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NASENI's DELTA-2 Programme and the Push for Research Results Commercialization

The National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), in collaboration with the Presidential Implementation Committee on Technology Transfer (PICTT), has launched the second phase of the DELTA-2 Programme call for proposals in Abuja.

The initiative, which is a bilateral partnership with the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR), is designed to ensure that research and development outcomes in Nigeria are commercialized to solve real-life problems, create jobs, and contribute to economic growth.

The DELTA-2 Programme was first introduced in 2022, when Nigerian innovators, researchers, and entrepreneurs were invited to submit project proposals in key sectors such as agriculture, mining, and manufacturing. That first call attracted about 284 proposals, out of which 25 projects were eventually selected for funding after a rigorous evaluation process.

In December 2023, NASENI and the Czech government signed agreements worth \$21.7 million to fund selected projects. Under this arrangement, TA CR committed \$11.7 million while Nigerian government through NASENI contributed \$10 million. Officials said the projects cut across priority sectors and would provide a platform for Nigerian innovators to scale their solutions into market-ready products.

The maiden joint call for proposals was made on 18 May 2022, with results announced on 30 November 2022. Twenty-five proposals were initially approved as winners, while another five were placed on waiting list. The estimated implementation period for individual projects was 36 months, giving beneficiaries sufficient time to deliver tangible outcomes.

One of the striking features of the first call was the nationwide spread of winners, where the projects were drawn from across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, ensuring that the impact was not restricted to a single region but spread fairly across the federation. Observers said this inclusivity was deliberate, with NASENI and PICTT emphasizing fairness and balance in opportunities, giving innovators a chance regardless of location.

At the launch of the Second Call for Proposals, the Executive Vice Chairman of NASENI, Mr. Khalil Suleiman Halilu, noted that DELTA-2 had the potential to be a catalyst for Nigeria's innovation ecosystem adding that the decision is already yielding results. "Today, we can point to the stories of 12 beneficiaries from the First Call, Nigerians who are working on diverse projects across our country.

"From renewable energy solutions to advanced materials, from agricultural technologies to manufacturing innovations, these projects testify to the power of applied research to solve real problems, create jobs, and deliver products and services that meet the needs of our people", he remarked.

Halilu noted that what makes DELTA 2 unique is its focus on outcomes. "It is not research for the sake of research; it is research with purpose and market in mind. It is research that leads to new knowledge, new skills and new products. It is research that bridges the gap between laboratory and the marketplace, between ideas and impact.

"It is also a bridge between nations — between Czech enterprises and Nigerian innovators, between European expertise and African creativity. Together, we are building partnerships that accelerate progress, foster mutual respect and innite possibilities for both countries", he emphasized.

The NASENI boss further stated that DELTA-2 projects being supported by NASENI will respond not only to the current needs of the society, but also anticipate the challenges of tomorrow — from climate change to digital transformation. Therefore, he called on researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs in Nigeria to make use of the opportunity once again.

Also speaking, the Chairman of PICTT, Dr. Dahiru Mohammed, said the programme had become a major driver of innovation and economic growth in Nigeria. He explained that the DELTA-2 framework is aimed at advancing applied research, industrial innovation, and experimental development through joint funding by Nigeria and Czech Republic.



■ L-R: Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), Dr. Abike Dabiri-Erewa; Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Chief Uche Geoffrey Nnaji; Executive Vice Chairman/CEO of NASENI, Mr. Khalil Suleiman Halilu; Chairman, Presidential Implementation Committee on Technology Transfer (PICTT), Dr. Dahiru Mohammed during the launch of Delta-2 Projects Second Call for Proposals held at the NASENI Headquarters, Abuja on Thursday, September 11, 2025.



According to him, the essence of the initiative is to accelerate Nigeria's technological advancement through partnerships that combine resources and expertise. Dr. Mohammed further stated that the programme encourages the creation of consortia involving innovators, universities, and entrepreneurs.

These consortia, he said, act as engines of innovation, combining scientific knowledge, skilled manpower, and market insights to produce results that are commercially viable and socially impactful. By fostering such collaborations, the programme maximizes the potential of each funded project while building stronger linkages between research and the private sector.

"This initiative is a direct response to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, which prioritizes the encouragement and support of local production of goods and services. By fostering indigenous innovation and reducing dependency on imports, the DELTA-2 Programme operationalizes this vision, creating a Nigeria that is self-sufficient, resilient, and globally competitive" he said.

"The products unveiled from the last call—spanning agricultural equipment, mining technologies, and manufacturing solutions—demonstrate the programme's alignment with the agenda, delivering tangible outcomes that empower farmers, miners, and SMEs while driving economic growth"

"As we embark on this new call for proposals, I call upon all stakeholders—research institutions,

academic bodies, and entrepreneurial ventures—to seize this opportunity. Let us build on the successes of the past, leveraging the momentum of the 25 projects already funded and the innovative products they have brought to market.

"Submit proposals that are ambitious yet feasible, innovative yet practical, and aligned with our national priorities. Together, we can create a legacy of innovation that transforms Nigeria's technological landscape and drives sustainable prosperity" he added.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Chief Uche Geoffrey Nnaji, noted that the programme aligns strongly with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda. He explained that every project funded under DELTA-2 must deliver tangible and commercially viable results that respond to Nigeria's real challenges and opportunities.

He further listed agriculture and food technology, renewable energy, mining and industrial development, health technologies, advanced manufacturing, digital mobility, climate technology, and defence innovations as priority areas that reflect the administration's development agenda.

Reports from the first edition indicate that the projects were expected to run between 12 and 36 months, with outputs ranging from patents, pilot plants, and proven technologies to software, certified methodologies, and specialized maps. Stakeholders also noted that for every 1 invested by NASENI, Nigeria should expect about 6 in

commercial returns.

Beyond the financial projections, the bilateral arrangement is also designed to leave behind knowledge. Officials emphasized the importance of technology transfer between Czech institutions and Nigerian counterparts. This includes training of local engineers, development of prototypes within Nigerian facilities, and creating pathways for small businesses to adopt new technologies and scale them for domestic use.

To support the funded projects, eligible costs under the programme include new equipment, materials, personnel, subcontracting or consulting services, intellectual property protection, and travel required for project purposes. Beneficiaries are also required to provide matching funding, with the maximum support intensity in some categories set at up to 70 per cent of project costs.

In her goodwill message, the Chairman of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), Dr. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, described the launch as another step forward for the country. She commended NASENI's leadership under Mr. Halilu and urged that similar programmes be extended to Nigerians in the diaspora. She said initiatives like DELTA-2 are proof of Nigeria's capacity to generate world-class innovations when given the right support.

Also speaking, the Special Assistant to the President on Trade, Investment and Industry, Mr. John Ugochukwu Uwajumogu, linked the initiative to President Tinubu's ambition of building a \$1 trillion economy. He insisted that technology transfer is central to industrialization and competitiveness, stressing that Nigeria must strengthen its industrial base to attract both domestic and foreign investments.

Another stakeholder, Dr. Tope Agbana, the CEO of A.DX Medical in the Netherlands, praised the initiative but called for a deliberate emphasis on mentorship. He argued that involving students and young innovators would expand the programme's impact and ensure sustainability. He pledged to support DELTA-2 through funding, partnerships, and collaboration while also mentoring younger talents to ensure that Nigeria's innovation pipeline remains strong.

The DELTA-2 framework has also produced spin-off initiatives, the most prominent being DELT-Her (Developing Engineering Leaders Through Her, designed to empower female engineers with grants, mentorship, and technical support. In 2024, six female engineers received a total of 70.5 million under this scheme for projects aimed at solving national challenges. Stakeholders have commended DELT-Her for breaking barriers in an engineering field traditionally dominated by men.

Its design, which combines funding with mentorship and technical assistance, provides a practical way of encouraging more women to enter engineering and technology. With beneficiaries drawn from diverse backgrounds, DELT-Her is also expected to create role models who can inspire a new generation of female innovators.

For NASENI and PICTT, the focus of the Second Call for Proposals is to build on past achievements and create a stronger link between research and the market. By bringing together government, academia, and entrepreneurs, the programme is expected to stimulate industries, create employment, and enhance Nigeria's technological competitiveness.

Projects supported under DELTA-2 are also expected to address not only present national needs but also anticipate future challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, and industrial diversification. By positioning Nigeria as a hub for African innovation, the initiative is intended to reduce dependence on imports and strengthen the country's ability to compete globally.

As Nigeria continues to search for solutions to its economic and developmental challenges, DELTA-2 stands out as an initiative that places innovation and research commercialization at the centre of national growth. With the lessons from the first call, its wider reach across geopolitical zones, the clarified structure of funding and permitted costs, and the growing involvement of women engineers through DELT-Her, the programme is increasingly being seen as a cornerstone of Nigeria's long-term sustainable development agenda.