

ICT INNOVATION DRIVE

A Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services Initiative

CALL FOR PROPOSALS DOCUMENT

1.0 Background

The Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services and the Postal Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ), supported by the postal and telecommunication services sector are inviting ICT Innovators, Start-Ups and Entrepreneurs to apply for Funding in the form of loans, under the ICT Innovation Drive Project.

The Innovation Drive Project is a brainchild of the Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services and is being implemented by POTRAZ. The project aims at promoting a culture of creativity and innovation among Zimbabweans, with the aim of creating employment through the development of local ICT applications, hardware and related innovations which are rooted in the realities of Zimbabwe.

ICT is a key driver of economic growth and development. It has the power to transform the fortunes of our country's economy into a digital powerhouse. Most useful innovations in this sector come from young people and the Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services would like to harness this power to promote development and transformation of the Zimbabwean economy towards a digital economy.

In order to be considered for funding, POTRAZ requires a detailed brief on the ICT innovation, Business Plan and a budget, which will be used to assess eligibility for funding.

Definition of ICT Innovation

Any ICT based product, service, business model, or process that is new to the market with a unique feature(s) that is successfully implemented to address a current need in a new /better way, or to satisfy a newly created demand when developed and deployed.

2.0 Who can apply?

Any ICT Innovators or Start-Ups that have brilliant innovations or solutions that have the potential to revolutionize its target market and/or drastically change the lives of Zimbabweans and the economy as a whole.

3.0 Type of Funding

Funding will be in the form of a loan. Please refer to 6.0 for details.

4.0 Application Process

Send a soft copy of the descriptive business plan, projections and budget required, clearly indicated "Application for Innovation Project Funding" to: innovationdrive@potraz.gov.zw for consideration.

5.0 Proposal Format

The business plan must be brief and concise. It is advisable to use the guidelines and format below to ensure that all the necessary information needed for assessment is available in the business plan:

i. Section A (Introduction)

- This is one of the most important sections of your business plan. It enables adjudicators to see how innovative your idea is.
- Give a description of the innovation and/or business Start-Up.
- Clearly highlight the goals, objectives, functionality, benefits, and or value proposition of the innovation to Zimbabwe.
- Briefly describe qualifications, expertise and capabilities of the Innovators or team members of the Innovation.
- State ownership of the innovation and/or company owning the innovation should be made clear and supporting documents are required.

ii. Section B (Market Analysis)

- Who are your target market and current customers?
- Has the Innovation been piloted?
- What is the size of your target population or market?
- Competitor analysis.
- Simple SWOT analysis.
- At what stage is the innovation (development, testing or in service etc).

iii. Section C (Funding Request Section)

NB: This is the most important section, take time to articulate this well as this will be assessed against your funding requirements or budget.

- How much funding are you applying for?
- Disclosure of previous funding received from other funding organisations. Have you received any other funding for this Innovation before, if so how much and for what purpose?
- Detailed purpose of funds being applied for.

iv. Section D (Financial Section)

- Revenue projections of the innovation for a minimum of 2 years.
- Historical financial data if the Innovation has been in operation.
- Income Statement, Balance Sheet can be included for already established innovations.
- Explain how the new funding would improve your operations - in terms of revenue, cash flow and profitability.

Adjudication process

There are a number of stages and ways that can take the innovation toward success – provided the proposal fully meets all the necessary criteria.

How successful Innovators will be selected:

The process

- Once the first submission deadline is over, the evaluation process will begin.
- The Adjudication team shall consist of Officials from the Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services, POTRAZ and Industry experts, who will evaluate and rate submissions.
- Adjudicators will work with sector specific Experts to verify credibility of Innovations focusing on specific sectors e.g. agriculture, manufacturing, health and others, depending on the specific areas that the innovation focuses on. This is to further assess feasibility of the innovation.
- After the adjudication process is done, successful innovations will be informed and announced.
- All successful Innovators will be required to undergo a mandatory entrepreneurship skills training and will be allocated mentors to guide them towards a sustainable and profitable business.

Adjudication Criteria

The Adjudication Team will evaluate the proposal submissions based on the following criteria:

- Degree of innovation in comparison with solutions already developed and implemented or for new innovations, its potential to change the lives of Zimbabweans and/or beyond.
- Impact of the innovation and potential of the proposed idea to make technological change/digital transformation.
- Sustainability and scale to which the innovation can turn into a project that can be sustained and the potential that the innovation can be scaled up at a national level and beyond.
- How global or local the innovation is; that is, does it solve a problem or improve a situation on a small or large scale?
- Potential revenue or cost reduction for the customer or end user purchasing the innovation. The business case should verify these numbers.
- How easy it is to develop, and how fast it can go to market, explained in a constructive and concise manner.
- How easy it is for the potential customers to deploy it, taking into account; time, change of behaviour and cost. The benefits of the innovation (user or efficiency). What impact does the innovation have?
- Does the solution solve the problem in an innovative way?

Terms and Conditions

- The decision of the Adjudication Team is final.
- Participants must ensure that their Submissions comply with specifications of the definition of an ICT Innovation.
- Attempting to influence decision making process will lead to disqualification.
- Any Innovator who does not submit their application by the given deadline will not be considered.
- Participants must ensure that their innovation belongs to them and that it is not stolen from someone else or they will be required to return all funding.
- Canvassing will lead to disqualification of the project and Innovator.
- Successful Innovators will be required to open a bank account with an identified financial institution for disbursement purposes.
- Documents submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.
- All successful Innovators will be required to attend capacity building training and will be assigned mentors (business, marketing, finance and technical) to ensure business success.
- Fraudulent or negligently misrepresenting information will lead to immediate disqualification.

6.0 Loan Repayment conditions

- Successful Innovators will require a guarantor to secure the loan which will be offered on 36 month tenure.
- Repayments will be done in line with cash flow projections through monthly instalments.
- New projects will be granted a 12 month grace period to commence repayment of loan.
- Operational Innovations will be granted 6 months grace period to commence repayment of loan.
- All successful Innovators will be required to sign a loan agreement before funding is released.
- Police Clearance will be required.

CALL FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

POTRAZ is calling for submission of proposals from 04 May 2017, closing on 30 May 2017 to: innovationdrive@potraz.gov.zw.



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'Creating a level playing field'