



**Mauritius Research and Innovation Council**

## **Special Call for Proposals**

**Building Blue Resilience through innovation**

***Guidelines to Applicants***



# ***Guidelines to Applicants***

## **1. Background**

On 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020, MV Wakashio ran aground on a reef off Pointe d'Esny, southeast of Mauritius leading to a 'state of environmental emergency'. Since 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020, oil has been released into the pristine lagoons and coastal areas affecting the marine, terrestrial environments, and coastal communities along the impacted areas.

In order to face this ecological crisis of unprecedented magnitude and impact on our society, the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC), through this special call for proposals, has earmarked funds to encourage Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), enterprises, private organisations, public and private institutions, academia and research institutions to implement research and/or innovative projects to accelerate the Government's response and to contribute to remedial and recovery.

## **2. Aim and Objective of the Special Call for Proposals**

This Special Call for Proposals is aimed at supporting multidisciplinary research and/or innovative projects that can potentially improve and accelerate the national response to the challenges posed by the oil spill resulting from the grounding of the MV Wakashio. This calls for sustainable and environmentally friendly approaches for the restoration and recovery of the wide gamut of impacted dimensions including biodiversity, marine, terrestrial environments and coastal communities.

## **3. Thematic Areas**

The following thematic areas will be considered for funding:

- Oil spill tracking;
- Development of ecosystem health and indicators;
- Restoring coastal, marine, and wetland resources;
- Restoring coral reefs and sea-grass beds;
- Identification of the best remediation techniques to deal with oil spillage in the sea;
- Ecosystem and community structure;
- Societal impact and building community resilience;

- Enhancing beaches and shorelines;
- Assessing and addressing the human health impact of oil spill;
- Oil spill waste management; and
- Understanding ecological impacts.

A list of indicative project ideas is available on the website ([www.specialcall.org](http://www.specialcall.org)) for reference purposes only.

Projects that can be funded under this Special Call are encouraged to leverage on existing infrastructure, capabilities, and networks with local/international partners.

## 4. Deadline

- The **Application Deadline** is **Thursday 17th September 2020 at 14h00**. Applications received after the due date will not be considered.
- The application form is available at <http://www.specialcall.org> and should be sent to the MRIC by email on [scp.blueresilience@mrhc.mu](mailto:scp.blueresilience@mrhc.mu). Applications will be evaluated in the order they are received.

## 5. Eligibility

5.1 The main applicant must be one of the following:

- i. a Company (including start-ups, 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
- iii. an Institution registered with the Higher Education Commission or
- iv. a Public Research Institution

The main applicant is encouraged to collaborate with local or international institutions/companies/organisations.

5.2 The Project Leader must be employed by the institution/company/organisation submitting the project proposal. 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 for implementation of the project.

The Project Leader must be a Mauritian national/resident or holder of a Mauritian work permit covering at least the period of time during which the proposed project will be undertaken.

## 6. Funding opportunity

The total amount available for this Special Call for Proposals is currently MUR25 Million.

The maximum amount per grant is MUR 2 Million over a period of maximum 24 months.

While this is a 100% grant to be awarded for approved projects, applicants are advised to demonstrate their contribution to the project. The applicant's contribution can be in-cash and/or in-kind.

Applicants are strongly advised to consult the Guide on Allowable and Non-Allowable Expenses specific to this Special Call ([www.specialcall.org](http://www.specialcall.org)).

## 7. Assessment of applications

The assessment of applications will be undertaken in a two-stage process (i) Administrative Screening and (ii) Technical Panel Evaluation.

### Administrative Screening

The MRIC will perform a pre-screening of applications according to the eligibility criteria as outlined in the Call. This will also include

1. A due diligence on the institutions/companies/organisations involved in the project as well as the collaborators.
2. A verification of the originality of the proposal through a similarity index.

All mandatory fields in the Application Form should be completed. **Incomplete application forms will not be assessed.** The onus is on the applicant to ensure that the application form, CVs, letter of support and any other required supporting documents are submitted within the stipulated deadline. Where specific clearances or authorisation is required from relevant authorities, the applicant must initiate the appropriate process to obtain the relevant clearance/authorisation and in the event the application is successful, the contractual agreement will only be signed upon receipt of the relevant clearances/authorisations.

### Technical Panel Evaluation

A Special Independent Panel will conduct the Technical Panel Evaluation in an expedited manner and in accordance with MRIC review principles.

The Technical Panel Evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Quality of the proposed project
  - The scope of the proposal, including the appropriateness and innovativeness of the proposal.
  - Extent to which the application responds to the aim and objectives of this call for proposals.
  - Appropriateness of the budget and justification for amount requested.
- Quality of applicant and team members

- Qualifications and track records of the applicant and team members.
  - Ability of the team to mobilise necessary resources.
  - How the in-house research/business environment at the applicant's organisation supports the planned work.
- Expected deliverables and impact of the project
  - The potential for timely and significant contributions in dealing with the challenges
  - Expected impact on assisting the relevant authorities in their work and in the deployment of general remediation and recovery solutions
  - The plans for sharing and dissemination of project outcomes.

Applicants may be invited for a pitching exercise, during which they would be required to answer questions based on their application to a Special Independent Panel.

## 8. Decision

- Funding decisions will be reached within an estimated 10 weeks after the closure of the deadline.
- The MRIC will endeavour to communicate its funding decisions as swiftly as possible so that approved projects can start immediately upon award.
- Only successful applicants will be notified.
- The decision of the Council will be final.

## 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Upon signing of the contractual agreement with successful applicants, funds will be disbursed on a mutually agreed milestone. Thereafter, the applicants would be required to submit progress reports and financial reports in timely manner on the templates provided by the MRIC.

The contractual agreement to be signed between the successful applicant and the MRIC is available on the website ([www.specialcall.org](http://www.specialcall.org)). By submitting an application under the Special Call for Proposals, the applicant undertakes to abide by the terms and conditions outlined in the contractual agreement in the event their application is successful.

## 10. Publication and accessibility of Research and Innovation results

Upon completion of the project, grantees will be asked to present their project outcomes in a final report. Due to the specific nature of this call, grantees will be mandated to make their Research and Innovation results available to the public (while respecting ethical, confidentiality and commercial sensitivity constraints), explicitly mentioning the support received from the MRIC.

The successful applicants may also be called upon to present the project in any dissemination event organised by the Council. Moreover, the abstract (*as specified in Section B.1 of the application form*) will be made public and will be published on the MRIC website (<http://www.mric.mu>) / Mauritius Research Repository (<https://www.repository.mu>) in the event the application is approved.

## 11. Queries and clarifications related to submission of applications

For all queries and clarifications regarding this Special Call for Proposals, please contact the MRIC on the following email: [scp.blueresilience@mric.mu](mailto:scp.blueresilience@mric.mu) or through our social media pages. Any queries or clarifications should be submitted to the Council before Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 09:00 hrs.

## 12. Privacy, Proprietary Information and Data Protection

Information contained in the applications will remain the property of the applicant, however MRIC will retain file copies of all proposals for record.

Applicants are advised to limit any proprietary information to the extent they deem essential for proper evaluation of their proposal. Proprietary information may be included in the body of the proposal or set apart from other text. Any proprietary information included in the proposal must be clearly marked by sentence or paragraph, as 'proprietary & confidential'. Applicants are advised to ensure that the proprietary information disclosed (if any) is restricted to information having : (i) minimal risk to jeopardising the award of patents or (ii) no risk for revealing trade secrets or commercial or other financial information that could adversely affect the competitive position of the applicants.

Proprietary information submitted to MRIC will be treated as confidential, 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, the special independent panel and, if necessary, to external reviewers for the evaluation of the proposal on a confidential basis.

In compliance with the Data Protection Act 2017 of the Republic of Mauritius, all personal information submitted along with the proposal shall be solely used for (i) processing and evaluation of the application and (ii) monitoring and evaluation of any approved project.