

**US NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION /
NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION
MATERIALS WORLD NETWORK
CALL FOR PROPOSALS: SOUTH AFRICA
2009**

Background

The Materials World Network is an initiative of the US National Science Foundation (NSF) aimed at promoting international collaboration in the field of materials science research and education. Making available a total of between \$2.5 million and \$4.5 million for US FY2009 to fund between 20 and 40 joint projects between US materials researchers and their counterparts from all over the world, the programme is jointly coordinated by the NSF and their partner agencies in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East, whose own contributions to individual research projects allow for the participation of local scientists as well. This year sees the second opportunity for South African researchers to participate in the programme through the administrative means offered by the National Research Foundation, pleased herewith to invite the submission of project proposals in this regard.

(Before considering submission, potential applicants are urged to read the outline of the programme as offered by the website of the NSF, at the following address:
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=12820&org=NSF&sel_org=MPS&from=fund.

Eligibility criteria

This call is open to all permanently employed researchers affiliated to a recognised higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology or science council in SA. An application must designate two principal investigators, one in South Africa and one in the US, who will bear the main responsibility for the project, including its technical and administrative coordination as well as scientific and financial reporting. The South African applicant must be in possession of a master's degree (preferably a PhD).

How do I apply?

Application forms for South African applicants may be downloaded electronically from the NRF website (www.nrf.ac.za). US applicants can apply online via the NSF website as indicated above. **No hard copy** of the applications will be accepted. **Only an electronic and the scanned signature page of the South African application should be submitted to:**

Mr Raven Jimmy
raven@nrf.ac.za

Only applications endorsed by the research office or its equivalent at higher education or research institutions and will be accepted. No applications from private companies will be accepted. Please ensure that you have the signature of the international partner. This can be emailed to the contact person should you have difficulty in meeting the deadline.

Which activities may I apply for?

In an effort to afford researchers maximum flexibility, the kinds of activities which may be financed are left undefined, although it is expected that the bulk of the allocation will go to the funding of mobility and the organisation of joint events such as workshops, seminars etc. Note however that the following will NOT be financed from the NRF allocation accorded to the project: consultant's fees, educational expenses (scholarships, etc.), insurance and medical care, Research assistantships, Sabbatical leave, student project costs, large equipment, project management fees, publication costs, salaries and temporary staff fees. A maximum of 10% of the total budget request can be used for the purchase of equipment or consumables,

In the case of reciprocal visits and the attendance of workshops and conferences organised as part of joint research projects funded from the NRF allocation, it is recommended that the sending party be responsible for financing international travel, while the receiving party be responsible for financing the accommodation and subsistence of their international visitors. Local travel and fees relating to the organisation of joint scientific events (venue, catering, audiovisual equipment etc.) should ideally be the financial responsibility of the investigator representing the country in which the event is held, to be paid from his/her allocation of the joint funding accorded.

Areas of study supported?

- Condensed matter physics
- Solid state and materials chemistry, polymers, biomaterials
- Metallic materials and nanostructures
- Ceramics, electronic and photonic materials
- Condensed matter and materials theory

How much should I apply for?

The total amount of funding requested should preferably not exceed R450 000. South African researchers should not necessarily attempt to match funding requested by their US counterparts due to the fact that they have significantly more resources to draw on. **NRF funding for a single project will be available for a maximum of three years, starting in 2010.** Note that both scientific and financial reporting on the project is an obligatory condition of funding.

How are applications evaluated?

Following the closing date indicated below, applications will be submitted to both a postal and panel review by recognised local experts in the various fields of research represented by the proposals received. These experts will evaluate each proposal based on the following criteria:

- Track record of the applicant
- Methodology
- Scientific merit
- Quality of the proposal
- Potential for promoting equity and redress
- Value of the collaboration
- Possible impact of the research

(Note that proposals demonstrating strong elements of capacity building, particularly among previously disadvantaged socio-economic population groups, will be favourably regarded).

Following local evaluation a shortlist of projects to be funded will be constituted in consultation with the NSF and based on the results of the evaluations done in both countries. Proposals which have only been received in either South Africa or the US, but not both, will not be evaluated or considered for funding. Note further that funding will only become available once both funding agencies have completed their respective operational processes.

When is the closing date for applications?

All applications must be submitted by **11 November 2009**.

Applications received after this date will not be considered for funding.

Where can I obtain more information?

For further information regarding submission in South Africa, please contact:

Mr Raven Jimmy
International Research Grants
The National Research Foundation

Tel: 012 481 4069

Email: raven@nrf.ac.za

In USA:

Dr. Daniele Finotello, 1065N, telephone: (703) 292-4676, email: dfinotel@nsf.gov

Dr. Carmen I Huber, telephone: (703) 292-4939, email: chuber@nsf.gov