**CAPE HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM (CHEC) /**

**WESTERN CAPE GOVERNMENT (WCG)**

**JOINT TASK TEAM (JTT)**

**CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

**2020/2021**

# BACKGROUND TO THIS CALL

Over the past seven years, through a grant from the WCG, the JTT has funded research projects that address the developmental priorities of the Province. This year the research call will focus on strengthening the partnership between the WCG and the four universities (CPUT, SU, UCT and UWC) through the development of frameworks or approaches that support collaborative innovation.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic and governance sections of the WCG’s Provincial Recovery Plan[[1]](#footnote-2) identify the importance of innovative systems in addressing developmental priorities in the region. Across the Western Cape, the crisis caused by the pandemic has forced residents, organisations and governments to improvise in the face of rapidly changing challenges and opportunities. This has led to spontaneous innovation, or accelerated existing innovation. The WCG recognises the importance of building on these innovative developments, in order to implement its Recovery Plan in a difficult socio-economic environment, characterised by reduced budgets in government and civil society, continuing unemployment and the persistent vulnerability of significant segments of the population.

Accordingly, this research will lay the basis for a Community of Practice to be established between the four regional public higher education institutions (HEIs), the WCG, industry and other stakeholders to promote innovation in the region. The Regional Innovation System envisaged by this call will represent the first practical space for collaboration between these institutions to drive innovation in a particular sector. Over time the intent is to develop the capabilities required to establish a range of innovation networks in the Western Cape that have a variety of role players involved in them.

# RESEARCH FOCUS FOR 2021: FOSTERING A REGIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEM

There is growing South African and international interest in the cultivation of Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) as a model for sustaining and strengthening innovative approaches. This approach to innovation focuses on the importance of geographical proximity to deepen knowledge transfer, encourage inter-sectoral collaboration and respond effectively to the specific needs of local users and consumers. Usefully, research has shown that the type of knowledge matters: “geographical proximity is especially important in clusters that rely on tacit, symbolic or synthetic knowledge, but not so much in those relying on analytical or scientific knowledge.”[[2]](#footnote-3)

There is therefore the possibility, if not need, to expand the array of possible knowledges and points of innovation beyond high-end technology or the commercialisation of scientific research. Recognising the diversity of knowledge products (and producers) that are simultaneously addressing the economic, social and environmental aspects of challenges in the Western Cape, offers a wealth of possibilities for innovation that will tackle the deep issues in our society. This explicit embracing of “inclusive innovation” has the “aim to improve the availability, accessibility, affordability and acceptability of products, services and processes to low-income individuals.”[[3]](#footnote-4)

In general, therefore, there five sectors involved in an inclusive regional innovation system: (a) government, (b) research institutions, (c) universities, (d) firms and, critically, (e) communities. The sectors are required because:

* governments are in charge of setting an appropriate political and regulatory framework to encourage collaboration, technological development and exploitation;
* universities and research institutes provide the technical capacity and create useful knowledge for them and also for firms to innovate;
* while firms contribute to the RIS with the injection of capital for innovation, to generate technological demand, and to meet customer`s demands;
* communities must be treated as active producers, employees and entrepreneurs, not just passive consumers.

There are a number of international and local publications that provide guidance how to “open the black box of regional innovation”.[[4]](#footnote-5)

The existing partnership between the WCG, CHEC and the four universities of the Western Cape, as formalised in the Memorandum of Understanding (October 2006), offers the foundation for this kind of approach. And, as has been noted above, there are rich examples of economic and social innovation being pursued by the private sector and civil society across the Western Cape. However, a great deal of this work is happening beyond the view of the state and, often, academia.

As noted above, the longer term goal is to leverage the development of a Regional Innovation System where all four HEIs cooperate with the WCG, industry and communities into a Community of Practice that is able to foster innovation in the areas that create jobs, increase the well-being and improve the safety of all the residents of the Western Cape.

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The purpose of the research call is to assemble the evidentiary basis for a proposal to all four HEIs to cooperate with the WCG, industry and community to develop a Regional Innovation System (RIS) concentrated on a focus area that can have a significant impact on the long term development of the Western Cape.

## **Research Phases**

## This research should provide the Western Cape Government, CHEC and universities with the information required to develop a proposal to pursue a RIS together with the private sector. Therefore, this call is an invitation for proposals from academic partners that address the following thematic areas:

## Phase 1: The Western Cape Government has outlined in some detail its medium-term goals in two key documents – a Recovery Plan, to respond to the crises triggered by COVID-19, and a Provincial Strategic Plan, which maps out the change intended by 2024. The first phase should focus on identifying areas of innovation that would be most impactful in driving the achievement of the WCG’s medium-term goals. This could be achieved by formulating scenarios that describe possible paths of change, and the contribution needed from the different sectors of society to achieve them, before identifying sectors of innovation that will be needed.

* Phase 2: Focusing on these sectors of innovation, a scan of existing innovation in the Western Cape could be conducted in order to identify innovation networks and projects that are already showing signs of success and, critically, that can *benefit from the support* provided by an RIS. Case studies of existing innovative networks or projects should be part of this overall scan.
* Phase 3: A review of international examples of best practices of RIS should be conducted – that provides specific guidance for the development of innovation systems in the areas of innovation identified in the previous two steps. Critically this review should focus on the factors that have contributed to the success of these systems and compare this to the context of the Western Cape.
* Phase 4: An integration of the work of the previous three themes to make specific recommendations about which sector of social and economic innovation would benefit from increased support *and* the kinds of institutional, funding and capacity support that would be most effective to establish a Regional Innovation Forum in the Western Cape.

Recognising the exploratory nature of this research, the proposal should also plan to report interim findings to, and receive feedback from, a Reference Group that will be composed of representatives from WCG, CHEC, the four HEIs and industry. This should enable the flexibility to change course if the findings lead us in new directions.

## **Research Partners**

The overall intent of this research call is to support the development of a Community of Practice through building collaborative relationships between researchers at the HEIs, policy practitioners and researchers in the Western Cape Government, other research organisations, and representatives from industries and communities. Therefore, the expectation is that prospective bids will include representatives from at least two of the public HEIs in the Western Cape, and the overall number of institutions included in the bid will be a critical consideration in the evaluation of research proposals. A successful proposal will also demonstrate existing relationships with innovators and intermediaries in the economic and social sectors which can be mobilised to conduct this rapid review. The identification of partners in the WCG will be an advantage.

If researchers have an interest in bidding for specific phases of this process but cannot assemble the right or enough partners for a full bid, they should contact the institutional representative as indicated below to see if the JTT can assist with connecting them to other prospective bidders.

It should also be noted that the CHEC / WCG programme offers an excellent opportunity to expose students to working with government.

## **Evaluation of Proposals**

The JTT will use the following considerations in the evaluation of proposals:

* Proposals must include representatives from at least two of the public HEIs in the Western Cape.
* Proposals should demonstrate existing relationships with innovators and intermediaries in the economic and social sectors which can be mobilised to conduct this rapid review.
* Preference will be given to proposals that involve multiple universities from the Western Cape.
* Preference will be given to proposals that include research partners in the WCG.
* The methodology used for this work will be critical to its success – given the scope of this work and the need for it to be relatively rapid. Beyond these features, the methodology will not be dictated in this call. The comprehensiveness and feasibility of the methodologies outlined in the proposals will be a key factor in the adjudication process.

It may also be useful to consider Appendix 2, which contains the questions to be addressed in the adjudication process.

## **Minimum requirements in proposals**

All proposals must:

* Be submitted on the template provided in Appendix 1
* Include information about both the main researchers and the WCG partner (where applicable)
* Include a description of research approaches, activities and methods
* Explain the way(s) in which the project and its outcomes respond to the Phases identified in the call.
* Provide a work-plan that aligns with project objectives. The work-plan must take into account the deadlines for project deliverables and that final reports are due on **31 October 2021**.

## **Budgets**

This call provides for a total amount of R 500 000. The amount required per phase should be indicated and the funding for the next phase will be released upon the successful report on the previous phase to the Reference Group. All proposals will be evaluated on overall merit.

The JTT reserves the right to engage with researchers and, where necessary, discuss the modification of the costing of particular aspects of the work. It may also reserve a proportion of this overall amount for further phases of this work, if they are not adequately addressed by the available proposals.

# APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Institutional researchers interested in applying for the CHEC / WCG funding need to submit a completed proposal (using the template) to the member of the Joint Task Team at their university for internal review by **4 March 2021**. The names and email addresses of the institutional representatives are given below:

* CPUT: Dina Burger ([burgerd@cput.ac.za](mailto:burgerd@cput.ac.za))
* SU: Mawethu Nyakatya ([nyakatya@sun.ac.za](mailto:asmi@sun.ac.za))
* UCT: Sonwabo Ngcelwane ([sonwabo.ngcelwane@uct.ac.za](mailto:sonwabo.ngcelwane@uct.ac.za))
* UWC: Elizabeth Archer ([earcher@uwc.ac.za](mailto:earcher@uwc.ac.za))

If researchers have an interest in bidding for specific phases of this process but cannot assemble the right or enough partners for a full bid, they should contact their institutional representative to see if the JTT can able to assist with connecting them to other prospective bidders. You have this paragraph under Research Partners already so could leave it out here.

The proposals received will be ranked by a JTT adjudication panel, which includes all the institutional members of the JTT, in a process guided by the questions listed in the adjudication schedule in Appendix 2. It is anticipated that the JTT meeting to be held on **12 March 2021** will make a final selection.

Applicants may be called upon to make a presentation of their proposed projects to the JTT.

All applicants will be notified of the outcomes of this meeting and successful applicants will be requested to submit an invoice for the approved amount to CHEC. It should be noted that the management (including expenditure) of the awards will be in terms of the policies and processes of each of the universities.

# REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

As noted above, the researchers will be expected to report intermediate findings to a Reference Group. However, the timing of these reports should be indicated in the proposal, in line with the overall research timeline, rather than determined here.

A compulsory project progress report will be required by the end of July 2021, while the final project report will be required by the end of October 2021. Note that the report is considered by both academic and non-academic audiences.

In the unlikely event that no final report is received, the researchers will be expected to repay the monies allocated.

**Appendix 1**

Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) /

Western Cape Government (WCG)

JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMME 2020/2021

Project Funding Application

1. Main Researcher’s Details

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Surname |  | Initials |  | | Title |  | |
| University |  | | | | | |
| Faculty |  | Dept. / Unit | |  | | |
| E-mail |  | Tel (office) | |  | | |
|  |  | Mobile | |  | | |

Other Researcher’s Details

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Surname |  | Initials |  | | Title |  | |
| University |  | | | | | |
| Faculty |  | Dept. / Unit | |  | | |
| E-mail |  | Tel (office) | |  | | |
|  |  | Mobile | |  | | |

2. Main Provincial Partner’s Details (if applicable)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Surname |  | Initials |  | Title |  | |
| Department |  | | | | |
| E-mail |  | Telephone | |  | |

3. Provide details of your proposed research project

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Summarise your collective qualifications and experience – explain how these are relevant to the project.* |  |
| *Describe how the project responds to the research call* |  |
| *Research design and methods* |  |
| *Envisaged outputs and outcomes* |  |
| *List project partners and describe their role(s) in the project* | *(i) Partners*  *(ii) Western Cape Government Partners* |
| *Time-frame and project work plan* |  |

4. Budget: requests

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Kindly adhere to below description of budget line items | | |
| Each and every budget ITEM should be motivated in such a way that it justifies the amount/s requested.  Budget items must be fully described and aligned with the project work-plan provided in Section 3 above. | | |
|  | Description of budget line item | Amount |
| a. |  |  |
| b. |  |  |
| c. |  |  |
| d. |  |  |
| e. |  |  |
| f. |  |  |
| TOTAL | |  |

5. Other sources of funding received / expected

Please list other sources of funding you have received and expect to receive for this project.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Please complete this table | | |
|  | Other sources of funding received for this project | Amount |
| a. |  |  |
| b. |  |  |
| c. |  |  |
| d. |  |  |
| e. |  |  |
| f. |  |  |
| TOTAL | |  |

**Appendix 2**

**ADJUDICATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

**WCG - CHEC Projects**

**Key questions to be addressed when assessing proposals:**

1. **Inclusion of a diverse and useful set of representatives**: are there representatives from at least two of the public HEIs in the Western Cape? How many of the research institutions in the Western Cape are represented? Does the proposal demonstrate existing relationships with innovators and intermediaries? Does it include research partners in the WCG?
2. **Responsiveness to the call’s priorities:** Will the study address the phases identified in the call?
3. **Research Methodology / Methods / Activities:** Do the methods align with sound research practice? Are they also aligned with the research call question / objectives?
4. **Envisaged outputs and outcomes:** Will the envisaged outputs and outcomes speak to the needs of the different stakeholders, e.g. will the outputs and outcomes result in recommendations for the WCG, CHEC, universities and other sectors in the development of a regional innovation system?
5. **Time-frame and workplan:** Is the work plan realistic - and will it result in the desired outcomes?
6. **Budget:** Are budget items clearly motivated? Are there any inappropriate budget items (such as funding for augmenting salaries covered by the core establishment of the university)?

1. While this document will be released in mid-February, the key elements of the Recovery Plan were announced in a special address to Western Cape Legislature by Premier Alan Winde on the 22 October 2020. Available here: <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/sites/www.westerncape.gov.za/files/address_by_premier_winde_-_the_courage_needed_to_get_the_job_done_media.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Ricardo M. Pino & Ana María Ortega (2018) Regional innovation systems: Systematic literature review and recommendations for future research, *Cogent Business & Management, 5*:1, 1463606. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Grobbelaar, S., Gwynne-Evans, N. & Brent, A. (2016). From enterprise development to inclusive innovation – A systemic instruments framework for regional innovation support. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 8(2), 233-246. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. OECD (2011). Regions and Innovation Policy*, OECD Reviews of Regional Innovation*. OECD Publishing. [*http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264097803-en*](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264097803-en) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)