



**National
Research
Foundation**

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

2015 to 2017

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Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this 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 Ecosystem Programme
AOP	African Origins Platform
CNRS	French National Centre for Scientific Research (<i>Centre national de la Recherche Scientifique</i>)
CoE	Centres of Excellence
COMG	Community Engagement Grants
CPRR	Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSUR	Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers
DA	Designated Authority
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
ERGR	Education Research in South Africa Grants
GCRP	Global Change Research Plan
GCSSRP	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme
GMSA	Grants Management and Systems Administration Directorate
HartRAO	Hartebeesthoek Radio Astronomy Observatory
HDI	Historically disadvantaged institution

HEI	Higher education institution
IFRR	Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IRG	International Research Grants
iThemba LABS	iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator Based Sciences
KAT	Karoo Array Telescope
KFD	Knowledge Fields Development
KIC	Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration
MCDM	Multi-criteria Decision Model
Mintek	Council for Mineral Technology
MWGR	Human Capital Development for Multi-Wavelength Astronomy Grants
NEP	National Research Equipment Programme
NFP	Nanotechnology Flagships Project
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NNEP	National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme
NNS	National Nanotechnology Strategy
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSI	National System of Innovation
NZG	National Zoological Gardens
PD	Postdoctoral
PDP	Professional Development Programme
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RE	Reviews and Evaluation Directorate
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement

RISP	Research Infrastructure Support Programme
RTF	Research and Technology Fund
SA	South Africa/South African
SAAO	South African Astronomical Observatory
SAEON	South African Environmental Observation Network
SAIAB	South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity
SANAP	South African National Antarctic Programme
SANSA	South African National Space Agency
SARChI	South African Research Chairs Initiative
SC	Specialist Committee
SKA	Square Kilometre Array
SMME	Small, medium or micro enterprise
STEM	Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematical Sciences
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 order to access the numerous funding opportunities available to 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 funding instrument-specific guides and frameworks. In addition, general enquiries can be directed by e-mail 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 2020 Strategic Plan* (www.nrf.ac.za/??). The mandate applies to the NRF's three organisational arms, namely:

1. The National Research Facilities, which 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 and Advancement (RISA), which 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.

The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) aims to advance public awareness, appreciation and engagement of science, engineering and technology in South Africa. SAASTA is business Unit of the National Research Foundation.

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; and
8. Transformation and excellence.

The NRF has identified five Broad Investment Areas, which 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's Broad Investment Areas

Next Generation
Emerging Researchers
Established Researchers
Strategic Investment
Infrastructure

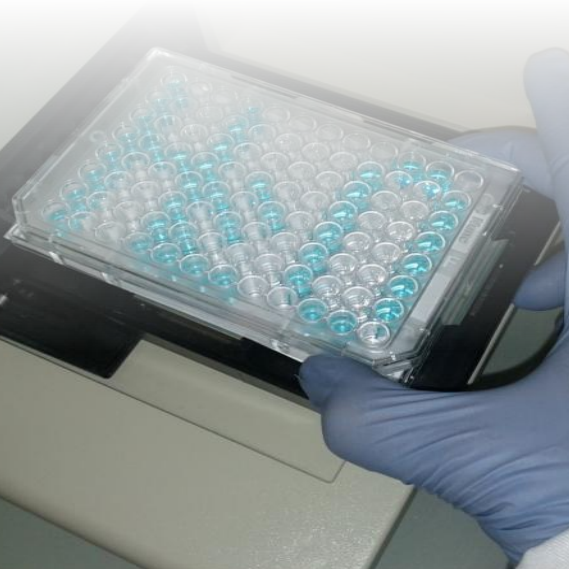


Table 2: List of funding opportunities

Broad Investment Area	Funding Instruments
NEXT GENERATION	Professional Development Programme
	Sabbatical Grants for Completing a Doctoral Degree
	Student Support
	Thuthuka: PhD Track
EMERGING RESEARCHERS	Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers
	Nanotechnology Flagships Project for Emerging Researchers
	Postdoctoral Fellowships
	Professional Development Programme
	Research Career Advancement Fellowships
	Thuthuka: Post-PhD Track
	Thuthuka: NRF Rating Track

Broad Investment Area	Funding Instruments
ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS	African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme
	African Origins Platform
	Bioinformatics and Functional Genomics
	Blue Skies Research
	Collaborative Postgraduate Training Programme
	Community Engagement Programme
	Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers
	Education Research in South Africa
	Energy Research Programme
	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme
	Human Capital Development for Multi-Wavelength Astronomy
	Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers

Broad Investment Area	Funding Instruments
	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
	International Research Grants
	Knowledge Fields Development
	Research and Technology Fund
	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

Funding Opportunities

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

0. Student Support

2.1. Bursaries and Scholarships

The NRF supports students, mainly at postgraduate level, in two different ways, namely:

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

Refer to the NRF's Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) booklet '*2015-17 NRF Bursary & Scholarship Values, Rules and Guidelines*' for funding opportunities.

Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded to applications of any nationality, 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 university at which the

candidate obtained their Doctorate. Exceptions can be considered based on a motivation submitted with the application for the Fellowship.



1. Overarching Grant Criteria

The overarching eligibility criteria that apply to the majority of RISA research grants, are summarised below:

- All researchers who are employed and remunerated on a full-time permanent or full-time contract basis at institutions as defined in **Table 3**.
- Persons from institutions not listed in **Table 3**, who conduct research and are formally affiliated to one of the institutions as defined for each specific funding instrument 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 professor, honorary research associate/professor, 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 affiliated, or anticipate to be affiliated;
 - active researchers with a distinguished track record of research and postgraduate student supervision; and
 - still actively mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff.

2.2.

2.3. 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 instruments and rating programme are listed in **Table 3**.

2.4. Student Training

The quality of all applications for funding is greatly enhanced if the applicant has a track record of student training, although this is not always an eligibility requirement.

2.5. Foreign Applicants

Persons who hold a joint appointment at a South African (SA) and a foreign institution, and are actively involved in research capacity building in SA, are eligible for a RISA research grant, provided that they are employed by the SA institution in a full-time capacity for a period of at least six months per annum and spend at least six months per annum in South Africa.

Instrument-specific Eligibility Criteria

The following is an overview of the criteria for research grants in the various funding instruments 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 funding

instrument. Refer to the relevant framework and guidelines at www.nrf.ac.za for more information.

African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP)

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

African Origins Platform (AOP) Strategy

The African Origins Platform (AOP) Strategy provides direction for a holistic approach towards the development of palaeo-sciences 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 palaeo-sciences.

Bioinformatics and Functional Genomics

The Bioinformatics and Functional Genomics (BFG) funding instrument is a DST contract-funded instrument whose aim is to support bioinformatics applications in biotechnology projects in line with national priorities as set out in the South African Biotechnology Strategy and the Ten Year Innovation Plan. The instrument provides support on an open and competitive basis for both research grants and bursaries at post-graduate level.

Blue Skies Research Programme

The Blue Skies Research Programme is a highly competitive funding instrument that aims to bring about new and unpredictable

scientific/technological/scholarly discoveries. It provides the space for novel fundamental inquiry that can be described as multi-dimensional, self-initiated and curiosity-driven, necessitating high investment risks, addressing new phenomena, and pushing forward 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 various perspectives, namely that of the researcher, the funding agency, the object of the research, the research approach, and/or the contribution to the knowledge base.

Centres of Excellence (CoE)

The applicant must be an established researcher and hold 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 of research outputs.

Collaborative Postgraduate Training

The objectives set out in the South African Human Resource Development Strategy (2012 – 2030) on developing and increasing the number of skilled personnel in science, engineering and technology, are a clear indication of the commitment the country has towards research, development and innovation in science and technology.

The supporting platforms for the realisation of these HRD objectives as stipulated in the programme specific DST strategies require three critical areas for successful implementation:

- Human capital: the development of appropriate expertise and skills will receive

priority attention, as without them all existing and envisaged programmes and infrastructure will be unsuccessful;

- Infrastructure: appropriate infrastructure is the cornerstone of an effective training programme, enabling technology transfer and human capacity development initiatives; and
- International partnerships: strategic partnerships with foreign partners are necessary for tangible and intangible technology transfer and a viable and sustainable human capital development programme.

The postgraduate training programmes should ideally be inter-university partnerships and/or public-private partnerships with government, industry and universities; all working together toward a common objective to produce and sustain a growing stream of well- rounded postgraduates to address national needs.

Community Engagement Programme

The Community Engagement Programme is a competitive funding instrument providing the space for research that contributes both to knowledge production within the ambit of community engagement (where ‘community’ is defined in its broadest sense), as well as to research on the processes and dynamics of engagement from the perspective of the higher education sector. This funding instrument is aimed at supporting and providing enabling conditions for higher education institutions to tackle some of the philosophical and conceptual challenges associated with the dynamics of community engagement and social responsiveness as a field of research inquiry.

Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers (CPRR)

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

As a competitive funding instrument, the main eligibility criteria are:

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

Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers (CSUR)

The aim of this funding instrument is to provide research support to 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 funding instruments.

The strategic objectives of CSUR are to:

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

Education Research in South Africa

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

The research must address:

- the overarching theme of ‘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 among at least three different institutions in South Africa, with at least one representing a rural-based institution; and
- multi-disciplinary backgrounds.

Energy Research Programme (ERP)

The DST has developed and has started the roll-out of a collaborative model that recognises and supports the distribution of research capacity and expertise for a defined focus area, across more than one institution and/or divisions of an institution.

The various institutions are assigned areas of focus and responsibility within the broader defined focus area, preferably within their individual areas of pre-existing competencies, capacities, expertise and specialisation. One institution is selected as the coordinating point (the Hub) and the rest are the Spokes. A hub -and-spokes

cluster may have any number of spokes and these may be added as the need arises, for example if new sub-focus areas not yet catered for are realized. These hub-and-spokes are mainly expected to focus on applied research with a goal of ensuring that South Africa stays abreast with regard to the latest technologies and research in a specific focus area. The hub-and-spokes are also critical to realising the objectives of human capital development.

The first hub-and-spokes cluster has been established to contribute to the key strategic area of Energy Security with the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies at the University of Stellenbosch serving as the hub with three spokes focussing on wind, Solar thermal and solar photo-voltaic renewable energy respectively, located at five paired universities which includes Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, Fort Hare and University of Pretoria.

Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants

The NRF, through mobility grants, makes funds available for both national and international travel in order to support researchers who require access to equipment that is not available either regionally and/or nationally. The mobility grants are divided into two portfolios of opportunities, namely **Equipment-related Travel Grants** and **Equipment-related Training Grants**. This funding is available to researchers based at institutions as defined 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 clearly feeder equipment that 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 the design, procurement, construction, testing and certification of novel research equipment.

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 the 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 funding instrument that will be implemented to address the identified fundamental research questions and provide research -based evidence required for socio-economic development, sustainability and social cohesion. This funding instrument will also offer 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 approaches to problem-solving.

Human Capital Development for Multi-Wavelength Astronomy

Any researcher at a South African higher education institution or national research facility can apply for funds from this funding instrument, 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 for human capital development, as the Mutli-Wavelength Astronomy funding instrument is **not** intended to support radio astronomy.

Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers (IFRR)

The Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers funding instrument was created with the aim of incentivising excellent research. The collateral objectives of the funding instrument 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=129>).

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Applicants must respond to one of the following funding instruments:

- 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 the Khoi, Nama, Griqua and San communities; and/or
- novel and creative thinking that will shift the boundaries of IKS knowledge production and 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).

International Research Grants

The International Research Grants (IRG) support international research collaboration between two or more qualified scholars from at least two countries, where the Principal Investigator brings different and complementary perspectives, knowledge, and/or skills to the project. In addition, a n applicant for an International Research Grant must be engaged in research with a collaborator in a country that is a

signatory to a binational or bilateral agreement between the NRF and a funding agency in that country.

Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration (KIC)

The Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration funding instrument offers researchers an opportunity to apply for funding for local or international travel; support grants to host an event such as a conference or symposium; and mobility grants to support local or international travel for research visits. The guidelines for funding within the KIC instrument are available on the NRF website, usually published twice per annum

Nanotechnology Flagships Project (NFP) for Emerging Researchers

This funding instrument, which is in its third funding cycle, will be awarding development grants to early-career researchers in the field of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology for a three-year period.

The primary focus of research projects supported by this funding instrument is to demonstrate the benefits of Nanotechnology and its impact on some of the key challenges facing South Africa. The NFP portfolio spans the spectrum of the national research agenda by focusing on the following key priority areas as identified in the National Nanotechnology Strategy (NNS):

- Energy Security;
- Improved Healthcare;
- Water Purification;
- Mining and Minerals; and
- Advanced Materials and Manufacturing.

In addition, the NFP addresses the strategic imperatives set forth in the NNS and other national strategies such

as the National Research and Development Strategy of 2002. The NFP is therefore geared towards achieving the following objectives:

- Ensuring the development of human resource capacity that focuses on historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs), women and persons with disabilities;
- Accelerating national efforts in order to build excellence in research and development capacity;
- Attracting and retaining young scientists and professionals of the highest calibre;
- Supporting young scientists and professionals in basic and applied research;
- Promoting and stimulating innovation in the form of proof of concept and/or patents; and
- Creating transparency, public awareness and acceptance of Nanotechnology.

Professional Development Programme (PDP)

The Professional Development 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 pre paration programme that will allow them to obtain and further develop research experience and skills by working and contributing directly towards the ir host's research project/s. Candidates are required to be working towards obtaining either a Doctoral qualification or Postdoctoral research experience within their research field and contributing to the NSI.

Research Career Advancement Fellowships

Research Career Advancement Fellowships are aimed at providing support for the training of individuals for research leadership in all areas of Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematical Sciences (STEM) at public universities. These Fellowships may be held in partnership with a public research institution such as a science council, a National Research Facility or an academic health complex. The Fellowships are not pre-allocated to institutions, and candidates must apply individually to the NRF. These applications must bear the endorsement of the university Deputy Vice - Chancellor (DVC) for research, or equivalent. There is no restriction on the number of Research Career Advancement Fellowships that may be awarded to a single institution. The Fellows must undertake research that is aligned with national and institutional research priorities. They are expected to dedicate at least 80% of their time to conducting research, and supervising and mentoring postgraduate students. Successful candidates can receive support for full-time research for a period of five years.

The objectives of the Research Career Advancement Fellowships are to:

- Provide career a career path for Postdoctoral researchers to pursue a career in research;
- Create the opportunity for these emerging researchers to be mentored and groomed for research leadership and academic positions;
- Create the opportunity for senior Postdoctoral researchers to strengthen their research track record in their chosen research area and to establish themselves as independent researchers;

- Create the opportunity for these emerging researchers to gain experience in postgraduate training;
- Effect a transformation in the demographic composition of established researchers in South Africa, with respect to race, gender and persons with disabilities; and
- Develop a cohort of potential candidates for the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI).

Research Infrastructure Support Programmes (RISP)

The purpose of the Research Infrastructure Support Programme is to support the acquisition, maintenance and development of state -of-the-art research equipment. Support through the National Equipment Programme (NEP) and the National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme (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; and

- Appropriate training of technical staff for diagnostic, maintenance and application purposes.

Research and Technology Fund (RTF)

The RTF is a fund provided by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and fisheries (DAFF), managed by the NRF, to fund research and related human capacity development in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, There are two types of funding models, namely: (i) Co-Funding (CoFM) and (ii) Competitive Funding (CompFM). The primary difference between the 2 is that in the case of CoFM, at least one industrial partner should be co-funding project and may define the research topic and focus, whereas in the CompFM, the project may be funded from the RTF alone, but the research topic and focus will be informed by the RTF priorities. An RTF project:

- Must be of a high quality agriculture/forestry/fisheries and/or technology research/systems development, whose outputs should make a significant contribution towards improving the industrial partner's competitive edge/agricultural entity's social stability.
- Must have clearly defined scientific, and/or technology, and/or appropriate systems outputs.
- Must lead to development of a prototype (product, process, and technique, methodology) to benefit the industry partners/targeted communities.
- Must lead to the creation and transfer of new knowledge into a process or product (prototype), or the transfer of existing

knowledge into a new process or product to benefit the needs of small-holder farmers.

- Must provide support for professional development and small-holder technology needs.

Sabbatical Grants for Completion of Doctoral Degrees

This funding instrument is a special intervention aimed at addressing the decline in the number of full-time university academic staff with a Doctoral degree and the inadequate supervisory capacity that currently characterises the South African academic landscape. As a direct response, it seeks to accelerate the training of Doctoral candidates in order to improve the qualifications of employed academics and enhance their research and supervisory capacity. In recognition of the inhibiting role that limited funds play in the creation of a vibrant academic milieu, this intervention is aimed at addressing this problem for individuals in the final stages of their Doctoral studies.

In light of the above, the aims of the grant are to:

- Accelerate the Doctoral level training of full-time academic staff at public universities and research institutions;
- Improve the academic qualifications of employed academics in order to enhance research and supervisory capacity; and
- Effect a rapid transformation in the demographic composition of the emerging researcher community with respect to gender, race and persons with disabilities.

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 funding instrument supports research in the fields of Earth Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Life Sciences, Oceanographic Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences, Law and Humanities.

South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI)

The South African Research Chairs Initiative is a strategic intervention of the South African (SA) government designed to attract and retain excellence in research and innovation at SA universities. In particular, it is aimed at increasing scientific research capacity by developing human capacity and stimulating the generation of new knowledge. It is also intended to support the realisation of SA's transformation into a knowledge economy in which the generation of knowledge translates into socio-economic benefits.

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 of supervising and mentoring postgraduate students;

- have a track record of being able to obtain external funding; and
- reside on a full-time basis in SA for the duration of the Research Chair award.

Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP)

THRIP is a programme funded by the Department of Trade and Industry (**the dti**) and managed by the NRF. It is designed to enable South African industry to access (from research institutions) specific responses to technological needs and to produce a flow of highly skilled researchers and technology managers who understand research, technology development and the diffusion of technology from the view points of both industry and academia. THRIP projects must satisfy the following:

- Be a high-quality science, engineering and/or technology research project.
- Must produce an innovative (able to be commercialised) product/process/prototype
- Must indicate implementable outcomes that will benefit the industry partner
- Must train South African or other African students at postgraduate level
- Must involve technology transfer.
- Must have at least one industry partner, who is also co-funding the project
- Must be based at a university or Science Engineering and Technology Institution

Thuthuka Funding Instrument

The Thuthuka funding instrument is central to the NRF's human capital development strategy for advancing the equity and redress agenda within the research sphere. Operating within the ever-evolving higher education landscape, Thuthuka aims to develop human capital and to improve the research capacities of designated researchers (black [African, Indian or Coloured], female or persons with disabilities) with the ultimate aim of redressing historical imbalances. This is done in partnership with publicly funded higher education institutions, science councils and other publicly funded research institutions.

Thuthuka is managed in three different funding tracks, targeting different research capacity development needs:

- **PhD-Track** for applicants who intend to obtain a PhD within the funding period;
- **Post-PhD Track** for applicants who intend to become established researchers by strengthening their research capabilities; and
- **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	Funding Instrument	South African HEIs (publicly funded)	South African science councils	Museums (publicly funded)	National Research Facilities	Publicly funded research institutions	Private HEIs operating in SA	HEIs from other countries	NRF-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
	Sabbatical Grants for Completion of Doctoral Degrees	Y	Y	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
	Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Nanotechnology Flagships Project	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N

	Postdoctoral Fellowships	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
EMERGING RESEARCHERS	Professional Development Programme	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Research Career Advancement Fellowships	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
	Research and Technology Fund	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	L
	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
	Bioinformatics & Functional Genomics	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	L
	Blue Skies Research	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	Collaborative Postgraduate Training Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	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
	Energy Research Programme	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	L

	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
	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	N	N	N	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	-	iThemba LABS, NZG, SAAO, SAIAB, SAEON, HartRAO
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

The restrictions on holding multiple NRF awards are indicated in **Table 4** (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 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.
- A researcher may not receive more than one grant for an identical or closely related research proposal. The decision on 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 an additional NRF Discretionary Core Grant.
- A researcher may receive multiple awards from the NRF according to **Table 4**.
- An individual may not receive more than one Thuthuka grant.

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 funding instruments listed in the vertical headings.

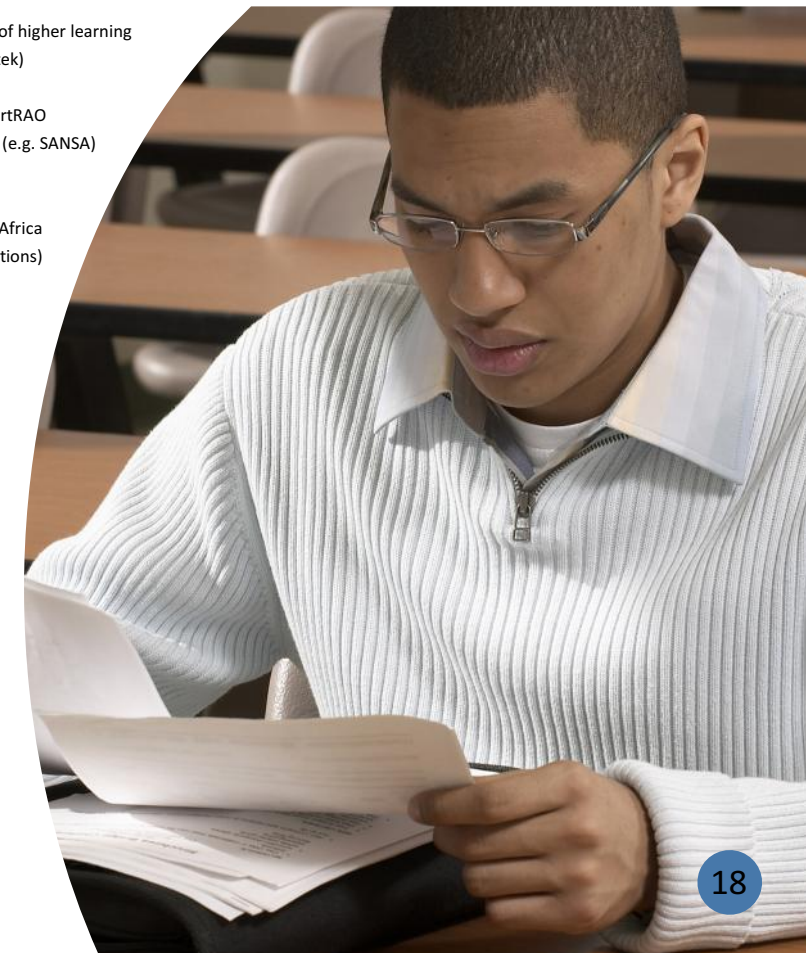


Table 4: Restrictions on multiple funding combinations

	African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP)	African Origins Programme (AOP)	Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)	South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP)	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme (GCSSRP)	Collaborative Postgraduate Training Programme	Community Engagement Grants (COMG)	Education Research in South Africa	Energy Research Programme	Human Capital Development for Multi-wavelength Astronomy	Bio-informatics and Functional Genomics	Blue Skies Research	Centres of Excellence (CoEs)	Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers (CPRR)	Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers (CSUR)	Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants	KFD Development Grants	Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers (IFRR)	International Research Grants (IRG)	Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration (KIC)	Nanotechnology Flagship Projects (NFP)	Postdoctoral Fellowships	Postgraduate Student Support	Postdoctoral Development Programme	Research Career Advancement Fellowships	Research and Technology Fund (RTF)	Infrastructure Funding Instruments (National and Nanotechnology Equipment (NEP/NNEP))	Sabbatical Grants for Completion of Doctoral Degrees	South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI Tier 1)	South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI Tier 2)	Thuthuka	THRIP	Y-rated Scientists	Key to Table 4 Y This combination is allowed N This combination is not allowed Y* If rated within the funding cycle Y** If rated but does not hold a Doctoral degree		
African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP)																																				
African Origins Programme (AOP)	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP)	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme (GCSSRP)	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Collaborative Postgraduate Training Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Community Engagement Grants (COMG)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Education Research in South Africa	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Energy Research Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Human Capital Development for Multi-wavelength Astronomy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Bio-informatics and Functional Genomics	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Blue Skies Research	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Centres of Excellence (CoEs)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y		
Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers (CPRR)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y		
Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers (CSUR)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N		Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N		
Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
KFD Development Grants	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers (IFRR)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y	
International Research Grants (IRG)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration (KIC)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Nanotechnology Flagship Projects (NFP)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Postdoctoral Fellowships	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	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	N	N	N	N	N		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
Postdoctoral Development Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N		Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Research Career Advancement Fellowships	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	
Research and Technology Fund (RTF)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Infrastructure Funding Instruments (National and Nanotechnology Equipment (NEP/NNEP))	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Sabbatical Grants for Completion of Doctoral Degrees	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N		N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y**	
South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI Tier 1)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N			N	Y	Y		
South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI Tier 2)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y			N	N	Y	Y		
Thuthuka	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N		Y	Y*		
THRIP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Y-rated Scientists	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y	Y	

Duration of Awards

The duration of awards differs among funding instruments. In general, however, awards are made for periods/cycles of three years. In some cases, there may be a limit on the number of funding periods/cycles allowed, especially in the development funding instruments 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-year period, however, is dependent on satisfactory progress, which is assessed annually. Details on the duration of awards are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Duration of awards

Broad Investment Area	Funding Instrument	Award cycles/years	Maximum number of cycles	Total support period/years
EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUALS		6	Unlimited	
NEXT GENERATION	Sabbatical Grants for the Completion of Doctoral Degrees	1	1	1
	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
	Nanotechnology Flagships Project	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Postdoctoral Fellowships	2	1	2
	Professional Development Programme Postdoctoral Support	2	1	2
	Research Career Advancement Fellowships	5	1	5
	Thuthuka: Post-PhD Track	3	2	6
	Thuthuka: NRF Rating Track	3	2	6
	African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	African Origins Platform	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Bio-informatics & Functional Genomics	3	Unlimited	Reapply

Broad Investment Area	Funding Instrument	Award cycles/years	Maximum number of cycles	Total support period/years
ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS	Blue Skies Research	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Collaborative Postgraduate Training Programme	3	1	3
	Community Engagement Programme	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Education Research in South Africa	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Energy Research Programme	5	Performance-based	Performance-based
	Global Change, Society and Sustainability Research Programme	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Human Capital Development for Multi-Wavelength Astronomy	3	Unlimited	Reapply
	Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers	6	Duration of valid NRF rating	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
	Research and Technology Fund	3	3	9
	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

Broad Investment Area	Funding Instrument	Award cycles/years	Maximum number of cycles	Total support period/years
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 funding instruments as described in this booklet. The management of grants is made up of two distinct activities, namely:

- **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, whereas Free-standing Scholarships and Fellowships are paid directly to the awardee).

Note: All applications for funding must 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:

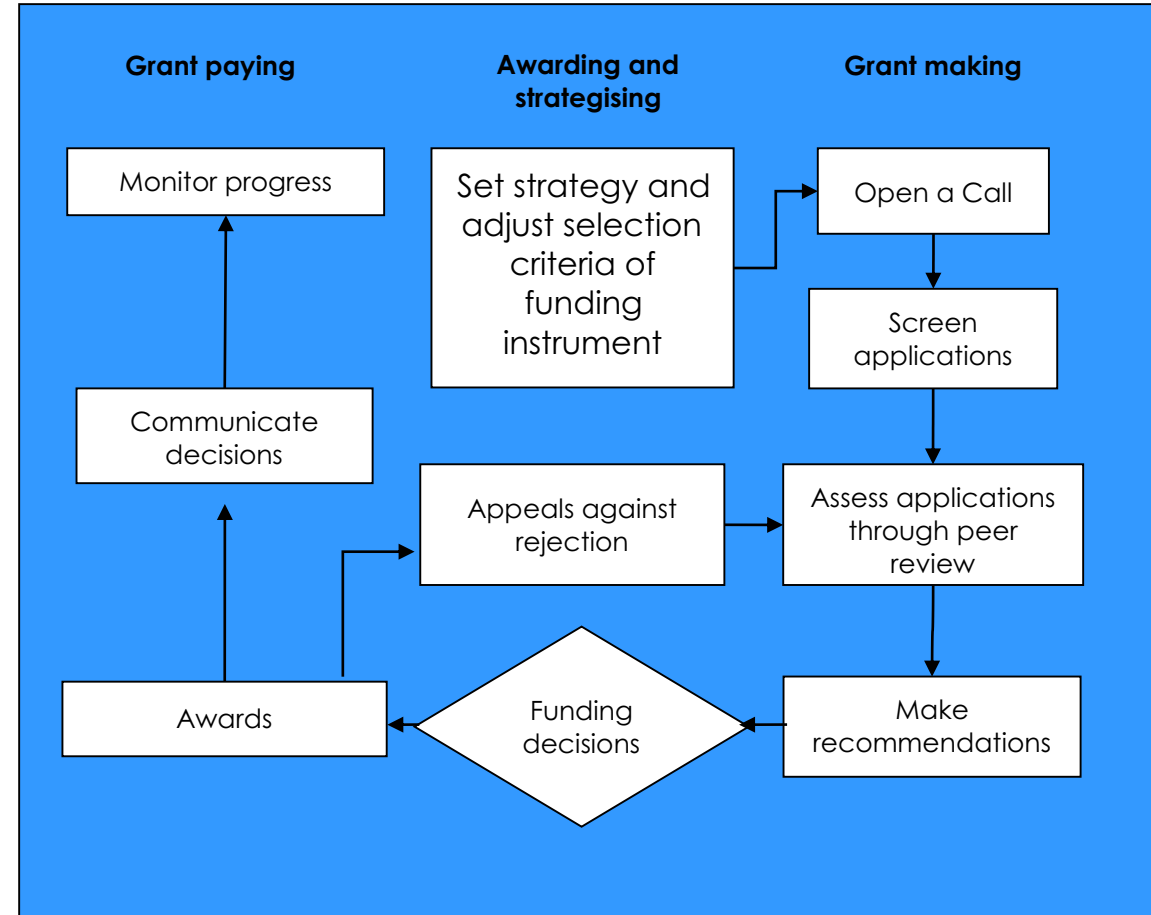
- the NRF Discretionary Core Grant; and
- various Government departments, e.g.
 - Department of Science and Technology (DST);
 - Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET);

- Department of Trade and Industry (the dti); and
- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT).
- Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)

The funds are disbursed according to strict criteria set by the sponsor, and are transferred to the NRF as either **Ring-fenced** or **Contract** grants.

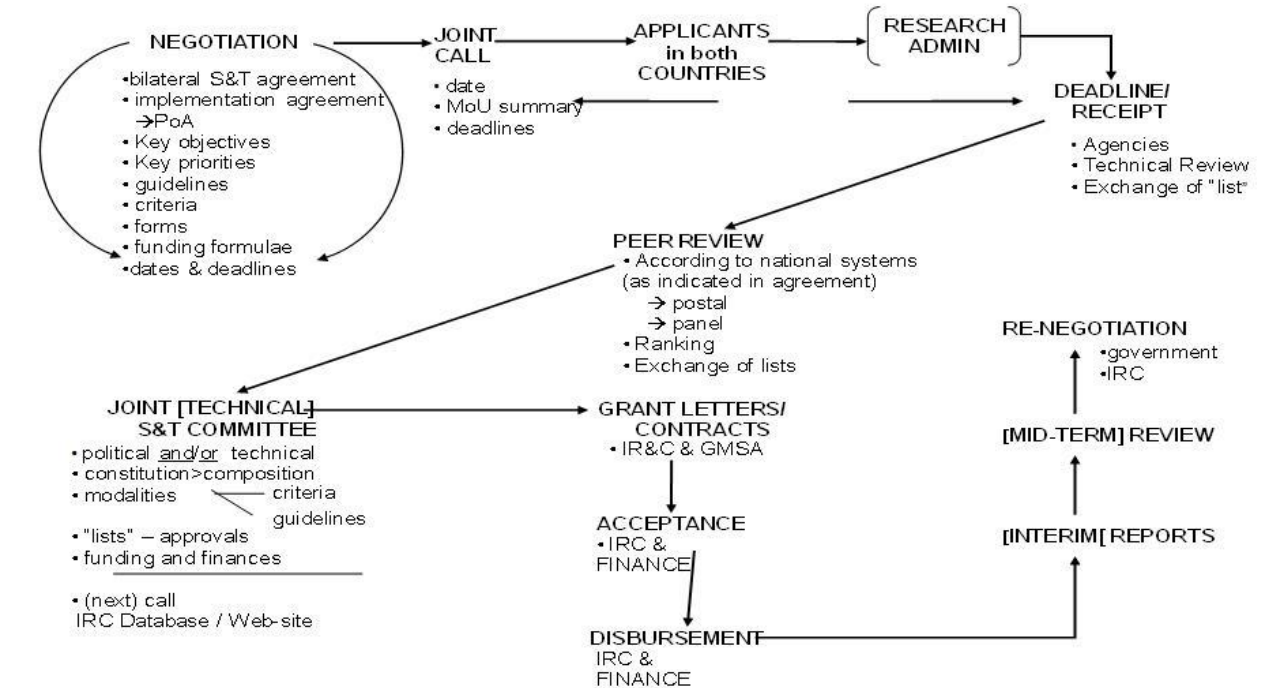
The Grant Management Cycle is described in **Figure 1**. The typical period of a Grant Management Cycle is one calendar year.

Figure 1: Grant Management Cycle



It is important to note that the grant management cycle is slightly different for International Research Grants. The cycle for International Research Grants makes provision for joint committees with international partners for funding decision-making purposes. Please see the figure below:

Figure 2: International Research Grant Management Cycle



Grant Payment Process

The NRF pays grants to the grant-holder'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 the grant for which the payment is earmarked. Institutional finance officials process the expenditure online at <http://nrffonline.ac.za>. Updated statements are generated after payments have been made.

Grant statements can also be accessed online on a continuous basis by the grant-holder and the institution's research office at <http://nrffonline.ac.za> through the Grant-holder Tools facility or Institutional Facilities.

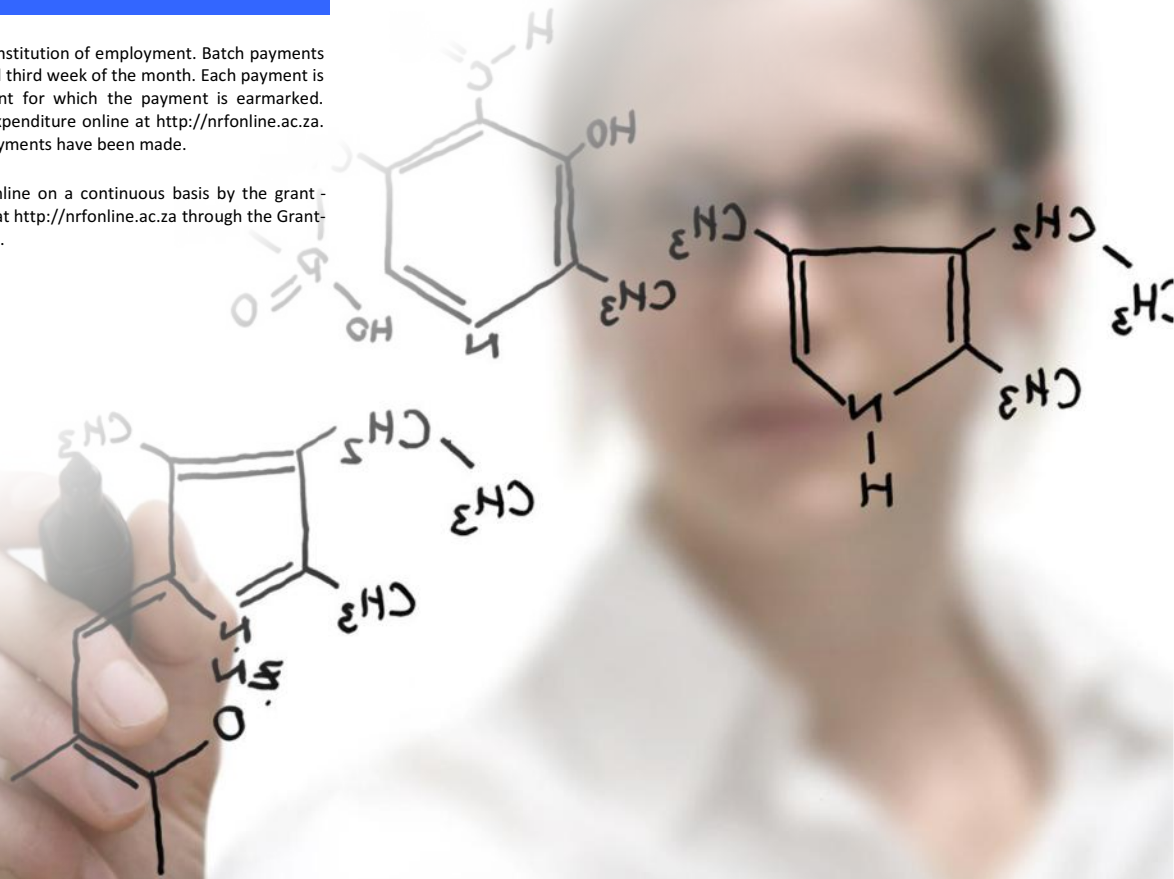
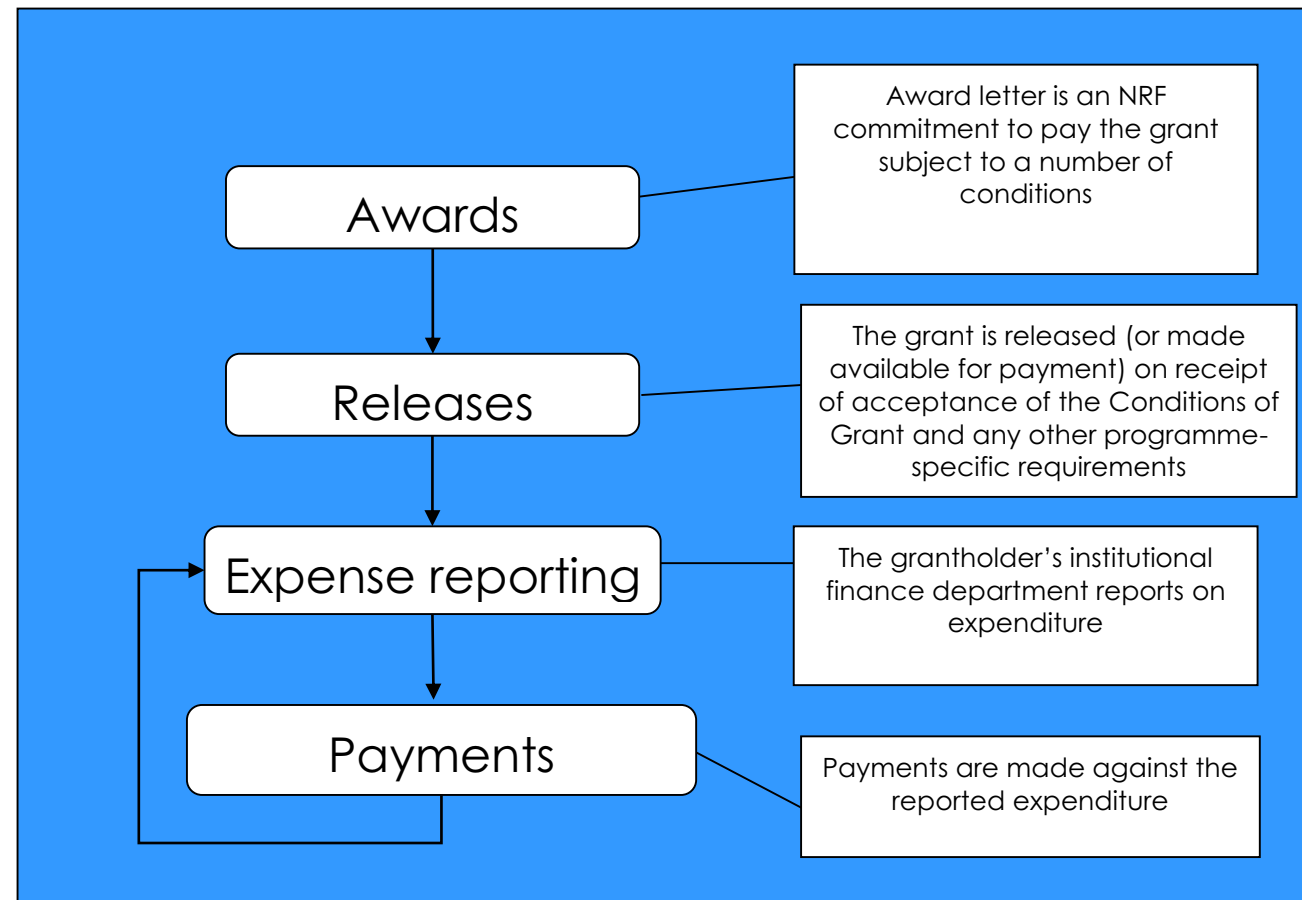


Figure 3: Payment Process



Evaluation and Rating of Individuals

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 applicant's research standing in their 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 apply for a grant at any time during their six-year rating cycle, and their rating is often taken into account in the review process.
- Ratings can be used as a tool for benchmarking purposes (i.e. researchers can compare their standing in the research community against that of their peers nationally and internationally).

2. Eligibility for Rating

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

1. Researchers who are employed and remunerated on a full-time, part-time or contract basis at South African (SA) higher education institutions (HEIs), museums or NRF-recognised research institutions. (For retired academics/researchers, bullet 6 applies.)

2. 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.
3. 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 starting date should be provided before the rating will become valid.
4. Persons holding joint appointments between an 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 should be submitted by the applicant's institution confirming that these conditions have been met.
5. 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 mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff. Such persons must indicate which institution is their primary institution (i.e. the institution to which the rating must be linked). A motivation from the institution submitting the application

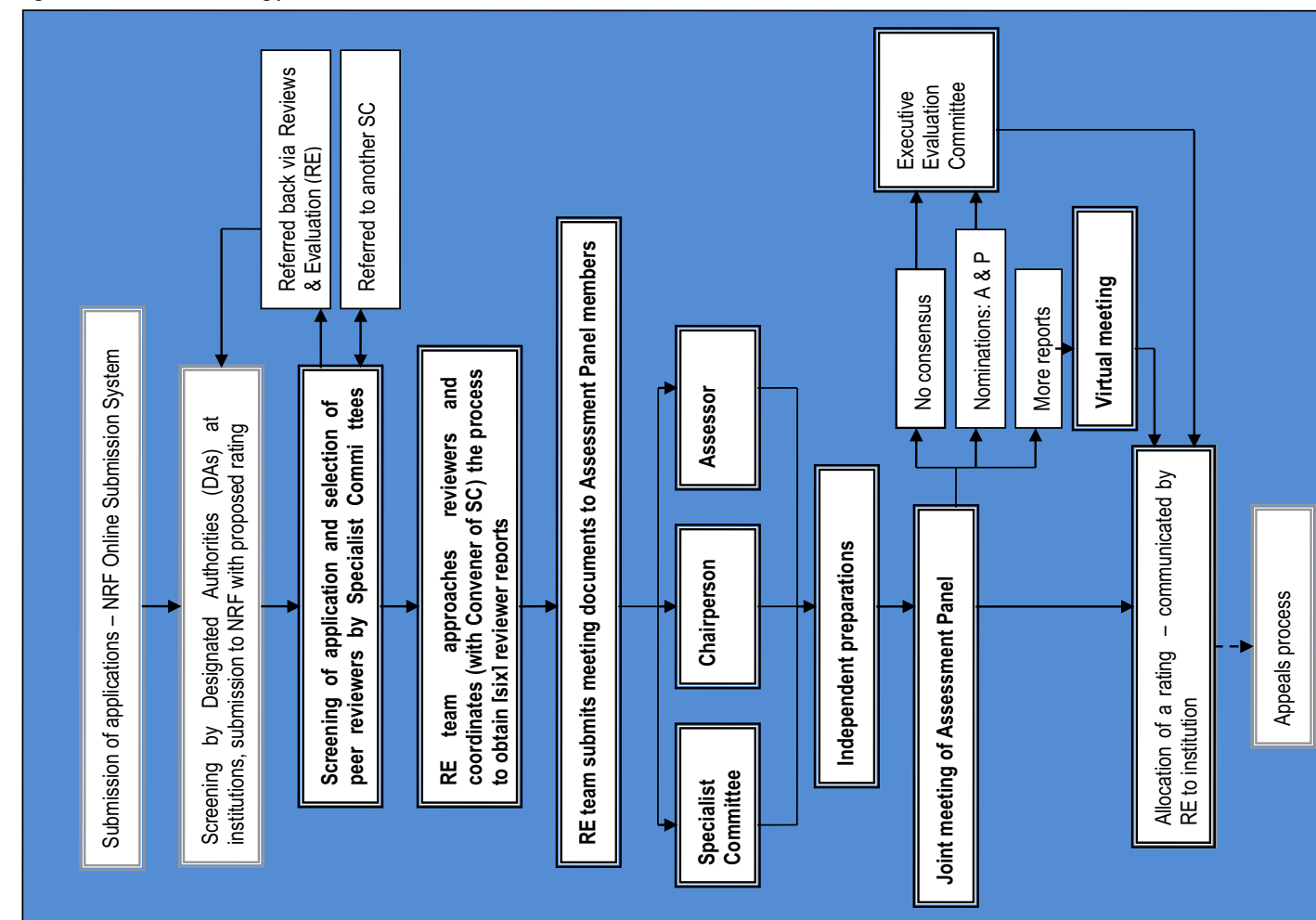
must be submitted confirming that these conditions have been met.

6. Retired academics/researchers must meet all the following criteria:
 - resident in SA; and
 - formally affiliated to an SA HEI (e.g. appointed as an emeritus professor, honorary research associate/professor or supernumerary/contract employee); the candidate's application for rating must be formally supported and endorsed by the SA HEI to which he/she is affiliated, or anticipates to be affiliated; and
 - active researchers with a distinguished track record of research and postgraduate student supervision; and
 - actively mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff.

3. Rating Procedure

The rating procedure is described on the NRF website (<http://www.nrf.ac.za/projects.php?pid=129>) and briefly illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Evaluation and rating process



Conclusion

The business of the NRF may appear to be complex. It is hoped that this overview has helped to provide some clarity. More detailed information on award opportunities is available on the NRF website (www.nrf.ac.za). General enquiries may be directed by e-mail to info@nrf.ac.za, and grant-related enquiries to supportdesk@nrf.ac.za.

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