
SAIF

SOUTH
AFRICAN
ISOTOPE
FACILITY



UPDATE ON SAIF Phase 1 FUNDING APPLICATION January 2019:

Over the past few months, much progress was realized with the application to secure funding for the South African Isotope Facility (SAIF) Phase 1. iThemba LABS' project team, working with the National Research Foundation (NRF) Corporate office, has been burning the midnight oil to respond to urgent questions and clarifications from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and National Treasury (NT) on the business case submitted by iThemba LABS for SAIF Phase 1. During the two months period, several positive steps and outcomes were achieved. These include (amongst others):

1. A strongly positive letter of support from the DST acknowledging the value of the project for iThemba LABS, NRF, NSI and the country.
2. Formal support and approval of the SAIF project from the Minister of Science and Technology, Minister Kubayi-Ngubane.
3. Successful submission to the Joint Technical Committee of the Budget Facility on Infrastructure (BFI) of the National Treasury. The technical committee recommended the project to the Steering committee within BFI in September 2018.
4. Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane's announcement during her address at the COMEX6 conference that the iThemba LABS SAIF project is supported by her Ministry, and that she has engaged with the Minister of Finance to provide funding for the project.

Treasury allocated R167.9m for the project as indicated in the midterm budget policy statement for the 2018/2019 financial year. The funding will be used to kick-start phase 1 of the SAIF project (ACE Isotopes), which is centred on the acquisition of a 70 MeV cyclotron that will be used for isotope production and research; and the implementation of the low-energy radioactive ion beam (LERIB) project.

The DST's evident support of the first phase of SAIF ushers in a new era for iThemba LABS as the beams from the SSC will be dedicated for nuclear physics and radiation biophysics research. This will not only more than double the beam time available for research, thereby providing more beam time for student training projects, but it will also enhance the training of accelerator physicists, engineers and technicians.

The iThemba LABS management team is already working hard to implement the project management teams to ensure that we deliver on this very important project timeously.

Subsequent to the confirmation of the allocation of the initial funding for SAIF Phase I, much work has been done over the past three months to progress a number of initiatives. The Steering and Project Committees, for example, were finalised; the procurement work packages progressed and engagement with National Treasury initiated to finalise the second part funding of SAIF Phase I. The procurement of the 70MeV Cyclotron is currently at an advanced stage, with the bid expected to be evaluated during the first week of February 2019. The call for experts to design, specify and progress the Civils work packages is to be advertised shortly. These milestones were only achievable with the dedication and focus of the Technical Project team, the Supply Chain Management team and Senior Management leadership.

Once National Treasury confirms final allocations, the project will subsequently progress to the appointment of the supplier to supply and install the 70MeV Cyclotron, appointment of experts for site works and the clearing and preparation of vaults for the installation. More importantly, the licencing and regulatory approvals will also be progressed with the necessary urgency and duty of care.

The NRF and iThemba LABS management would like to thank the project team, supported by many role-players at iThemba LABS and collaborators, for the sterling work achieved thus far.

