NRF Briefing Presentation 2023 Call for Postdoctoral Fellowships



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Presentation Outline

- 1. NRF Mandate
- 2. Postdoctoral Fellowship Funding
- 3. Global Knowledge Partnerships
- 4. Application Process
- 6. Discussion



Positioning the NRF within the National Science landscape







NRF Vision, Mission and Critical Success Factors







NRF Transformation Framework



Transforming equity profiles of **Postgraduate students** and **Researchers**

Transforming the knowledge enterprise

Transforming science & society relationships Building diverse & inclusive learning organisation

Detailed evidence-based sets of choices and implications for NRF

- New policy for resourcing the NRF mandate
- Enhancing postgraduate access, success and throughput through funding
- Definition of the research agenda
- Early Career Researchers Programme
- Research Excellence Framework





Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development

HICD

Research Infrastructures - Equipment grants

Emerging Researchers - Thuthuka - Black Academics Advancement Programme - nGAP - Postdoctoral fellowships - Professional Development Programme

> National & Global knowledge partnerships - International training opportunities

Mobility Grants - Access to national & international research infrastructures

Postgraduate Funding

- Honours
- Masters
- Doctoral





Postdoctoral/Early Career Researcher Training Journey

To provide a comprehensive training/development/mentorship programme for the establishment of an independent researcher involved in engaged research

To provide space to:

- develop an independent research focus;
- produce research outputs with socio and/or economic impact;
- mentoring and postgraduate supervision;
- develop networking capabilities;
- obtain grantmanship skills to secure own research funding;
- develop the necessary administrative/managerial skills in research;
- science communication to the general public; and
- managing and leading research teams.

To develop excellence not only in research but also in research administration and teaching





Postdoctoral/Early Career Researcher Training Journey (cont.)

Exposure to:

Research-related activities to develop a comprehensive research programme/engaged research - exposure to the broader areas of research and development including raising science awareness, development of research policies etc.

Research management-related activities - i.e. managing undergraduate and postgraduate research projects, working within a host research group, development of grant applications etc.

Undertake teaching-related activities alongside the Supervisor towards demonstrable proficiency

Participate in national and international networking-related activities and present own research

Professional development activities - career planning, collaborating and coauthoring, building academic networks, accessing mentors, creating a research agenda etc.







THREE CATEGORIES OF POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

- NRF Free-standing Postdoctoral Fellowship
- Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowship
- Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowship





Objectives of the NRF Postdoctoral Fellowships

- Increase the number and quality of Postdoctoral Research Fellows in South Africa in all fields of research, with a focus on specified scarce skills areas;
- Expand transformation initiatives through career growth opportunities for South African designated groups;
- Support young scientists and professionals in conjunction with universities, public research institutions and industry - to support the development of basic, strategic and applied research, for knowledge and socio-economic impact;
- Enable young scientists and professionals to access world-class research training opportunities to strengthen their research profiles and thereby improve their prospects of employment within the national science system;
- Enable South African Postdoctoral Fellows to obtain international research training opportunities and exposure; and
- Enable outstanding international Postdoctoral Research Fellows to undertake research in South Africa and contribute to the national research enterprise.





NRF Free-standing, Innovation & Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowship (FISS)

> Equity targets:

- 80% South African citizens and permanent residents
- 80% Black (African, Indian and Coloured)
- 55% Female

Proportional allocation:

- Percentage awarded in the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) disciplines will be between 70 – 80%; and
- Between 20 30% will be awarded for the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)





NRF Freestanding Postdoctoral Fellowships

> Thematic Areas:

Natural Sciences, Engineering, Technology, Social Sciences, and Humanities.

> Eligibility:

Open to **South African citizens** and **permanent residents** as well as **international candidates** who intend to undertake research at a public university or research institution in South Africa



Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowships

Thematic Areas:

Biotechnology, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Engineering, Computer science, Physics, Astronomy, Mathematical Sciences, Nanotechnology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Ecology, Medical sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities

> Eligibility:

Open to **South African citizens** and **permanent residents** as well as **international candidates** who intend to undertake research at a public research institution in South Africa.





Scarce Skills Development Fund Postdoctoral Fellowships

Thematic Areas:

- **Management:** Financial Management
- Financial sector: Accounting, Auditing, Statistics, Actuarial Science
- **Biological sciences:** Biotechnology
- Physical sciences: Mathematical Sciences, Physics, Geology, Computer Science, Information systems, Chemistry
- Engineering: All fields of Engineering
- Sector specific: Agricultural Sciences, Transportation Studies, Tourism, Demography

> Eligibility:

Open to **South African citizens** and **permanent residents** <u>only</u> who intend to undertake research at a public research institution in South Africa.







Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must have obtained a PhD degree within four years of submitting an application to the NRF.

Applicants must have graduated with their doctoral degree no later than 31 December 2017.

- Applicants currently completing a PhD dissertation, should complete their PhD degree by 31 December 2022, as awards that are not taken up by 30 June 2023 will be cancelled by the NRF.
- Applicants applying for a second NRF Postdoctoral research placement, must undertake research on a new project.
- Applicants applying for a third NRF Postdoctoral research placement are not eligible.
- Full-time employees of a HEI or other research institutions must take unpaid leave for the full duration of the postdoctoral fellowship.





Conditions of Grant Award

- The grant must be taken up (submission of signed Conditions of Grant) within two months of receipt of the Letter of Award, except in cases where the doctoral degree certificate is pending (see Section 6 on Eligibility).
- The fellowship shall be held as the primary funding for the postdoctoral research training;
- Fellowships may not be held simultaneously with another fellowship from any other government or NRF source or NRF administered source;
- Postdoctoral Fellows may hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to the institutional capped value;
- Postdoctoral Fellows may not concurrently hold the fellowship with any full-time salaried employment;
- Postdoctoral Fellows are permitted to spend a maximum of 20% of their time undertaking lecturing and student supervision;
- Carry-over of unspent funds will not be permitted for Postdoctoral Fellowships, except under extenuating circumstances, e.g., ill-health, and must be motivated for in writing; and
- > The awards must be taken up in 2023 and awards not taken up will be cancelled.





Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant Values

Value per annum (Rand)	Category			
Free-standing				
200 000	non-taxable stipend			
50 000 contribution towards research costs				
15 000 compulsory institutional contribution				
Innovation				
255 000	non-taxable stipend			
50 000	contribution towards research costs			
15 000	compulsory institutional contribution			
Scarce Skills				
255 000	non-taxable stipend			
50 000	contribution towards research costs			
15 000	compulsory institutional contribution			





Postdoctoral Grant Values: Travel Grants

- Successful candidates for the postdoctoral fellowship are also eligible for a travel grant of up to R15 000, for local travel, and up to R50 000 for international travel.
- The travel grants may be used to contribute towards the costs of attending local or international conferences, workshops, visiting a laboratory, or any other activity that supports the beneficiaries' research training.
- \succ This is the maximum amount permitted over the tenure of the fellowship.
- To access the travel grant, a fellow must consult the Scholarship- & Fellowship-Holders Travel Grant Guideline which may be accessed on the NRF website at: <u>https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/</u>





Assistive Devices for Postdoctoral Fellows with Disabilities

- All Postdoctoral Fellowship-holders with a disability may apply for additional funding for an assistive technology device of up to R20 000.
- > This is the maximum amount allowed during the tenure of the fellowship.
- As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA), an assistive technology device is "any piece of equipment, or product system, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities".





Scorecard for the Assessment of Applications

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Weight (Total = 100%)
Track Record of	Applicant expertise/training that will enable the applicant to successfully undertake the proposed research.	
Applicant	The applicant's research track record which could include peer-reviewed publications, conference proceedings, research prizes and awards.	10%
Scientific and	Literature review with citations, significance of the research in terms of the problem statement, aims and objectives. Scientific contribution; originality and new knowledge to be generated.	
Technical quality of proposed research	Research design and methodology developed to address aims of the research. Provision of a work plan and feasible timelines and milestones for the research.	
	Alignment with national and institutional research priorities.	5%
Institutional Support	Institutional support for the postdoctoral fellowship through infrastructure and facilities for an enabling environment.	10%
Potential Research Outputs and Impact of the research	Details of envisaged realistic outputs of the research such as publications, conference proceedings, toolkits, policy documents.	5%
	Contribution to postdoctoral research skills development in a priority research area (human capacity development of the applicant)	10%
	 Potential for impact of the research in South Africa realised through either: Knowledge impact - scientific advances in understanding, interpretation, methods, theory and applications. Societal impact - the value research adds to society through improvements in the social, economic or environmental spheres. 	10%
		100%





NRF is advancing a Research Impact Agenda

Underscores the NRF Framework to Advance the Societal and Knowledge Impact of Research

Access the Framework: <u>https://bit.ly/3qyTjbc</u>

NRF Website: <u>https://www.nrf.ac.za/</u>

 \succ Intention is to support and enable research with potential impact.

- Potential for impact of the research in South Africa realised through either:
 - **Knowledge impact** scientific advances in understanding, interpretation, methods, theory and applications.
 - **Societal impact** the value research adds to society through improvements in the social, economic or environmental spheres.





Engaged Science







Global Knowledge Partnerships (GKP)

- International exposure for postdoctoral fellows is an integral component of the NRF strategic goal to create an internationally competitive, transformed, and representative South African research system.
- The international training opportunity enables outstanding postdoctoral fellows to:
 - enhance their theoretical and practical knowledge;
 - form international networks; and
 - access mentorship and global research funds and infrastructures.
- Opportunity offered to postdoctoral fellows with <u>active</u> NRF grants on a competitive basis.
- Access the NRF GKP implementation framework at: <u>https://www.nrf.ac.za/spp/about-strategic-partnerships</u>





Global Knowledge Partnerships (GKP) (cont.)

The two GKP opportunities for postdoctoral fellows are:

1. South African women postdoctoral fellows undertaking research in Biotechnology and attached to the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) in Cape Town, will have an opportunity to spend between three (3) to six (6) months abroad at the ICGEB laboratories in Trieste, Italy or New Delhi, India.

Access the site at: <u>https://www.icgeb.org/activities/fellowship/</u>

2. The NRF and **Mitacs Inc.** will support South African and Canadian postdoctoral fellows to carry out joint internships in industry and strengthen international research collaboration between South African and Canadian companies and universities.

Access the site at: <u>https://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs#postdoc</u>

Note: Preference will be given as per stipulated equity targets and support South African citizens and Permanent residents with a valid SA ID number





Pointers for a Winning Application

These are not exhaustive but are a general guide:

- Time prepare the application timeously and check the deadlines (both institution DA deadlines and the NRF);
- Consult with your mentor/supervisor that will host you during the fellowship;
- Ensure that the scope of your research is realistic, though ambitious and novel/innovative, indicating what the potential outcome will be;
- Work plan speaks to your research time plan noting key milestones to be achieved;
- Budget it must speak to your research objectives and work plan;
- Ensure that the proposal meets the criteria set. The Scorecard provides a tool to note the respective areas the reviewers pay attention to and the scoring proportions;
- Attachments ensure that documents that are requested for have been attached as well as responses received from your required references timeously; and
- Lastly, before you hit the submit button, do check for errors, spellcheck and/or have experienced colleagues/mentor review your proposal.





Application and Awarding Process









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BRIEFING MEETING FOR NRF CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR 2022/23:

Post Doctoral Fellowships



Thashni Pillay

Director, Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

06 April 2022





Presentation Overview

- **1. Application Process**
- 2. Key Challenges under NRF Screening Process





Call Documents

- 1. Framework
- 2. Online Application Funding Guide
- 3. Manuals on how to use the system

Kational Ensearch Faundation	About us Funding	Rosearch Engag	amant Info Portal News & Events Procurament		
General Application Guide Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) View all Call Documents >	Multiple Grant E Criteria 2020/2021 Fun Download	ding	NRF Connect Documents Manuals, Tutorials and more View all NRF Connect Documents >		
Researchers		Researchers			
Open Calls for Proposals		Closed Calls			
Pre-announcement of a call for NRF NSF Biodiversity Planet Joint Research Programme	Pre-announcement of a call for NRF NSF Biodiversity on a Changing Planet Joint Research Programme		Announcement of NRF One Call for Proposals 2021/2022		
BRICS Multilateral Call for Pre-proposals 2021		View mone >			

Access: https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/





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How to apply

Submit all Applications electronically on the NRF online platform:

NRF Connect system



https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za





Sign in/ Registration

Click the ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) icon to login or register



For Technical support: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za





Registering/signing in using ORCID

If already registered on ORCID, sign in using one of the following options:

- 1. ORCID iD
- 2. Email address linked with your ORCID profile
- 3. GMAIL account linked with your ORCID iD
- 4. Facebook account linked with ORCID iD

Email or 16-digit ORCID iD		
example@email.com or 0000-0001-2345-6789		
Password		
SIGN IN		
Forgot your password or ORCID ID?		
Don't have an ORCID iD yet? Register now		
or		
Access through your institution		
G Sign in with Google		
Sign in with Facebook		

Sign in





Registration on the NRF Connect system

If you currently registered on the NRF Online Submission System, the system will automatically log in with the ORCID profile.

New users will be redirected to NRF Connect screen to register on the system.







Updating your profile

After logging in, the user can click on the **Update Profile** button to update or complete the profile details.







Attaching the ID or Passport

Personal Details

Title * Ms	•	Initials * NM		First Name * Mkosi		Surname * Ngubane	
Maiden Name		Birth Date * 2002/01/02	٦	Citizenship Status * South African citizen	•	Country of Birth * South Africa	•
Province of Origin *	•	District of Origin *	•	Municipality or Origin *	•	Current Country * South Africa	•
Institution *	-	Race * African	•	Identity Type * SA ID Number	•	ID/Passport Number *	0
Gender* Female	Ŧ	Identity Document *	9	Are you disabled in any way?		Please fill in a valid SA ID Number	
		Please upload ID Document	0 (0.0B)				
		EDIT FILE					





Sync Your CV

- 1. If you are an existing user on the NRF Online submission, there is functionality to migrate the CV from the previous system. Click 'Verify' in order to link to the relevant account on the NRF Online Submission System.
- 2. Provide the ID/Passport number and password used on the NRF Online Submission System.

Link Submission	Enter your Old Nrf Submission Details
Connect your old nrf submission profile NO THANKS	ID/Passport Password *
	Your Old Password
	CANCEL SUBMIT

3. Once the verification of the two accounts has been completed, confirmation will show at the bottom of the screen.




Updating the CV

The CV can be updated by clicking on the tabs under the CV banner on the left-hand side of the screen.





Advancing knowledge. Transforming lives. Inspiring a nation.



Updating the CV(Cont.)

Career Profile

• The applicants must provide information about employment history, accomplishments, awards, and prizes, as well as any period that applicant was absent from research

Qualifications / Certifications

- Applicants must have graduated with their doctoral degree within four (4) years of submitting an application to the NRF
- If the Doctoral degree is "in progress", then the degree should be completed by 31 December 2022





Creating an Application

Homepage or My Applications menu





Advancing knowledge. Transforming lives. Inspiring a nation.



Creating the Application (Cont.)

My Application menu

My	Applications	
Instruc	tions	^
Please	e consult the relevant Manuals/Tutorials at https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding for instructions on how to use NRF Connect.	
List	of Applications	
	Category	
Ð	Postdoctoral Grants	
Ð	Research Grants	
•	Targeted Grants	
Resea	rch Development Grants for nGAP Scholars	CREATE



Advancing knowledge. Transforming lives. Inspiring a nation.



Sections of the application

Section			
Section	Complete	Updated	Edit
Personal Profile *	~	15/02/2022	1
Qualifications/Certifications *	~	15/02/2022	1
Research Expertise *	~	15/02/2022	/
Student Supervision *	~	15/02/2022	1
Career History *	~	15/02/2022	1
Research Outputs *	~	15/02/2022	1
Personal Profile *	~	15/02/2022	-
Qualifications/Certifications *	~	15/02/2022	-
Research Expertise *	~	15/02/2022	-
Student Supervision *	~	15/02/2022	-
Career History *	~	15/02/2022	-
Research Outputs *	~	15/02/2022	-
Patents *	~	15/02/2022	-
Fellowship To Be Funded *	×		-
Basic Information *	×		-
Ethical Clearance *	×		-
Details of Research *	×		🖸 🔹 Re
National Infrastructure Platforms *	×		-
Science Engagement *	×		-
Application Support Input	×		-
Attachments *	×		-
Preferred Panel *	×		-





Fellowship to be Funded

Fellowship to be Funded	
Fellowship for which you are applying *	Provide a short description of current and previous research
Date of commencement of postdoctoral research	Full-time *
Was your Masters degree upgraded to Doctoral?*	Does any financial support received for previous studies bind you to a service contract? *
Student number (if applicable)	Discipline of Postdoctoral research *
Department/School for Postdoctoral research *	Faculty for Postdoctoral research *
Indicate what you are doing presently *	
	CANCEL





Basic Information

D	_	£	-
нае	ic in	mm	ation

			BACK TO APPLICATION
Basic Information			
Institution *	*	Short Title *	
Type part of the institution name to search Descriptive Title		Period funding requested from	
Period funding requested to			
			CANCEL





Ethical Clearance

oes this project require ethical clearance?	Has ethical clearance been obtained?	
dditional comments on ethical clearance *		

EDIT FILE

Note: Will be filled in and attached, if applicable





Details of Research

etails of Research *	×	•
Section	Complete Update	ed Edit
Problem Statement *	×	i
Aims and Objectives *	×	ľ
Rationale and Literature Review *	×	ľ
Proposed Activities/Methodology/Work Plan *	×	ľ
Anticipated Outputs *	×	ŕ
Potential Impact and Outputs *	×	ľ
Transformation *	tangular Snip 🗙	ľ
Alignment to National Imperatives	×	ľ
Data Management and Utilisation	×	1





Science Engagement

cience E	ingagement			CREATE NEW
ategory	Engagement to be undertaken and desired outcome	People / audiences	Intended engagement with audiences	Plan to assess broader impact(s)
No data av	vailable			
	e engagement planned 🌔 🕽			

Note: Will be filled in, if applicable





Application Support Input

pplication Suppo	ort Input	
		BACK TO APPLICA
None * Host of Research		
Phone seture a ton		
Title	 Burnarios 	
Initials.	First name	
Email Address	Institution *	
Designation	Phone Number	
		CANCEL SAVE

The Application Support Input section allows applicants to include academic referees who can comment on the applicants' academic abilities. On final submission of the application, the emails containing a reference form are sent automatically to the nominated referees to provide a report on the academic and research capabilities of the applicant.





Attachments

Attachments	
	BACK TO APPLICATION
Instructions	^
 Please consult the Call documents to determine the compulsory attachments. Please note that if these are not attached, the application will not be processed for review Please do not upload a copy of your ID document of passport under this section. This is done under Personal Details. 	
Document Upload	
Supporting Documents	
	CANCEL SAVE

• If the Doctoral degree is still "in progress", a formal letter of confirmation from your institution, stating that your Doctoral qualification will be completed by December 2022, **must** be attached.

•If the institution, department and/or supervisor remain the same as your Doctoral study or first postdoctoral placement, a motivation letter **must** be attached.

•Official postdoctoral acceptance letter from the host institution (signed, stamped and on an official letterhead). The letter should include details of the availability of specialised equipment, infrastructure and resources to enable the fellow to conduct their research.





Key Challenges under the Screening Process

- Missing documentation required under attachment.
- Applicants who obtained their doctoral degree more than 4 years from time of application.
- Applicants who are full time employed during the tenure of the fellowship are not eligible.
- Applicants who are applying for a second NRF Postdoctoral research placement to continue with research on the same project are not eligible.
- Applicants who are applying for a third NRF Postdoctoral research placement are not eligible.
- Missing host and institutional support letters- Main reason for NRF rejection under the programme.
- Missing motivation letters for remaining at the same institution, same supervisor, same department as doctoral study.





Grant Management Process

Acceptance of Award

- NRF Conditions of Grant (CoGs) will be forwarded with the award letter
- Successful Grantholders should carefully read and sign the CoGs and submit timeously
- Official proof of commencement of the Postdoctoral Fellowship
- Copy of Doctoral Certificate
- Copy of the Ethical Clearance certificate (if applicable)

Change Requests- Institution, Project, Host

- A formal request should be submitted by the grantholder and should be endorsed by the current and new supervisor in writing.
- In the case of project change requests a synopsis of the new project has to be submitted and endorsed by the host
- The documents must be submitted to the NRF via the research office for approval before effecting any changes.





Grant Management Process

Change Requests- Institution, Project, Host

Documents to submit	Conditions of Change		
	Change of supervisor	Change of institution	Change of project scope
Release letter from approved supervisor		n/a	n/a
Acceptance and commitment letter from new supervisor			
Submit revised project scope endorsed by supervisor, for NRF approval	n/a	n/a	√
Release letter from approved supervisor		n/a	
Acceptance and commitment letter from new supervisor			
Submit revised project scope endorsed by supervisor, for NRF approval			
Release letter from approved supervisor		ν	n/a
Acceptance and commitment letter from new supervisor Acceptance and commitment letter from new institution			
Release letter from approved supervisor		√	
Acceptance and commitment letter from new supervisor			
Acceptance and commitment letter from new institution			
Submit revised project scope endorsed by supervisor, for NRF approval			





NRF Contact Details

For funding instrument-related enquiries, please contact:

Ms Edith Shikumo Professional Officer: Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD) Telephone: 012 481 4236 E-mail: EA.Shikumo@risa.nrf.ac.za

For technical NRF online submission enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours from 08:00 to 16:30 from Monday to Friday.

E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

For grants management-related enquiries, please contact:

Ms Nozine Nqeketo

Professional Officer: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

Telephone: 012 481 4184

E-mail: N.Nqeketo@risa.nrf.ac.za

For Reviews and Evaluations-related enquiries, please contact:

Ms Lutanani Rambau

Professional Officer: Reviews and Evaluations (RE)

Telephone: 012 481 4208

E-mail: LA.Rambau@risa.nrf.ac.za





Enkosi, Thank you, Re a leboga, Siyabonga, Dankie





