

NRF - TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowships Call for 2016

The National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa and the Department of Science and Technology (DST), in partnership with the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) have partnered to pursue the goal of advancement of Science in developing countries through the establishment of the **NRF-TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowship funding instrument**. TWAS is based in Italy and operates as a programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the advancement of science in developing countries. The parties entered into a contractual agreement to support postdoctoral fellows from Africa and developing countries who will be funded per annum for a maximum of three (3) years to pursue full-time research training in South Africa. There will be an intake of 10 postdoctoral fellows each year for three (3) years, starting in 2016.

International strategic partnerships remain the vehicle for development, within the context of the advancement of research and human capacity development. Through this funding instrument, South Africa will contribute to effective science collaboration on the African continent and globally. In particular, ensuring capacity development of promising next generation and emerging researchers in developing countries will make headways towards exchange of knowledge and improving the quality of research leading to innovative ideas for socio-economic development.

The objectives of the NRF-TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowship funding instrument are to:

- Increase the number and quality of postdoctoral research fellows in Africa and other developing countries;
- Foster collaboration in order to increase the supervisory capacity of postdoctoral students and fellows in South Africa and other developing countries;
- Foster scientific and technological cooperation by facilitating brain circulation between countries;
- Attract young scientists and professionals of the highest calibre from developing countries to access world class strategic and applied research opportunities in South Africa in order to advance their professional competitiveness; and
- Support human capacity needs and thus position the developing countries for global competitiveness in scientific and technological fields.

1. Areas of support

The NRF-TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowship funding instrument will support fellows to undertake full - time research at any South African public research institution including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Science Councils and National Research Facilities.

Applicants who wish to pursue research under Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) disciplines will be supported through the fellowship.

2. Eligibility

In selecting applicants for consideration for NRF-TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowship, the following criteria will apply:

- Fellowships are open to **citizens and permanent residents in a developing country other than South Africa**. Refer to Appendix 1 for the list of eligible developing countries or [click here](#);
- The following individuals are **not eligible** to apply:
 - South African citizens;
 - Foreign citizens who hold permanent residence permits of South Africa;
 - Foreign citizens who are already resident in South Africa and hold temporary residence permits (this includes study permits);
 - Citizens and permanent residents of any developed country
- Applicants must have obtained their Doctoral qualification within five (5) years of submitting an application to the NRF;
- Applicants should be a regular employee in a developing country (other than South Africa or any developed country) and hold a research assignment;
- Visa and immigration laws of the applicant's home country and South Africa must be met by the applicant.

3. Application requirements

- Applications from individuals that are employed must provide an official letter of release from their employer to authorise absence for the full duration of the fellowship. **Applications that do not have an official letter of release will be automatically disqualified.**
- Applicants must provide an official letter from their host South African institution, department or laboratory and motivation from the applicant's host. **It is the**



responsibility of the applicant to contact the respective institution to apply for acceptance. Applications that do not have an official letter of support will be automatically disqualified

- The research project must be registered and approved by the host institution (a letter of support from the prospective supervisor will suffice); and
- Preference will be given to applicants that meet the following requirements of the English Language Proficiency Academic test:
IELTS 6.5 (no band less than 6.0); or TOEFL (paper) 575 (TWE 4.5); or TOEFL iBT (min. 20); or Cambridge minimum 58. Information on the IELTS tests can be obtained from the British Council in home country or accessed on: www.ielts.org. Further information on the TOEFL test can be accessed on: www.toefl.com. Consult the British Council in the home country for assistance.

4. Awarding principles

Fellowships will be awarded based on the following principles:

- Priority will be given to applicants from the 81 states endorsed by TWAS for priority in capacity development in Science and Technology. Refer to Appendix 2 for the list of TWAS endorsed developing countries or [click here](#);
- Priority will be given to female applicants and the target is to award 50% of fellowships to female fellows; and
- The target is to support fifty percent (50%) of fellows from developing countries on the African continent.

5. Conditions of award of the Fellowship

- The fellowship shall be held as the primary funding for the postdoctoral research training;
- Fellowships may not be held simultaneously with a fellowship from any other TWAS, South African government or NRF administered source;
- Postdoctoral fellows are permitted to spend a maximum of 20% of their time undertaking lecturing and student supervision;
- Postdoctoral fellows may not concurrently hold the fellowship with any full-time employment position in South Africa;
- Postdoctoral fellows may hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to the institutional capped value;

- Successful applicants must provide a written undertaking to return to their home country upon completion of the fellowship;
- Postdoctoral fellows will be required to submit Annual Progress Reports (APR) in a format provided by the NRF, against deliverables as outlined in the application form and the signed Conditions of Grant;
- All fellows will be required, to submit an exit report to the NRF - TWAS, upon completion of their Postdoctoral research, on their overall experience, achievements and outputs;
- Successful applicants must have all foreign qualifications (obtained from non-South African universities) evaluated by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). A SAQA evaluation certificate must be submitted with the application, if available. The applicant will nonetheless need to provide proof of SAQA accreditation before they can register at most South African institutions; and
- Successful applicants will be required to meet the following requirements of the English Language Proficiency Academic test:
IELTS 6.5 (no band less than 6.0); or TOEFL (paper) 575 (TWE 4.5); or TOEFL iBIT (min. 20); or Cambridge minimum 58. Information on the IELTS tests can be obtained from the British Council in home country or accessed on: www.ielts.org. Further information on the TOEFL test can be accessed on: www.toefl.com. Consult the British Council in the home country for assistance.

6. Value of award and funding period

The duration of postdoctoral fellowships will be for a minimum of six (6) months and a maximum of three (3) years.

The breakdown of the award will be as follows:

| Category of support | Value (Rand) | Duration |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Stipend | 255 000 | Per Annum |
| Research Costs | 50 000 | Per Annum |
| Compulsory institutional contribution | 15 000 | Per annum |
| Cost towards mobility of the fellow | Subject to comprehensive cost breakdown | Once off |



Host institutions will be expected to supplement the fellowship with a minimum of R15 000.00 per annum as part of the institutional commitment. In addition, the host institutions will ensure the provision of an enabling environment for fellows' research training and skills development.

The costs for the mobility of the fellow will include the following:

- Travel visa and study visa;
- A single economy airfare for travel from the fellows' home country to South Africa; and
- A single economy airfare from South Africa to the fellow's home country, upon completion of the postdoctoral research fellowship.

Postdoctoral fellows that take up the fellowship for more than one year, are also eligible for a once-off travel grant of up to R25 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. This is the maximum amount permitted over the tenure of the fellowship. Postdoctoral fellows who wish to access the travel grant must complete a travel grant application form available on the NRF Online Submission System.

For fellowships with a duration of six (6) months to 12 months, stipends and research costs will be paid on a pro-rata basis depending on the duration of the fellowship.

7. Responsibilities of fellows

The fellowship **does not** cover the following:

- All financial expenses of accompanying family members. Fellows must also ensure that accompanying family members have the correct documentation for entry and stay in South Africa; and
- Comprehensive medical insurance for the period of their stay to meet any untoward incidents and major ailments during travel and stay in South Africa.

8. Application process

For the applications process outlined below, also refer to the **Grants Management and Systems Administration Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Manual 2016** for a step-by-step detail.



Stage 1:

Application for acceptance at South African Institutions

Applicants must contact institutions in South Africa or potential supervisors to obtain a placement into the postdoctoral research training programme. For details of recognised HEIs [click here](#) and for other Public Research Institutions [click here](#).

An official letter of acceptance must be obtained from the potential host institution and/or supervisor. The letter must cover detail on:

- The research project to be undertaken by the applicant; and
- Available infrastructure and facilities for an enabling environment for host's research

Application for evaluation of foreign qualifications from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Applicants are advised to start this process early to allow time for processing. Information on the process can be accessed by logging on to www.saga.org.za. On the SAQA website, navigate to Service - Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications - General Information. Applicants must strictly adhere to all the instructions and provide all applicable documents to avoid delays and rejection of applications. Applicants are advised to courier all application documents to SAQA directly.

Stage 2:

Application to the NRF

Applicants must apply for the NRF – TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for 2016 by accessing the link: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/> on the NRF Online application system and follow the steps below:

On accessing the link, please follow the following instructions:

- Individuals that are not registered on the NRF Online system, must first register by selecting the 'new registration' option and complete all sections.
- Once a profile has been created, login using your passport number and password.
- Select "My Applications".
- Select "Create Application".
- Select the call for which you are applying: **NRF - TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for 2016.**
- Select "Apply now".
- Complete all relevant sections of the application form.



- Ensure that the *Curriculum Vitae* section is also completed as the information submitted therein will also be used to evaluate your application.
- Please attach the required documents in **one PDF file in the following order**:
 - Passport;
 - Official acceptance letter from host institution;
 - Certified copies of undergraduate and postgraduate certificates;
 - Letter of release from employer in home country;
 - English Language Proficiency Academic test **if available**; and
 - SAQA evaluation certificate **if available**.
- Should you not follow the guidelines for attaching the necessary documents, your application will not be considered.
- Remember to submit your application upon completion.

Please note the following:

- Completed applications submitted by applicants, will automatically be forwarded to the host institution for verification before being submitted to the NRF for further processing.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered.
- Contact the university postgraduate or research office for queries related to institutional processes and deadlines.
- NRF contact persons are listed below for NRF related enquiries.
- The closing date for submitting applications is **02 October 2015**.

9. Selection criteria and review process

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria and that are completed appropriately, will be subjected to a competitive merit review process. If any information that should have been submitted as attachments is not included in the application, it will be rendered incomplete resulting in a rejection without review. The reviewers are selected by the NRF from existing reviewer databases and other sources and may include reviewers suggested by the applicant. TWAS may also submit names of potential reviewers to the NRF.

The feasibility and merit of the research projects will be assessed in line with the scorecard that follows:

Scorecard for the Assessment of Proposals for Postdoctoral fellowships

| Criteria | Sub-Criteria | Weight (Total = 100%) |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| Track Record of Applicant | Applicant expertise/training that will enable the applicant to successfully undertake the proposed research. | 10% |
| | The applicant's research track record which could include peer reviewed publications, conference proceedings, research prizes and awards. | 10% |
| Scientific and Technical quality of proposed research | 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. | 20% |
| | Research design, methodology developed to address aims of the research. Provision of workplan and feasible timelines and milestones for the research. | 20% |
| | Alignment with national (at applicant's home country) and institutional research priorities (at host institution). | 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 socio-economic impact of the research in South Africa | 10% |
| | | 100% |



10. NRF contact persons

For NRF Online application and grants management related enquiries, please contact:

Ms Zikhona Lose

Professional Officer: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

Telephone: 012 481 4365. E-mail: zikhona.lose@nrf.ac.za

For funding instrument related enquiries, please contact:

Ms Nompumelelo Thwala

Professional Officer: Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD)

Telephone: 012 481 4232. E-mail: nompumelelo.thwala@nrf.ac.za

For international relations enquiries, please contact:

Mr Malose Ledwaba

Liaison Officer: International Relations and Cooperation

Telephone: 012 481 481 4356. E-mail: malose.ledwaba@nrf.ac.za

Appendix 1

Eligible developing countries

| 151 ELIGIBLE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1. Afghanistan | 53. Guatemala | 105. Papua New Guinea |
| 2. Albania | 54. Guinea | 106. Paraguay |
| 3. Algeria | 55. Guinea-Bissau | 107. Peru |
| 4. Angola | 56. Guyana | 108. Philippines |
| 5. Antigua and Barbuda | 57. Haiti | 109. Qatar |
| 6. Argentina | 58. Honduras | 110. Romania |
| 7. Armenia | 59. Hong Kong, SAR | 111. Rwanda |
| 8. Aruba | 60. India | 112. Samoa |
| 9. Azerbaijan | 61. Indonesia | 113. São Tomé and Príncipe |
| 10. Bangladesh | 62. Iran, Islamic Rep. | 114. Saudi Arabia |
| 11. Bahamas | 63. Iraq | 115. Senegal |
| 12. Bahrain | 64. Jamaica | 116. Serbia |
| 13. Barbados | 65. Jordan | 117. Seychelles (Transitional) |
| 14. Belarus | 66. Kazakhstan | 118. Sierra Leone |
| 15. Belize | 67. Kiribati | 119. Solomon Islands |
| 16. Benin | 68. Korea, Dem Rep. | 120. Somalia |
| 17. Bhutan | 69. Kosovo | |
| 18. Bolivia | 70. Kuwait | 121. South Sudan |
| 19. Bosnia and Herzegovina | 71. Kyrgyz Republic | 122. Sri Lanka |
| 21. Brunei | 73. Lebanon | 124. St. Vincent and the Grenadines |
| 22. Brazil | 74. Lesotho | 125. Sudan |
| 23. Bulgaria | 75. Liberia | 126. Suriname |
| 24. Burkina Faso | 76. Libya | 127. Swaziland |
| 25. Burundi | 77. Macedonia, FYR | 128. Syrian Arab Republic |
| 26. Cabo Verde | 78. Macau | 129. Taiwan, China |
| 27. Cambodia | 79. Madagascar | 130. Tajikistan |
| 28. Cameroon | 80. Malawi | 131. Tanzania |



151 ELIGIBLE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 29. Central African Republic | 81. Malaysia | 132. Thailand |
| 30. Chad | 82. Mali | 133. Timor-Leste |
| 31. Chile | 83. Marshall Islands | 134. Trinidad and Tobago |
| 32. China | 84. Madagascar | 135. Togo |
| 33. Colombia | 85. Mauritania | 136. Tonga |
| 34. Comoros | 86. Mauritius | 137. Tunisia |
| 35. Congo, Dem. Rep | 87. Mayotte | 138. Turkey |
| 36. Congo, Rep. | 88. Mexico | 139. Turkmenistan |
| 37. Costa Rica | 89. Micronesia, Fed. Sts. | 140. Tuvalu |
| 38. Côte d'Ivoire | 90. Moldova | 141. Uganda |
| 39. Cuba | 91. Mongolia | 142. Ukraine |
| 40. Djibouti | 92. Montenegro | 143. United Arab Emirates |
| 41. Dominica | 93. Morocco | 144. Uruguay |
| 42. Dominican Republic | 94. Mozambique | 145. Uzbekistan |
| 43. Ecuador | 95. Myanmar | 146. Vanuatu |
| 44. Egypt, Arab Rep. | 96. Namibia | 147. Venezuela |
| 45. El Salvador | 97. Nepal | 148. Vietnam |
| 46. Eritrea | 98. Nicaragua | 149. Yemen, Rep. |
| 47. Ethiopia | 99. Niger | 150. Zambia |
| 48. Fiji | 100. Nigeria | 151. Zimbabwe |
| 49. Gabon | 101. Oman | |
| 50. Gambia, The | 102. Pakistan | |
| 51. Georgia | 103. Palau | |
| 52. Ghana | 104. Palestine, State of | |

Appendix 2

TWAS endorsed countries

| LIST OF 81 TWAS ENDORSED COUNTRIES | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Afghanistan | 28. Gambia | 55. Niger |
| 2. Angola | 29. Ghana | 56. Nigeria |
| 3. Azerbaijan | 30. Guatemala | 57. Papua New Guinea |
| 4. Bangladesh | 31. Guinea-Bissau | 58. Paraguay |
| 5. Belize | 32. Guinea | 59. Peru |
| 6. Benin | 33. Guyana | 60. Rwanda |
| 7. Bhutan | 34. Haiti | 61. Samoa |
| 8. Botswana | 35. Honduras | 62. São Tome and Principe |
| 9. Burkina Faso | 36. Indonesia | 63. Senegal |
| 10. Burundi | 37. Jamaica | 64. Sierra Leone |
| 11. Cambodia | 38. Kenya | 65. Solomon Islands |
| 12. Cameroon | 39. Kiribati | 66. Somalia |
| 13. Cape Verde | 40. Korea DPR | 67. South Sudan |
| 14. Central African Republic | 41. Kyrgyzstan | 68. Sudan |
| 15. Chad | 42. Lao PDR | 69. Suriname |
| 16. Comoros Islands | 43. Lesotho | 70. Tajikistan |
| 17. Congo, Dem. Rep. | 44. Liberia | 71. Tanzania |
| 18. Congo, Rep. | 45. Madagascar | 72. Timor-Leste |
| 19. Côte d'Ivoire | 46. Malawi | 73. Togo |
| 20. Djibouti | 47. Maldives | 74. Tuvalu |
| 21. Dominican Republic | 48. Mali | 75. Uganda |
| 22. Ecuador | 49. Mauritania | 76. Uzbekistan |
| 23. El Salvador | 50. Mongolia | 77. Vanuatu |
| 24. Equatorial Guinea | 51. Mozambique | 78. Vietnam |
| 25. Eritrea | 52. Myanmar | 79. Yemen |
| 26. Ethiopia | 53. Nepal | 80. Zambia |
| 27. Gabon | 54. Nicaragua | 81. Zimbabwe |

TWAS has identified 81 developing countries whose capacity in science and technology is still lagging. For this reason, TWAS is focusing special attention on capacity-building efforts in these countries.