DST-NRF Conference Fund

2016 Annual Online Call

Closing dates: 6 November 2015

CONTEXT

While international collaboration has always been an intrinsic part of the research and innovation (R&I) endeavour, the forces of competitiveness and globalisation are accelerating the scope, pace and importance of cross-border R&I, strengthened by directed partnerships both within and outside of South Africa.

A vibrant and internationally competitive science, technology and innovation (STI) system is critical to growing a knowledge-driven economy and improving the social well-being of South Africans. The importance of a globally competitive STI system is well captured in policy documents of both the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Research Foundation (NRF).

To attain this goal, it is important to strategically position South Africa as a global player in R&I. This can be achieved by promoting international collaboration through hosting of strategic global events, support of researcher mobility and participation in scientific events, enriched by national learning opportunities and engagements.

OBJECTIVES

The conference fund is intended to support the hosting of international conferences centred on excellent scientific research that has potential for socio-economic impact. The funding platform makes provision for **strategic, large events of an international nature**, hosted in South Africa, or on behalf of South Africa abroad. The fund will typically support 'global conferences' of more than 1 000 participants. Smaller events can be applied for under the KIC funding instrument of the NRF, published biannually.

The overall objectives of this fund are to:

- Promote South Africa as a science destination;
- Increase the competitiveness of the South African National System of Innovation (NSI);
- Showcase South Africa's scientific endeavours and infrastructure, and to build capacity within the NSI;
- Enhance networking within the science system;
- Foster international collaboration in order to improve the quality of research outputs by researchers.

WHO MAY APPLY

All researchers who are full-time employees or on a fixed term contract at any of the following institutions are eligible to apply:

- South African universities /universities of technology;
- Recognised national research institutions such as the national facilities;
- Museums;
- Science councils;
- International Council for Science (ICSU) National Committees (with recognition of institutional affiliation to adhere to the list of qualifying institutions that may receive grants);
- The applicant must be a member of the conference organising committee and must be in possession of a PhD degree;
- **Researchers from private/commercial institutions are not eligible to apply**.

REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for funding, applications have to fulfil the following conditions:

- The proposal must have clearly defined objectives and a programme of activities;
- The theme of the conference must be aligned to the DST-NRF priorities;
- The conference must be co-organised with a renowned international body/society and must be open to international participation;
- The conference programme should be designed in such a way that it fosters international collaboration;
- The organisers must ensure that the event is openly accessible, and that participants represent the diversity of people working in the field;
- Postgraduate students must be included as participants at the conference (e.g. through poster presentations or presenting papers);
- Involvement of other South African scientists and collaborations with other institutions working in similar disciplines;
- Letters of support from the hosting institutions;
- Proof of other sources of funding or the fundraising strategy;
- Applicants requesting support may be required to present before an evaluation panel;
- At least 30 percent of participants should be from the African continent.

WHICH ACTIVITIES MAY I APPLY FOR?

During the present call, funding may only be utilised for the following activities:

- Venue and/or equipment hire;
- Catering – meals, lunches, tea and coffee breaks etc.;
- Conference marketing material;
- Evaluation reports and/or publication of conference proceedings;
- Translation;
- Accommodation and/or travel for non-paying delegates (*keynote speakers, or participants from Africa only*);
- Bursaries for participants with appropriate backgrounds and/or experience that would be useful to include in order to achieve the conference objectives (*limited to participants from developing countries, and specifically from Africa only*);
- Given the competitive nature of the programme and budgetary limitations, funding is not guaranteed;
- **Costs for non-scientific activities e.g. cultural activities and social programmes will not qualify for consideration.**

HOW ARE APPLICATIONS EVALUATED?

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Motivational statement concerning the nature of the conference, its importance in the scholarly or professional field (s) within which it is located;
- Clear anticipated benefit to South Africa of hosting the conference, the host institution and broader scientific community;
- Theme of conference alignment with the national priorities;

- Geographic distribution of delegates who are expected to be in attendance, including effective participation of delegates from Africa;
- Proof of other sources of funding or efforts being made to secure additional funding. At least one third of the total cost of the event must be sourced elsewhere;
- Applications will further be evaluated in terms of the extent to which they are able to promote and establish South Africa as a science destination of choice;
- Demonstration of how the conference has the potential to leverage potential medium- to long-term partnerships and collaborations;
- The applicant must be in possession of a PhD degree. Students and researchers from private/commercial institutions are not eligible to apply;
- The world body or equivalent of the association or professional body hosting the conference should provide proof of its support or allocation of the bid for hosting the event in South Africa, or abroad on behalf of South Africa.
- The conference should take place between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2016.
- Grants are limited to a maximum of R2 mill. per conference (and a minimum of R250 000);
- In the context of a successful bid to host for a conference taking place beyond 2017, the NRF should be consulted for consideration of funding modalities, or potential seed support, for the period leading up to the conference. This is still dependant on the outcome of the competitive evaluation process in considering support. Normally, funding support will be provided in the year prior to the conference.
- When a decision has been taken to bid for a conference in future, the NRF and DST should be notified of the intent prior to the bidding process.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications must be submitted electronically to the NRF on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/
- Register/Login using your ID number and password.
- Go to "My Applications" and select "Create Application".
- Select the call for which you are applying for: **DST-NRF Conference Fund 2016**
- Complete all compulsory sections and the non-compulsory sections (i.e. CV sections). Please attach the required documents in PDF format in the following order: CV of partner, budget of partner and a signed support letter of the partner.
- Remember to submit your application on completion.
- Completed applications will go to the host institution for verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- All applications should be submitted by 6 November 2015. No application will be accepted beyond this date.
- The NRF will not be held liable for server/IT problems experienced by any institution for non-submission of applications.

Where applicable the application must be accompanied by:

- A list of the conference organising committee (A diversified committee comprising of researchers from different institutions is highly encouraged);

- A list of local and international invited keynote speakers;
- CVs of the organising committee members and invited keynote speakers;
- A draft or final version of the conference programme;
- A letter of support/sponsorship/co-funding/part-funding from the international body;
- Information on conference publicity (especially international) and outreach activities.

ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT CONDITIONS (AOC)

An appropriate hard copy of the AoC will accompany each formal letter of award. This should be signed by both the grant holder and the Designated Authority at the institution. The signed AoC should be indorsed and uploaded by the research office on the NRF system within 30 days of receipt or before funding is disbursed. Failure to comply may result in the NRF cancelling the award.

REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

NRF and DST support should be acknowledged in all publications (including World Wide Web pages) and presentations (oral or poster). Use of the NRF and DST logos should be according to the branding policies of the organisations (contact Mr Thabiso Nkone at thabiso.nkone@nrf.ac.za for further details).

- A **student attendance register is required** to be made available during the event, including detailed information providing name, department, institution, study level and demographics.
- Each event should be reported upon no later than 30 days after the event.
- Grant payments will be made directly to the institution of the applicant.

CONTACTS

All queries or comments about this call should be addressed to:

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