Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Question and Answers
SBIR DM "**Innovation challenges in** Ghana, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Uganda"

Version 1, 21 December 2023

This document contains the questions and answers from the information meeting, and which were received by e-mail.

SBIR Questions:

	Questions:	Answers:
1.	Is there a format/form for the proposal for stage 1?	This information can be found on: https://www.rvo.nl/subsidies-financiering/sbir-innovatie-opdracht/offertes-indienen
2.	Where can I find the call on TenderNed?	https://www.tenderned.nl/aankondigingen/overzicht/311843
3.	Are the information sessions recorded?	No, they are not. The presentation will always be shared with the attendees. If you have any questions left, please contact us by email: SBIR@rvo.nl .
4.	In the presentation it is emphasised that the context should be taken into account, what is meant with this?	When developing innovations (for emerging economies) the settings/context and the obstacles with the embedding of your innovation, should be well taken into account. This can be about resource constraints (materials, financing, institutions), possible undesirable impact on the environment, cultural and social demands, existing (informal) activities and national legislation. The African partner in the co-operation can help you understand these settings and context.
5.	The bids will be assessed on impact, technological feasibility and economical perspective. Will we receive more specific requirements per subject?	The 3 assessment criteria are clarified and elaborated in the text of the call. The translation of this part of the call is added on the bottom of this document. Key is to substantiate how your innovation will have reasonable chance to make impact, is technical feasible and has an economic perspective
6.	In the slide 'Online SBIR form", what does Declaration mean?	The declaration needs to be signed by an authorized person to send in the SBIR bid, this might be someone else than the project leader. This person is declaring that he/she • Is authorized to sign this bid • Has completed the form and the appendices truthfully • Accepts and understands the SBIR procedure and conditions • His/Her organization meets the conditions (chapter 4 and 5 of the Call) • All partners agree with the project plan (this includes de division of the budget and tasks)

7.	Minimum viable product after phase 1?	After phase 1, it is expected that a lot of your questions are answered, and one can see with more certainty if the idea is still feasible. You can develop an MVP in phase 1.
8.	For phase 1, legal feasibility I assume is part of the feasibility study (if I would advise on this)?	Yes, if it is a valuable topic for your innovation
9.	How will you divide the €136.000 per country between 8 matches?	Not all matches will receive a contract, so the €136.000 can be divided with a max of € 34.000 per bid.
10.	If total costs are higher than our bid (of max. €34.000), should we make that transparent?	Yes please. As long as you offer your bid for no more than the maximum price.
11.	What is meant by the hypothetical price?	We ask you to indicate what the price would be if you would transfer all (IP) rights of the research to us.
12.	Is it possible that some countries may receive more contracts than others or all countries have equal contracts numbers for the feasibility?	Yes, depending on the received bids per country and the quality of the bids, the number of awarded bids per country can differ. The remaining budget from phase 1 will be transferred to phase 2.
13.	Do I have to send in an invoice with 0% VAT?	In SBIR, we always ask to offer your bid **including** VAT. VAT can be 0%.
14.	And how do I send in an invoice?	If you receive a contract, you will get the right email address to send in the signed contract, invoice and reports.
15.	Is there a template for the collaboration agreement?	RVO does not have a template for the collaboration agreement. The coaches, however, are working on this and will contact you about this part.
16.	Who is the main contractor of RVO - the Dutch or African entrepreneur?	Due to the SBIR framework, it is obliged that a Dutch (or EU partner) is the main contractor. Therefore, the Dutch/EU partner transfers the money to the African entrepreneur.
17.	What responsibilities does the main contractor have?	The main contractor is responsible for the results and reporting. The main contractor allocates the budget between the partners as agreed in the proposal and according to the terms agreed in the collaboration agreement.
18.	Does transferring the money mean that the local entrepreneur must pay taxes (as it is income) locally?	Yes, you should take the local taxes into account in your budget.
19.	And if you have an additional partner, is it possible to subcontract this partner?	Yes, you can have extra partners as a subcontractor, as a co-creation partner, that is up to you. You can also get a service or a product from a third party.
20.	Is there a max/cap on day rate for the budget?	We expect you to make us an offer. No cap on day rates, but make sure you are competitive and that your rate reflects the fact that you will keep the intellectual property rights (IPR) and make a business case in the future. So we don't expect an offer with commercial hourly rates.

21.	Is the selection phase after the feasibility?	Phase 1 is the feasibility phase and starts after the assessment process where only projects will be selected and awarded that look promising. The same goes for phase 2. There are 2 assessment moments.
22.	Will the assessment committee ask direct questions to us?	Yes, in this SBIR we ask the project leaders (EU and African) to be online present in the online committee meeting. During the committee meeting of both phase 1 and phase 2, project leaders and partners will get a chance to pitch their project and have a Q&A with the committee.
23.	Pitch is done by the Dutch or the African entrepreneur?	Preferably together. We expect 2-4 project members in the meeting. Make sure these people can answer question from the committee. About the pitch: you decide who will pitch what part. Please keep in mind, time is limited.
24.	How long do you have for the pitch?	We expect max 5 minutes pitch and around 10 min Q&A, we are busy making the committee program and time slots, details will follow by email.
25.	If conflicts (of interest, or other) arise, does RVO have a mediation channel?	If there is a conflict, the first thing to do is check how you divided the responsibilities and how you planned to deal with conflicts in the collaboration agreement. RVO may try to mediate if parties cannot resolve the issue themselves.
26.	The Dutch company is the main contractor, but only the African entrepreneur can change partners. Why is that?	The SBIR requires an EU company to be the formal contractor. However, in this pilot the African entrepreneur is the owner of the innovation concept and further development. We see the cooperation as a co-creation process in which both parties agree to work together or stop the cooperation. When partners agree to stop the collaboration in phase 1, it is the African entrepreneur who has to indicate whether another partner is possible in order to compete for phase 2. Without an EU partner it is not possible to compete in phase2. Of course, this has to be done in consultation with the SBIR team and in line with the competition process.
27.	This will be a collaboration challenge, how about IPR	We expect you to agree on this topic in the collaboration agreement. If there are questions about it, please know that RVO has expertise on IPR.
28.	Who will be the owner of the idea?	The African entrepreneur is the owner of the idea at the start of phase 1. In phase 1 both partners start a co-creation process with the aim of developing the innovation further together. One can say that there is a shared aim. The collaboration agreement will outline on what base the partners work together, this includes aspects of ownership (on the short and long term). This differs from case to case.

Assessment criteria (From SBIR Call pag 10.)
The assessment by the external committee will take place in accordance with the procedure described in the SBIR manual (version March 2021) and using the assessment criteria described

below. In the assessment (total maximum 100 points to be obtained), a maximum of the following number of points can be awarded per criterion:
1. Impact: 40
2. Technological feasibility: 30
3. Economic perspective: 30

Only proposals that meet the minimum requirements (see 3. Minimum requirements) will be further assessed. Only projects that score 60% or more of the maximum number of points on each of the three criteria will be included in the ranking in order to be considered for a contract Eligibility.

9.1 Impact
For the Impact criterion, the following points are important:
a. Extent to which the innovation contributes to solving the societal problem.
b. Quality of the substantiation of the impact.
c. Degree of innovation: How big is the 'breakthrough' and how much new functionality is created for customers?
d. Usability for users.
e. How much value does the proposal deliver for the requested budget ('value for money')?

9.2 Technological feasibility
The following points are important for the Technological feasibility criterion:
a. The extent to which the proposal proposes a technologically interesting approach.
   i. Is the approach promising?
   ii. Is the approach feasible?
   iii. Is the approach inventive?
a. b. Is (are) this the right party (parties) to develop it?
b. Quality of the technical rationale:
   i. Is it clear what the 'technological starting point' is?
   ii. Is clear what research is planned to be done?
   iii. Are the proposed resources consistent with the proposed approach?
   iv. Is it clear how the proposed research contributes to the objective of the project?
   v. Is the proposal easily readable by someone well versed in the subject matter but who is not a technical expert?

9.3 Economic perspective
For the Economic perspective criterion, the following points are important:
a. Does the proposal give confidence that the entrepreneur is developing a product and/or service that customers can and are willing to pay for? And does the entrepreneur have a picture of who the paying customer could be?
b. Quality of substantiation:
   i. The extent to which it is clear how the business will make money.
   ii. The extent to which it is substantiated that the right parties are involved.