



The National Innovation Challenge

Guidelines to Applicants

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PRIVACY STATEMENT

The information requested on these application forms is solicited by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council. It will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals and may be disclosed to qualified experts and the staff of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council as part of the review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards. To perform its contractual obligations, the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (“MRIC”) collects, processes, and stores personal data (including sensitive personal data) of its data subjects. MRIC treats these personal data collected as private and confidential. The MRIC abides by all data protection laws as may be applicable, including the Mauritian Data Protection Act 2017 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (“GDPR”). We have implemented organisational, physical and technical safeguards thus ensuring protection (of personal data collected) from: unauthorized access, misuse and/or unauthorized disclosure. We are also committed to being transparent about how personal data of our data subjects are collected and used. For more information, please refer to the MRIC Privacy Statement on our website: www.mric.mu

Note:

Applications not meeting content requirements which are listed and explained in this solicitation will not be considered.

By submitting an application, the applicant accepts to be filmed and featured in the National Innovation Challenge TV series.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The **Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC)**, formerly known as the Mauritius Research Council, is a corporate body set up on the 1st of September 2019 through the proclamation of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council Act 2019. The activities of the Council are focused on the main objective of promoting, coordinating, and exploiting research with a view to sharpening the competitive edge of industries for sustainable economic and social growth. To that end, the Council operates a number of Research and Innovation Grant Schemes.

Under this Call for Ideas, the MRIC, under the aegis of the **Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation** invites the public to participate in this competition.

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The National Innovation Challenge (NIC) aims at uncovering and fostering local and professional innovations created by Mauritians working in a variety of fields from Academia, Private sector, Start-up and Micro Companies, SMEs, Communities to local schools and backyard sheds/ home inventions.

The aim of this challenge is to inculcate and nurture an innovation culture amongst the Mauritian population whilst finding practical innovative solutions to common life problems.

3. ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

This is an open competition and any individual (General Public), Small and Medium Enterprise, Association, group or Non-Governmental Organization from the Republic of

Mauritius can apply. There is no restriction on age. Applications can be submitted individually or in groups.

Application in Group

The group should consist of a maximum of 5 members, including a group leader.

How to participate?

Participants are required to propose an innovative solution to a national problem or to an issue faced in their region (locality, village, ward, town or district). The proposed solution should be viable and address a specific issue related to the problem area.

Participants should also outline how they intend to further improve their ideas or come with a prototype in the two months provided in the Idea Acceleration phase. A budget for this phase should be provided.

The application form should be filled online on the website www.mric.mu. All applications must be submitted before the deadline.

Video Applications

Video applications of a maximum duration of five (5) minutes are also accepted provided they outline:

- The problem addressed
- The solution
- Its advantages and disadvantages
- The potential impact
- Further idea development

Submission of video applications should be done on the online application form.

4. EVALUATION

The ideas will be evaluated based on:

- Innovativeness
- Practicality
- Relevance
- Scalability
- Potential impact
- Feasibility

5. PROCESS

Stage 1 – Application

Prospective participants will be allocated 1 month for submission of their online application. No application will be accepted past the deadline.

Stage 2 – Administrative Screening

Administrative screening will be conducted to assess completeness of applications. Candidates whose ideas satisfy the specified criteria will proceed to the Pre-selection stage.

Stage 3 – Pre-selection

In this stage, applications having met all specified criteria will be screened for the innovative merit of their applications. The pre-selected candidates would then proceed to the selection/audition phase.

Stage 4 – Selection/Audition Phase

Pre-selected applicants will be given the opportunity to present their ideas to the jury. It is free to the participants to choose their preferred mode for presenting their ideas (This can be in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, oral presentation, demonstration, etc.).

Out of this process, the best ideas will be selected for the Idea Acceleration phase.

The audition phase is video recorded and will be broadcasted on television or MRIC online platforms.

Stage 5 – Idea Acceleration

The finalists will be provided with seed money of up to Rs 20,000 (as required per their budget estimates) to further consolidate their ideas and come up with a realizable plan/prototype or concept within a given time scale of 2 months.

Participants will have to commit in coming up with a refined plan/prototype/concept in these two months. Regular monitoring will be conducted by MRIC officials.

Participants will be provided with free coaching from the accredited incubators of the National SME Incubator Scheme (NSIS).

Stage 6 – Final

After the Idea Acceleration phase, the finalists will have to present their final concept/prototype/plan or minimum viable

product to the jury. The jury will then proceed to the selection of winners.

6. SEED FUNDING AND DURATION

The MRIC will provide a seed money of a maximum of **Rs. 20,000 (Twenty Thousand Rupees)** per selected idea.

A maximum of 25 ideas will be selected under the current call for ideas.

The maximum duration for funding of the project is **two (2) months** following the date of signature of contract.

The expected outcome is an innovative prototype which has significant potential to solve the stated problem.

Important Note:

- Applicants must be prepared and committed to leading their idea into the Idea Acceleration phase.
- The various phases of this competition will be video recorded and may be televised or broadcasted on online platforms.

7. SEGMENTS

For this edition of the National Innovation Challenge, in addition to the overall competition, two dedicated segments have been incorporated as follows:

- Rodrigues Innovation Challenge
- Mauritius Plastic Challenge (Mission Verte)

These will be run in collaboration with the partners of this challenge.

8. ALLOWABLE AND NON-ALLOWABLE FOR SEED MONEY

Allowable Expenses

- Associated costs such as investment in new technologies, systems and software
- Associated capacity building expenses
- Aspects of experimental research and development to create new applications or prototypes
- Duly justified consultancy fees

- Publications, books

Non Allowable Expenses

- Paying off debts
- Covering of operational expenses
- Organisation of conferences, workshops, or seminars
- Academic studies for self-qualification

Note: The MRIC reserves the right to recover any funded equipment such as mobile phones, laptop, projector, cameras, television, etc.

8. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Funding will be disbursed upfront to the selected applicant. The payment will be released upon signing of the contractual agreements by all parties concerned to enable the grantee to initiate the project.

The selected applicants will have to submit a short report on a milestone basis, together with a statement of accounts and invoices, showing how the funds have been utilised.

No awards will be made to applicants who are already recipient of full project funding from other agencies (including the MRIC) for the same or any similar project.

8.1 Budget Reallocation

Any redefinition and reallocation in the agreed tasks and associated budget described in the Task Scheduling and Budget Chart can only be carried out in consultation with the MRIC which, if satisfied, will authorise the necessary amendments.

9. PRIZE

The best ideas will receive prizes in the following structure:

1st Prize

A cash prize of Rs 150,000, a Trophy and recognition certificate(s).

2nd Prize

A cash prize of Rs 100,000, a Trophy and recognition certificate(s).

3rd Prize

A cash prize of Rs 75,000, a Trophy and recognition certificate(s).

Rodrigues Innovation Challenge Grand Prize

A cash prize of Rs 100,000, a Trophy and recognition certificate(s).

Mauritius Plastic Challenge Grand Prize

A cash prize of Rs 100,000, a Trophy and recognition certificate(s).

10. DISCLAIMER

- The MRIC reserves the right to seek further information and/or clarifications from the proposer(s) of an idea before reaching a final decision.
- The MRIC will support all meritorious projects to the extent of resources available. However, it is under no obligation to fund any idea or any number of specific ideas on a given topic.
- The MRIC may inform all proposers of the outcome of their proposals. A decision will normally be made within one month of the date limit for submission of ideas. However, there may be cases where, because of the complexity of a proposal, more time may be required for processing of the proposals.

11. DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION

The Call for Ideas is open until the **22 December 2023**. All applications will be treated on merit.

12. CONTACT US

For more information, please contact us:

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**The MRIC reserves the right to revise and amend
the terms and conditions laid down
in this solicitation as and whenever necessary.**

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