

Request for applications: Mpox research in South Africa

Internal closing date for budget approval	15 October 2024	See attached budget template
Internal closing date for institutional approval	20 October 2024	See attached Word document. Submit to @Eleanor van der Westhuizen
SAMRC final closing date	31 October 2024	Link to online Mpox application https://redcap.link/samrc_mpox

The SAMRC is partnering with the Department of Science and Innovation through the Strategic Health Innovation Partnerships (SHIP) programme to support research on Mpox in South Africa.

Mpox is caused by the species monkeypox virus (MPXV), genus *Orthopoxvirus*, discovered in 1958 in a primate research facility in Denmark, with the first human case reported in 1970. Mpox virus infection is normally caused by spill-over events to humans from animals. The virus can also be transmitted from one person to another through close contact with lesions, body fluids, respiratory droplets, and contaminated materials.

Since January 2023, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has reported more than 22 000 suspected mpox cases and more than 1 200 deaths. The Republic of the Congo (ROC), which borders DRC to the west, declared a clade I mpox outbreak in April 2024. On 13 August 2024, Africa CDC Director-General Dr Jean Kaseya declared mpox a public health emergency of continental security, saying that there was an urgent need for swift and decisive action by the global community to eliminate the threat of the disease. Following this – on 14 August 2024 – WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus determined that the upsurge of mpox in the DRC and a growing number of countries in Africa constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations.

In response to the recent announcements, the SAMRC and DSI are redirecting funding to support an mpox research and innovation programme directly aimed at better understanding, preparing for, and addressing mpox in South Africa and beyond.

This RFA seeks to support research proposals focused on mpox in the following areas:

No:	Research area	Details
1.	Surveillance	Understanding the prevalence of mpox in South Africa and the circulating strains/clades
2.	Immunology	Understanding immune responses to mpox in the South African population, including in the context of other infections and multi-morbidities and impact on disease outcomes
3.	Diagnostics	Development of relevant diagnostic tools for the detection of mpox infections
4.	Mpox and HIV	Comparison of phenotypic expression in HIV-infected vs. HIV-uninfected individuals and impact on disease outcomes
5.	Vaccines	Studies on candidate vaccines for mpox
6.	Therapeutics	Studies on new / repurposed therapeutic agents for treating mpox

This RFA is seeking to fund collaborative projects between institutions in the target research areas rather than small, siloed projects. Investigators are therefore encouraged to collaborate to develop a single holistic response in each of the research areas. Research to be supported through this RFA may include translational research, laboratory-based research, or hypothesis-driven and hypothesis-generating clinical research, with the objective of improving scientific understanding of the disease in our population and identifying tools for diagnosis, prevention, and treatment.

RFA documentation

- Kindly view the [Request for application for Mpox research](#) for full details of the call, eligibility, and application process.
- Link to online Mpox application https://redcap.link/samrc_mpx
- [Detailed budget template](#)
- [Declaration and institutional approval](#)

For further enquiries:

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View the RFA here: <https://www.samrc.ac.za/funding/request-applications-mpox-research-south-africa>

Access the following documents here:

- [Mpox Project budget template](#)
- [Mpox-Declaration and Institutional Approval](#)
- [SAMRC Mpox RFA Sept 2024 Final](#)