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GUIDELINE 7.4 OF 2024

OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (OTT) SUPPORT FUND

1. OVERVIEW

The Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act (IPR Act) No. 51 of 2008 came into effect on 2 August 2010.

According to Section 6(4)(a) and (b) of the IPR Act “NIPMO may, on terms and conditions determined by it, provide assistance to institutions for the establishment of offices of technology transfer... [which assistance] may include – (i) financial assistance;....and (iii) development of appropriately skilled personnel for the offices of technology transfer”.

This guideline provides clarity on the OTT Support Fund including the structure of the OTT support fund, the application requirements, eligible and non-eligible costs and general grant conditions.

Should you have any enquiries regarding any matter relating to this Guideline, please do not hesitate to contact NIPMO:

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Head: NIPMO

Date: 28 March 2024

Previous iterations of the OTT Supporting Fund Guideline include:

Guideline 7.1 of 2019, signed on 30 April 2019

Guideline 7.2 of 2022, signed on 1 April 2022

Guideline 7.3 of 2023, signed on 29 March 2023.

2. TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. OVERVIEW	1
2. TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
3. GLOSSARY OF TERMS	3
4. LIST OF ACRONYMS USED	3
5. STRUCTURE OF THE OTT SUPPORT FUND.....	4
5.1 Legislative mandate.....	4
5.2 Scope of the OTT Support Fund.....	4
6. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION TO THE OTT SUPPORT FUND.....	5
6.1 Minimum application requirements	5
6.2 Application date and review process	5
6.3 General Timeline for Processing new OTT Support Fund Applications	6
7. ELIGIBLE COSTS	7
7.1 Establishment/ Maintenance of OTTs including:	7
7.2 OTT Operational activities (up to R300 000 per annum) including:.....	7
7.3 Capacity development (up to R200 000 per annum) including:.....	7
7.4 Technology transfer (up to R1 million per annum) including:	7
8. NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS	8
9. APPLICATION TEMPLATE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION.....	9
9.1 Section 1: Institution Information and OTT Support Fund History	9
9.2 Section 2: Overview of Institutional Capabilities and R&D Activities	9
9.3 Section 3: Funding request.....	10
10. EVALUATION CRITERIA	12
11. GENERAL OTT SUPPORT FUND GRANT CONDITIONS.....	12
12. ANNEXURE A: NIPMO APPROVED POSITIONS, SALARY SCALES, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE	13

3. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Institution	Any higher education institution contemplated in the definition of "higher education institution" contained in section I of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of (1997); (b) any statutory institution listed in Schedule 1 of the IPR Act; and (c) any institution identified as such by the Minister under section 3(2)
IP7	Means the Form IP7 as attached to the Regulations and titled " <i>Intellectual Property Status and Commercialisation Report</i> "
NIPMO KIM System	Means the NIPMO Knowledge Information Management System which must be used to submit the OTT Support Fund application

4. LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
IP	Intellectual Property
IPR Act	Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act (Act 51 of 2008)
KIM	Knowledge Information Management
KPI	Key performance indicator
NIPMO	National Intellectual Property Management Office
OTT	Office of Technology Transfer
R&D	Research and Development
TT	Technology Transfer

5. STRUCTURE OF THE OTT SUPPORT FUND

5.1 Legislative mandate

The objects of the IPR Act are to ensure that “*intellectual property emanating from publicly financed research and development is identified, protected, utilised and commercialised for the benefit of the people of the Republic...*”. NIPMO, as the implementing office of the IPR Act, thus needs to, through compliance and enabling means, ensure that the objects of the IPR Act are given effect to.

Section 9 of the IPR Act provides explicitly for the functions of NIPMO to include:

“assistance to institutions with (i) the establishment of offices of technology transfer and related capacity-building; (ii) intellectual property transactions; (iii) commercialisation of intellectual property...”.

5.2 Scope of the OTT Support Fund

Aligned with the legislative mandate, NIPMO established the Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) Support Fund in **2011**. Since its inception, the scope of the OTT Support Fund has grown, covering a broader range of activities beyond salaries and operational costs (as outlined in NIPMO Guideline sections 7.1 to 7.3).

The 2024 OTT Support Fund aims to:

- **Facilitate the establishment and maintenance of OTTs**
This includes providing financial assistance for salaries of positions defined in the OTT organogram and supporting operational costs related to OTT functions.
- **Enhance human capacity within OTTs through capacity development initiatives and provide support for operational costs related to OTT functions.**
This involves supporting IP management and Technology Transfer courses, training programs, workshops, and membership association fees aimed at skills enhancement and professional development of personnel within the OTT.
- **Empower OTTs to identify, protect, and deploy intellectual property (IP) for socio-economic impact**
This includes technology transfer costs, often associated with Intellectual Property Status and Commercialisation Reports (IP7 Forms/disclosures), enabling OTTs to effectively manage and leverage IP assets for societal and economic benefit.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION TO THE OTT SUPPORT FUND

6.1 *Minimum application requirements*

- Applications must be submitted by the institutional Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) or, in cases where there is no institutional OTT, by a duly designated individual representing the institution.
- Only one (1) application per institutional OTT/institution is permitted within a financial year.
- The application must include page numbers.
- Complete budget with a clear description of the funding amount requested per year, along with associated deliverables and activities, is mandatory. The application must specify the duration of NIPMO support required, ranging between 1 and 3 years.
- Applications for funding should be categorised under the following four (4) headings:
 - (i) Establishment/Maintenance of OTT
 - (ii) OTT Operational activities
 - (iii) Capacity Development
 - (iv) Technology Transfer Activities
- Institutional financial commitment post-DSI/NIPMO support is strongly encouraged.
 - The submitted application must specify the extent of the institutional financial commitment towards the operations, capacity development and financial sustainability of the OTT.
 - If the institution cannot provide this commitment at the time of application, please provide reasons for this lack of commitment. These reasons provided will be considered by the OTT Support Fund Allocations Committee.
- The submitted application must be signed off by an authorised institutional representative and must be aligned with application template as set out in paragraph 9 below.
- Submission of the application must be through NIPMO's Knowledge Information Management (KIM) System and emailed to Mr. Thabang Jase at Thabang.jase@nipmo.org.za.

6.2 *Application date and review process*

- The KIM System will open between **15 April and 15 May of each financial year** for applications to the OTT Support Fund to be uploaded. No applications received after 15 May will be accepted.
- NIPMO reserves the right to determine whether:
 - an activity for which funding is being requested falls within the scope of eligible costs and whether the quantum of funding which is being requested is deemed reasonable.
 - previous applicants are eligible to apply for new funding based on minimum contractual requirements with the Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act (IPR Act) and use of previous funding received in line with contractually agreed deliverables.
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a contractual relationship with the Department of Science and Innovation/ NIPMO. Failure to utilise the funding as per the contractual commitments will have consequences which will include non-payment of subsequent tranches or even requests by the Department to repay all monies already paid out to the institution.

6.3 General Timeline for Processing new OTT Support Fund Applications

In submitting the proposal with associated deliverables, including motivation and supporting documentation, the timeline below must please be kept in mind.

DATE	ACTIONS
15 April to 15 May	KIM system opens for period 15 April to 15 May. <i>OTT Support Fund applications and supporting documentation to be uploaded. In addition, a copy of the application and supporting documentation must be emailed to Thabang Jase at Thabang.Jase@nipmo.org.za</i>
15 May	Deadline for receiving applications – <i>no extension will be granted for late submissions</i>
May/June	NIPMO internal review of applications in line with the OTT Support Fund guideline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal NIPMO response sent to applicant to amend/substantiate/motivation further • 2-weeks' response time provided to applicants
July/ August	First OTT Support Fund Allocations Committee meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee considers applications in line with the OTT Support Fund guideline and requests further clarity and/or amendments from applicants (if required), or recommends approval for funding of application • 2-weeks' response time provided to applicants which require further clarity of amendments
August/ September	Second OTT Support Fund Allocations Committee meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee considers revised/updated applications received in line with the OTT Support Fund guideline and recommends approval for funding or declines funding request
September/ October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSI internal processes commence securing approval for funding of applications based on OTT Support Fund Allocations Committee recommendations. • NIPMO communication sent to applicants confirming approved amount based on proposal reviewed/recommended and informing them that DSI contract drafting process will commence. • Applicants are provided opportunity to amend proposal if not in line with approved funding (2-weeks' response time provided to applicants).
November to January	Contract drafting process initiated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft agreement sent to applicants for inputs/consideration (2/3-weeks' response time provided to applicants) • Applicant contract inputs received and incorporated, and further drafts sent to applicants for consideration (2/3-week response time provided to applicants) <p>Final agreements issued by DSI: Legal and sent to applicant for signature (securing final signatures generally take 2 to 3 weeks)</p> <p>Payment processed upon receipt of signed agreement:</p>

7. ELIGIBLE COSTS

The OTT Support Fund provides financial assistance to institutions for:

7.1 Establishment/ Maintenance of OTTs including:

Salaries for any positions requested will only be approved within the salary scale as set out in Annexure A. A sliding scale will be implemented for positions previously funded by NIPMO/DSI – please refer to paragraph 9 below.

7.2 OTT Operational activities (up to R300 000 per annum) including:

Operational costs supporting activities undertaken by the OTT or Technology Transfer Function can include, but are not limited to:

- Hosting of IP awareness workshops/seminars;
- Organising IP and technology transfer (TT) related events, such as conferences, symposiums, and networking sessions;
- Marketing and advertising of the OTTs functions and offerings (website designs, publications, guides, social media campaigns);
- Access to IP databases, search tools and Technology Transfer administrations tools;
- Travel and accommodation for IP advocacy, awareness and training activities provided by OTT; and/ or
- NIPMO will consider funding of other operational activities as motivated.

7.3 Capacity development (up to R200 000 per annum) including:

Capacity development support is provided for OTT staff members (as provided for in the OTT organogram). This support includes:

- Registration and attendance of IP Management and Technology Transfer related local and international courses, webinars, trainings, workshops, conferences, etc. This includes associated travel and accommodation costs.
- Registration fees for membership in professional associations such as the Registered Technology Transfer Professional (RTTP), Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), Licensing Executives Society (LES), and similar organisations. This support aims to facilitate access to networks, resources, and opportunities for professional development within the field of IP management and TT.

7.4 Technology transfer (up to R1 million per annum) including:

The Fund will consider the following technology transfer activities (as motivated):

- IP audit(s), Techno-economic feasibility analysis(es), Market assessment(s), and/or Business plan development
 - The specific IP7 reference number or multiple IP7 reference numbers associated with the identified research area must be specified in the application.
- Access to IP showcasing online platforms (up to R150 000 annually), to showcase IP assets to potential investors and collaborators.
- Contract drafting costs (up to R300 000 annually).

- Participation in trade shows, exhibitions, and industry conferences to showcase technologies and attract potential partners or investors.
- Short-term independent service provider appointments (up to R500 000 annually) to provide specialised expertise and support in IP commercialisation, launching or maintaining spin-out ventures, and/or to provide technology incubation related activities. Clear motivation for the intended activity/activities should be provided.
- NIPMO will also consider funding other technology transfer activities as motivated by the institutions.

8. NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS

The OTT Support Fund does not provide support for the following costs:

- (a) Office infrastructure, furniture or equipment;
- (b) IP prosecution and maintenance cost (to be submitted under NIPMO IP Fund);
- (c) Management fee associated with the contract funding;
- (d) VAT costs associated with receiving contract funding (unless specifically motivated within project proposals); and
- (e) Capacity development in areas that are not related to IP management and transfer of technology.
- (f) Employee relocation costs.

9. APPLICATION TEMPLATE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The application for OTT Support Fund must follow a similar structure/ template as set out below:

9.1 Section 1: Institution Information and OTT Support Fund History

(a) Details of Institution

Name of Institution	
Submitted by:	
Designation:	
Date of Submission:	
Signature:	

(b) Details of previous and current OTT Support Fund Agreements

No	Agreement no	Period	Amount	Status (Complete/ In progress)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

(c) Summary of current OTT Support Fund Application

Financial years	2025	2026	2027	Total
Establishment/ Maintenance of OTTs	R	R	R	R
OTT Operational activities	R	R	R	R
Capacity development	R	R	R	R
Technology transfer activities	R	R	R	R
Total	R	R	R	R

9.2 Section 2: Overview of Institutional Capabilities and R&D Activities

(a) Institutional research outputs and activities *(limited to 1 page)*

To include a brief description of institutional research activities, including publication output, research income, research contracts, collaborations networks. Additional information or links to annual reports can be provided.

(b) Technology transfer human capacity

Provide an Organogram of Technology transfer office/function indicating the current NIPMO funded positions, previously NIPMO funded positions and institutional funded positions. The organogram must specify whether positions are permanent or on contract basis; and should include demographics of personnel occupying all positions, including gender, race and age range (*below 35 years, 36 to 54 years, 55 to 65 years*).

(c) Technology transfer activities (*limited to 1 page*)

Provide a summary of technology transfer activity highlights undertaken, including number of invention disclosures received, IP applications filed, IP applications granted, licences concluded, spin-off companies established, funding received from investors or funders.

(d) Intellectual property portfolio (*limited to 1 page*)

To provide summary details of institutional IP portfolio, including (if relevant) technology sector profile; commercialisation status and activities to date; socio-economic impact made by institution and any relevant information on the institutional IP portfolio.

(e) IP policies and frameworks (*limited to 1 page*)

List existing policies and frameworks affecting technology transfer activities directly or indirectly within your institution.

9.3 Section 3: Funding request

Application for funding should be categorised and motivated under each of the 4 funding categories. Please refer to section 7 on eligible costs for each category. This section sets out supporting documentation or additional considerations to be noted by the applicant.

(a) **Establishment/Maintenance of OTT**

- Provide an organogram of OTT indicating the new position/s for which funding is requested.
- For each requested position, please provide a job title; purpose of the position; key performance areas; and key competency areas (minimum requirements). A copy of the job description/s must be annexed to the application.
- Salaries for any positions requested will only be approved within the salary scale as set out in Annexure A. An institution that intends on remunerating more than the salary scale indicated in Annexure A should indicate that in the proposal and state such institutional top-up commitment.
- A sliding scale will be implemented for positions previously funded by NIPMO/DSI.
 - If an institution applies for funding for the same position for the second time, the applicable sliding scale will be 100% DSI/NIPMO funding in Year 1 (Institutional contribution 0%); 75% in Year 2 (Institutional contribution 25%); and 50% in Year 3 (Institutional contribution 50%).
 - In exceptional circumstances, NIPMO will consider funding the same position for a third time, accompanied by an institutional motivation.
- Applicants to note that a maximum of 6% increase per annum will be considered.
- Institution to articulate institutional commitment to fund positions post-NIPMO support funding.

(b) **OTT Operational activities (up to R300 000 per annum)**

- Provide a detailed breakdown of operational costs associated with the proposed activities per annum.

(c) **Capacity development (up to R200 000 per annum)**

- Provide breakdown of OTT capacity development costs (as best estimate) associated with the capacity development activities of OTT staff.
- Provision of the OTT Training and Capacity Development Plan would be an added advantage.

(d) **Technology Transfer Activities (up to R1 000 000 per annum)**

- To provide details of proposed activities and associated cost over the funding period.
- IP7 reference numbers and/ or intended research areas supported by one or more IP7 reference numbers must be provided.
- Clear motivation for the intended activity/activities should be provided.

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The OTT Support Fund Allocations Committee will review all applications received and give particular attention to the following criteria when evaluating and adjudicating an application to the OTT Support Fund:

- (a) Previous OTT Support Fund financial assistance and the duration thereof (if applicable);
- (b) Whether the financial assistance previously allocated were used as per the original proposal (if applicable);
- (c) Whether the applicant submitted bi-annual and annual reports in accordance with previous contractual obligations (if applicable);
- (d) Whether the applicant is compliant with all NIPMO/ IPR Act reporting or other requirements, i.e. IP7s, previous funding agreements etc., all legislative and contracting requirements were/are and all contractual reporting were/ are being met by the institution;
- (e) Alignment of the application to the requirements as set out in this Guideline;
- (f) Funding needs and duration of support requested;
- (g) Requested budget against the proposed KPIs;
- (h) Current institutional funding commitment to the OTT; and
- (i) Post-NIPMO funding institutional financial support.

11. GENERAL OTT SUPPORT FUND GRANT CONDITIONS

- (a) Each Institution will be required, at all times, to comply with the reporting requirements as per the IPR Act, in particular all regulatory and compliance requirements.
- (b) Grant funding is provided on a one to three-year funding cycle, subject to revision, milestone performance and availability of funding.
- (c) A project funding agreement must be concluded with each institution for which approval was given for funding.
- (d) The institution must use the OTT Support Fund financial assistance only for purposes outlined in the application to NIPMO and set out in the concluded project funding agreement, and for no other purpose without the prior written consent by NIPMO.
- (e) NIPMO shall, on reasonable notice to the institution, be allowed to visit the institution for the purpose of updating itself on progress in relation to the project funding agreement signed.
- (f) NIPMO reserves the rights to determine whether proposed activities fall within the scope of OTT Support Fund.

-[END]-

12. ANNEXURE A: NIPMO APPROVED POSITIONS, SALARY SCALES, QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Positions	Suggested salary band	Qualifications	Experience
Head/ Director	R1 026 355 – R1 162 350	Min Master's degree, preferably PhD	8-10 years working experience, at least 5 years relevant experience
Manager	R820 852 – R957 660	Min Honours/ BTech degree, preferably masters	5 -8 years working experience, at least 3- 5 years relevant experience
Co-ordinator/ Analyst	R615 639 – R752 448	Min. Bachelor's Degree/ BTech, preferably Honours	3-5 years working experience, at least 3 years relevant experience
Officer	R410 423 – R547 234	Min. Diploma or Bachelor's Degree	1-3 years working experience
Administrator	R205 213 – R336 487	Min. Diploma	1-2 years working experience