



ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CALL

Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) Applications: Concept Notes for Large Integrated Team Projects 2016

The primary focus of the Programme is to generate, mobilize, co-ordinate and make accessible foundational biodiversity knowledge in line with the needs of society, the Department of Science & Technology (DST) Global Change Programme and the bio-economy. The main approach is to fund large, collaborative / integrated team projects which align with knowledge needs, or which involve participants along the entire value chain from knowledge generation to application for decision-making. These projects will also include postgraduate students and emerging researchers, and the up-skilling of researchers and practitioners who use the data generated. The projects will generate or mobilize species occurrence data, DNA barcode data, and descriptive information on species, and will ensure that the knowledge is co-ordinated, managed and disseminated through appropriate structures and systems. Monitoring of the uptake and impact of the knowledge generated will allow the development of an understanding of best practice for ensuring that research outputs do have an impact on global change understanding and decision-making relating to biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods. **More details of the programme and call are provided in the Programme Framework document.**

Concept notes for large integrated team projects that address at least one of the research focus areas below are invited. Concept notes will be assessed by a panel and a limited number will be selected for further development into full proposals.

Research focus areas include:

1. Resolution of taxonomic problems, and documenting distribution and abundance of plant and animal species used for medicinal purposes in South Africa.
2. Biological control: identification of potential biocontrol agents through being able to identify the pest / pathogen / alien and its origin, the identification of natural predators / pathogens of it, and close relatives of the host and potential agents.
3. Co-ordinated surveys for soil organisms and identification of functional roles in agri-ecosystems and natural areas and the co-ordination of existing information on soil organisms in South Africa.

4. Biodiversity functionality. Better understanding of key functional attributes of different species in ecosystems, and the key interactions between them, focusing on terrestrial regulatory services systems (developing an understanding of the system using a functional approach). Regulatory services include invasion resistance, pollination, climate regulation, carbon sequestration, pest and disease control in agricultural systems).

5. Multi-taxa surveys of strategic geographic areas (eg. new or proposed protected areas, areas targeted for development, areas with high levels of dependence on biodiversity for livelihoods, areas of importance for providing ecological infrastructure) that produce inventories, integrated information for species recorded (species pages, DNA barcodes, species occurrence and abundance data). Mobilization of existing records for the species recorded or for the area could also be included in the project.

The following eligibility criteria are applicable for projects:

- Only researchers at NRF recognized research institutions¹ in South Africa are eligible to apply as a principal investigator. Post-doctoral fellows, students, technical and support staff are NOT eligible to apply. A detailed description of applicant eligibility can be found in the Programme Framework document.
- Projects must include a minimum of five team members from a minimum of three institutions, but teams that involve all relevant specialists will be favoured. Teams must be led by an identified principle investigator.
- Project teams must include at least one young researcher (younger than 40 at the time of application) and ensure adequate mentorship and involvement as necessary.
- Projects must include postgraduate training.
- Projects must identify specific users of the knowledge generated and information co-ordinated and must indicate how engagement with users has been or will be addressed to ensure that data needs are met in terms of what is generated and mobilized and how it is accessed by users.
- Projects must indicate the impact of the project on understanding and mitigation of global change and / or the bio-economy.
- Projects must be in line with one of the focus areas identified.
- Projects must generate primary biodiversity data sets.
- Projects must contribute to the compilation of species pages for the EoL.
- Projects must provide specimens for barcoding or produce DNA barcodes for species.

¹ NRF recognised research institutions are declared (and gazetted) by the Department of Science and Technology and include Public South African (SA) Higher Education institutions (HEIs), Science Councils and other research performing public institutions. The list is available on the NRF Submission System at: <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za/nrfmkii/>

- The data generated or mobilized through the grant must be provided to the FBIP / SANBI according to the Programme at the end of the project. This is to ensure that the data can be archived, integrated and made accessible for a range of applications and products.
- Data deliverables as stated in the proposal must be made available at the end of each year, and all data must be submitted six months after the end of the three-year project (i.e. 42 months after the signing of the Conditions of Grant agreement).
- Successful applicants must sign the Conditions of Grant (COG) agreement as specified in the attachments to the award letter.
- Grant holders who have not submitted data within the specified timeframes from previous grants will not be eligible to receive further funding from the FBIP until the data have been submitted.

Note:

- The FBIP is funded through the DST and is required to report on the outputs from funding allocations. This means that in addition to the standard NRF reports, grantholders will be expected to provide details of outputs, email updates and additional reports to the FBIP management team.
- It is critical for the continuation of the FBIP that grant recipients deliver the outputs specified in their proposals and that this is done within the proposed timeframes.

Research team structure

For the large integrated team project application to the FBIP, the core research team consists of a principal investigator and one or more co-investigator(s). The project may also include research associates / collaborators. Co-investigators, research associates and collaborators can be based at other institutions, or be associated with appropriate citizen scientist associations.

The principal investigator must be an active researcher who takes intellectual responsibility for the project, its conception, any strategic decisions called for in its pursuit, and the communication of results. The principal investigator must have expertise and a track record in the field dealt with in the proposal, and they must play an intellectual leadership role in both the development of the proposal and the implementation of the activities covered in the project. The principal investigator must have the capacity to make a serious commitment to the project and cannot assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be placed in the hands of others. S/he will take responsibility for the management and administration of resources allocated to the application.

A co-investigator is an active researcher who provides significant commitment, intellectual input, relevant expertise into the design and implementation of the research application. S/he will be involved in all or at least some well-defined research activities within the scope of the application. South African-based co-investigators are eligible to receive NRF funds from the grant if the team's application is successful. Post-doctoral fellows, students, technical and support staff should NOT be listed as co-investigators.

Research associates / collaborators are individuals or groups who are anticipated to make relatively small but meaningful contributions to the research endeavours outlined in the application. Research

associates/collaborators will not actively participate in the design and implementation of the research application. They are not considered a part of the core research team.

Funding details

Application for funding for the large, integrated team projects is a two-step process:

- i. Concept document call, evaluation and selection for full development (2-4 concepts selected);
- ii. Development of full proposals for selected concept documents, evaluation, selection of 1 to 2 full proposals for funding for a three-year period.

No funding is available for the development of the concept notes. Limited seed funding is available as a once off payment in order to assist successful applicants to develop full proposals (R20, 000 per team).

For the full projects the range of funding available is R500, 000 to R2 million per annum for a three year period (R1, 500,000 - R6, 000,000 in total per project with a maximum of R2 million in any one year).

Grantholder-linked student support

- Honours / Final year BTech student assistantships (full time) R 20 000 p.a.
- Masters (full-time) R 80 000 p.a. (2 years)
- Doctoral (full-time) R 120 000 p.a. (3 years)
- Postdoctoral fellowship (pro rata per month) R 200 000 p.a. (3 years)

Note: According to the NRF Bursaries, Scholarships Value, Rules and Guidelines document, the distribution for these bursaries is targeted at the following ratios:

- Honours and Final year BTech student assistantships (full time), only South African citizens are considered, with a minimum of 50% black (inclusive of African, Indian and Coloured) within a grant.
- Masters and Doctoral bursaries are awarded according to the following ratios: 87% South African (including permanent resident), 5% SADC, 4%; rest of African continent and 4% from non-African countries.
- Postdoctoral Fellowships: No ratio applies.

CONCEPT NOTE CALL OPENS 07 April 2016
CONCEPT NOTE CALL CLOSES 22 June 2016

All applications must be endorsed by the research office of the principal applicant. The DA closing date is 23 June 2016. Institutions must set their own internal closing date for DAs to validate applications by the closing date.

Successful applicants will be invited by 20 July 2016 to submit full proposals (due by 21 September 2016).

All endorsed applications must be submitted electronically via the NRF's Submission system at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>