



General Application Guide 2022

Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

Final Version 1

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1. Background

During the last four years the National Research Foundation (NRF) has embarked on a process designed to enhance and simplify the NRF administrative interface with Researchers, Students and Designated Authorities. This has been done by streamlining its application templates and its Call Opening process, in line with the forthcoming Research Support Strategies by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the NRF. These changes will create enhanced efficiency in receiving and processing applications and be more effective in prioritizing funding to best serve the NRF mandate.

2. Application Categories

As a result of the streamlining, the NRF will publish the One Call for Applications for funding in February 2021 (Review Period 1) and others later in Review Period 2 under the following categories. Refer to Appendix 1 for the Review Periods.

1) Concept Notes

- a) Concept Notes FBIP
- b) Concept Notes JINR (Offline)

2) Infrastructure Bridging Finance

3) Institutional Grants

- a) CSIR / SANBA Co-funded Research Chair
- b) DSI / NRF / WRC Water RDI Roadmap Research Chair
- c) DSI / DHET / NRF Research Chair
- d) NRF / CSIR (Smart Mobility) Co-funded Chair
- e) NRF / Swiss Bilateral Research Chair
- f) NRF / UKZN Co-funded Chair (**Closed Call**)
- g) NRF / UP Co-funded Research Chairs (**Closed Call**)
- h) Replacement Chairs (**Closed Calls**)
- i) Umgeni Water / NRF / UP Research Chair (**Closed Call**)

4) Non-funding opportunities

- a) NRF Awards
- b) NRF Rating

5) NRF Postgraduate Scholarships

- a) Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Studies
- b) First-time Doctoral Scholarships (Including SRAO Doctoral Scholarships)

- c) First-time Masters Scholarships (Including SARA O Masters Scholarships)
- d) Honours Scholarships (Including SARA O Honours Scholarships)
- e) NRF / Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships (Split site)

6) Other Grants

- a) Fulbright / NRF Visiting Student Research (Offline)

7) Postdoctoral Grants

- a) Postdoctoral Fellowships (Including SARA O Postdoctoral Fellowships)

8) Research Grants: General

- a) African Origins Platform (AOP)
- b) Black Academics Advancement Programme
- c) Earth Systems Science Research Programme (ESSRP)
- d) FBIP Large Grants*
- e) FBIP Small Grants
- f) Human and Social Dynamics Programme
- g) Marine and Coastal Research Programme
- h) New Earth Observation Frontiers (NEOFrontiers)
- i) Support for Rated and Unrated Researchers

9) Research Grants: International

- a) Africa / Japan Collaborative Research (AJ-CORE)
- b) BRICS Multilateral Joint Science and Technology Research Collaboration
- c) Italy / South Africa Joint Research Programme
- d) Netherlands (NWO)-SA Bilateral (**Closed Call**)
- e) NRF / DFG International Research Training Groups (IRTGs)
- f) SA / China (CSTEC) YSEP Call for Proposals
- g) SA / China (MOST) Joint Research Programme (JRP) and Flagship
- h) SA / France (PROTEA) Call for Joint Proposals
- i) SA / Japan (JSPS) Call for Joint Proposals
- j) SA / Sweden (STINT) Call for Joint Proposals
- k) SA (NRF) / Switzerland (Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Lead Agency (**Opened 15 Sep 2020**))
- l) SA /USA (NSF) Dimensions of Biodiversity
- m) SA / Wallonia Brussels Federation (FNRS) Call for Joint Proposals
- n) Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP) COVID-19 Call

10) Research Grants: Thuthuka

- a) Thuthuka

11) Research Grants: Without Student Support

- a) Support for Y-rated Researchers

12) SRAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships

- a) SRAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships

13) Targeted Grants

- a) DSI / NRF Research Development Grants for New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) Scholars (**Closed Call**)

14) Travel, Training and Conference Grants

- a) DSI / NRF Conference Fund
- b) Equipment-related Travel & Training
- c) ERC Mobility
- d) Germany (IRTGs) Preparatory Workshop
- e) ISC Grants for Travel & Hosting of Events
- f) JINR Student Practice
- g) Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration (KIC)
- h) Scholarships- and fellowship-holders Travel grants

Please note:

- **Research Grants: General**

FBIP Large Grants indicated with (*) will be available to successful applicants from the Concept Notes submitted in Review Period 1.

3. Cut-off dates and Review Periods

The NRF will accept applications for processing on the cut-off dates for the different Review Periods as indicated in Appendix 1. Applications submitted by institutions after the DA cut-off date, will not be considered. Applicants should therefore ensure that **the institutional deadlines are strictly followed.**

Institutional Cut-off Dates: Internal

The cut-off dates for submission of applications to institutions are dependent on the internal cut-off dates of individual institutions. Institutions will need to advertise their respective cut-off dates for submission of applications to their Researchers/Students to ensure applications are not submitted late.

Applicants are **strongly advised** to adhere to the institutional cut-off dates so as NOT to miss the opportunity for their applications being submitted to the NRF for review.

Institutional Cut-off Dates: NRF

The cut-off dates advertised in Appendix 1, are the final dates for the Designated Authorities (DAs) to submit applications to the NRF. **Applications that are submitted to the NRF by institutions later than the dates in Appendix 1, will NOT be processed for funding in 2021/2022.**

4. How to Apply

Applications must be submitted electronically on the NRF Online Submission System at

<https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za> unless indicated otherwise.

It is important to read the relevant documents before deciding on the funding opportunity to apply to. All eligibility criteria, as well as the applicable requirements, must be taken into consideration. All Framework and Application and Funding Guide documents are available on the NRF website at <https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/framework-documents>

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the NRF website. It includes a search box and a menu with eight items: 01 Funding, 02 Bursaries & Scholarships, 03 Information Sources, 04 Science Engagement, 05 NRF Rating, 06 Research Platforms, 07 Science Matters, and 08 Information Portal. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads 'home » funding » 01 funding: call documents'. The main heading is '01 Funding: Call Documents'. Underneath, there are two links: 'NRF Call for Proposals for Funding in 2021 and 2022' and 'Scholarship and Fellowship Application Documents 2022'. On the right side, there is a 'Related Pages' section with a list of links: 'Directorates & Instruments', 'Non-NRF Opportunities', 'NRF Calls', 'Call Documents' (which is highlighted with a right-pointing arrow), and 'Outcomes Of Applications'.

Please note that Framework documents for the Research Grants: International category (Review Period 2) will be published on the system as they become available.

Instructions to Applicants

- Go to <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>.
- Register/Login using your ID/Passport number and password.
- Go to “My Applications” and select “Create Application”:

Funding Category		Create
>	Infrastructure Bridging Funding	
>	Targeted Grants	
>	Concept Notes	
	Institutional Grants	
>	Postdoctoral Grants	
>	Research Grants: General	
>	Research Grants: International	
>	Research Grants: Without student support	
	Research Grants: Thuthuka	
>	Travel, Training and Conference Grants: General	

Non-Funding Calls	Open Date	Closing Date	Create
Rating Call 2021	30 September 2020	01 March 2021	

- Where there are multiple “Funding Opportunities” per category, click on the icon next to the relevant “Funding Category”.
- On the confirmation screen, review the selection of “Funding Opportunity” and click “OK” if correct.
- If the selection is not correct, click “Cancel” to return to the “Create Application” screen.
- Where there is only one “Funding Opportunity” per category, click on the icon next to the relevant “Funding Category”. With these “Funding Opportunities”, the application will automatically be created.
- Complete all the compulsory sections of the application as well as the non-compulsory sections which are relevant to you.
- Attach all the required documents in PDF format.
- Submit the application on completion.
- Complete applications will go to the Research/Postgraduate Office of the applicant’s institution for processing.

Number of Applications Allowed within a Category within a Call Year

Category	Applications per Category	Applications per Funding Opportunity
Concept Notes	2	1
Infrastructure Bridging	1	1
Institutional Grants	2	1
Non-funding Opportunities	1	1
NRF Postgraduate Scholarships	1	1
Other Grants	1	1
Postdoctoral Grants	1	1
Research Grants: General	2	1
Research Grants: International	2	1
SARAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships	1	1
Targetted Grants	1	1
Travel, Training and Conference Grants	2	1
Travel, Training and Conference Grants:	Per Review Period	Per Review Period
• Equipment-related Travel and Training	2	2
• Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration	2	2

The following applications will not be considered for funding:

- Incomplete applications;
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in the call documents;
- Applications submitted outside the NRF Online Submission System, unless indicated otherwise;
- Applications submitted in hard copies; and/or
- Applications in a language other than English.

Only applications endorsed by the Research/Postgraduate Office at Higher Education Institutions, or their equivalent at declared NRF Recognised Research Institutions, as gazetted, will be accepted. Please contact the relevant Research/Postgraduate Offices, or equivalent, if you have any queries.

Instructions to Research/Postgraduate Officers (or equivalent)

Please ensure that you prepare adequately for the advertised cut-off dates.

Designated Authorities (DAs) are the gatekeepers of quality applications to safeguard the reputation of institutions in accessing funds. As such they should:

- Provide guidance and advice to potential applicants, researchers, grantholders and students in the choice of funding opportunities available to them;
- Review applications for completeness and correctness before submission to the NRF. This includes ensuring that all compulsory attachments are uploaded and are correct;
- Open applications for amendment if/when required and indicate where revisions are required;
- Decline applications that do not comply with the eligibility criteria and provide feedback to the applicant;
- Ensure that all mandatory documents e.g. copy of ID etc. are uploaded; and
- Ensure that applications meet all the Funding Opportunity eligibility criteria before submitting to NRF.

Please Note:

- Under no circumstance should DAs submit applications to the NRF if not all the eligibility criteria are met.
- For the Thuthuka funding opportunity, DAs are requested to enter the preferred Funding Track in the “Comments” block provided, see example below.

5. Evaluation of Applications

All applications received by the NRF are screened for eligibility and for compulsory documentation to be submitted with the application. Applications that are deemed not eligible or don't have ALL the required attachments will not be processed further.

Reviewing of most applications for funding will be through a one-stage or two-stage process.

One-stage review refers to where the reviewers who receive the applications, review them virtually or convene as a panel to share their reviews of the applications, score them & generate a collective outcome & recommendation. This process therefore entails the panel engaging the applications directly, and not receive & deal with postal reviewer reports.

In the case of two-stage reviews, the applications are sent out to remote, specialist reviewers who submit review reports on the applications. A panel/committee primarily considers the review reports in scoring & generating collective outcomes & recommendations.

6. Outcomes

Following on the review process recommendations, the NRF makes awards according to the recommendations, set criteria and objectives of the various funding opportunities and funds available. The dates of the outcomes of the funding decision process will be made available in an updated version of this document later in February 2021.

7. Contact Details

Applicants are encouraged to first engage their institutional authorities, i.e. Research/Postgraduate Office (or equivalent) for information and advice.

For Funding Instrument-related queries

Please contact the relevant contact persons as indicated in the Framework and Funding and Application Guides.

The NRF Support Desk can be contacted for technical support as follows:

Email: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

Appendix 1

List of Funding Opportunities and Cut-off dates

Category	Funding Opportunity	Funding Year	Review Period	Call Opening Date	Cut-off Date for DAs
Concept Notes	Concept Notes for Large Integrated Projects - Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP)	2021	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Concept Notes JINR (Off-line applications)	2022	1	1 Apr 21	30 May 21
Customised Programmes	No calls in this category in 2021	No calls in 2021			
Infrastructure Grants	National Equipment Programme	No call in 2021			
Infrastructure Bridging Finance	Infrastructure Bridging Finance	2021	1	8 Feb 21	28 Feb 21
Institutional Grants	CSIR / SANBA Co-funded Research Chair	2022	1	8 Mar 21	15 May 21
	DSI / DHET / NRF Research Chair	2022	1	8 Mar 21	15 May 21
	NRF / CSIR (Smart Mobility) Co-funded Chair	2022	1	8 Mar 21	15 May 21
	NRF / Swiss Bilateral Research Chair	2022	1	8 Mar 21	15 May 21
	NRF / UKZN Co-funded Chair	2022	1	8 Mar 21	15 May 21
	NRF / UP Co-funded Research Chairs	2022	1	8 Mar 21	15 May 21
	Replacement Chairs – Review Period 1	N/A	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Replacement Chairs – Review Period 2	N/A	2	5 Jul 21	15 Aug 21
	Umgeni Water / NRF / UP Research Chair	2022	1	8 Mar 21	15 May 21
DSI / NRF / WRC Water RDI Roadmap Research Chair (2 nd Round)	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21	
Non-Funding Opportunities	NRF Awards	N/A	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Rating for Individuals	N/A	N/A	6 Sep 21	17 Feb 22
NRF Postgraduate Scholarships	Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Studies	2022	1	1 Apr 21	20 Aug 21
	First-time Doctoral Scholarships (Including SARAO Doctoral Scholarships)	2022	1	1 Apr 21	20 Aug 21
	First-time Masters Scholarships (Including SARAO Masters Scholarships)	2022	1	1 Apr 21	20 Aug 21
	Honours Scholarships	2022	1	1 Apr 21	18 Dec 21
	SARAO Honours Scholarships	2022	1	1 Apr 21	14 Aug 21
	NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships (Split-site)	2022	1	1 Apr 21	20 Aug 21
Other Grants	Fulbright - NRF Doctoral Abroad (Offline application)	2022	1	N/A	N/A
Postdoctoral Grants	Postdoctoral Fellowships (Including SARAO Postdoctoral Fellowships)	2022	1	8 Feb 1	14 May 21
Research Grants: General	African Origins Platform (AOP)	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Black Academics Advancement Programme (BAAP)	2022	1	8 Feb 21	30 Apr 21

Category	Funding Opportunity	Funding Year	Review Period	Call Opening Date	Cut-off Date for DAs
	Earth Systems Science Research Programme	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) - Small Grants	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) - Small Grants	2022	2	1 Jun 21	23 Sep 21
	Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) - Large Grants (Closed Call)*	2021	2	7 Jul 21	23 Sep 21
	Human and Social Dynamics Programme	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Marine and Coastal Research Programme	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	New Earth Observation Frontiers (NEOFrontiers)	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 Mar 21
	Support for Rated and Unrated Researchers	2022	1	8 Feb 1	15 May 21
Research Grants: International	Africa / Japan Collaborative Research (AJ-CORE)	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
	BRICS Multilateral Joint Science and Technology Research Collaboration	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
	Italy/South Africa Joint Research Programme (ISARP)	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
	Netherlands (NWO)-SA Bilateral (Closed Call)	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
	NRF / DFG International Research Training Groups (IRTGs)	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
	SA / China (CSTEC) YSEP Call for Proposals	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
	SA / China Joint Research Programme (JRP)	2022	1	8 Feb 21	31 Mar 21
	SA / France (PROTEA) Call for Joint Proposals	2022	1	8 Feb 21	31 Mar 21
	SA / Japan (JSPS) Call for Joint Proposals	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
	SA / Sweden (STINT) Call for Joint Proposals	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
	SA (NRF) / Switzerland (Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Lead Agency (Opened Sep 2020)	2022	1	15 Sep 20	1 Apr 21
	SA / USA (NSF) Dimensions of Biodiversity	2022	1	8 Feb 21	31 Mar 21
	SA / Wallonia Brussels Federation (FNRS) Call for Joint Proposals	2022	2	8 Feb 21	31 Mar 21
	Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP) COVID-19 Call	2022	2	1 Jun 21	17 Sep 21
Research Grants: Thuthuka	Thuthuka	2022	1	8 Feb 21	30 Apr 21
Research Grants: Without Student Support	Support for Y-rated Researchers	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 May
SARAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships	SARAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships	2022	1	1 Jun 21	31 Aug 21
Targeted Grants	DSI/NRF Research Development Grants for New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) Scholars (Closed Call)	2021	1	8 Feb 21	26 Mar 21

Category	Funding Opportunity	Funding Year	Review Period	Call Opening Date	Cut-off Date for DAs
Travel, Training and Conference Grants	DSI / NRF Conference Fund	2022	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Equipment Related Travel & Training 1 st Call	2021	1	8 Feb 21	16 Mar 21
	Equipment Related Travel & Training 2 nd Call	2022	2	1 Jun 21	27 Aug 21
	ERC Mobility	2021	1	8 Feb 21	30 Mar 21
	Germany (IRTGs) Preparatory Workshop	2021	1	8 Feb 21	30 Mar 21
	Germany (IRTGs) Preparatory Workshop	2022	2	1 Apr 21	30 May 21
	ISC Grants for Travel & Hosting of Events	2021	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	JINR Student Practice (Off-line)	2022	2	6 Sep 21	6 Oct 21
	Knowledge Interchange & Collaboration (KIC) 1 st Call	2021	1	8 Feb 21	15 May 21
	Knowledge Interchange & Collaboration (KIC) 2 nd Call	2022	2	3 Aug 21	30 Aug 21
	Scholarship- and fellowship-holders Travel Grants	2021	1 2 3	8 Feb 21	19 Mar 21 4 Jun 1` 3 Sep 21

* Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) - Large Grants (Closed Call) is for applicants whose Concept Notes applications were successful.