Moses Kotane Research Institute

Research · Innovation · Excellence

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS UMFOLOZI INNOVATOR'S HACKATHON 2025

CLOSING DATE: 13 June 2025

Visit our website to apply

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www.moseskotaneinstitute.com

CALL FOR APPLICATION: UMFOLOZI INNOVATOR'S HACKATHON 2025

BACKGROUND

The Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI), through its Commercialising Innovation and Research (CIR) programme, in partnership with local municipalities, invites youth, SMMEs, cooperatives, schools, and informal traders from the King Cetshwayo District to participate in the upcoming Grassroots Hackathon. This initiative aims to empower rural and township communities by providing a platform for practical, locally relevant innovation. The hackathon is part of a broader implementation plan spanning King Cetshwayo, Zululand, uThukela, and uMkhanyakude districts.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify and showcase grassroots innovations addressing local challenges
- Promote inclusive innovation and entrepreneurship in rural areas
- Strengthen collaboration between youth, SMMEs, academia and government
- Align innovation efforts with district development goals
- Develop local solutions to address socioeconomic challenges

THEME

"uMfolozi Innovates – Practical Solutions for Rural Transformation in King Cetshwayo" is the hackathon theme that encourages community-driven innovations in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and other relevant sectors. It focuses on low-tech, indigenous, frugal (economical) and service-based solutions.

HACKATHON FOCUS AREAS

- Agriculture and Food Security: Manual or solar-powered tools, frugal irrigation systems, composting solutions
- Tourism and Cultural Preservation: Indigenous artefacts, rural hospitality models
- SMMEs and Manufacturing: Product/process innovations, low-cost vending systems
- Sustainability and Waste-to-Value: Recycled material tools, clean energy devices
- Youth and Community Services: Mobile community services, rural training models

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

- Youth aged 18–35
- Local inventors, creatives and makers
- Informal traders, schools, cooperatives, and SMMEs
- Elders and traditional knowledge holders from the following municipalities: uMfolozi, uMhlathuze, Nkandla, Mthonjaneni, uMlalazi

HACKATHON FORMAT AND SCHEDULE

- Pre-Hack Orientation and Mentorship: 26 June 2025
- Hackathon Day: 27 June 2025
- Welcome and Opening
- Innovation Showcasing
- Judging and Awards

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Relevance to local problems
- Cost-effectiveness and simplicity.
- Use of local/recycled materials
- Scalability and replication potential
- Community benefit and inclusivity.

PRIZES AND POST-HACK SUPPORT

- In-kind support (equipment, tools, training) and any other relevant support to the solution/idea.
- Access to MKRI's CIR and other Innovation Programme
- Mentorship and pilot project opportunities

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Interested participants must submit their proposal topic ideas, which should include:
- A brief background,
- A clear problem statement, and
- A proposed solution.

Submissions must not exceed three (3) pages in total.
Applications should be submitted by **13 June 2025** to **hackathons@moseskotane.com**
For queries please contact Ms Asebenzile Mkunyana **hackathons@moseskotane.com**