

CSIR
Young Researcher Establishment Fund
2016/17

Wednesday 28th October, 2015

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Contents

Contents	i
1 YREF Programme Overview	2
1.1 Goals	2
1.2 Conditions	2
1.3 Eligibility of Applicants	2
1.4 Funding	3
2 Application Process	4
2.1 Submission Requirements	4
2.2 Provisional Timelines	5
A YREF: Application Guidelines	6
A.1 Summary Information	6
A.2 Background and Motivation	6
A.3 Objectives	6
A.4 Implementation Plan	7
A.5 Budget	7
A.6 Outputs	7
A.7 Probability of Technical Success and Key Risks	7
A.8 CVs	7
B YREF: Assessment Template	8
B.1 Project and Reviewer Details	8
B.2 Declaration	8
B.3 Comments on Evaluation Metrics	8
B.4 Evaluation Metrics	9
B.5 Summary Assessment.....	10

Structure of Document

This document contains:

- An overview of the YREF Programme for 2016/17 (Chapter [1](#))
- Details of submission procedures and timelines (Chapter [2](#))
- Application Guidelines (Appendix [A](#))
- Assessment Templates (Appendix [B](#))

YREF Programme Overview

1.1 Goals

The principal goal of the YREF programme is to support the career development of emerging¹ researchers. In particular the programme aims to give emerging researchers the opportunity to manage and implement a substantial research programme over an extended period of time.

1.2 Conditions

In order to qualify for YREF funding the following general conditions have to be met:

1. The proposed research programme must be substantially focused on the creation of new knowledge, either in the form of peer-reviewed publications or the demonstration/implementation of an existing technology. In particular the YREF will not support projects that focus on literature reviews or the collation of existing research outputs.
2. The proposed research programme must be aligned to CSIR and Operating Unit research objectives. The responsible Executive Director / Centre Manager must supply a formal endorsement of the proposal.
3. The proposal must clearly identify a mentor/supervisor within the CSIR who will provide guidance for the programme, and who will assume collective responsibility for its successful execution. In cases where there is more than one supervisor at least one member of the team has to be a CSIR employee. The supervisor should also supply a formal endorsement of the proposal and indicate that they are willing to take on the responsibility associated with guiding the research programme.

1.3 Eligibility of Applicants

In order to be eligible for an YREF grant, applicants must meet the following criteria:

¹We will, for historical reasons, retain the name YREF even though the strict age requirement (younger than 35) has been dropped.

1. The applicant must be a permanent employee of the CSIR or a temporary employee whose contract extends to at least March 2017.²
2. The applicant must be at level D1 (Senior Researcher/Engineer) or below.³

1.4 Funding

The maximum value of the grant is R 200,000 per year, for at most three years. The grant is awarded to an individuals – joint application, co-ownership or transfer of a grant is therefore not allowed. The grant can be used to support the following costs, with the condition that not more than 20% of the grant may be spent on running costs:

1. Time for both the applicant and their supervisor (in cases where the supervisor is employed by the CSIR);
2. The use of research facilities;
3. Travel for the purpose of research and collaboration;
4. Attending conferences, on condition that the applicant is presenting a paper or poster;
5. Career development courses.

²One year beyond the initial date of the award

³No applications from Principal or Chief Scientists/Engineers will be eligible.

Application Process

2.1 Submission Requirements

Please use the application guideline in section A. The following components of the application are critical and in their absence the proposal will not be assessed:

1. A covering letter in which you set out how you think you will benefit from this grant, and in which you indicate that you meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section 1.3.
2. A technical proposal that includes the details of the research programme and its intended outputs and outcomes. The supervisor(s) of the project should be clearly identified.
3. A letter of endorsement from your Executive Director or Centre Manager.
4. A letter of endorsement from your supervisor(s).
5. A copy of your curriculum vitae.
6. A copy of your supervisor's curriculum vitae.

Where applicable, the applicant will be asked to obtain ethics clearance before any research activities are carried out.

The proposals will be assessed by the Strategic Research Panel, and applicants may be asked to deliver short presentations as part of the adjudication process. The outcome of the adjudication session will be a shortlist of proposals to be presented to CSIR Executive for final approval.

Applications should be submitted to Dr Lee-Ann Noach-Pienaar at **R&D@csir.co.za**. Please contact Lee-Ann or Ndumiso Cingo (**NCingo@csir.co.za**) if you need any further information.

2.2 Provisional Timelines

Action	Date
Call Published	4 November 2015
Applications Due	7 December 2015
Grants Awarded	15 February 2016

YREF: Application Guidelines

A.1 Summary Information

Proposal Title	
Name of Applicant	
Lead Operating Unit/Centre	
Other Operating Units/Centres	
Ethics Approval Required (Yes/No)	

A.2 Background and Motivation

Give a description of the topic you want to study and why it is important, innovative, timely and relevant. Briefly answer the following:

- *Who will supervise the project?*
- *What are the key gaps in knowledge the research will address?*
- *What are the key research questions to be answered?*
- *What is novel about the proposal and or approach?*
- *How is the project aligned to the CSIR's strategic objectives?*
- *What are the potential long-term impacts of the project?*
- *What are the key deliverables?*

A.3 Objectives

State the key project objectives.

A.4 Implementation Plan

- *Provide an outline of how the research will proceed.*
- *Where applicable give a synopsis of the roles of the key project team members.*

A.5 Budget

Provide a high-level budget showing the major categories of expenditure for each year of the proposed project. Clearly distinguish between the personnel costs for the applicant and the supervisor. Also specify the total cost of the proposed project and, if necessary, indicate how the remaining resources will be obtained.

A.6 Outputs

List the anticipated R&D outputs (articles, conference papers, technology demonstrators, patents, etc.).

A.7 Probability of Technical Success and Key Risks

Comment on the probability that the project will deliver on its goals based on the relevant experience of the applicant and their supervisor. Also note any risks associated with the availability of research resources and partnerships with external experts/institutions.

A.8 CVs

Include the CVs of the main applicant and their supervisor(s). The CV should contain the following important sections: (a) the highest qualifications obtained, (b) research experience relevant to the proposed project, (c) a list of relevant R&D outputs such as publications, books and patents, and (d) (in the case of the supervisor) their track record in providing research leadership.

YREF: Assessment Template

Please supply the following information for each proposal that you have reviewed:

B.1 Project and Reviewer Details

Name of Reviewer	
Application ID	
Proposal Title	

B.2 Declaration

Please describe the nature of your relationship with each of the key research team members (the main applicant and their supervisor(s)) listed in the proposal.

B.3 Comments on Evaluation Metrics

Comment on the quality of the proposal with respect to each of the evaluation metrics listed below. Your comments should reflect the scores you have awarded in Section B.4.

The metrics are:

Human Capital Development

Will the applicant, through this project, develop as a researcher, either by gaining new skills or consolidating their existing set of skills. The assessment should take into account the potential quality of the applicant (as shown through their academic and work experience) and the guidance provided by their supervisor.

Novelty and Innovation

The program supports work leads to the generation of new knowledge, as exhibited in the production of academic outputs, technology demonstrators or systems.

Clarity and Quality

Does the proposal have a clearly defined research question? Is the approach to the problem clearly presented and specific?

Technical Feasibility

Consider the relevant experience and qualifications of the core team members, and the availability of resources.

External Collaboration

The potential to strengthen existing linkages, or the creation of new local and/or international linkages in order to improve probability that the research objectives will be attained.

Impact Potential

The potential impact of the project, and its contribution to the strategic objectives of the CSIR.

IP and SET Outputs

The quantity and quality of IP and SET outputs.

B.4 Evaluation Metrics

Category	Item	Max Score	Reviewer Score
Human Capital Development	Developmental potential for applicant (based on academic and work experience)	25	
	Quality of supervision/guidance	15	
Quality of Proposal	Is the proposed work novel and innovative with the potential to create a strong SET platform for scientific and technical growth?	25	
	Overall clarity and quality of the proposal	15	
Relevance and Impact Potential	Potential to contribute to the impact of the CSIR and broader national imperatives	10	
	Contribute to the SET output of the CSIR - including publications, intellectual property, technology packages, new processes, working software and technology demonstrators etc)	10	
Total		100	

B.5 Summary Assessment

Rank the proposal as A/B/C where A = deserves funding, B = proposal can be funded after some improvements, and C = proposal should not be funded.

Justify your score – this comment may be used as feedback to the applicant. The comment should therefore be detailed and useful to both successful and unsuccessful applicants. It should be both technical (examples: technical critique, technical feasibility, problem description, objectives, milestones, deliverables and technical suggestions for improvement where necessary) and non-technical (examples: project team strength, fit with national imperatives, general presentation and any other non-technical suggestions for improvement where necessary).

Overall rank for the proposal	A/B/C
Justification	