science, technology & innovation
Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR
Touching lives through innovation

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
FIELD DIAGNOSTIC PLATFORM FOR BACTERIAL DETECTION

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) invites expressions of interest from laboratories, manufacturers, technology developers and commercial partners to collaborate on a portable, modular diagnostic platform designed for rapid, on-site detection of bacterial contamination in water samples.

The platform is designed to complement the work of centralised laboratories by extending their reach into field environments. By enabling preliminary or screening-level testing at the sampling site, laboratories can streamline workflows, reduce backlog and allocate their analytical capacity to confirmatory or high-complexity testing. This creates opportunities for laboratories to offer new value-added services.

The platform supports a wide range of lateral flow test (LFT) strips, allowing laboratories and resellers to integrate their own sourced/developed LFT strips, including those targeting *E. coli*. The CSIR is also advancing its own proprietary LFT technology for enhanced detection performance that will be made available.

To broaden manufacturing options, especially for start-ups or laboratories expanding into device production, the platform is compatible with additive manufacturing (3D printing) using biocompatible materials. This provides a low-risk, low-capital pathway to produce the device components.

The CSIR welcomes expressions of interest from organisations seeking partnership opportunities in manufacturing, LFT strips integration, distribution, commercialisation or further development of this diagnostic platform.

KEY POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Faster turnaround through localised screening;
- Premium rapid-testing service offerings;
- Cost savings through reduced sample logistics;
- Higher testing capacity without additional staffing;
- Scalable and flexible for multiple bacterial targets; and
- Low-risk entry to market.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Organisations that:

- Operate accredited water testing laboratories or partner with such facilities;
- Have experience in water quality monitoring and microbiological diagnostics;
- Possess established client networks in municipal, industrial, or environmental sectors;
- Demonstrate strong business acumen and strategies for market penetration; and
- Are willing to invest financially or source funding for technology adoption and scale-up.

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- A brief description of the company's core business and water testing capabilities;
- Demonstrate relevant industry knowledge and experience in water quality diagnostics;
- A detailed plan for integrating the platform into existing workflows and commercialising the solution; and
- An indication of willingness to invest financially or source funding for implementation.

APPLICANTS MUST ALSO ATTACH:

- Audited/independently reviewed financial statements;
- For companies operating in South Africa, a valid tax clearance certificate;
- A valid B-BBEE certificate;
- Brief CVs (one page preferred) of team members driving adoption and integration; and
- Company registration documents.

Failure to provide the required documents or motivations will prejudice the assessment of the application submitted.

Closing date for Application 31 March 2026 at 16:30

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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