

SPARK SOUTH AFRICA call for projects is now open

Release date: **15 June 2022**

Closing date: **31 July 2022**

SPARK SOUTH AFRICA supports the development of novel **knowledge-based innovations** to target current market needs and even better to push the market to other dimension

SPARK projects receive:

- Mentorship from academic and industry experts
- Education in workshops on “how to develop a solution” and “what you need to understand about business and finance”

The program is able to provide financial support based on progress according to defined milestones. In exchange, accepted teams need to commit to the program and participate in our mentoring and educational events.

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Scope of the addressed target in all scientific and technological disciplines
- Novelty of approach
- Feasibility (point of maturity to be achieved within the time frame)

YOUR OPPORTUNITY

Have your research potential to be transferred to the market? Are you sitting on a potential new technology addressing current or new needs of the market (*push-pull*)? Why not let the SPARK SOUTH AFRICA program (<http://www.biodurban.org/> & <https://www.krisp.org.za/innovation.php>) support you in taking your discovery from the bench to the market or to the community! The opportunity is also open to innovators from indigenous knowledge systems. ***We accept projects already in the idea phase, not only those that are more advanced.***

SPARK SOUTH AFRICA is particularly keen to support knowledge-based innovation projects targeting current or anticipating new market needs in the frame of a *push-pull* strategy.

OUR CONCEPT

The “SPARK SOUTH AFRICA” program is a new initiative that is designed to de-risk projects with high potential impact, addressing new or current market needs. We want to support people to develop their ideas into practical applications that can have an impact in the real world and contribute to economic growth. The program is based on the highly successful “SPARK” program developed at Stanford University (<http://sparkmed.stanford.edu/>), which has achieved a translational success rate of > 60%, through education, mentorship, advising and small milestone-based funding. The SPARK program has also expanded to over 20 countries in the world, which led to the formation of SPARK GLOBAL (<https://sparkglobal.io>).



As a SPARKEE you will get:

- Mentoring and advice from national and international industry leaders who will help you to develop your idea towards working commercial solution
- Opportunities to participate and pitch your idea in international industrial events may be available.
- Education on R&D and Business development in scientific and technological innovations
- Small financial contribution to de-risk your project
- Access to investors.

As a SPARKEE you need to:

- Make an 18-months development plan with milestones for your idea/project.
- Meet the local SPARK team and advisors regularly during the program (once per quarter)
- Present your project progress 2-3 times per year in mentoring sessions.
- Participate actively in mentoring sessions and educational sessions.
- Be committed to take your idea to next level.

ELIGIBILITY

- The opportunity is open to researchers and from across South Africa, however, the project needs to be developed within the boundaries of eThekweni Municipality, KZN, South Africa.
- Researchers must be appointed at Higher Education Institutions or Public Research Organizations for at least the duration of proposed project. Postdoctoral fellows, postgraduate students are eligible to apply but must include a faculty member as a co-PI on the application.

Additional consideration:

An applicant may submit a maximum of one application per call as project team leader. Applicants may be involved in other applications as co-Investigators or collaborators.

FUNDING

SPARK SOUTH AFRICA will provide seed funding which will be tied to agreed-upon project milestones. The goal is to de-risk early stage projects by conducting key value-adding experiments.

HOW TO APPLY

Use the application form available within BioDurban website and submit a two-page proposal. Apply by **31 July 2022, 18:00** by sending your proposal in PDF format to MkhizeG5@ukzn.ac.za

SELECTION

- All applications received will be screened by the SPARK SOUTH AFRICA team for completeness and responsiveness. If the application is found to be incomplete or unresponsive, it will not be processed further.
- All responsive and complete applications will be reviewed by the selection committee.



- Selected applicants will be invited to pitch their ideas to the SPARK SOUTH AFRICA Advisory team. The final selection will be made based on the scores from the pitch.
- SPARK SOUTH AFRICA reserves the right not to fund any of the proposals if the scientific quality is deemed low.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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