



30 October 2019

## Call for Proposals to participate in the Young Enterprise Initiative South Africa (YEI SA) Programme

### Background and Context

The [Embassy of France in South Africa](#) and the [Technology Innovation Agency \(TIA\)](#) are implementing the **Young Enterprise Initiative South Africa (YEI SA)**, focused on providing South African start-up companies with the opportunity to develop and grow their businesses in France. The global YEI Programme is organised by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in partnership with *Hello Tomorrow* (for more information see: [www.yei.france.com](http://www.yei.france.com) and <https://hello-tomorrow.org/>).

France has a strong research, development and innovation hub in Europe and has the highest number of start-ups in Europe. France is also ranked first in Europe in terms of the number of innovative structures by the Thomson Reuters TOP100 innovators ranking. In 2018, France was the largest European delegation at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. With French 160 companies present, the delegation was second only to the USA.

YEI SA is an accelerator programme that is aimed at enabling science-based, early-stage SA companies to get to know the French research and innovation environment and to provide market access opportunities in French and global markets. The enabling environment will not only contribute to increased global competitiveness of the SA companies but also assist the French technical experts from a network of incubators to identify and nurture innovative technologies.

In 2019/20 YEI South Africa will be implemented in parallel with similar programmes in the USA, Canada, Germany, Italy, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Singapore and Taiwan. The Programme provides an opportunity for selected start-up companies and young enterprises to participate in an acceleration programme within the French ecosystem. To do this, in late 2019, three (3) South African companies will be selected to benefit from this programme and travel to France in early 2020 to attend the 2020 *Hello Tomorrow* Global Summit and spend



a further personalised week in France to meet with potential partners, connect with the best resources and set up business operations.

### **The Programme**

During the first week of the programme, the selected companies will be in Paris to attend:

1. Training sessions on how to do business in France;
2. Planned, and ad-hoc, B-2-B meetings with technical and business partners; as well as to,
3. Participate to the 2020 Hello Tomorrow Global Summit.

During the second week, the selected companies will explore the innovation ecosystem outside Paris, with a tailored program in a pre-identified incubator/accelerator.

### **Eligibility criteria**

To be considered, and qualify, for this programme your company:

1. Is developing a new technology based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in any industry;
2. Must clearly show and motivate potential for French and European markets. (For an overview of the French AI company / stakeholder landscape, see: <https://franceisai.com/>);
3. Is working on a technology project at early stage of development (i.e. seed-phase or series A);
4. Must be a South African registered company with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) as an SMME in accordance with the SA Companies Act categorisation;
5. Must be in early revenue stage or pre-commercialisation;
6. Is not yet a giant: a team of at least two working on the project but fewer than 30 employees and less than \$2 million, (i.e. ZAR30 million), in annual revenue.

Please note that:

1. Past beneficiaries of the YEI programme are not eligible to apply, and
2. Preference will be given in line with the National Equity targets.

### **Travelling permits**

- One company representative from the selected applicants must be available to undertake the trip to France from 07 to 21 March 2020 (the Programme start is 9 March 2019),



- The candidate must have a valid passport, (i.e. still valid for 6 months after the date of return from travel and with at least 2 blank pages).

### The process

- The call closes on **22 November 2019**;
- The selection process will take place via video interview with shortlisted candidates during the week of 25 to 29 November 2019. This will be in the format of an investor pitch interview, (7 minutes to pitch and 7 for questions and answers), via Skype. Applicants therefore must have access to Skype for Business. Applicants may contact TIA if they need to use TIA facility;
- Winners will be **announced in December 2019**;
- Selected finalists will be required to enter into a performance contract with TIA, specifying terms and conditions.
- The candidates will benefit from training sessions and B-2-B meetings from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 and will then get the opportunity to attend the 2020 *Hello Tomorrow* Global Summit from 12 to 13 March 2020,
- The selected candidates will then also spend one immersion week in France from 16 to the 20 March 2020 at a pre-selected incubation partner;
- To submit your application, visit the website link below and click on the South Africa tab/link <https://www.yeifrance.com/>.

### Costs

- The Embassy of France in SA will cover the return airfare, (economy class), from SA to France for 3 SA young enterprises / start-ups;
- The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs will cover:
  - The entrance fee for attending the *Hello Tomorrow* Challenge;
  - All costs relating to training and meetings;
  - Contribution to accommodation costs in Paris during week one.
- TIA will cover the accommodation and ground transport costs for the second week of the Programme costs in France.

The closing date for submitting applications: **22 November 2019**



**For more information please contact:**

- **Marion Gues**, project officer for science and innovation at the Embassy of France in South Africa, [marion.gues@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:marion.gues@diplomatie.gouv.fr) , or,
- **Kristin Klose**: Business Development Manager: International Partnerships at the Technology Innovation Agency, [Kristin.klose@tia.org.za](mailto:Kristin.klose@tia.org.za)