



NRF

National
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Foundation

Overview of NRF Funding Opportunities, Grant Management, and the Rating of Researchers 2013



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Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in the booklet is accurate. Changes that may occur from time to time, will be discussed with, and communicated to, the research community where possible. If errors are noted or if changes occur, the NRF is not bound to abide by the published information.



Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACEP	African Coelacanth Environment Programme
AOP	African Origins Programme
CoE	Centres of Excellence
CPRR	Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers
CSUR	Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers
DEA	Department of Environment Affairs
DA	Designated Authority
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DST	Department of Science and Technology
GCRP	Global Change Research Plan
GCSSRP	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme
GMSA	Grants Management and Systems Administration
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
IFRR	Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
KFD	Knowledge Fields Development
KIC	Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCM	Marine and Coastal Management
NEP	National Research Equipment Programme
NNEP	National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSI	National System of Innovation
PDP	Professional Development Programme
RISA	Research and Innovation, Support and Advancement
SANAP	South African National Antarctic Programme
SARChI	South African Research Chairs Initiative
SC	Specialist Committee
the dti	Department of Trade and Industry
THRIP	Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme

Introduction

This booklet is intended to provide readers with a resource that will enable them to navigate the National Research Foundation's (NRF) research funding landscape.

Readers will find this a useful tool for interacting with the institution in pursuit of leveraging numerous funding opportunities available for the research community. The booklet should be read in conjunction with other resources such as the NRF website (www.nrf.ac.za) or publications such as the NRF Annual Report, business plans and programme-specific guides and frameworks. In addition, emails can be sent, for general enquiries to info@nrf.ac.za or, for grant related enquiries to supportdesk@nrf.ac.za.

Mandate

The mandate of the NRF is to "Support and promote research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary research facilities in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of science and technology including indigenous knowledge and thereby to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of the Republic".

This mandate translates into the NRF's Vision 2015 Strategic Plan. (www.nrf.ac.za/). Tactically it gives rise to two organisational arms, viz.

1. The National Research Facilities that are custodians of large pieces of scientific equipment or large collections of data and specimens. These resources are for the use of researchers across the country. Descriptions of these facilities can be found at www.nrf.ac.za/.
2. Research and Innovation Support Advancement (RISA) is a grant and knowledge management unit. This booklet focuses almost entirely on the activities of RISA and specifically on the award of research grants and the benchmarking of research quality through the rating system.

Investment Principles

The NRF invests its limited resources strategically according to the following broad principles:

1. Awarding funding on a competitive basis.
2. A healthy balance between strategy-driven versus demand-pull funding.
3. Merit-based and rigorous peer review.
4. PhD as a driver.
5. Cross-fertilisation of talent within the National System of Innovation (NSI).
6. Effective, goal-oriented resource allocation.
7. Fairness, transparency and accountability.
8. Transformation and excellence.

The NRF has identified five broad investment areas that are listed in **Table 1**. The allocation of resources will change over time in response to developments in the landscape of the NSI, but will remain within the guidelines set by the NRF strategy.

Table 1: NRF Broad Investment Areas

Next Generation
Emerging Researchers
Established Researchers
Strategic Investment
Infrastructure

Funding Opportunities

The wide range of NRF funding opportunities is dynamic and therefore subject to change. Researchers are advised to regularly visit the NRF website at www.nrf.ac.za to check for notifications of changes and updates on the current status of the respective programmes. A list of the current major funding opportunities is provided in **Table 2**.



Table 2: List of funding opportunities

Broad Investment Area	Funding Programmes
NEXT GENERATION	Professional Development Programme
	Student Support
	Thuthuka: PhD Track
EMERGING RESEARCHERS	Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers
	Postdoctoral Fellowships
	Professional Development Programme
	Thuthuka : Post-PhD Track
	Thuthuka: NRF Rating Track
ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS	African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme
	African Origins Platform
	Blue Skies Research
	Community Engagement Programme
	Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers
	Education Research in South Africa
	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme
	Human Capital Development for Multi-Wavelength Astronomy
	Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers
	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
	International Research Grants
	Knowledge Fields Development
	SA National Antarctic Programme
Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme	
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT	Centres of Excellence
	Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration
	South African Research Chairs Initiative
INFRASTRUCTURE	Equipment Related Travel and Training Grants
	Research Infrastructure Support Programmes

1. Student Support

1.1 Bursaries and Scholarships

The NRF supports students, mainly at postgraduate level, in two different ways, viz.

- Free-standing scholarships, for which students apply online and compete individually on merit.
- Grantholder-linked bursaries, a grantholder is awarded a number of bursaries within his/her research grant. The grantholder is responsible for selecting the most appropriate and worthy students.

Refer to the NRF/GMSA's booklet '2013 NRF Bursary & Scholarship Values, Rules and Guidelines' for funding opportunities.

The NRF awards postdoctoral fellowships in the same way as described in 3.1.1 above. Postdoctoral fellowships are awarded to all nationalities, based on a pre-determined quota, and the awarded funds have to be used in South Africa. A Postdoctoral Fellowship appointment should preferably be at a university other than the one that awarded the Doctorate. Exceptions can be considered based on a motivation submitted with the application for the Fellowship.

2. Overarching Grant Criteria

The overarching eligibility criteria for RISA research grants are summarised below.

- All researchers who are employed and remunerated on a full-time permanent of full-time contract basis at institutions as defined in **Table 3** below.
- Persons from institutions not listed in **Table 3**, who conduct research and are formally affiliated with one of the institutions as defined for each specific funding programme in **Table 3** (e.g. appointed as a visiting professor). In the case of grant funding, the funds will be paid to the affiliated institution.
- Retired academics/researchers who are -
 - residing in South Africa;

- formally affiliated (e.g. appointed as an emeritus professors, honorary research associates/professors, supernumerary/contract employees) to a research institution as defined in **Table 3** and whose application is formally supported and endorsed by the institution to which they are or are anticipating to be affiliated;
- active researchers with a distinguished track record in research and postgraduate student supervision; and
- still actively mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff.

2.1. Research-intensive Institutions

The NRF primarily supports **research-intensive institutions** conducting basic or applied research of a pre-competitive nature for the benefit of the long-term knowledge base. The institutions must also be committed to human resource capacity development, including equity and redress. The institutions supported by the NRF through its funding and rating programmes are listed in **Table 3**.

2.2. Student Training

Although not always an eligibility requirement, the quality of all applications for funding is greatly enhanced by the applicant having a student-training track record.

2.3. Foreign Applicants

Persons holding joint appointments between a South African and a foreign institution, and who are actively involved in research capacity building locally, must be employed by the South African institution in a full-time capacity for a period of at least six months per annum and should spend at least six months per annum in South Africa.

Grant-specific Eligibility Criteria

The following is an overview of the criteria for research grants in the various programmes offered by the NRF (excluding Student Support). The proposed work must constitute research as defined by the NRF and be aligned with the strategy of the relevant programme. Refer to the relevant programme framework and guidelines under www.nrf.ac.za for more information.

3. African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP)

The African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme is a research platform which aims to provide access to research infrastructure (e.g. ship's time, remote operated vehicles, dive teams etc.) and associated funding to the research community to undertake research along the east coast of South Africa.

4. African Origins Platform (AOP) Strategy

The African Origins Platform strategy provides direction on a holistic approach towards the development of palaeosciences and related disciplines. This strategy addresses issues of public engagement, human resources, challenges faced by universities and museums as research institutions and repositories for collections, and the legal landscape and tourism development in palaeosciences.

5. Blue Skies Research Programme

The Blue Skies Research Programme is a highly competitive programme that aims to bring about new and unpredictable scientific/technological/scholarly discoveries. It provides the space for novel fundamental enquiry and can be described as multi-dimensional, self-initiated, curiosity-driven inquiry that necessitates high investment risks; addresses new phenomena, as well as push the frontiers of knowledge. Blue Skies research is associated with fundamental and basic research programmes and should be considered as a multi-dimensional concept that can be defined from different perspectives viz. that of the researcher, the funding agency, the object of the research, the research approach, and/or the contribution to the knowledge base.

6. Centres of Excellence (CoE)

The applicant must be an established researcher that holds a Doctoral degree, and must have a strong network of collaborators and fellow researchers working in similar and different, but related research fields. The network must span departments, schools and institutions and have an excellent and extended track record in research outputs.

7. Community Engagement Programme

The Community Engagement Programme is a competitive programme, which provides

the space for research that contributes both to knowledge production within the ambit of community engagement (here community is defined in its broadest sense); as well as research on the processes and dynamics of engagement from the perspective of the higher education sector. To further elaborate, the Programme is aimed at supporting and providing the enabling conditions for higher education institutions to come to grips with some of the philosophical and conceptual challenges associated with the dynamics of community engagement and social responsiveness, as a field of research enquiry.

8. Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers (CPRR)

The Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers is a discipline-based programme that supports principally basic research as the foundation of knowledge production, in the Natural Sciences and Engineering, and Social Sciences and Humanities.

As a competitive programme, the main eligibility criteria are the -

- current NRF rating of the principal applicant; and
- scientific merit of the research proposal.

9. Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers (CSUR)

The aim of this funding programme is to provide research support to those researchers, working in any research field, who do not, for a variety of reasons, hold a current NRF rating and who are not participating in any of the NRF capacity development programmes.

The strategic objectives of the Programme are to -

- strengthen the nation's research base;
- increase the nation's research outputs; and
- support the training of postgraduate students.

10. Education Research in South Africa

The call for funding for Education Research in South Africa seeks research proposals that adhere to the following entry-level hurdles:

- The research must address the -
 - overarching theme on "Teaching and learning interactions that shape the qualitative

outcomes of education” at all levels of the education and training system;

- national priorities in South Africa (a strong indication must be provided); and
 - systemic implications (either through large-scale empirical research or meta-analyses of past/existing small-scale research projects).
- Only proposals submitted by consortia will be accepted. Consortia members must reflect the following minimum conditions:
 - Multi-institutional collaboration: At least three different institutions in South Africa, with at least one representing a rural-based institution.
 - Multi-disciplinary backgrounds.

11. Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants

The NRF, through mobility grants, makes available funds for both national and international travel costs in order to support researchers who require access to equipment that is not available either regionally or nationally. The mobility grants are divided into two portfolios of opportunities, namely **Equipment-related Travel Grants**; and **Equipment-related Training Grants**. This Programme makes funding available to researchers based at institutions as listed in **Table 3** in order to support -

- the larger research community to access state-of-the-art equipment that is not readily available regionally and/or nationally;
- researchers and postgraduate students in South Africa to access global research infrastructure such as synchrotron radiation facilities;
- research institutions hosting training workshops on the use of specialised equipment that is acquired through NRF equipment grants;
- the larger research community to access training workshops on the use of specialised equipment that is acquired through NRF equipment grants; and
- the larger research community to access training workshops on the use of specialised equipment, not necessarily obtained through NRF grants, but that is clearly feeder equipment which is complementary to that acquired through NRF equipment grants.

The NRF encourages the local design and development of the next generation of research equipment in South Africa. Therefore, institutions are encouraged to apply for support for

access to training on design, procurement, construction, testing and certification of novel research equipment.

12. Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme (GCSSRP)

The Global Change Research Plan (GCRP) is one of the five grand challenges underpinning the ‘10-Year Innovation Plan’ of the Department of Science and Technology (DST). More information on the Global Change Grand Challenge, the associated Research Plan and implementation architecture can be found at <http://www.globalchange.grandchallengeonline.org/>.

The Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme is a long term large scale structured and coordinated research programme that will be implemented to address the identified fundamental research questions and provide research-based evidence that is required for socio-economic development, sustainability and social cohesion.

This Programme will also provide a unique opportunity to bring together a variety of players in the area of social-ecological research, enhance their capacity and capability to respond to climate and environmental change and in effect encourage and enhance interdisciplinary approach to problem solving.

13. Human Capital Development for Multi-Wavelength Astronomy

All researchers at South African higher education institutions and national research facilities can apply for funds, provided that they are working under the rubric of multi-wavelength astronomy, including: optical and gamma-ray astronomy and the supporting theory.

Researchers who are eligible for funding from the SKA/KAT are required to use that funding instrument, as the Multi-Wavelength Astronomy Programme funding is **not** intended for radio astronomy.

14. Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers (IFRR)

The Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers Programme was created with the aim

to incentivise excellent research. The collateral objectives of the Programme include encouraging researchers to -

- subject themselves for rating;
- maintain their ratings; and
- attain ever higher ratings until they reach the top rating (A1) (refer to rating categories at <http://www.nrf.ac.za/projects.php?pid=115>).

15. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Applicants must respond to either -

- IKS and Bio-economy (African Traditional Medicine; Food Security; or Cosmetics);
- IKS Epistemology (Ubuntu and Cosmology; or Taxonomies, pedagogies, methodologies);
- IKS and Climate Change;
- IKS and Energy;
- IKS Practices of Khoi, Nama, Griqua and San communities; and/or
- novel and creative thinking that will shift the boundaries of IKS knowledge production and that address national priorities in South Africa.

Joint and active participation and equal ownership among academic scientists and IKS holders/practitioners/community members must be evident in the application (either as the principal investigator or co-investigator).

16. International Research Grants

The proposed work must constitute research. The applicant(s) must have a research collaborator in the country that is a signatory to the bi-national or bi-lateral between the NRF and a funding agency in another country, e.g. the NRF-CNRS Agreement (with France).

17. Knowledge Fields Development (KFD) Grants

The Knowledge Fields Development Directorate identifies and coordinates a number of knowledge field development activities for implementation each year. These activities are supported by way of short-term grants that are typically once off. It is only under

very special circumstances that additional support will be made available for further development of the same initiative. Choice of setting priorities for activities is done either through the directed or non-direct approach. The directed approach involves activities that are aligned with national strategic priorities, and may be identified internally by the NRF or in collaboration with the research community. The non-directed approach involves activities identified and coordinated by the research community itself, and funded by KFD.

18. Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration (KIC)

Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration offers researchers an opportunity to apply for funding for local or international travel; support grants to host events such as conferences and symposia; and mobility grants which support local or international travel for research or training on specific equipment not available in the applicant's institution or in South Africa respectively and not supported by the NRF's Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants Programme (refer to 11 above). The guidelines pertaining to funding within the KIC Programme are being revised and it is advisable to contact the NRF for updated information.

19. Professional Development Programme (PDP)

This Programme is aimed at creating an opportunity for research institutions such as science councils, national research facilities and museums to attract, retain and train young scientists and professionals within their strategic research programmes and projects.

Candidates will be exposed to a work preparation programme which will allow them to obtain and expand on their research experience and skills through working and contributing directly towards the hosts' research project/s. They will be working toward obtaining either a doctoral qualification or postdoctoral research experience within the research field and contributing to the NSI.

20. Research Infrastructure Support Programmes (RISP)

The purpose of the Research Infrastructure Support Programme is to support the acquisition, maintenance and development of the state-of-the-art research equipment. Support through NEP and NNEP is intended for researchers from South African higher education institutions, national research institutions such as museums, Science Councils,

National Research Facilities and other government-funded laboratories, including research hospitals. The main criteria for consideration for funding applications are as follows:

- Scientific merit of the proposed research.
- Human resource capacity development.
- Regional and national collaboration with other institutions and industry.
- Effective sustainable utilisation of the equipment.
- Appropriate maintenance of the investment.
- Appropriate training of technical staff for diagnostic, maintenance and application purposes.

21. South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP)

The South African National Antarctic Programme supports research in the Southern Ocean, including the Southern Ocean Islands (Marion Island, Prince Edward Island and Gough Island) and Antarctica. The Programme supports research in the research areas of Earth Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Life Sciences, Oceanographic Sciences, Physical Sciences and the Social Sciences, Law and Humanities.

22. South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI)

In order to apply for a Research Chair, an applicant must -

- be an established researcher;
- hold a PhD or an equivalent research qualification;
- have a research track record that is excellent and sustained, and clearly on an upward trajectory for more than four years;
- have a track record in supervising and mentoring postgraduate students; and
- have a record of being able to obtain external funding.

23. Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP)

The proposed project must be a high quality science, engineering and/or technology research project with financial support from an industry partner (preferably an SMME). The project must produce an innovative (able to be commercialised) product/process/



prototype, must involve technology transfer and must produce Additionality, Causality and Implementation. It must have clearly defined scientific, technological and human resources outputs and contribute to the competitive edge of the investing industrial partner. For a definition of Additionality, Causality and Implementation, refer to the THRIP MCDM, obtainable from THRIP staff at the NRF (see contact details at the end of the booklet).

24. Thuthuka Programme

The Thuthuka Programme, initiated in 2001, is central to the NRF's human capital development strategy in so far as it relates to advancing the equity and redress agenda within the research sphere. Operating within the ever-evolving higher education landscape, the Programme aims to develop human capital and to improve the research capacities of designated researchers (black [African, Indian or Coloured], female or disabled) with the ultimate aim of redressing historical imbalances. This is done in partnership with public funded HEIs, Science Councils and other publicly funded research institutions.

The Programme is managed in three different funding tracks, each one targeting research capacity development needs:

- **PhD-Track** for applicants to intend obtaining a PhD within the funding period.
- **Post-PhD Track** for applicants who intend becoming established researchers by strengthening their research capabilities.
- **NRF Rating Track** for applicants who would like to apply for NRF Rating within the funding period.

Table 3: Institutions supported by the NRF's funding and rating opportunities

Investment Area	Award Programme	South African HEIs (Public funded)	South African Science Councils	Museums (Public funded)	National Research Facilities	Public funded research institutions	Private HEIs operating in SA	HEIs from other countries	Approved NGOs	Private sector companies
EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUALS		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
NEXT GENERATION	Professional Development Programme	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Student Support	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
	Thuthuka: PhD Track	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
EMERGING RESEARCHERS	Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Postdoctoral Fellowships	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
	Professional Development Programme	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Thuthuka: Post-PhD Track	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Thuthuka: NRF Rating Track	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS	African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	African Origins Platform	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Blue Skies Research	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Community Engagement Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Education Research in South Africa	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N

ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS	Human Capital Development for Multi-Wavelength Astronomy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Indigenous Knowledge Systems	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	International Research Grants	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Knowledge Fields Development	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	SA National Antarctic Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	L	N	L	L
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT	Centres of Excellence	Y	L	L	L	L	N	N	N	N
	Knowledge Interchange Collaboration	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	South African Research Chairs Initiative	Y	L	L	L	L	N	N	N	N
INFRASTRUCTURE	Equipment related Travel and Training Grants	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Research Infrastructure Support Programme	Y	Y*	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N

Key to Table 3

- Y** - Yes (supported)
N - No (not supported)
L - Linked (cannot apply directly but can benefit)
South African HEIs (Publicly funded) - All South Africa's publicly funded institutions of higher learning
South African Science Councils - Statutory science councils, e.g. the CSIR, Mintek
Museums (publicly funded) - Research intensive museums in South Africa

- National Research Facilities** - iThema Labs, NZG, SAAO, SAIAB, SAEON, HarRAO
Publicly funded research institutions - NRF approved research intensive institutions e.g. SANSA
Private HEIs operating in SA - e.g. Monash University
HEIs from other countries - e.g. Oxford University, Harvard University
NRF approved NGOs - Research intensive NGOs registered in South Africa
Private sector companies - Local and foreign industry (for profit organisations)



Restrictions on Holding Multiple NRF Grants

Restrictions on holding multiple NRF awards are indicated in **Table 4** below (refer to Call documents for exceptions):

- A student may not receive more than one bursary or scholarship from the NRF concurrently.
- A student who is being supported by an NRF bursary/scholarship/fellowship may not also apply for a research grant.
- A student may not receive an NRF bursary or scholarship if he/she is contracted to a company in any manner.
- Researchers may not receive more than one grant for identical or closely related research proposals. The decision whether two proposals are identical or sufficiently similar to constitute double dipping, will be based on peer review.
- An NRF Research Chair-holder will not be eligible for additional NRF Discretionary Core Grant.
- A researcher may receive multiple awards from the NRF according to the **Table 4** below.
- Only one Thuthuka grant can be given to an individual.

Table 4 should be read by identifying the grant one holds (or hopes to hold) in Column 1, and then moving horizontally across the table to check which grants can be held simultaneously in the programmes listed in the vertical headings.

Table 4: Restrictions on multiple funding combinations

	ACEP, AOP, IKS, SANAP, GCSSRP, COMG, ERGR, MWGR	Blue Skies Research	CoE	CPRR	CSUR	Knowledge Fields Development	Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants	IFRR	IRG	KIC	PD Fellowships	PDP	RISP: NEP/NNEP	SARChI	Postgraduate Student Support-	THRIP	Thuthuka
ACEP, AOP, IKS, SANAP, GCSSRP, COMG, ERGR, MWGR	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Blue Skies Research	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N
CoE	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
CPRR	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N		N
CSUR	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
KFD	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
IFRR	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
IRG	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y
KIC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
PD Fellowships	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
PDP	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
RISP: NEP/NNEP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y
SARChI	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Postgraduate Student Support	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
THRIP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N
Thuthuka	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N

NOTE: The information contained in this Table is intended as a guide only. Potential applicants have to ensure that they familiarise themselves with programme specific conditions within the applicable Call.

Key to Table 4

Y - This combination is allowed **N** - This combination is not allowed

Duration of Awards

The duration of awards differ from programme to programme. However in general, awards are made for periods/cycles of three years and in some cases there is a limit to the number of funding periods/cycles allowed. This is especially the case in the development

programmes where the emphasis is on the development of research capacity. The duration of a Thuthuka grant, for example, is two cycles of three years each, giving a total support period of six years. Continued funding within the six years is, however, dependent on satisfactory progress that is assessed annually. Details on the duration of awards are provided in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Duration of awards

Broad Investment Area	Programme	Award cycles/years	Max Number of cycles	Total support period/years
EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUALS		6	Unlimited	
NEXT GENERATION	Professional Development Programme Doctoral Support	2	1	2
	Student Support (Free-standing and Grantholder-linked) Honours	1	1	1
	Student Support (Free-standing and Grantholder-linked) Master's	2	1	2
	Student Support (Free-standing and Grantholder-linked) Doctoral	3	1	3
	Thuthuka PhD Track	3	3	9
EMERGING RESEARCHERS	Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Postdoctoral Fellows	2	1	2
	Professional Development Programme Postdoctoral Support	2	1	2
	Thuthuka Post-PhD Track	3	2	6
	Thuthuka NRF Rating Track	3	2	6
ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS	African Coelecanth Ecosystem Programme	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	African Origins Platform	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Blue Skies Research	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Community Engagement Programme	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Education Research in South Africa	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Human Capital Development for Multi-Wavelength Astronomy	3	Unlimited	Reapply

ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS	Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers	6	Duration of valid NRF rating	
	Indigenous Knowledge Systems	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	International Research Grants	Varies	Unlimited	Reapply
	Knowledge Fields Development	Once-off grants (period linked to activity)		
	SA National Antarctic Programme	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme	3	3	9
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT	Centres of Excellence	10	1	10
	Knowledge Interchange Collaborations	1	1	1
	South African Research Chairs Initiative	5	3	15
INFRASTRUCTURE	Equipment related Travel and Training Grants	1	Unlimited	Reapply
	Research Infrastructure Support Programme	1	1	1



Grants Management

Grants are managed by RISA's Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate. Grants Directors are responsible for a number of programmes as described in this booklet. The management of grants is made up of two distinct activities, viz.

- **Pre-award activities or grant making** – All grants are awarded on a competitive basis through peer review of proposals submitted to the NRF; and
- **Post-award activities or grant paying** – The transfer of funds to the researcher's institution and the monitoring of research progress and expenditure (grants are seldom if ever paid to individuals). (Free-standing scholarships and fellowships are paid directly to the awardee.)

NB: All applications for funding need to be submitted during specific call periods using the online submission system (<https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>), unless otherwise indicated in the Call announcement.

The NRF manages and disburses funds received from various sources, including -

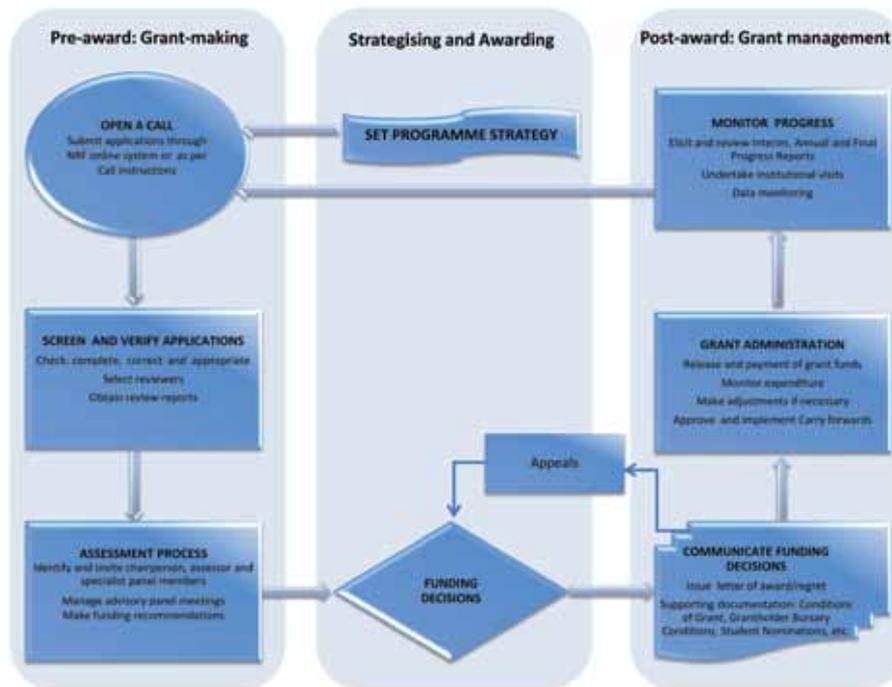


Figure 1: Grant management cycle

- the NRF Discretionary Core Grant; and
- various Government departments, e.g.
 - Department of Science and Technology (DST),
 - Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET),
 - Department of Trade and Industry (the dti),
 - Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

The funds are disbursed according to strict criteria laid down by the sponsor. These funds are transferred to the NRF as either **Ring-fenced** or **Contract grants**.

The Grant Management Cycle is described in **Figure 1**. The typical period of a grant management cycle is one calendar year.

Grant Payment Process

The NRF pays grants to the grantholder's institution of employment. Batch payments are made twice a month during the first and third week of the month. Each payment is accompanied by a description of which grant the payment is earmarked for. Grant statements can be accessed online at <http://nrfonline.ac.za> on a continuous basis by the grantholder and the institution's research office, through the Grantholder Tools facility or Institutional Facilities. Updated statements are generated after payments have been made.

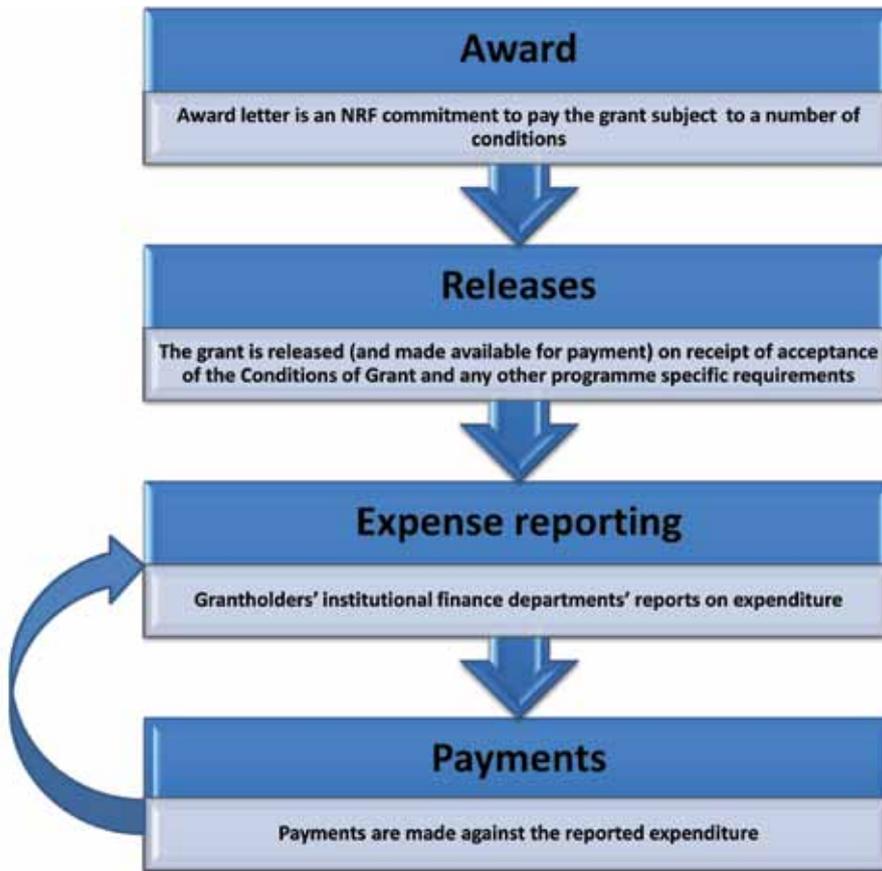


Figure 2: Payment process



Evaluation and Rating

The evaluation and rating of individuals is based primarily on the quality of research outputs in the recent past (over the last eight years) and is undertaken by national and international peer reviewers who are requested to critically evaluate the quality of the research outputs and the applicants research standing in the field. Currently there are five rating categories (A, B, C, P, and Y).

There are two main reasons why researchers should seek to be rated:

- Rated researchers are eligible to receive incentive funding. Moreover, they can hence apply for a competitive grant at any time during their six-year rating cycle and their rating is often taken into account in the review process.
- Rating can be used as a tool for benchmarking purposes. Researchers can compare their standing in the research community against that of their peers nationally and internationally.

25. Eligibility for Rating

The following persons are eligible to apply for evaluation and rating:

- Researchers who are employed and remunerated on a full-time, part-time or contract basis at South African (SA) higher education institutions (HEIs) (including private HEIs in SA), museums or at NRF recognised research institutions. (For retired academics/researchers bullet 6 applies.)
- Full-time temporary staff members at SA HEIs and SA museums who enjoy the

conditions of service that normally also apply to their permanent full-time colleagues.

- Persons who are in the process of being appointed in full-time posts at SA HEIs and SA museums (i.e. applications from such persons can be submitted by the HEI). However, a motivation confirming the researcher's employment and proposed start date should be provided before the rating will become valid.
- Persons holding joint appointments between a SA institution and a foreign institution who are actively involved in research capacity building locally and who are actively mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff. Such persons should be appointed by the SA institution in a full-time capacity for a period of at least six months per annum and should spend at least six months per annum in SA. A motivation from the institution submitting the application should be submitted confirming that these conditions are met.
- Persons holding joint appointments between two institutions within SA (of which at least one appointment should be a formal association with an NRF recognised research institution) who are actively involved in research capacity building locally and who are still actively mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff. Such persons must indicate which institution is the primary institution, i.e. the institution to which the rating must be linked. A motivation from the institution submitting the application must be submitted confirming that these conditions are met.
- Retired academics/researchers must meet **all** set criteria as stipulated below;
 - Resident in SA.
 - Formally affiliated to a SA HEI (e.g. appointed as an emeritus professor, honorary research associate/professor, supernumerary/contract employee) and whose application for rating is formally supported and endorsed by a SA HEI to which he/she is or is anticipating to be affiliated.
 - Active researchers with a distinguished track record in research and postgraduate student supervision.
 - Actively mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff.

26. The Rating Procedure

The rating procedure is described on the NRF website (<http://www.nrf.ac.za/projects.php?pid=33>) and is briefly illustrated in **Figure 3** below.

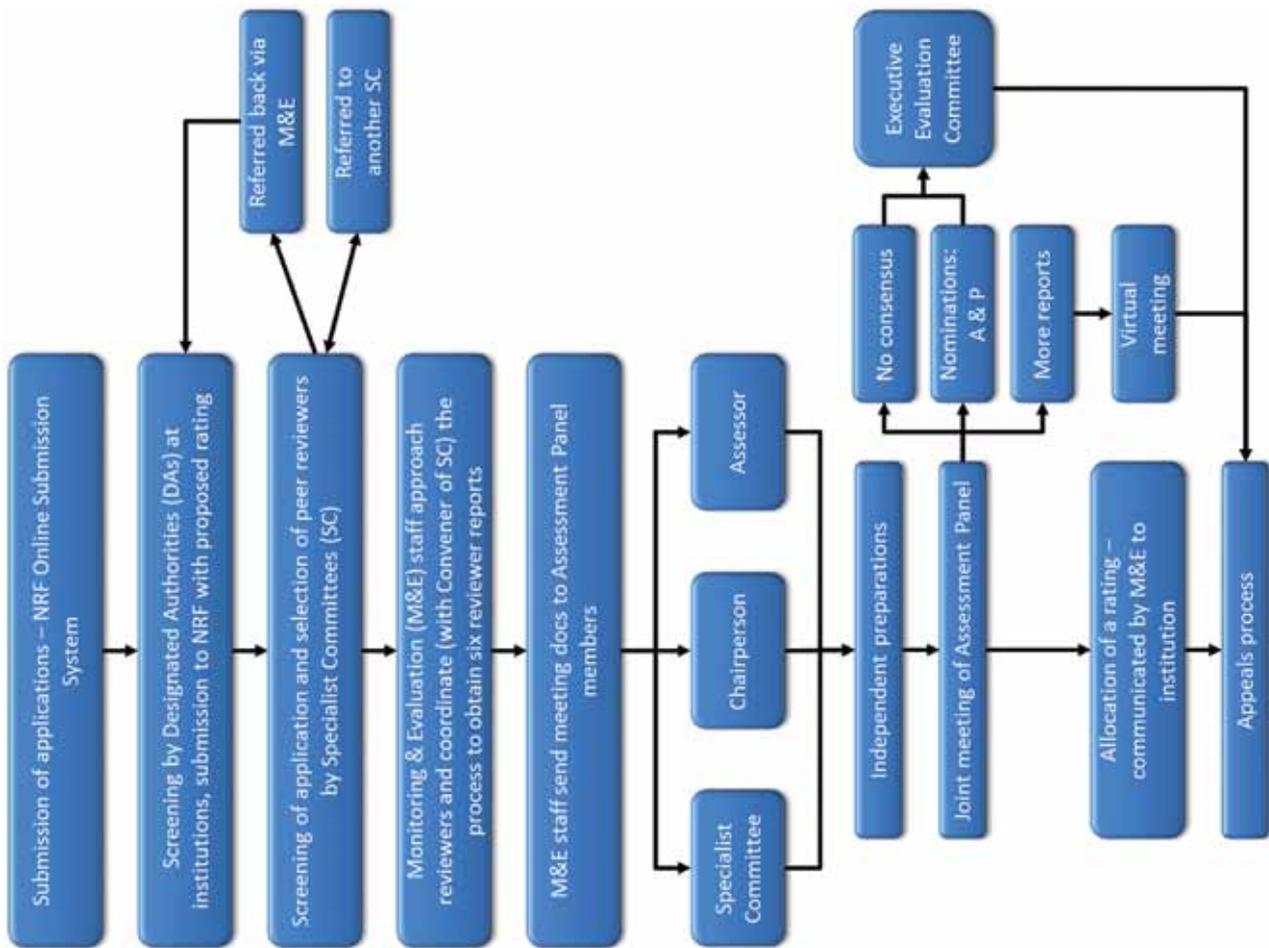


Figure 3: Evaluation and rating process

Conclusion

The business of the NRF can appear to be complex. It is hoped that this overview has helped to provide initial clarity. For more detailed information on award opportunities, please visit the NRF website at www.nrf.ac.za or alternatively for general enquiries, send an email to info@nrf.ac.za. For grant related enquiries, please send an email to supportdesk@nrf.ac.za.

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