



South Africa, National Research Foundation (NRF)

National Eligibility and Funding Regulations

From the South African side only working researchers/scientists residing in South Africa and affiliated with a recognised South African public higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology or science council are eligible to apply. Researchers based at private higher education institutions are not eligible to apply under this programme. Researchers from SMEs, private companies/industries, and NGOs cannot serve as Principal Investigators but can form part of the South African research team. NGO and/or industry/ SME participants are expected to meet their own participation costs in the joint project. South African applicants and the Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDI) based co-Principal Investigators must be in possession of a PhD (Doctoral Degree).

It is “**mandatory**” for South African Principal Investigators based at historically advantaged institutions to include, as part of their research team, a research partner from a historically disadvantaged institution. Proposals submitted by an applicant based at a historically advantaged institution without a research partner from a historically disadvantaged institution will be ineligible (and will not be submitted for review).

Applicants based at (1) historically disadvantaged institutions, (2) South African science/research councils, (3) NRF research facilities and (4) the two new universities, i.e. the Sol Plaatje University (SPU) and the University of Mpumalanga (UMP), can act as Principal Investigators and submit proposals without the involvement of and/or partnering with researchers based at historically advantaged institutions (if they so wish). Please note that only the following eight universities are currently recognised as historically disadvantaged in line with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) November 2019 Ministerial Statement on university funding: University of Limpopo (UL), University of Fort Hare (UFH), University of Venda (Univen), Walter Sisulu University (WSU), University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of Zululand (UniZulu), Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU).

In terms of human capital development, Principal Investigators are encouraged to ensure the involvement of young scientists (i.e. doctoral and postdoctoral students) and pay attention to gender equality (a balanced involvement of female and male researchers) and previously disadvantaged individuals.

Eligible Costs

NRF funds can be used to cover the following costs:

1. Research-related costs

Activities to be supported may include expenses relating to field work such as conducting interviews, surveys, laboratory experiments, research-related trips, small equipment (consumables), etc. Airfare, accommodation, ground transport and subsistence should be calculated using rates as stipulated in institutional travel policies.

2. A 2-year postdoctoral research support

Funds within this Call make provision for one 2-year postdoctoral position equivalent to the NRF Freestanding postdoctoral fellowships. Therefore, Principal Investigators are expected to supervise and mentor a postdoctoral researcher who should be allowed to conduct research, either on a pre-specified aspect of the project or on their own designed topic within the project and should be supported to publish the work. The responsibilities of this position may also include assisting the Principal Investigator with the management and administration of the project. The postdoctoral fellows should be prepared to become principal investigators so they also take on senior responsibilities like mentoring, grant writing, and teaching.

3. Up to three (3-year) doctoral positions

For further details on the eligibility and funding criteria, refer to the *NRF Postgraduate Funding Guidelines*. Principal Investigators are expected to encourage their students to apply for bursaries when the call for Postgraduate Student Support opens. The Principal Investigators should provide the students with their grant number (***UID number***), which the NRF will provide on the letter of award. For further details on the NRF postgraduate funding support, kindly refer to the NRF Corporate website.

4. Masters, doctoral and postdoctoral research placement

The placements should enable the postgraduate students within the project to (1) learn valuable new skills or techniques; (2) access facilities or resources not readily available at home; (3) build relationships with potential new collaborators; and (4) advance complementary collaborative research. The duration of each placement is expected to be 3-6 months, with the flexibility to split the placement into several shorter visits. Longer placements may be undertaken where this would add value, and these should be justified within the application. Placements must enhance, not replace, the standard training and study support that the postgraduate students receive. These placements must be managed to fit within the original funded period of the studentship. Additional funding will not be made available through this call to support studentship extensions for those undertaking international placements. Applicants should include information about how these exchanges will be managed within their proposal.

5. Knowledge sharing costs (science engagement)

In support of activities organised by the partners, such as joint workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, lecture presentations, capacity building sessions, meetings, local/regional dissemination of results aimed at involving stakeholders, and/or end-users from outside the consortium with a minimum of 15% of the grant budget.

6. Research equipment or infrastructure

Up to a maximum of 15% of the budget may be budgeted for this item.

7. Project related Fora/ Seminars

To highlight the outcomes of funded projects and enable knowledge mobilisation and cross-project learning, a forum will be organised by funders at the mid-term and at the end of the grant period. Applicants should include expenses related to attending the fora in their project budgets. It is expected that policymakers from governments and non-government organisations will attend. The fora may also be a springboard for new research collaborations.

8. Exclusions

The following will **NOT** be funded from the NRF grant: consultant's fees, large equipment, project management fees (these fees can be included as part of the postdoctoral research support), overheads and salaries and temporary staff fees.

Funding Regulations

The total amount requested from the NRF should not exceed **R3,2 million per project**. Funding will be made available for a maximum of 3-years for research activities commencing in 2024. The grant covers research operating costs, postdoctoral fellowships, bursaries for doctoral students; short-term placement of postgraduate students at partnering countries, mobility costs, and limited research equipment and infrastructure. The guidelines for apportioning of the grant across these categories and the values of fellowships and scholarships are shown below. The funds per project must be utilised as follows:

- R1,2 million (R400 000 per annum) per project for research activities, mobility costs of the research team, small equipment, short-term research placement of postgraduate students, and knowledge sharing costs per project.
- R430 000 for one postdoctoral position at R215 000 per annum for 2-years:
 - R155 000 non-taxable stipend;
 - R45 000 contribution towards research costs; and
 - R15 000 compulsory institutional contribution.
- R1,5 million for up to 3 doctoral positions at:
 - R511 290 per student for 3-years (R170 430 per annum) at the full cost of study.
 - R286 290 per student for 3-years (R95 430 per annum) at the partial cost of study.

Doctoral students are advised to apply for a scholarship through the NRF call for student support which opens at the beginning of April each year.

The operational value of the grant for year 1 of 3 for the awarded Principal Investigator will be released to the host institution upon receipt of the signed copy of the NRF *Conditions of Grant* by the Principal Investigator and paid upon the claim of expenses. Postgraduate student funding will be made available to successfully nominated postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Grants will thereafter be disbursed to the institutions on an annual basis, for the approved funding period, subject to the awarded Principal Investigator meeting the *Conditions of Grant* and submitting a Progress Report.

Science Engagement

Science engagement refers to scientific and initiative activities, events, interventions, or interactions characterised by mutual learning and dialogue among people of varied backgrounds, scientific expertise, and life experiences, who articulate and discuss their perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and values. It is an overarching term for all aspects of public engagement through suitable communication channels with science, science awareness, science education, science communication, and science outreach, aiming to develop and benefit individuals and society. The NRF supports science engagement by coordinating and implementing the Department of Science and Innovation's Engagement Strategy. The strategy embraces a broad understanding of science, encompassing systematic knowledge spanning (natural and physical sciences, engineering sciences, medical sciences, agricultural sciences, mathematics, social sciences and humanities, and technology) all aspects of the innovation chain and indigenous knowledge. Therefore, researchers funded through the NRF programmes must contribute to science engagement and report the related outputs in their project's progress report.

Intellectual Property

The researchers of each country, particularly the leaders, must take adequate steps to ensure protection and sharing of the intellectual property that could result from the joint projects.

Ethical Clearance

In conjunction with the institution, it is the responsibility of the grant-holder to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside South Africa comply with the laws and regulations of South Africa and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted. These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigor of all research prior to the commencement of the research and acceptance of the grant. The awarded amount will not be released for payment if a copy of the required ethical clearance certificate, as indicated in the application, is not attached to the Conditions of Grant. Please also refer to the "Statement on Ethical Research and Scholarly Publishing Practices" on the NRF website at <https://www.nrf.ac.za/statement-on-ethical-research-and-scholarly-publishing-practices/>.

Protection of Personal Information

The National Research Foundation ensures compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), Act 4 of 2013, committing to ensure the privacy of those submitting applications and proposals to the NRF on the NRF Connect (<https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/>). The National Research Foundation will protect the personal information provided by applicants or the third party against misuse, loss, unauthorized access, modification, or disclosure. The Privacy Policy of the NRF outlines the practices relating to the protection of personal information and can be accessed on the NRF website at <https://www.nrf.ac.za/privacy-policy>.

Application Procedure

Procedure for Submitting a Notice of Intent (NOI):

Applicants must submit their Notice of Intent (NOI) (*mandatory*) directly to the Call Secretariat, using the Convergence Portal. Queries on using the Convergence Portal can be directed to the Call Secretariat (i.e. NFRF Staff) at NFRF-FNFR@chairs-chaire.gc.ca. All information on this process can be found through the link: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/international/2023/guide_NOI-guide_AIPD-eng.aspx. The deadline for the submission of the NOI to the Call Secretariat is **Tuesday, 2 May 2023, 20:00 PM (Eastern Time)**.

To access the General Call Framework, please use this link: <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/international/2023/competition-concours-eng.aspx>.

South African applicants requesting funding from the NRF are not expected to submit their NOI to the NRF. NRF Connect will only be open for the submission of full proposals. Refer to the next paragraph.

Procedure for Submitting a Full Proposal:

Full proposals should also be submitted to the Call Secretariat (NFRF). The Convergence Portal for submission of full proposals will open on **Sunday, 7 May 2023**. Research teams should submit their full proposals by **Tuesday, 12 September 2023**.

South African applicants requesting funding from the NRF are also expected and required to submit their full proposals through to the NRF Connect using the following link: <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>. Please make use of the 'General Application Guide 2024' for assistance on the steps to follow when applying for international research grants. The link to the guide will be published on this web page: <https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/>. The NRF system will open for the submission of full applications on **Monday, 8 May 2023** and close on **Tuesday, 12 September 2023**.

Please note that failure to submit a full proposal to the NRF will make the application ineligible, compromising the entire project consortium.

South African applicants **must** attach the required **compulsory documents** in PDF format in the following order:

- CVs of partner Principal Investigators.
- Budgets of partner Principal Investigators.
- Budget division of the South African team, particularly budget sharing between the historically advantaged and HDIs.

Please note:

- Failure to submit compulsory documents will result in the disqualification of the application and will make the entire project consortium ineligible.
- Only one application is allowed per South African applicant. Should more than one application be received, only one will be submitted for review at the discretion of the NRF.

NRF Contact Details for Queries

Queries on the NRF Connect can be forwarded to the NRF Support Desk on email: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za.

The following NRF officials can also be contacted for further information:

For programme-content related queries	For technical and grant related queries
<p>Mr Nombuso Madonda Professional Officer: Overseas Collaborative Grants Knowledge Advancement and Support (KAS) Tel: +27 (0) 12 481 4285 Email: NP.Madonda@risa.nrf.ac.za</p>	<p>Mr Jan Phalane Professional Officer: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Tel: +27 (0) 12 481 4157 Email: JR.Phalane@risa.nrf.ac.za</p>