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 and Innovation (DSI) 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. 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 buildings 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.).

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. **Evidence of firm commitment from key regional institutions or stakeholders (e.g. Provincial/local government and institutions, private business etc.) to implement the plan if shown to be feasible.**
2. **Demonstrate linkages and synergies to relevant development plans (3 spheres of Government) such as provincial plans and Municipal IDPs.**

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.

3.   INNOVATION BASELINE STUDIES

Please note that all proposals MUST have **Commitment (and evidence) of co-funding from the applicant, or a regional or local partner.** In addition, the proposals must clearly articulate the following **RISP Minimum Requirements** (**Indicators**) for Innovation Baseline Studies:

- **Commitment (and evidence) of co-funding from the applicant, or a regional or local partner.**
- **STI institutional landscape**
  - The status of the STI institutional landscape - identification and analysis of existing regional STI institutions and programmes (e.g. academia, research institutions, product development centres, digital skills centres, technology-based incubators etc.). This must include their current spatial location and respective roles in promoting socio-economic development through STI.
  - The status of key competencies/expertise of regional/local STI institutions that are aligned with regional economic sectors (e.g. their research centres, technology incubators, skills development centres etc.).
  - Accessibility of these regional and national STI institutions/programmes and incentives support by local communities, industries, SMMEs, inventors and innovators.
  - The role (including support mechanisms) that regionally/locally based STI institutions should play in supporting regional/local innovation, industrialisation and technology-based entrepreneurship.
- **Industrialisation and Technology-based entrepreneurship**
  - The extent of beneficiation/value-addition through innovation by local/regional industries (do these industries/sectors utilise innovation to be competitive?).
  - The degree of technology and innovation adoption by regional sectors (including SMMEs).
  - The status of technology-based enterprise development.
  - The extent of linkages between regional/local industries and local and national STI institutions (this could be demonstrated through collaborations/partnerships on STI projects and initiatives).
  - Challenges and recommended interventions to promote and support technology based industrialisation and enterprise development.
- **Inclusivity and transformation**

- o Analysis of the demography of the region as it relates to a regional socio-economic profile, including education level (including Science, Engineering, Technology and Digital skills) , poverty levels, unemployment (including youth unemployment).
  - o Community involvement/participation in innovation programme/initiatives, technology-based entrepreneurship and related activities (e.g. through regional/local innovation support programmes or interventions from government, private business and non-government entities etc.).
- **Government (national, provincial and local government) enabling environment**
  - o Assessment of government policies and strategies (such as the NDP, Bio-economy strategy, IPAP, NGP, STI funding, etc.) to support innovation in South Africa.
  - o State of regulatory environment, RDI enabling frameworks or instruments and institutional arrangement.
  - o Accessibility of national government programmes and incentives support by regional/local communities, industries, SMMEs, inventors and innovators.
  - o Assessment of provincial and local government mechanisms and interventions to support regional innovation. This includes enabling policies and strategies, innovation funding and other innovation-enabling mechanisms (e.g. science parks, technology incubators, incentives, innovation funding etc).
  - o Policy and strategy alignment - alignment of provincial and local strategy/plans with national STI related policies. This should include policies aimed at promoting industrialisation, technology SMMEs development and positioning the regions/provinces for the fourth industrial revolution.
  - o The effectiveness of provincial/local government mechanisms and interventions in creating enabling environment to harness innovation for regional socio-economic development.
- **Linkages, collaborations and partnerships**
  - o Mapping of potential role players, stakeholders and strategic local and international partners.
  - o The extent of linkages, collaborations and partnerships between STI institutions (including institutions outside the region/province), provincial/local government, civil society and local/regional industries (including SMMEs, inventors and innovators).
  - o Existing and/or planned RDI initiatives.
  - o Challenges and recommendations to facilitate increased linkages, collaborations and partnerships. This should include the role government, academia and private business should play to facilitate participation of regional/local communities, inventors and innovators in technology and innovation.
- **Political, Economic, Social, and Technological (PEST) analysis** covering all key Areas above**:**
  - o STI institutional landscape
  - o Government enabling environment
  - o Industrialisation and technology-based entrepreneurship
  - o Inclusivity and transformation
  - o Linkages, collaborations and partnerships
  - o Other key Areas (if applicable)

2. What is a co-funding contribution?

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:

- Applicants applying for the first time: At least **15%** of the total requested funds

- Applicants receiving funding for the second time: At least **30%** of the total requested funds, *with half of the contribution being in cash.*

- Applicants receiving funding for more than two times: At least **50%** of the total requested funds *with 70% of the contribution being in cash.*

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

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

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 expect 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 *<u>enabling innovation in the regions</u>* 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 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 partner with organisations that offer IP protection cost.

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, or if the RISP funding stops.

NB: The budget for branding and website will be capped at R15 000.