



**RISA**

Research and Innovation  
Support and Advancement

**Funding Instrument:** Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants

**Functional Domain:** Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development

**Document:** Strategic Framework

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# 1. Strategic Context and Background

Research infrastructure is a key enabler for advancing research and postgraduate training. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has identified five categories for research infrastructure investment in South Africa. These are research equipment, cyber infrastructure, specialised laboratories, large high-end infrastructure and global infrastructure.

The National Research Foundation (NRF) through the National Equipment Programme (NEP) and the National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme (NNEP) funding instruments supports the acquisition, upgrade and development of state-of-the-art research equipment at South African public universities, Science Councils (SCs), National Research Facilities (NFs), museums and other public research institutions, such as the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (Necsa).

While the NEP and NNEP funding instruments have, for more than five years, made progress in addressing the research infrastructure needs of the country, the following challenges have been encountered by the NRF:

- Access to regional and national multi-user equipment is reliant on the ability of researchers to travel to institutions across the country where the multi-user equipment is located;
- Specialised multi-user research equipment, is not equally distributed across the various research institutions in SA;
- Researchers in SA continue to require access to specialised equipment located at institutions nationally and abroad. Such equipment may not currently be available within their research institution and/or in SA;
- Researchers from SA will in the short, medium and long-term continue to require access to selected global research infrastructure such as synchrotron radiation facilities; and
- Optimal access and utilisation of the available research infrastructure is dependent on the availability of funding support for:
  - Hosting of workshops that focus on on-site training of instrumentation specialists, technicians, operators, researchers, postgraduate students and other users; and
  - Outbound and inbound access to specialised equipment and global research infrastructure located at other institutions in SA and abroad.

The ***Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants*** funding instrument, is supported partially by the NRF parliamentary core grant and with DST co-funding made available through a

contractual agreement between the DST and the NRF. The funding instrument seeks to improve the competitiveness of South African research by advancing the national research agenda contained in the *National R&D Strategy*, the *DST Ten-Year Innovation Plan*; and the strategic objectives of the NRF. Collectively, these seek to promote and support research through human resource development and facilitate access to state-of-the-art research equipment.

In light of the aforementioned challenges the NRF has, over the past several years, co-funded with the DST through a contractual agreement, both national and international travel costs in order to support researchers who require access to equipment that is not available either regionally or nationally as well as the facilitation of workshops that focus on on-site training of instrumentation specialists, technicians and operators that are full-time employees at a South African public research institution, researchers, postgraduate students and other users. This document provides a framework for the implementation of travel and training grants geared towards addressing the aforementioned challenges.

## 2. Scope

The rationale for this funding instrument is to make funds available to support the broader science community to access state-of-the-art research equipment that is not available at the home research institution, regionally or nationally. This will also include access to synchrotron facilities and other global research infrastructures. The grants are divided into two categories, namely:

- Equipment-related **Travel Grants**; and
- Equipment-related **Training Grants**.

### 2.1 Equipment-related Travel Grants

The objective of this intervention is to provide financial support for researchers, technical staff and postgraduate students to access state-of-the-art research equipment, within SA or abroad, that is not available at their own research institution, nor other institutions regionally or nationally. This funding instrument is subdivided into two categories, namely:

**2.1.1 General Equipment Travel Grants** that make funds available to researchers requiring access to specialised equipment that is not available at their own institutions, regionally or nationally. The grant will cover national or international travel and subsistence costs as required.

**2.1.2 Outbound or inbound Travel grants to Access Global Infrastructure (AGI).** The two options for AGI are:

- **Outbound Global Infrastructure** located outside of South Africa such as the Joint Institute of Nuclear Research (JINR) in Dubna, Russia, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland and European Synchrotron Radiation Facilities (ESRF) in Grenoble, France. Currently research cooperation agreements between South Africa and JINR, CERN and ESRF respectively are in place. However, access to other synchrotron radiation facilities and global research infrastructure will also be considered for support.
- **Inbound Global Infrastructure** located in South Africa such as the South African Large Telescope (SALT), MeerKAT, the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biology (ICGEB) and the NFs.

## 2.2 Equipment-related Training Grants<sup>1</sup>

This intervention makes funds available for:

- Researchers to host or attend workshops focussed on training technical staff, postgraduate students and other users of:
  - Specialised or state-of-the-art research equipment; or
  - Feeder equipment that complements the capabilities of state-of-the-art research equipment.

Such equipment must be acquired either through NRF and/or DST grant awards. This type of intervention may include practical training and short courses on the use of such research equipment; and

- Institutions that have been awarded NEP/NNEP grants, and require skills training from expert instrument scientists on the sustainable management of the research equipment. These institutions may apply for funding to host a visiting instrument scientist. The instrument scientist may be hosted by the applying research institution for a minimum period of three months due to his/her scarce skill in the use of a specific instrument that has been acquired through NRF and/or DST funds. The institution hosting the visiting instrument scientist must be committed to a compulsory matching co-investment with the DST-NRF on a 1:1 ratio.

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<sup>1</sup> The initial training that forms part of the commissioning of new equipment will not be covered by this training grant as this may be factored into the purchase price of the equipment.

### 3. Objectives

The Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants aim to support world-class research, enhance research collaborations nationally and internationally, and support the development of specialised skills required to sustainably manage and operate state-of-the-art research equipment.

The objectives of this funding instrument are to make funds available to support:

- The larger research community to access:
  - State-of-the-art equipment that is not available regionally and/or nationally;
  - Natural science collections such as those located at museums; and
  - Training workshops on the use of specialised equipment or feeder equipment that have been acquired through public funds and high-end equipment donated by the private sector;
- Researchers and postgraduate students in SA to access global research infrastructure located nationally (SALT) or abroad such as synchrotron radiation facilities;
- Researchers and postgraduate students in South Africa to access natural science collections for the completion of their dissertations;
- Research institutions hosting training workshops on the use of feeder and/or specialised equipment that is acquired either through NRF and/or DST funds; and
- Expert instrument scientists, that can aid NEP/NNEP grant-holder institutions to build capacity relating to the sustainable management of high-end equipment. Institutional co-investment is compulsory.

The travel and training grants are aimed at:

- Full-time postgraduate (masters and doctoral) students that require training and/or access to infrastructure for the completion of their dissertations - ***supervisor must apply on behalf of the postgraduate student;***
- Postdoctoral fellows - ***supervisor must apply on behalf of the post-doctoral fellow;***
- Technicians, instrument specialist and operators that are full-time employees at a public research institution; and
- Researchers that are full-time employees at a public research institution.

### 4. Societal and Economic Impact

The ERTTG applicants must demonstrate the expected societal/economic impact of the proposed research activity towards improving the quality of life of South Africans.

## 5. Eligibility

### 5.1 Eligibility criteria

#### 5.1.1 Institutions

All South African public research institutions, including universities, SCs, NFs, museums and other NRF recognised Research Institutions such as Necsa.

#### 5.1.2 Applicants

The following applicants are eligible to apply:

- Full-time employees that hold the position of:
  - Academic staff; or
  - Research equipment technicians, operators and instrument specialists.
  
- Full-time academic staff members can apply on behalf of:
  - Full-time postgraduate students (masters and doctoral students); or
  - Full-time postdoctoral fellows

that require access to an infrastructure facility either nationally or internationally in order to complete their research undertaking.

In the case of those researchers accessing synchrotron facilities, the outcomes letter from the peer review process undertaken by the synchrotron facility must be attached.

In the case of institutions applying to host an expert instrument scientist, the expert instrument scientist is required to stay at the host research institution for a minimum period of three months due to his/her scarce skill in the use of a specific instrument that has been acquired through NRF and/or DST funds. ***This institution must be committed to a compulsory matching co-investment with the DST-NRF on a 1:1 ratio, as described in section 5.1.3.***

## Travel and Subsistence<sup>2</sup>

### National travel:

The NRF will cover the costs of:

- The cheapest economy air ticket;
- Accommodation (*Local accommodation costs are limited to three-star rating establishments*); and
- Subsistence.

### International travel:<sup>3</sup>

These will be considered on a **case by case** basis and the NRF provides guidelines for rates in Appendix A.

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<sup>2</sup> The NRF encourages all applicants to utilise their institutional financial policies in developing their budgets especially with regard to S&T allowance, car mileage claims, amongst others. Where there is no institutional policy in place, please utilise the NRF guidelines, which is as follows:

- Mileage claims: R3, 18 per kilometre (all engines).
- S&T daily allowance: R250 per day (receipts and quotes required).

<sup>3</sup> The NRF encourages all applicants to utilise their institutional financial policies in developing their budgets especially with regard to international travel. Where there is no institutional policy in place, please utilise the NRF guidelines, is attached as Appendix A.



### 5.1.3 Applicants

#### Budget Guidelines: Maximum NRF Investment per Activity

	NATURE OF THE ACTIVITY			
	Maximum National Travel/Training Support	Maximum International Travel/Training Support/ Synchrotron/ other Global Infrastructure	Maximum to host a workshop	Visits by Instrument Scientists
	R	R	R	R
Applicant	30 000	50 000	65 000	N/A
Applicant plus one Co-applicant	40 000	80 000	N/A	N/A
Applicant plus two Co-applicants	50 000	100 000	N/A	N/A
1 – 3 months stay	N/A	N/A	N/A	60 000
1 – 6 months stay	N/A	N/A	N/A	120 000

### 5.2 Exclusion criteria

**Undergraduate and Honours students are not eligible** to apply for Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants. In addition, the following instrument-specific exclusions are applicable.

#### Travel Grants:

Requests for funding to support:

- Research that advances private enterprise;
- Outbound visiting scientists;
- Attendance of conferences and/or training workshops; and
- Testing the functional capability of equipment that an applicant may procure through NEP and/or NNEP grants.

This must be achieved by the applicant in partnership with the supplier.

- Training Grants:** Requests for funding to support:
- Training that addresses the applicant's institutional needs only; and
  - Basic training of operators and technicians, provided by the supplier as part of equipment acquisition.

***Grants awarded are not transferable***

## 6. Review of applications

All the applications are subjected to the NRF granting process, which is defined on the ERTTG funding guide.

The proposals will be sent out to reviewers, who are national and international subject experts and are recognised nationally for their research contributions. At a convened panel meeting, they will review proposals against set evaluation criteria, ERTTG objectives, and provide expert opinion on the scientific merit and feasibility of the proposed research undertaking. In addition, they will provide a quantitative scoring and qualitative written evaluation of the proposal.

## 7. Evaluation of the Funding Instrument

At the end of a five-year period in 2017, the Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants funding instrument will be evaluated by an independent reviewer.

## APPENDIX A: Guidelines for International Travel

Daily travel amount linked to accommodation			
2015 NRF Guidelines			
Country		Amount	Currency
1	Albania	48.5	EURO
2	Algeria	56	EURO
3	Angola	161	USD
4	Antigua and Barbuda	110	USD
5	Argentina	59	USD
6	Armenia	110	USD
7	Australia	104	AUD
8	Austria	62	EURO
9	Azerbaijan	72.5	USD
10	Bahamas	95.5	USD
11	Bahrain	18	B DINARS
12	Bangladesh	39.5	USD
13	Barbados	101	USD
14	Belarus	38	EURO
15	Belgium	71.5	EURO
16	Belize	76	USD
17	Benin	44.5	EURO
18	Bolivia	35	USD
19	Bosnia-Herzegovina	76.5	Bam
20	Botswana	259	PULA
21	Brazil	158.5	Reals
22	Brunei Darussalam	44	USD
23	Bulgaria	45	EURO
24	Burkina Faso	29156.5	FCFA
25	Burundi	152652.5	Burundian Francy
26	Cambodia	48.5	USD
27	Cameroon	103	EURO
28	Canada	83.5	CAD
29	Cape Verde Islands	32.5	EURO
30	Central African Republic	47	EURO
31	Chad	60.5	EURO
32	Chile	64.5	USD
	China (People's Republic)	469.5	Renminbi
33	Colombia	47	USD
34	Comoro Islands	62.5	EURO
35	Cook Islands	108.5	NZD
36	Cote D'Ivoire	48	EURO
37	Costa Rica	51	USD
38	Croatia	54	EURO
39	Cuba	61.5	USD
40	Cyprus	59	EURO
41	Czech Republic	45.5	EURO
42	Democratic Rep of Congo	78	USD
43	Denmark	650.5	Danish Kroner

44	Djibouti	49.5	USD
45	Dominican Republic	49.5	USD
46	Ecuador	60.5	USD
47	Egypt	65	USD
48	El Salvador	36	USD
49	Equatorial Guinea	65	EURO
50	Eritrea	64.5	USD
51	Estonia	45.5	EURO
52	Ethiopia	32	USD
53	Fiji	55	USD
54	Finland	87	EURO
55	France	78	EURO
56	Gabon	82.5	EURO
57	Gambia	52.5	EURO
58	Georgia	47.5	USD
59	Germany	60	EURO
60	Ghana	64.5	USD
61	Greece	65	EURO
62	Grenada	75.5	USD
63	Guatamala	54	USD
64	Guinea	39	EURO
65	Guinea Bissau	42.5	EURO
66	Guyana	59	EURO
67	Haiti	54.5	USD
68	Honduras	83	USD
69	Hong Kong	500	HKD
70	Hungary	43.5	EURO
71	Iceland	10739	ISK
72	India	2948	Indian Rupee
73	Indonesia	43	USD
74	Iran	52.5	USD
75	Iraq	62.5	USD
76	Ireland	62	EURO
77	Israel	88.5	USD
78	Italy	62	EURO
80	Jamaica	75.5	USD
81	Japan	8839	YEN
82	Jordan	98	USD
83	Kazakhstan	67	USD
84	Kenya	56.5	USD
85	Kiribati	116.5	AUD
86	Korea	90	USD
87	Kuwait	90	USD
88	Kyrgystan	86	USD
89	Laos	47.5	USD
90	Latvia	75.5	USD
91	Lebanon	70.5	USD
92	Lesotho	375	RAND

93	Liberia	71	USD
94	Libya	56	USD
95	Lithuania	77	EURO
96	Macau	598	HKD
97	Macedonia	50	EURO
98	Madagascar	52.5	EURO
99	Madeira	145	EURO
100	Malawi	10849.5	Kwacha
101	Malaysia	183	Ringgit
102	Maldives	101	USD
103	Mali	91	EURO
104	Malta	66	EURO
105	Marshall Islands	127.5	USD
106	Mauritania	48.5	EURO
107	Mauritius	53	USD
108	Mexico	656.5	Mexican Pesos
109	Moldova	58.5	USD
110	Mongolia	34.5	USD
111	Montenegro	86	EURO
112	Morocco	485	Dirhams
113	Mozambique	55.5	USD
114	Myanmar (Burma)	44	USD
115	Namibia	417.5	RAND
116	Nauru	139	AUD
117	Nepal	32	USD
118	Netherlands	59	EURO
119	New Zealand	95	NZD
120	Nicaragua	144	USD
121	Niger	49.5	EURO
122	Nigeria	78.5	USD
123	Niue	126	NZD
124	Norway	927	NOK
125	Oman	34.5	Rials Omani
126	Pakistan	3144	Pakistani Rupees
127	Palestine	73.5	USD
128	Palau	126	USD
129	Panama	52.5	USD
130	Papa New Guinea	142.5	KINA
131	Paraguay	31.5	USD
133	Peru	66.5	USD
134	Philippines	66.5	USD
135	Poland	48.5	EURO
136	Portugal	50	EURO
137	Qatar	325.5	Qatar Riyals
138	Republic of Congo	74.5	EURO
139	Reunion	82	EURO
140	Romania	40	EURO
141	Russia	85.5	EURO

142	Rwanda	53	USD
144	Sao Tome	80	EURO
145	Saudi-Arabia	256	Saudi Riyals
146	Senegal	47	EURO
147	Serbia and Montenegro	38	EURO
148	Seychelles	137.5	EURO
149	Sierra Leone	45	USD
150	Singapore	115	Sing Dollars
151	Slovakia	48	EURO
152	Slovenia	48	EURO
153	Solomon Islands	456	Sol Isl Dollar
154	Spain	57	EURO
155	Sri Lanka	53.5	USD
156	St Kitts & Nevis	113.5	USD
157	St Lucia	107.5	USD
158	St Vince & Grenadines	93.5	USD
159	Sudan	100	USD
160	Suriname	53.5	USD
161	Swaziland	409	RAND
162	Sweden	645.5	Swedish Krona
163	Switzerland	104	SFRANC
164	Syria	56	USD
165	Taiwan	1677.5	New Taiwan Dollar
166	Tajikistan	54	USD
167	Tanzania	61.5	USD
168	Thailand	2337.5	Thai BAHT
169	Togo	39	EURO
170	Tonga	115.5	PA'ANGA
171	Trinidad & Tobago	106.5	USD
172	Tunisia	81.5	Dinar
173	Turkey	52.5	USD
174	Turkmenistan	62.5	USD
175	Tuvalu	169.5	AUD
176	Uganda	43.5	USD
177	Ukraine	62.5	EURO
178	United Arab Emirates	328.5	DIRHAMS
179	United Kingdom	62	GBP
180	Uruguay	67.5	USD
181	USA	77	USD
182	Uzbekistan	58.5	USD
183	Vanuatu	86.5	USD
184	Venezuela	116.5	USD
185	Vietnam	44	USD
186	Yemen	47	USD
187	Zambia	60	USD
188	Zimbabwe	60	USD
	Other countries not listed	107.5	USD