



# CALL FOR DOCTORAL ICT RESEARCH GRANTS

## **BACKGROUND**

The Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ) is pleased to announce the launch of the Doctoral ICT Research Grants program, aimed at fostering collaboration between academia and industry to address pressing challenges in Zimbabwe's ICT sector. This is in line with its mandate to promote research and development, in Zimbabwe's ICT sector. This initiative is designed to support registered doctoral students and academic staff at accredited universities in Zimbabwe as well as post-doctoral researchers affiliated to an accredited academic institution in Zimbabwe, by funding impactful ICT policy and technical research projects.

Research grants, particularly at the doctoral level, are an important investment for the advancement of knowledge in key fields, such as ICTs. The program seeks to enhance the role of academia in regulatory and policy research, as well as in the development of cutting-edge ICT solutions. Through this initiative, POTRAZ aims to strengthen research capacity, promote technological innovation, and generate data-driven insights for policy formulation and industry advancement.

## **RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS**

The initiative aims to advance policy research as well as technical/applied research and development. Hence applicants have the option to select a project based on either of the following clusters and corresponding themes:



### **CLUSTER 1: POLICY RESEARCH**

Proposals under the policy research cluster will focus on the conduct of research on fundamental problems, to provide policymakers with pragmatic, action-oriented recommendations for alleviating the problem. Hence, the outputs will be research reports and relevant policy recommendation papers. The identified priority themes under this cluster are as follows:

1. Data Protection & Cyber security.
2. Tariff & Competition issues in the ICT sector.
3. Universal Access and Use of postal and telecommunication services.
4. Smart cities.
5. Technological literacy and youth development.
6. ICT innovation and entrepreneurship.
7. Postal service access and usage study.
8. Impact of ICTs on agricultural productivity and service delivery in the health sector.
9. Emerging technologies and their application in various economic sectors e.g., health, agriculture, tourism, mining, education etc.
10. Regulation of Internet of Things (IoT) and Machine-to-Machine(M2M) communications.

### **CLUSTER 2: TECHNICAL RESEARCH**

POTRAZ seeks to promote academic research targeted towards development of tangible outputs that solve key challenges facing the ICT industry nowadays. In this target, POTRAZ

encourages submissions from academic researchers who are passionate about advancing the field of telecommunications. The final deliverables of projects under this cluster shall be research papers and prototypes which will be developed and tested within 12 months. The identified priority themes under this cluster are as follows:

### **Frontier Technologies**

- AI, IoT, Big data, Blockchain Applications in Telecommunications.
- Application of frontier technologies for cybersecurity and data protection.
- Automation & Robotics and Embedded systems.
- Augmented Reality.

### **Trends in Telecommunications**

- The Path Towards 5G
- Rural Connectivity
- Wireless Optical Communication
- Satellite Communications

### **Digital Services & Smart Communities**

- E-health
- Digital Agriculture
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Smart Water Managements (SWM).
- Smart Homes etc.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

The following types of researchers are eligible:

- Registered doctoral students at accredited Zimbabwean universities, in which case the projects must have been approved by the project supervisor (i.e., faculty member).
- Academic staff at accredited universities in Zimbabwe, in their individual capacity or as a collective.
- Post doctoral researchers, affiliated to an accredited academic institution in Zimbabwe.

## **RESTRICTIONS**

- a. Reimbursement of expenses (i.e., retroactive support) for previously completed research activities is not possible.
- b. Costs such as fees, stipends/salaries and other remuneration will not be eligible.
- c. Any academic with a yet to be completed research project awarded by POTRAZ will not be eligible to apply.
- d. The grants are limited to research projects that do not have prior funding, either from POTRAZ or other institutions.

## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Applicants will submit a competitive project proposal for the available funding. Submission of an application does not mean the project must be funded.

**Title of Paper:** A concise and informative title of the paper should be provided.

**Author names and affiliations:** Please clearly indicate the given name(s) and family name(s) of each author and check that all names are accurately spelt. Provide the full postal address, e-mail address and contact number of each author.

**Project Summary:** Maximum of 300 words.

**Introduction and Background:** Maximum of two pages.

**The research problem:** The proposal should clearly articulate the knowledge gap that the researcher targets to address, and why it is important to address this knowledge gap. The research problem should be aligned with at least one research theme/topic. Maximum of two pages.

**Objectives and Methodology:** The proposal should clearly articulate the objectives of the planned research and the research methodology. The research questions must align with the instructive research themes above. Particular attention will be paid to ideas that have clear potential for scalability to drive ICT development. Maximum of 5 pages.

**Literature Review:** Use APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition, a maximum of three pages.

**Implementation Plan:** Maxim of two pages.

**Budget & Budget Justification:** Researchers should provide a detailed budget and justification thereof. Ensure that the costs are credible and reasonable.

**Workplan:** A list of key milestones for the project which demonstrates the deliverables expected at each point during the project is required. These milestones will be used as the basis for tracking the implementation of activities towards project goals and outputs. Given the one-year time frame for the grant, researchers are encouraged to commit to a clear time-bound set of deliverables all achievable within one year for the main deliverable targeted during the current period of funding.

**References:** Authors are further encouraged to ensure that every reference cited in the text is also present in the reference list (and vice versa).

**Applicant`s Curriculum Vitae:** Curriculum vitae must be submitted for the Principal Investigator as well as the co-Investigators.

**Formatting:** Font size/type (Times New Roman/12)

**Tables & Figures:** Font size 10. Caption on top for tables and below for figures. Indicate sources in both cases.

## **SUBMISSION PROCESS**

**Deadline for Submission of Research Proposals:** All submissions from interested researchers, as per guidelines provided above, should be sent to [research.development@potraz.zw](mailto:research.development@potraz.zw) not later than the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2025.

**Review Process:** Following the submission of articles, reviews will be done by a Review Committee to select suitable papers by the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2025.

**Notification for Acceptance:** Authors meeting the selection criteria will be given a notification of acceptance by the 2<sup>rd</sup> of May 2025.

---