



Question and Answers

SBIR DM “Innovations for increased resilience to climate change in Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa”

Version 1.0, 17 January 2025

This document contains the questions and answers from the information meeting on 14 January 2025 and which were received by e-mail.

	Question	Answer
1.	Does SBIR provide a list of potential partners in the target countries and/or provide help connecting to them?	No, we expect you to find partner(s) yourself, preferably as soon as possible in the process. If you really do not know where to start, please contact us for our networks. You can use phase 1 to select a partner for the actual R&D in phase 2.
2.	Do you only focus on climate adaptation, or also mitigation?	Look how your innovation fits into one of the three themes on climate change. Describe the challenge you aim to tackle and eventually turn it into a business case. This is important. Not whether it is mitigation or adaptation.
3.	On this topic, I read in the call that prediction solutions are not considered an innovation for this call. So, would you say that smart sensors for example are considered innovative solutions for this call?	It depends. If smart sensors are part of an integrated approach for which there is a market in areas coping with climate change challenges, it does fit. Making it usable for specific conditions and integrated in the services needed. From experience we know that standalone forecast solutions are not used by farmers. Only if they are integrated in a package and providing services they need and may access.
4.	Is it possible to combine multiple themes in one project? If so, is allowed to increase the project budget due to the combination of multiple themes?	You can send in more than one EoI. These ideas should all be able to proceed independently. If you are invited to send in a bid for Phase 1, you need in addition convince the assessment committee that you have the capacity to implement each of them. The maximum budget applies for each bid. So no combinations.
5.	Is there any limit of EoIs per team? Can we apply to more than one theme with different projects in parallel?	No there is no limit. Keep in mind that you need enough resources (capacity and finances) to handle more projects at the same time.
6.	Understanding slide 13 of the presentation, does this mean that composting of residue materials as mentioned in theme 3, with the objective of producing a chemical fertilizer substitute as input for agricultural production, is excluded?	It depends. Providing fertilizers is excluded as being part of primary production and inputs. However, if the innovation lies in using untapped resources due to climate change and building resilience it may fit in one of the themes.



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7.	Question: Should the African partner be an SME, and is full commitment of the African partner necessary at EoI stage?	No. Partners are not mandatory nor the type of partner. The committee will assess your phase 1 and phase 2 bid for your capacity to achieve the intended results. From experience, this is only possible with the right partners. Full commitment is not necessary for EoI. We only assess if the EoI fits in the call, is an innovation and needs research and development.
8.	Clarification on the partners, whom can you work with?	See question and answer 7.
9.	Can a Dutch NGO do the application in cooperation with African partners?	Yes, there is no formal barrier to that. But mind you, we assess in phase 1 under economic perspective whether the applicant/consortium is capable of developing the innovation and bringing it to market. In addition, we assess whether the idea makes business sense. For this, see also the description of the criteria in the SBIR manual in section 3.3. An NGO does not seem the appropriate party to develop and market a product. We therefore recommend letting an entrepreneur take the lead. That way, we want to avoid funding projects that stop when the contract ends. A company will still have the 'drive' to develop the product and bring it to market. An NGO or a foundation can be the applicant. Involvement of an entrepreneur is a must, it can be a foreign party. Well explaining how the innovation can successfully enter the market is key.
10.	Is using brine water from a desalination plant for biomass productions (living fences, greening the desert, increasing biodiversity) also seen as an agricultural production system?	It depends. If it is connected to climate change, and you have a method with a business model, then yes. "Due to climate change we can create a package for farmers so that they still can farm". This is also a bit of a grey area. It also doubtful if introduction needs Research and Development or just demonstration.
11.	The ultimate beneficiary of all 3 themes is Farmers? That would mean this is an Agri-Climate change tender?	The beneficiaries are not necessarily farmers or farmers only. It concerns non-urban communities.
12.	What is the definition of "agricultural production method"? Can an open-field hydroponic system be included?	Such a system cannot be included. It is directly related to the production of crops. We refer to dedicated programmes for that. If you can help farmers to for instance protect their produce in case of floods or drought through an adaptive, innovative way, it may fit in the call.
13.	Is a Dutch Research and Technology Organisation (RTO) in combination with an African SME eligible?	Yes. The only obligation is that the bid is submitted by an entity having a EU CoC registration. Netherlands entities are preferred but cannot be given priority. An RTO does not seem the appropriate party to develop and market a product. See also question 9.
14.	Can a previously funded SBIR project reapply for funding?	Probably not in the same way; because there should be sufficient research and development needed for this new innovation. And, a company that has been funded before can apply again.



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15.	Is there a min and/or max amount funding per project? And is there a min. co-funding percentage?	Yes, as mentioned in the call. You bring out a bid up to a maximum. There is no minimum. It is not subsidy so no co-funding required. You compete also on price so it is advised not to maximise costs. Note: your costs can be higher than the price you offer it for.
16.	If the total cost are budgeted higher than 50,000, should we make that transparent and how we will cover these extra costs ?	Yes, you should make that transparent. But you can offer only for the maximum of € 50,000. Higher costs are at your own expense. The experience is that SBIR participants often make more costs by investing more hours e.g.
17.	Business Model: Are you more interested in business models where the solutions are sold to governments or organizations, or in models where the end customer and user is the farmer?	Both is ok. The link with government is mentioned because of the structure of the SBIR in which government purchases the innovation. However, this is not a mandatory requirement. From experience: farmers are mostly the end-users, not the direct customers. And, governments are often not the early adaptors of innovations.
18.	Is it possible to add Uganda to the list of countries, this because we (Dutch SME) are able to collaborate with a company in that country.	No. It is not a "Combi track" country in Africa.
19.	EoI and Initial Screening: What is the selection criteria for the projects based on the EOI?/ What is the level of detail are you expecting in the EOI? For example regarding the partners, technical details about the solution and the team involved in the work?	Selection criterium for EoI: does the idea fit in the call? in one of the three themes? It should be an innovation requiring Research and Development. Not much detail. Important: state what you are going to do. Not a high-over analysis of the challenge in general. If you already have partners: name them. If not: just state that you will name them in your phase 1 bid or select them during phase 1. Technical details: very briefly indicate why R&D is still required.
20.	Would researching new knowledge and leveraging on it to create a business and income for farmers fit into this call?	It depends. We cannot answer this question in general.
21.	Is there always a chronology between phase 1 and 2, or can phase 2 also be applied for without going through phase 1?	Yes, you have to start with phase 1. SBIR uses the "funnel system": after every phase there are fewer contracts available.
22.	Could you please share the presentation and related paperwork if possible?	Yes we will share the presentation and the Q&A. All paperwork is available on TenderNed, see question 29.
23.	From the call, it appears the focus is on products and/or services (or integrated solutions). However, the examples under the "Coping and adapting to impacts of climate change" theme predominantly emphasize hardware. Is this emphasis intentional or coincidental?	It is not entirely intentional, but services are tricky since stand-alone they would not be sustainable. This call is open for services as long as fitting in the call and integrated and business is possible.



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24.	Can we work in the Western Sahara in Morocco?	Please contact RAB-EA@minbuza.nl . This is the economic department at the Netherlands' Embassy in Rabbat.
25.	What happens to assets that are brought in for the execution of the bid? Can this happen without transfer of ownership?	You can use the budget for hardware. The committee will assess value for money. For major hardware, it is advisable to explain why you do not rent it or include a partner that already has the required equipment. Remember: this is about building a prototype, not about producing a new product.
26.	What are the qualification criteria for companies submitting to the call? Is a specific % NL ownership required for example?	The only obligation is that the bid is submitted by an entity having an EU CoC (KvK) registration. Netherlands entities are preferred but cannot be given priority.
27.	Following the question on previous SBIR funding; Can a company re-apply with the same idea (funded before by RVO/ NSO Prijsvraag phase 1 & 2) but an introduction into a new country?	If it only requires translating the manual: no. There should be R&D required to adapt it to the new country. And innovation. This implies: there is to be a fair chance of failure. Also: no standalone solutions (see question 3).
28.	What is the TRL level in this call?	TRL 3 – 7, after that there is no R&D needed anymore. In which case we refer to DHI-subsidieregeling RVO.nl for demonstration projects, feasibility studies and investment preparation projects abroad.
29.	Where can I find the call and accompanying documents on TenderNed?	https://www.tenderned.nl/aankondigingen/overzicht/362023
30.	The guidance note is half in English, half in Dutch, will there be a new version?	No.
31.	What happens when there are similar projects from different countries?	Each project will be scored individually and on its own merits.
32.	Does the scope cover rural and urban areas?	The scope is described as agricultural communities in non-urban areas.
33.	What are our opportunities to work on climate change and health within this tender?	There are possibilities to link to health as long as the innovation fits in one of the themes and has a clear link with resilience and climate change. In the call it is described as follows under theme 3: 'utilization of crop residues, husks, shells and animal by-products for biogas production, composting, biochar, first aid medical products'. We are not looking for medical devices, supplies, etc without this link.



	Question	Answer
34.	Does leveraging agricultural waste and by-products through valorization—transforming them into sustainable products that help farmers efficiently manage waste, provide a new income source by purchasing their waste, and create higher-nutrient value products for livestock feed—align with the third subtheme, "Utilization of Untapped Resources," in the call, as it contributes to sustainable agriculture and resolves waste issue? Shortly, is finding an alternative livestock feed a valid R&D bid for this SBIR call?	Yes this could be possible. See also nr. 6.
35.	Can you tell me more about the selection committee? Will they be constant throughout all phases of evaluation?	We normally aim to have the same committee formation for phase 1 and 2. Usually this works. RVO is chairing the committee and will make sure there is consistency in the assessment.
36.	Is there a preference for ideas that have already proved their validity/ viability in other countries/ have a proof of concept or completely new ideas? What is the ideal range for the TRL? You mentioned during the session that up to 7 but is there a minimum score as well?	Both ways are possible and assessed with the same criteria. Minimum TRL is 3.