



Mauritius Research and Innovation Council

MRIC Grants

Terms, Conditions and Process

PRIVACY STATEMENT

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.

This information will be used in connection with the selection of proposals and may be disclosed to qualified experts and the staff of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC) as part of the review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards.

In view of considerations for data protection under the Data Protection Act 2017 (Act No. 20 of 2017), the MRIC will undertake the following in relation to information received through proposals received:

- all personal data will be processed fairly and lawfully;
- the MRIC will only process personal data for specified and lawful purposes;
- the MRIC will endeavour to hold relevant and accurate personal data, and where practical, will keep it up to date;
- the MRIC will not keep personal data for longer than is necessary;
- all personal data will be kept secure;
- the MRIC will endeavour to ensure that personal data is not transferred to other entities without adequate protection;
- any applicant has the right to request details on the type of his/her personal data which the MRIC holds. This request should be done in writing and can be addressed to the MRIC at any time;
- any applicant has the right to request the MRIC to destroy all his/her personal data which have been recorded in connection with this application. This request should be done in writing.

Note:

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

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION, RIGHTS IN DATA AND INVENTIONS

Information contained in unsuccessful proposals will remain the property of the applicant, but MRIC will retain file copies of all proposals.

Applicants should limit proprietary information to that deemed essential for proper evaluation of the proposal. Any proprietary information included in the proposal must be clearly marked by sentence or paragraph, as proprietary. Proprietary information submitted to MRIC will be treated in confidence, to the extent permitted by law, if it is clearly identified. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, MRIC will limit dissemination of properly marked information to its employees and, as necessary for the evaluation of the proposal, to outside reviewers on a confidential basis.

Unretained applications will be destroyed after a period of three (3) years.

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About the MRIC

The Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC) 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 Council acts as the apex body which advises the Government on matters concerning applied research, innovation and research and development issues. The Act empowers the Council in the promotion of high-quality research with a view to sharpening the competitive edge of industries for sustainable economic and social growth and fostering innovation, through the operation of Research and Innovation Grant Schemes (RIGS).

Purpose

The development of innovative ideas is encouraged for either new or improved industry-oriented products, processes or services that will enhance socio-economic benefits. Proposals shall be in line with the list of priority areas identified and communicated by the MRIC. Grants being requested should focus on outputs of the initiative that can provide an exploitable competitive advantage, making the innovation more attractive for development towards commercialisation.

Applicants will submit their proposal through an application form. This form will determine which scheme is most appropriate to the applicants' project.

Research and Innovation schemes are as follows:

1. Proof of Concept Scheme (PCS)
2. Collaborative Research and Innovation Grant Scheme (CRIGS)
3. Research and Innovation Bridges (RIB)
4. Pole of Innovation Grant Scheme (PoIGS)
5. Social Innovation Research Grant Scheme (SIRGS)
6. National SME Incubation Scheme (NSIS)
7. Enterprise Innovation Booster Scheme (EIBS)
8. Public Sector Transformation Scheme (PSTS)
9. Innovation Boost Grant (IBG)

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purpose of solicitation of innovative initiatives:

Grantee - the Mauritian company or institution submitting the proposal is the grantee and the funds will be released to this entity.

Project Leader / Principal Investigator - the single individual designated by the applicant in a grant application as the key person who is responsible for the overall direction of the project.

Initiative – A project, programme or business idea that is funded by the MRIC.

Research - any activity which is a systematic and intensive study directed toward greater knowledge or understanding of the subject studied or a systematic study aimed specifically towards applying new knowledge to meet a recognised target.

Development - a systematic application of knowledge towards the production of useful materials, devices, systems, processes or methods, including design and improvement of prototypes to meet specific requirements.

Innovation - both radical and incremental changes to products, processes or services, including the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations.

Matching grant - the applicant will have to contribute at least the equivalent of the funding being requested.

'In-kind' contribution - the 'in-kind' contribution to be made by the applicant may entail the following:

- specialised equipment/facilities;
- space, including utilities;
- human resources directly involved in the initiative.

Funding Specificities

An earmarked budget will be specified during call for proposals. Consequently, projects will be selected on a priority basis and funding provided accordingly. Applications providing part-funding or matching grant will have a margin of preference.

Application Support

With a view of facilitating the application process and fostering transparency throughout the various stages, the following units and features have been implemented:

Project Advisory Unit (PAU)

Applicants will be supported by the Project Advisory Unit. The Project Advisory Unit is the central desk handling all queries and providing advice on the types and modalities of MRIC-funded schemes. Before preparing a formal submission, prospective applicants may discuss their ideas with the Project Advisory Unit. This will enable them to verify the relevance of their proposal as well as to ensure its originality. Applicants may also wish to contact the PAU outside of the call period to discuss any prospective project they have.

Application Information Session (optional)

Prospective applicants will be guided in the application writing process. The main aim of this session is to equip the applicants with the right tools and chances to make a successful application.

Project Facilitator (optional)

A database of project facilitators will be put at the disposal of prospective applicants. The facilitator will be a knowledgeable person contracted by the MRIC to assist prospective applicants navigate the application process. Project facilitator will be remunerated a fixed honorarium deductible from the funding earmarked for the project.

Application Process

1. Call for Proposals

Call for proposals will be launched by the MRIC for a specific period and it will be in line with priority areas identified. Applicants will be allocated a specified period for submission of their online application. No application will be accepted past the deadline.

2. Stage 1 Application

Preliminary information regarding the applicant, proposed project and financing will be provided by the applicant. This will allow 1st level screening and consequently channeling of the project to appropriate scheme.

3. Screening Process

1st Level Screening

Administrative screening

Each proposal will be reviewed against criteria to ascertain compliance to all administrative requirements. Non-responsive proposals will not be considered. If the applicant is a past beneficiary of an MRIC grant, a due diligence will be undertaken on their previous performance related to project management and completion as well as their participation in previous outcomes/impact surveys carried out by the MRIC. A penalty of 5% will be applied to the overall score received for the application for non-participation in previous outcomes/impact surveys.

Pitching Process

During this stage, the applicant will be required to make a pitch presentation to an evaluation panel.

Evaluation Criteria

The criteria for assessment of project proposals include, where applicable, the following:

- Innovativeness of the technology/ product/process/service;
- Feasibility of initiative in terms of budgeting, objectives and activities;
- Competence, capability and readiness of the team or entity to carry out the initiative and commercialise the opportunity;
- Matching grants or part-funding is encouraged;
- Alignment with national priority areas;
- Attractiveness of the product or service in the targeted market;
- Potential impact of the innovation on the economy and society;
- Alignment with sustainable development goals is encouraged.

4. Scheme Assignment

Following 1st level screening and pitching exercise, selected projects will be matched to the most appropriate scheme. Research and Innovation Initiatives relevant are as follows:

1. Proof of Concept Scheme (PCS)

2. Collaborative Research and Innovation Grant Scheme (CRIGS)
3. Research and Innovation Bridges (RIB)
4. Pole of Innovation Grant Scheme (PoIGS)
5. Social Innovation Research Grant Scheme (SIRGS)
6. National SME Incubation Scheme (NSIS)
7. Enterprise Innovation Booster Scheme (EIBS)
8. Public Sector Transformation Scheme (PSTS)
9. Innovation Boost Grant (IBG)

This will be contingent upon:

- Project specificity
- Specific eligibility criteria
- Duration
- Maximum funding requested
- Matching grant or part funding

5. Stage 2 Application

Thereon, guidelines specific to the assigned schemes will apply. In-depth information regarding the applicant, proposed project, financing, human resource will be provided by the applicant. This information will be scheme specific and may vary accordingly.

6. Evaluation

2nd Level Screening

Standardised due diligence process

A second stage due diligence will be conducted to determine that the applicant has sufficient funds to implement the initiative. The applicant may be requested to demonstrate evidence through copies of the last certified audited financial statements (income and expenditure).

New enterprises (between one to three years) may be requested to provide an estimate of their previous and current year's budget (income and expenditure) and same to be certified by a registered Accountant.

Site Assessment

The Site Assessment Unit will conduct a site visit at the premises of the applicant to assess whether the company or institution has the necessary infrastructure/ resources to carry out the proposed initiative.

Review Process

A technical review will be undertaken in line with the requirements of any specific scheme. This implies either a peer review or an evaluation panel.

Project not making it to the next stage will be oriented to the Project Advisory Unit for advice on improvement for any future application.

The MRIC will also request other organisational and management information for administrative purposes to ensure that the applicant adheres to certain business and financial standards. When requested, the information should be submitted to the Council as expeditiously as possible.

7. Decision on Award

The decision will be communicated as follows:

1. Approval for full grant, or
2. Approval for partial grant, or
3. Not approved.

In case of partial grant, the Project Leader will be convened to a meeting at the Council to explore the feasibility of carrying out the project within the grant proposed by the MRIC. The Project Leader will have to submit a revised proposal along the lines of any agreement reached. In case of full grant, there may be an optional meeting to discuss the modalities of implementation and funding. In case of modifications to the original proposal, which may be required following recommendations made by the reviewers/Committee/Council, the Project Leader will be requested to resubmit a detailed revised proposal.

In the event of an award,

- The grantee, and any collaborating partner(s), should use all reasonable actions to obtain all regulatory and ethical licenses, consents, and approvals necessary to allow it to carry out the activities allotted to it under the initiative.
- The grantee will be required to make certain legal commitments through acceptance of the terms and conditions in the grant agreement.
- The grantee will be required to have a dedicated bank account to manage funds for the initiative.
- The grantee must provide a written Collaborative Agreement between any collaborating company or institution involved in the initiative. The Agreement could cover the allocation of intellectual property rights and rights, if any, to carry out follow-up research, development, and/or commercialisation. The agreement must be signed, and official seal affixed by the head of the main applicant and the head of the collaborating partner(s).

Upon signing of the contractual agreements by all parties concerned, funding for the first milestone will be released to the grantee to commence the initiative. This will be done after verifying transfer of the grantee's in-cash contribution for the first milestone to a dedicated bank account.

The budget should reflect the cost for work to be undertaken only after the effective date of the award. The grant will not cover any cost/ charges incurred prior to the signing of the contract and it is the onus of the grantee to cover such expenses. Budgets for each proposed activity must be justified and related to the objectives of the initiative.

8. Project Monitoring

The MRIC will monitor the progress on a milestone basis as specified in the contract. Any decision on major issues pertaining to the project will be addressed by MRIC.

Disbursements will be made on a milestone basis, upon receipt of a satisfactory technical progress report, a certified statement of accounts and invoices.

A comprehensive interim report must be submitted at the end of each milestone.

The interim report should include:

- the objectives
- work completed
- outstanding work
- problems encountered by project leader and the collaborators
- way forward/conclusion

A site visit may be organised at the end of each milestone period to the company/enterprise/institution whereby the Project Leader or team member must present the activities undertaken during the milestone.

9. Project Completion and Follow-up

A soft copy of a comprehensive Final Report must be submitted to MRIC within 30 days after the end of the funding period. The Final Report must carry the following acknowledgement on the cover page: "*The material is based upon work supported by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council under award number Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MRIC.*"

The Final Report shall include:

1. a verbatim statement of the initiative objectives;
2. a summary description of the investigations and development carried out;
3. the research and development findings or results; and
4. the potential commercial application(s) of the innovation arising from the research and development efforts.

The Final Report delivered under the grant may be made available to the public by the MRIC, except for that portion of the report containing technical data and/or commercially sensitive which has been properly identified and marked. Such data must be clearly labelled as proprietary and marked with a legend similar to the following: *"The following is proprietary information, which (name of grantee) requests not to be released to persons outside the MRIC, except for purposes of evaluation, for a period of four years from the expiration of Grant No....."*

An acknowledgement of the support and disclaimer must also appear in publications of any materials, whether copyrighted or not.

Participation in Events and Surveys

The grantee must participate in events, outcomes and impact surveys conducted by the MRIC. Surveys will be conducted at any frequency that the MRIC chooses. All surveys will comply to the Data Protection Act 2017. The grantee may designate a team member, or any relevant responsible party at their discretion, to participate in surveys conducted by the MRIC. Upon non-participation, a penalty of 5% will be applied to the overall score received for any eventual funding application made by the grantee of any collaborating entity (institution/company/organisation) of the grantee.

Follow up services

The Follow up and Facilitation Unit will endeavour towards providing the optimal opportunities for the perennity of the project. This may consist of the following:

- identification and protection of Intellectual Property Rights through the Technology Transfer Office
- further development of project through other support mechanism
- matchmaking with other stakeholders
- Follow-up in terms of more funding, networking or aid to commercialisation
- Refer projects to other organisations or ministries
- Ensure perennity of projects
- Aid finance section in recovery of unspent funds
- Ensure project dissemination

Note: Unless otherwise agreed, the ownership of intellectual property and responsibility for its application shall vest in the person generating that intellectual property. Unless otherwise agreed, where a person uses the resources of the Council to create a product, process or service, the intellectual property rights of that product, process or service shall vest in that person.

Eligibility

The main applicant must be one of the following:

- i. A Company (including MSMEs, large enterprises) registered with the Registrar of Companies in the Republic of Mauritius.
- ii. An Organisation/Association including Non-Governmental Organisations registered with the Registrar of Associations in the Republic of Mauritius for at least one year.
- iii. An Academic Institution (recognised/ accredited tertiary education institutions or Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions) registered with the Higher Education Commission for at least one year.
- iv. A Public/Private Research Institution in the Republic of Mauritius in existence for at least one year.
- v. Government Institution or Parastatal Bodies

Eligibility of the Project Leader

The Project Leader must be employed by the enterprise, company or institution submitting the project proposal. For administrative purposes, all correspondence will be addressed to the Project Leader. If the Project Leader is not a citizen of Mauritius, the Project Leader is required to provide the Council with copies of the passport, Residence/Occupation Permit and/or work permit covering the duration of the project period and ensure that at least one team member is of Mauritian nationality. The individual who is proposed as the Project Leader at the time of the submission of the proposal is expected to be the Project Leader at the time of the inception of the grant. The Project Leader shall be nominated by the institution submitting the proposal.

Other eligibility criteria

- No awards will be made to applicants who are already recipient of full project funding from other agencies for the same activities of a same or similar project.
- An institution is not allowed to submit more than two (2) applications at the same time for funding considerations, under a Research and Innovation Grant Scheme or a specific Call for Proposals.

Dispute Settlement

Any dispute or difference arising out of the interpretation or implementation of the project shall be settled amicably or through recourse to arbitration. The partners shall mutually agree on the appointment of an arbitrator. The applicant is responsible for the accuracy and validity of all the administrative, fiscal, and scientific information in the proposal. Deliberate withholding, falsification, or misrepresentation of information could result in administrative action, such as declination of a proposal or the suspension and/or termination of an award as well as possible criminal penalties.

Projects are subject to regular technical and financial audits by MRIC or independent assessors to be appointed by MRIC. Unsatisfactory reports may lead to termination of the award and reimbursement of funds.

**Mauritius Research and Innovation Council,
Level 6, Ebène Heights,
34 Cybercity,
Ebène 72201**

Tel: (230) 465 1235

Fax: (230) 465 1239

Email: contact@mric.mu

Website: www.mric.mu