and must be included under administrative and related costs (including stationery).