GLOBAL HEALTH INNOVATION ACCELERATOR / MEDICAL DEVICE AND DIAGNOSTIC INNOVATION CLUSTER

Medical Devices and Diagnostics Technical Support

Request for Applications (RFA):

SAMRC-RFA-GIPD-05-2024

Release Date: 13 February 2024

Closing Date: 13 March 2024

1. Introduction

The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), through its Technology Innovation Agency (TIA)-funded Medical Device and Diagnostic Innovation Cluster Program (MeDDIC), has recently established the "*Medical Device and Diagnostics Technical Support Platform*". The platform was established to assist in bridging the gap between the identified need for technical support by medical device and diagnostics developers/innovators and the experienced limited access to the relevant expertise, resources and infrastructure that can enable finalization and commercialization of their products. The platform aims to, *inter alia*, provide consolidated information on locally available technology, expertise and platforms for medical device and diagnostics development, testing, registration, manufacturing and commercialization and facilitate access to this.

As part of a pilot phase, the SAMRC's Global Health Innovation Accelerator (GHIA) and MeDDIC are seeking to support medical devices and diagnostics projects funded by the SAMRC towards commercialization by providing access to technical / advisory support that will address key gaps and move their technologies towards market entry. This support is limited to those requiring specialist external expertise to progress their technology along the product development value chain. This is an invitation to SAMRC-funded projects to apply for support to access such expertise.

2. Eligibility

Projects previously or currently funded by the SAMRC involving mid- to late-stage product development of medical devices and diagnostics that address local and global health priorities are eligible to apply. This includes, for example, projects funded under the following SAMRC grant programmes:

- Strategic Health Innovation Partnerships (SHIP)
- Grand Challenges South Africa
- SAMRC- TIA Seed Fund
- SAMRC-TIA Medical Devices and Diagnostics Seed Fund (MeDDIC)
- Global Health Innovation Accelerator (GHIA)
- SAMRC-Newton Fund Programmes

Projects must be directly addressing a clear market need and must have at least achieved proof of concept (validated first prototype). **The support is not for early discovery or research**.

3. Funding Opportunity Description

Under the Medical Device and Diagnostics Technical Support Platform, the SAMRC's Global Health Innovation Accelerator and MeDDIC programmes are seeking to support projects involving mid- to late-stage product development of medical devices and diagnostics that address local and global health priorities to access specialist external expertise that will assist them to advance their technologies along the product development value chain towards market entry. The following

eligible activities, with appropriate justification, may be included in the application for Technical Support:

- Product design refinement/ improvement
- Production of improved prototypes
- Product testing (limited user/clinical testing and/or testing of product characteristics)
- Product verification and validation
- Development of comprehensive technology packages (documentation)
- Assistance with product certification (e.g., SAHPRA registrations and assistance with international certifications)
- Technical support for manufacturing scale up (excludes equipment and infrastructure costs)
- Market access experts

The following are non-fundable activities / non-eligible costs:

- Early-stage research activities
- Salary contributions*
- Equipment
- Infrastructure
- Working capital
- Travel*
- Operational costs such as rent, administration, grant management, etc.
- Overheads
- Conferences
- Publications

*Excludes personnel and travel costs for the specialist external experts

The anticipated funding for Technical Support is between R20,000 and R250,000 with a maximum of R300,000 (excluding VAT), unless strongly motivated, and the maximum period of support/ service provision is 6 months. The funding is aimed at providing access to specialist external expertise only and no internal project costs will be supported. Awards will be made to the project host institution, which will be required to procure the relevant services directly from the service provider. Appropriate service providers may be sourced from the MeDDIC Innovation Bridge Portal (https://www.innovationbridge.info/ibportal/meddic) and detailed quotes must be obtained for inclusion in the application.

4. Application Process and timelines

All applications must be submitted to: meddic@mrc.ac.za by the application due date of 13 March 2024, 18h00 (SAST). Applications submitted after this date will not be considered.

The application form must be accompanied by a detailed quote from the proposed service provider.

Medical device developers are encouraged to register their technologies on the MeDDIC Innovation Bridge Portal (https://www.innovationbridge.info/ibportal/meddic) and to use this portal to source suitable service providers.

Due to budget constraints, this is a competitive call for applications and only those demonstrating a clear need for the expert service, a clear route to market and a relevant product offering with the potential for health impact may be selected for funding. The purpose is to ensure that product development investments to date are provided with support towards successful commercialization.

The timelines for the application process are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Application timelines:

Process Stage	Due Date
RFA Release Date	13 February 2024
Application Due Date	13 March 2024
Review of Applications	March/April 2024
Internal Approvals	April 2024
Notification of Awards	April/May 2024

5. Review process

Each responsive and complete application received by the due date will be reviewed, taking into account at least the following criteria:

- Relevance and potential impact of the product
- Technical feasibility and likelihood of success
- Timeframe to completion of market-ready product
- Scalability, portability, cost /competitiveness and commercial feasibility
- Relevance of and need for the proposed technical support and potential impact on future market entry
- Suitability of the service provider to the identified need
- Budget

6. Compliance with POPIA

As of the 1st of July 2021, the new Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) came into full effect. The law is designed to protect how all juristic persons use, store and process data. You can read the full details on the act here: https://popia.co.za/. SAMRC as a responsible statutory science council complies with POPIA.

The SAMRC will receive personal information through the proposals/applications submitted to the SAMRC in response to this RFA. The personal information requested on the proposal template is necessary for the SAMRC to fully evaluate the proposal for funding. This information will be shared with external reviewers, as well as the SAMRC management for the purposes of processing the project proposals. The SAMRC will process this personal information strictly in accordance with POPIA. The SAMRC undertakes specifically to process the personal information on the basis that (a)

it was provided voluntarily and (b) the information will be processed only as far may be necessary and within the limitation and ambit of the purpose of evaluating the proposal/application for funding *(i.e., the purpose with which the personal information was received)*. The SAMRC confirms that it is lawfully processing the information since the purpose of processing is to seek quality proposals for funding which the SAMRC is mandated to do in terms of Section 4 of the SAMRC Act 58 of 1991, thus the SAMRC is fulfilling its legislated and lawful mandate, and strategic objectives as provided for in the SAMRC Act.

By submitting your project proposal to the SAMRC you acknowledge and agree to the use of your personal information as outlined above. Should you not approve of such use of your personal information then please refrain from submitting an application.

7. Contact Details

Please direct questions/queries on this RFI by email to:

Ms. Charlotte Mashaba

SAMRC Grants Innovation and Product Development (GIPD)

Email: charlotte.mashaba@mrc.ac.za