

South African Circular Manufacturing Initiative (SACMI)

Host Organisation: Phase 2

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

2026

Date of Issue	Monday, 1 June 2026	
EOI Number	CISA/EoI/2026_001	
EOI Description	Host Organisation: South African Circular Manufacturing Initiative (SACMI) Phase 2	
Non-Compulsory Briefing Session (online)	Date and Time	-
	Address/Link	-
Enquiries	Circular Innovation South Africa, hosted by the CSIR Prof Linda Godfrey E-mail: LGodfrey@csir.co.za	
	Please use EOI Title as email subject for reference	
Last date for enquiries / clarifications	Friday, 26 June 2026 @ 14h00	
Electronic Submission	LGodfrey@csir.co.za (EoI submission should not exceed 10MB in file size)	
CSIR business hours	08h00 – 16h30	
Closing Date and Time	Tuesday, 30 June 2026 @ 17h00	

1 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) is pleased to announce a **Call for Expressions of Interest** to identify a host organisation for the implementation of the **South African Circular Manufacturing Initiative: Phase 2**, commencing in 2026/27.

Phase 1 of SACMI was successfully completed by the National Cleaner Production Centre (NCPC-SA). The DSTI is now opening the call for hosting of SACMI for Phase 2 implementation. Phase 2 is seen as a 5-10 year programme, with regular renewal based on the performance of the host institution.

The DSTI, in the STI White Paper (2019) and STI Decadal Plan (2022-2032) recognized the circular economy as a new source of economic growth for South Africa. The circular economy is identified as one of two cross-cutting priorities in the STI Decadal Plan, which also prioritizes three economic sectors for advancing science, technology and innovation – manufacturing, mining and agriculture. Government's Circular Economy Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Strategy (2024-2034) ([available here](#)), has also identified the manufacturing sector as one of three priority sectors that stands to benefit from circular economy related science, technology and innovation.

Applicants are requested to familiarise themselves with the information provided in this Call, before preparing their Expression of Interest (*using the template provided with this Call*).

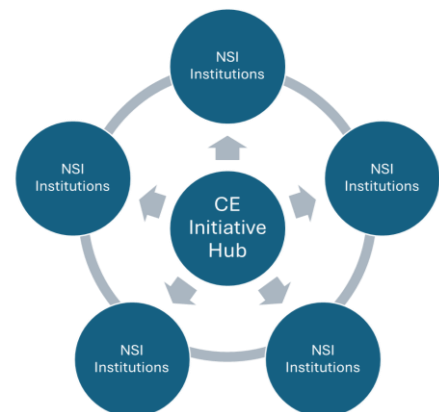
2 THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY INITIATIVES PROGRAMME

The DSTI launched three new, sector-specific Circular Economy Initiatives in 2024/25. The Initiatives are aimed at advancing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a circular economy in South Africa –

- The South African Circular Agriculture Initiative (SACAI) – *awarded to UFS (Phase 1)*
- The South African Circular Minerals and Metals Initiative (SACMMI) – *awarded to MMP (Phase 1) and NWU (Phase 2)*
- The South African Circular Manufacturing Initiative (SACMI) – *this Eol (Phase 2)*

The DSTI aims to find a suitable host organisation to help drive and coordinate circular economy STI for the manufacturing sector. The Initiative will act through a hub-and-spoke model. The host organisation will act as the hub and will receive funding support from the DSTI (dependant on the annual available allocation) for some administrative and STI functions. The host organisation will be required to drive and coordinate strategic STI for the sector, in partnership with other public and private organisations. The intention of the Circular Economy Initiatives Programme, is to help –

- Build and strengthen national CE STI capability;
- Minimize the duplication of CE STI across the NSI, through more coordinated and directed activities;
- Build new areas of CE STI excellence;
- Raise the profile of sector-specific CE STI locally and internationally;
- Use the government seed funding to mobilise additional co-funding to support CE STI
- Strengthen CE STI collaboration between NSI institutions and the private sector, for greater impact.



Hosting of the initiative will be for a contracted period and will be performance based, with the opportunity to renew. The Circular Economy Initiatives Programme, and all branding, is owned by the DSTI, but will be provided to the successful host organisation for use during the contracted period. In the case of non-performance or the termination of the contract, the initiative, its name and branding, will be returned to the DSTI.

The Circular Economy Initiatives will report directly to Circular Innovation South Africa (CISA), an initiative of the DSTI, hosted by the CSIR, responsible for giving effect to government’s Circular Economy STI Strategy.

3 THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND MANUFACTURING

Research undertaken by the CSIR in 2021-22 showed that transitioning the South African manufacturing sector to a more circular, resource efficient and low-carbon sector, provides very real benefits in terms of industry operations and competitiveness. The draft CE Manufacturing STI sub-strategy (NCPC, 2026) also confirmed that there is significant opportunity for greater uptake of circular economy interventions in the manufacturing sector, a resource intensive sector of the South African economy.

The circular economy is not new to South Africa or to the manufacturing sector. However, while some levels of activity already exist, particularly in areas such as resource efficiency and cleaner production; adoption of renewable energy technologies; and material looping (Figure 1), more needs to be done to achieve the scale required for meaningful economic, social and environmental impact. There is a strong role for science, technology and innovation in achieving these objectives.

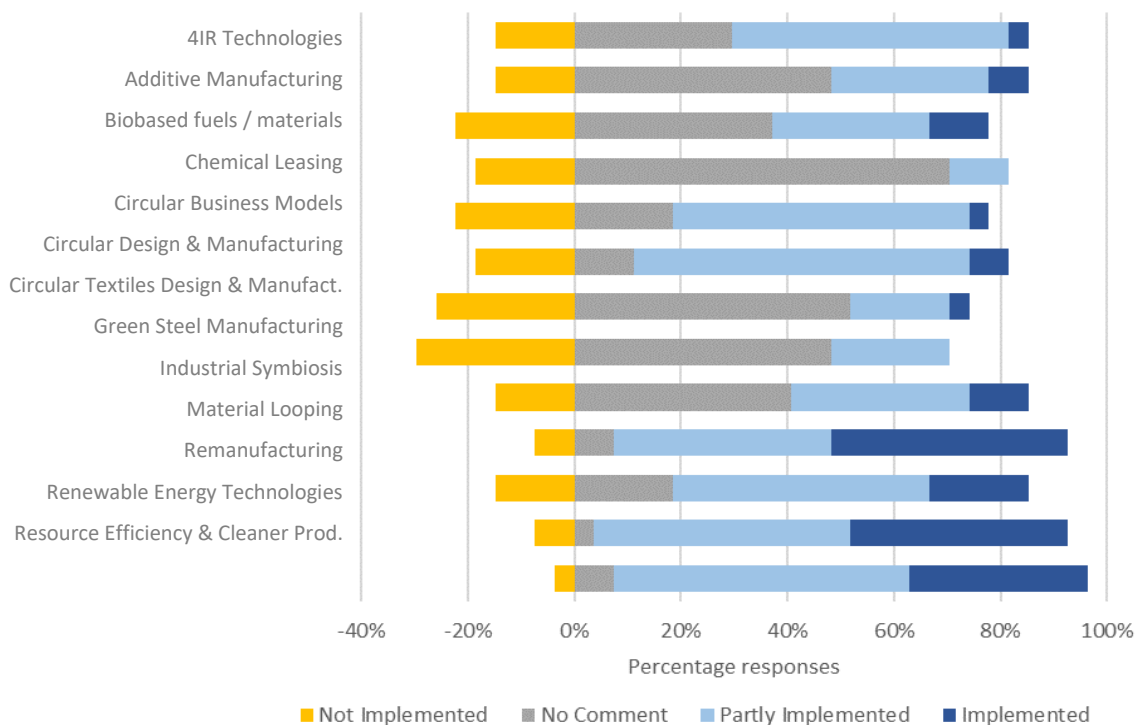


Figure 1. Level of implementation of circular economy interventions in South African manufacturing sector (CSIR, 2022)

Government's Circular Economy STI Strategy (2024-2034) has identified the following four (4) circular manufacturing STI priority areas for the short- to medium-term:

- **Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production:** The optimisation of resource use along different value chains holds major opportunities to increase circularity. These may include the reduction of raw material inputs, energy consumption, water consumption, and waste and wastewater production, while maximising output.
- **Circular Product Design:** Building circular economy principles into both the product and its value chain, across its full lifecycle. This includes improved materials science and manufacturing processes; and design thinking to fully embed circularity from the beginning of a product's life.
- **Advanced Manufacturing:** While developing industrial capacities, the integration of advanced technologies and digital trends represents a key determining factor. Skills needed for the transition to high-tech innovation, as well as required resources for machinery and equipment play an enabling role in developing the sector. These considerations include: the integration of advanced technologies, such as additive manufacturing or 3D printing; robotics and artificial intelligence; digitalisation; and green manufacturing technologies, including technologies that support the decarbonisation of high-production sectors such as steel and cement.
- **Remanufacturing:** Critical product components are restored to new specifications, creating opportunities for product improvement and the adoption of new innovations. Compared to the original product, the remanufactured or refurbished product performs the same or better; with the same quality testing, and an equivalent or better warranty, thereby keeping the product at its maximum utility.

These four priority STI areas will help to shape and guide the activities of the South African Circular Manufacturing Initiative (SACMI) in partnership with other universities and science councils, industry and government. The host of SACMI is not expected to have depth of STI expertise in all four of these areas, as it will give effect to the Circular Manufacturing STI sub-strategy in partnership with other universities and science councils, and with industry and industry associations.

4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

4.1 Eligible Organisations

To be eligible for consideration as the host of a Circular Economy Initiative, the applying organisation must be a public research organisation, e.g., a South African University, Science Council or other public research institution.

Business, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), other private sector organisations are not eligible to apply to host a Circular Economy Initiative.

4.2 Capability, Experience and Expertise

The organisation must detail the technical and programme management expertise that it brings to this initiative.

- Demonstrate a track record in the administration of, and/or research in, circular manufacturing projects. A track record of longer than five years in circular manufacturing administration and/or research would be advantageous
- Demonstrate having the necessary systems and capabilities in place to support the rapid implementation of the South African Circular Manufacturing Initiative (SACMI) in South Africa.

5 FUNDING

5.1 Funding amount and duration

An initial amount of R1,500,000 (excl. VAT) will be transferred to the successful host organisation upon finalization of contracting. This funding will be for a one-year period, from the date of last signature of the grant contract. Additional funding may be routed depending on the availability of funds from the DSTI, and other potential funders. The intention is to increase DSTI catalytic funding for further years of implementation. The successful organisation will also be encouraged to leverage co-funding as additional contribution to the implementation of the circular economy initiative, which will be monitored as a KPIs.

5.2 What will be funded

The funding allocated to the host organisation will cover the administrative role of implementing the initiative and relevant STI (as appropriate). The establishment of research partnerships with other research institutions in South Africa, through a hub-and-spoke model, with the contracted organisation acting as the 'hub'. Funding can cover time and minor running expenses but cannot be used for large capital infrastructure. Ideally no more than 30% of the budget should be retained by the host organisation for administrative costs.

5.3 Recipient of the funding

Upon award of the successful project, the CSIR, as host of Circular Innovation South Africa (CISA) and the custodian of the Circular Economy Initiatives Programme on behalf of the DSTI, will enter into a contract with the successful organisation (applicant). Funding will be disbursed by the CSIR only to the contracted organisation, who will then be responsible for any payment of funds to its partner(s), as/if applicable.

5.4 Funding transfers

Funding will be paid to the contracted organisation in instalments, upon successful completion of the agreed milestones, as set out in the contract.

6 SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

- 6.1 Expressions of Interest (Eoi) must be submitted electronically via email to LGodfrey@csir.co.za on the "South African Circular Manufacturing Initiative Call for Expression of Interest Template" (issued with this call). Eoi should be submitted in PDF or MSWord format.
- 6.2 The naming / labelling syntax of Eoi files must be short and simple.
- 6.3 An Eoi will only be considered if received by the CSIR before the closing date and time (*as indicated on the cover page of this document*). No late proposals will be accepted.
- 6.4 All dates and times in this Call are South African Standard Time (SAST).
- 6.5 Email submissions are to be clearly subject-referenced with the EOI number and EOI Description (*as indicated on the cover page of this document*).
- 6.6 The Eoi must be signed by a person or persons duly authorised by the submitting organisation.
- 6.7 An Eoi submitted to an incorrect location and/or address, will not be accepted for consideration.
- 6.8 An Eoi submitted via cloud solutions such as: WeTransfer, Google Drive, Dropbox, etc. will not be considered.
- 6.9 The CSIR will award the contract to qualified bidder(s)' whose Eoi is determined to be the most advantageous to the DSTI, taking into consideration the capability of the organisation, specific goals and objective criteria.
- 6.10 All applications will be regarded as valid for 90 days from the closing date, whereafter the CSIR may

request an updated application, should this become necessary.

- 6.11 All applicants will be notified about the outcome of their applications before the end of September 2026 to allow sufficient time for project preparations before commencing.

7 CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT

All applicants will receive a confirmation of 'receipt of proposal' email. If you do not receive such a confirmation within one week of application, please follow up with the CSIR to ensure that your proposal has been received. Proof of submission before the closing date will be required.

8 ENQUIRIES AND CONTACT WITH THE CSIR

Any enquiry regarding this Call shall be submitted in writing to the CSIR to the email and format outlined in the table on the cover page of this document.

9 VERIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS

Bidders should check the numbers of the pages to satisfy themselves that none are missing or duplicated. No liability will be accepted by the CSIR with regards to anything arising from the fact that pages are missing or duplicated.

10 ELIMINATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be eliminated under the following conditions:

- Applicants that submit a late EoI will not be considered.
- Applicants that submit to the incorrect location or email address will not be considered (*see cover page of this document*).
- EoIs which are not submitted on the "South African Circular Manufacturing Initiative Call for Expression of Interest Template" (*issued with this call*).
- Applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria (Section 4.1)

11 EVALUATION CRITERIA

All applications will undergo evaluation by an independent review panel, to assess the suitability of the proposal in terms of the DSTI's objectives.

All proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

i.	Public research organisation
ii.	Organisational capability (team strength)
iii.	Alignment with organisational strategy
iv.	Staff member for admin / technical lead
v.	Collaborative network / partnerships
vi.	Relevant project / programme experience
vii.	Co-funding which could contribute to this
viii.	Organisational experience in this technical field (years)

The DSTI may invite short-listed applicants to present their Expression of Interest to the review panel.

12 RESERVATIONS

The CSIR and DSTI expressly reserve the following rights:

- To reject all or any proposals
- To waive any or all irregularities in the proposals submitted
- To retain the right not to select any application/s even if meeting all the requirements

13 CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

The successful applicant will be required to enter into a written Agreement with the funder, in this case the CSIR, who manages the Circular Initiatives Programme on behalf of the DSTI.

14 DISCLAIMER

This Call is an Expression of Interest only and not an offer document. Answers to this EoI Call must not be construed as acceptance of an offer or imply the existence of a contract between the parties. By submission of its proposal, bidders shall be deemed to have satisfied themselves with and to have accepted all Terms & Conditions of this Call. The CSIR makes no representation, warranty, assurance, guarantee or endorsements to bidder concerning the EoI Call, whether regarding its accuracy, completeness or otherwise and the CSIR shall have no liability towards the bidder or any other party in connection therewith.