BLUE SKIES
RESEARCH FUNDING INSTRUMENT (FULL PROPOSALS CALL)

KNOWLEDGE FIELDS DEVELOPMENT

Framework Document

February 2019
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1 FUNDING INSTRUMENT AND DESCRIPTION

1.1 Description of the Funding Instrument

In respect of this instrument Blue skies research is defined through five (5) perspectives:

- Defined from the perspective of the researcher, it refers to self-initiated, curiosity-driven research (i.e. seeking to explore knowledge beyond the horizon).
- Defined from the perspective of a funding agency, blue skies research funding implies a willingness to take calculated investment risks.
- Defined in terms of the object of research, it focuses on exploring important and/or new phenomena - rather than run-of-the-mill themes - as defined by peers in the specific research community.
- Defined from the perspective of the research approach, it is novel1 in terms of one or more of the following components: theoretical framework, methodological approach or research context (for example, shifting paradigms or research technology innovation).
- Defined in terms of the contribution to the knowledge base, blue skies research is expected to push the frontiers of knowledge and possibly become a point of gravity for subsequent research.

Furthermore the Funding Instrument recognises that the epistemological, methodological and other differences between the respective science cultures (e.g. economic, medical, social, engineering and natural sciences) must be acknowledged and therefore the assessment process should take cognisance of this differentiation. However care should be taken to ensure that multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary blue skies research is not stifled through this differentiation.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blue Skies Research Funding Instrument can be described as multi-dimensional self-initiated, curiosity-driven inquiry that necessitates high investment risks, addresses new phenomena, as well as pushes the frontiers of knowledge. Blue Skies-type or frontier research is associated with fundamental and basic research.

The objectives of the Blue Skies Funding Instrument are:

- To provide space and time for research to push the frontiers of knowledge and to encourage imagination through scientific and scholarly endeavours;
- To support and sustain communities of critical and free thinkers;
- To promote and encourage diversity2 in research for re-imagining3 disciplines or academies;

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1 Novel research is about leveraging existing ideas in new ways however the paradigms/boundaries/directions must shift (either completely or partially).
2 Diversity in research in this context refers to theoretical frameworks, approaches and methodologies.
To bring about new and unpredictable scientific / technological / scholarly discoveries / interpretations / understandings / knowledge.

The NRF is cognisant of the complexities of dealing with this multi-dimensional concept and has structured the instrument as follows:

- Call for Concept Notes was opened on the 03 April 2017
- Successful Concept Notes funded for one year only to a maximum of R 200,000 each commenced in 2018;
- Promising Concept Note applicants will be invited to submit Full proposals (invitations will be made in February 2019)
- Successful Full proposals will be funded for a period of three-years (applicants will be informed in October 2019) to commence in 2020;
- Full proposals must address:
  a. New phenomena
  b. Push frontiers of knowledge
  c. Multi-dimensionality, and show
  d. Proof of concept (clear evidence of progress made and milestones achieved during the Concept Note funding phase).

See Figure 1 for a schematic representation of the application, assessment and funding processes.

3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The National Research Foundation’s (NRF) mandate is to support and promote research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary research facilities in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, and innovation and development in all fields of science and technology, including indigenous knowledge and thereby to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of the Republic (NRF Act, 1998).

In support of its purpose, the NRF launched the NRF Strategy 2020 that aims at contributing to the development of, a vibrant and globally connected national system of innovation, and anchored by five Strategic Outcomes, namely:

- An internationally competitive, transformed and representative research system;
- Leading-edge research and infrastructure platforms;
- A reputable and influential agency shaping the science and technology system;
- Scientifically literate and engaged society; and
- A skilled, committed and representative NRF and technical workforce

A review of the Focus Area Programme (FAP) that guided the NRF investments since 1998 was conducted in 2007. This review recognized that the rationale behind FAP and model underpinning it
remained valid. The review also acknowledged that the focus area programme came at the right time, had been partially successful and that a focused research programme should be continued, even if in an amended form. The review recommended the provision of a funding instrument dedicated to promoting discipline-oriented, self-initiated research. Hence, the Blue Skies Research Funding Instrument was initiated in 2008 to provide space for novel fundamental enquiry, curiosity-driven and basic research.

A two-staged process that was followed by the NRF to improve this instrument included:

- an open invitation to researchers in South Africa (SA) to input into the refinement of the instrument via an online questionnaire, and
- a workshop held on 16 March 2010 in Pretoria (taking into account the comments received from the above step) for invited participants to finalise the refined shape of the instrument.

3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the instrument are:
- To provide space and time for research to push the frontiers of knowledge and to encourage imagination through scientific and scholarly endeavours;
- To support and sustain communities of critical and free thinkers;
- To promote and encourage diversity\(^4\) in research for re-imagining\(^5\) disciplines or academies;
- To bring about new and unpredictable scientific / technological / scholarly discoveries / interpretations / understandings / knowledge.

3.2 Institutional structure

The strategic direction and outcomes of the funding instrument are managed by the Knowledge Advancement and Support (KAS) Directorate. The Reviews and Evaluation (RE) Directorate is responsible for the review processes up to the recommendations of grant awards. The Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate’s responsibilities include posting of the research call, communicating funding decisions, disbursement of grant funds, and ensuring adherence to the conditions of the grant.

3.3 Financing support

The Blue Skies Research Funding Instrument is made possible through the National Research Foundation’s Core Funding. As a demand driven funding instrument, there is no limit to the amount an applicant can request. However, the financial requests need to be in line with requirements and accurately reflect the financial needs of the proposed work. Excessive budget requests are not well

\(^4\) Diversity in research in this context refers to theoretical frameworks, approaches and methodologies.

received by the review panels. The final number of successful applicants to be funded will be determined by the available budget.

3.4 Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders involved in this funding instrument are persons based at public research institutions that are recognised by directive of the Minister of Science and Technology. These include mainly, Public Universities, Museums, Institutes, National Research Facilities and Science Councils.

4 MODUS OPERANDI

The Blue Skies Research Funding Instrument *modus operandi* is presented in Figure 1, which depicts the application, assessment and funding processes with appropriate timelines.

4.1 Call for proposals

**Full proposals must** be submitted electronically via the NRF’s Submission System at [https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za](https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za)

All applications **must** be endorsed by the research office of the principal applicant before submission to the NRF. It is the responsibility of each applicant to familiarise himself / herself with the **internal closing dates**, set by institution in order to meet the NRF closing date presented in the “General Application Guide 2020.

**NB:** Applicants must ensure that their Curriculum Vitae are updated on the NRF Submission system at [https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za](https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za).
FIGURE 1: The NRF’s application, assessment and funding process for the Blue Skies Research Funding Instrument

Call for concept notes by the NRF (03 April 2017) → Submission of concept notes to the NRF (12 May 2017) → Two-tier assessment process for concept notes (postal peer review and panel review, June-August 2017) → Funding decision: Selected pilot/proof of concept projects funded for one year only (Applicants will be informed in September 2017 for funding in the 2018 calendar year) → Invited submissions of full proposals (only to those funded for Concept Notes, Feb 2019) → Panel review of full proposal submissions (May-June 2019) → Funding decision: Selected proposals funded at 100% of panel recommended for three years (Applicants will be informed by September 2019 for funding from 2020 to 2022) → New cycle starts in 2017
4.2 Eligibility

Only current (2018 ONLY) Blue Skies Research Concept Note grant holders who have been funded for pilot / proof of concept projects are eligible to submit full proposals in this call.

4.3 Assessment

The assessment of applications will be guided by a Panel Assessment Scorecard (see Annexure 1), and scored according to the Proposal Grading (see Annexure 2). Application assessment will occur by way of a two-tiered process:

- Remote peer review
  The remote peer reviewers will be specialists in the ambit of the respective proposals. Requests for written reviews will be solicited electronically, or through appropriate media / means from peers located at remote locations from the NRF. Applicants will be requested to provide between 6 to 10 possible reviewers. It is in the applicant’s best interest to ensure that the selected reviewers are aware of the submission and are thus likely to respond. It is also in the applicant’s best interest to ensure that selected reviewers have no possible conflict of interest in submitting a review; as such review reports are dismissed without consideration. On average, a 30% response rate is achieved by the NRF in requesting postal peer reviews.

- Panel-peer review
  The adjudication panel will be broadly constituted to include senior academics, selected based both on their respective knowledge fields and their research standing. The panel meeting will be held at central location or by way of tele- or video-conferencing. Panel members will deliberate on submitted written reviews and will be expected to offer their own expert opinions.

NB: Applicants must ensure that their Curriculum Vitae are updated on the NRF Submission system at

https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za.

These Curriculum Vitae are used in the assessment processes, and incomplete or outdated inputs will jeopardise the application.
4.4 Rules of participation

a) Principal Investigator

Only unrated researchers based at NRF recognized research institutions in South Africa (as defined above) are eligible to apply as PI in this funding instrument.

The principal investigator (i.e. the applicant) must be an active researcher who takes intellectual responsibility for the project, its conception, any strategic decisions required in its pursuit, and the communication of results. The PI 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. The PI will take responsibility for the management and administration of resources allocated to the grant award, and for the meeting of reporting requirements.

The research team may also include:

b) Co-investigators

A co-investigator (CI) is an active researcher who provides significant commitment, intellectual input and relevant expertise into the design and implementation of the research application. The CI will be involved in all or at least some well-defined research activities within the scope of the application. Only South Africa-based co-investigators will be eligible for funding in successful grant applications.

It is important to note that post-doctoral fellows, students, technical and support staff DO NOT qualify as co-investigators

c) Research Associates / Collaborators

These individuals or groups make a relatively small, but meaningful contribution to the research endeavours outlined in the application, but do not participate in the research design. They are not considered a part of the core research team, and are not eligible to receive NRF funds from the grant if the team’s application is successful.

4.5 Data management and use

A data management plan (DMP) is a formal document that describes the data you expect to acquire or generate during the course of a research project, how you will manage, describe, analyze, and store those data, and what mechanisms (including digital data storage) you will use at the end of your project to share and preserve your data.

Research data sharing that underlies the findings reported in a journal article/ conference paper/thesis as set out in the NRF Open Access Statement.
The findings reported in a journal article or conference paper should be deposited in accordance with the NRF Open Access Statement. It is acknowledged that some data generated are more sensitive than others. Before initiating the research, it is the grant holders’ responsibility to consider the following: confidentiality, ethics, security and copyright. Possible data sharing challenges should be considered in the DMP with solutions to optimise data sharing.

Researchers should note that publicly funded research data should be in the public domain, with free and open access, by default. Collaborators and co-investigators in the research project should be informed by the applicant that due to public funding and funder mandate, one is expected to share research data as openly as possible. The Data Management Plan should indicate which data will be shared. If (some) research data is to be restricted, an appropriate statement in the DMP and subsequent publication should explain why access to data is restricted.

The National Research Foundation has adopted and is given permission to use the DCC Checklist for Data Management Plan, and this can be used as a guide for developing the DMP. (http://www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/resource/DMP/DMP_Checklist_2013.pdf)

4.6 Science Engagement

The NRF supports science engagement through its coordination and implementation of the Department of Science and Technology’s Science Engagement Strategy. The strategy embraces a broad understanding of science, encompassing systematic knowledge spanning natural and physical sciences, engineering sciences, medical sciences, agricultural sciences, mathematics, social sciences and humanities, technology, all aspects of the innovation chain and indigenous knowledge. Within this context, science engagement refers to activities, events, or interactions characterised by mutual learning and dialogue among people of varied backgrounds, scientific expertise and life experiences, who articulate and discuss their perspectives, ideas, knowledge and values. Science engagement is an overarching term for all aspects of public engagement with science, science awareness, science education, science communication and science outreach, which aim to develop and benefit individuals and society. Researchers funded through the NRF funding instruments are required to contribute to science engagement and report the related outputs in their project’s Annual Performance Report.

4.7 Management of funding instrument

The KAS Directorate of the NRF – Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (RISA) manages this funding instrument, and is responsible for:

- Strategic oversight and management of the funding instrument;
- Conceptualizing and developing the funding instrument;
- Coordinating and facilitating activities of the funding instrument;
- Compiling funding instrument research and evaluation reports;
- Stakeholder engagement; and
- Ensuring that the funding instruments delivers on its intended goal(s).
The Reviews and Evaluation (RE) Directorate of the NRF – RISA is responsible for managing the adjudication process including:

- sourcing of reviewers both for remote reviews and panels;
- managing the peer review process;
- organizing and managing the review panels as and where appropriate; and
- providing feedback as appropriate;

The GMSA Directorate of the NRF – RISA is responsible for

- Managing the call process, that is,
  - Posting the call;
  - Receiving and assessing applications eligibility;
- Coordinating and facilitating the granting processes
- Managing the granting including the administration of awards;
- Administering grant payments; and
- Ensuring adherence to conditions of grants

4.8 Lines of authority

The Director in KAS Directorate manages this funding instrument. The Director responsible for this instrument reports to the Executive Director of the KAS Directorate. Directors from RE and GMSA manage the review and granting processes. The Directors in both RE and GMSA report to their respective Executive Directors.

4.9 Timelines

Blue Skies Research Funding Instrument grants will be awarded for a period of three years (2020-2022. Successful applicants who wish to apply for further funding upon completion of a three-year funding cycle must submit new applications. All applications will be assessed on a competitive basis. The Blue Skies Research funding cannot be automatically renewed.

5 FINANCIALS

5.1 Funding model

The grants of this funding instrument are to be primarily used for research purposes and for the development of associated human resources under the auspices of the NRF standard grant and finance policies. The money is released upon acceptance of the conditions of grant, both by the applicant and his/her employing institution. These grants will fall under the NRF audit requirements of beneficiary institutions.
5.2 Funding ranges

The allocation of funds is demand driven, and as such there is no maximum or minimum proposal request. The number of applications that will be supported overall will depend on the availability of resources and the financial requirements of those successful applications. If successful applications have high financial requirements, fewer applications will be supported.

Successful applications will receive funding that accommodates the following budget items:

a) Grant holder-linked student support
b) Staff development grants
c) Research-related operating costs, including:
   o Sabbaticals
   o Materials and Supplies
   o Travel and subsistence
   o Research / Technical / Ad hoc Assistants
   o Research Equipment

The application assessment process will consider proposed budget items in terms of cost, risk and reward ratios. Decisions relating to budget items will also be governed by the overall funding instrument funds available for the period. Awards will be made in line with the NRF funding rules and guidelines as outlined in Section 5.3.

5.3 Funding support

Science councils, public universities, museums, national research facilities and other NRF-recognized institutions are the primary beneficiaries of funds from this funding instrument. The NRF has systems in place to ensure that there is no double funding of projects that are already funded by the Medical Research Council and those funded by the National Institute of Human and Social Sciences.

a) Grant holder-linked student support

Grant holder-linked student support will be awarded in accordance with eligibility criteria as detailed in the Ministerial Guidelines for Improving Equity in the Distribution of DST/NRF Bursaries and Fellowships (January 2013). The distribution for these bursaries is targeted at the ratios:

- Final year Undergraduate and Honours/BTech student assistantships: 100% SA citizens with a minimum ratio\(^6\) of 1:1 for Black\(^7\) and White participants;

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\(^6\) With the emphasis on Black students

\(^7\) Given the demographics of SA and its population, White is the reference group.
• Masters bursaries: 90% to South Africans and 10% to candidates from other African countries;
• Doctoral bursaries: 80:15:5, SA: Other African: Rest of the World; and
• Postdoctoral bursaries: Open to all who undertake research in South Africa.

The equity distribution for these bursaries is targeted at the ratio:
  o 80% Black
  o 55% Female
  o 4% Disabled

Values of Student Assistantships

• Honours / BTech (Full-time) R 60 000 pa for one year

Values of Bursaries & Fellowships

• Masters degree (Full-time) R90 000 pa for two years
• Doctoral degree (Full-time) R120 000 pa for three years
• Postdoctoral (pro rata per month) R220 000 pa for two years

b) Staff development grants

Applicants may apply for Staff Development grants for South African staff members at their own and other institutions, and who are not NRF grant-holders in their own right. These staff members must be registered for either a Masters or Doctoral degree, supervised by the applicant or a co-investigator of the application and must be directly involved in the NRF approved project. These grants can be used to contribute towards the operating costs for research undertaken at the supervisor’s facility, as well as the cost of travel and accommodation to enable staff members to meet with (co)supervisors. Grants usually range between R15,000 and R30,000 depending on the nature of the research and the proximity of the student in relation to the supervisor. Applicants themselves are not eligible for Staff Development Grants. The maximum period of support is three years.

c) Research-related operating costs

These costs include materials and supplies, travel (including conferences) and subsistence, equipment and research/technical/ad hoc assistance and sabbaticals to other research organisations and institutions of higher learning may be included within the context of the project applications. These costs should be justified and commensurate with the planned outputs, as they will be assessed on this basis. The amount awarded within this framework can be used at the discretion of the applicant.

7 Inclusive of Africans, Indians and Coloureds
General guidelines

Sabbaticals
Sabbaticals will be considered for a period from two to six months. The maximum sabbatical amount requested should not exceed R 80,000 for six months. Funding for sabbaticals of less than six months will be reduced pro-rata. Only principal investigators and co-investigators are eligible to apply for sabbatical funding.

Materials and Supplies
Generally, the NRF does not provide financial support for:

Basic office equipment including computers and consumables unless the computer is required for the research itself.

- Basic office stationery, photocopying costs, printing costs unless these items form part of the research tools.
- Journal publication costs, journal subscription costs and book costs.
- Telephone, fax and internet costs.

Travel and subsistence

- International conference attendance: Generally the NRF restricts this amount to R 25,000 per person to a maximum of R 50,000 per application per year for a team application i.e. for principal investigators and co-investigators (local only).
- International visits: These will be considered on a case by case basis. Such visits must be integral to the research plan and strong motivations should accompany these requests. Realistic funding allocations will be based on the requested activities. Only outgoing visits will be considered depending on the availability of funding.
- Local conference attendance: Generally the NRF restricts expenditure against this item to R 5,000 per person (all costs). Support for local conference attendance could be requested for all listed co-investigators and post-graduate students. The applicant should clearly motivate for the benefit to attend more than one local conference per annum, and for the number of people attending each local conference.
- Local travel: The NRF does not stipulate any rate for mileage as this will depend on the rate which varies per institution/organisation. Applicants are requested to provide details of this rate as well as the estimated distance to be travelled within the given year. This travel should be well motivated and excludes travel to conferences mentioned above.
- Local accommodation costs should not exceed a 3* establishment. This relates to local travel for research purposes and estimation of accommodation cost for each trip should be clearly presented in the motivation.
Research / Technical / Ad hoc Assistants

- This instrument **does not provide funding for salaries.**
- Requests for research/technical/ad hoc assistance should be treated with caution. Generally the NRF would encourage applicants to engage students to undertake the research rather than employing research consultants. The NRF will not pay for students to undertake research. This guideline however does not apply when specific and/or highly specialised research/technical expertise is required. This should be **CLEARLY** motivated for in the application.

**Administrative assistance DOES NOT qualify as technical assistance.**

Research Equipment

Funding for equipment will be limited to R 200 000 per application. Requisitions for large equipment items should be submitted through the NRF’s Equipment Programme.

Science Engagement

Science engagement events should be limited to a maximum of R30,000 per annum, and only events that are motivated upfront will be funded.

**d) Funding to cater for disabilities**

Additional funding support to cater for disability will be allocated to people with disabilities as specified in the Code of Good Practice on Employment of People with Disabilities as in the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998.

5.4 Financial control and reporting

Upon receipt of the signed Conditions of Grant letter, the NRF will release the awarded amount for the year. Grant holders will then be required to comply with the standard NRF financial management procedures, including the submission of an Annual Progress Report. These are to be submitted before the end of February of the following year, and are a prerequisite for the release of the subsequent year’s funding. Failure to submit an Annual Progress Report will result in the cancellation of the grant award.

6  **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE FUNDING INSTRUMENT**

The NRF is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Blue Skies Research funding instrument.
6.1 Reporting

The KAS Director is responsible for reporting quarterly on the contribution of this funding instrument to the KAS Directorate’s Key Performance Indicators. In addition, the Director is responsible for reviewing and reporting on the progress of the funding instrument.

6.2 Timeframes for funding instrument review

The Blue Skies Research funding instrument will be evaluated by an appropriate external reviewer as appointed by the RE Directorate. In consultation with this directorate, KAS will agree to and set timeframes for the review in line with existing guidelines.

6.3 Broad terms of reference for the funding instrument review

The broad terms of reference for the review of Blue Skies Research funding instrument will be determined by the KAS Directorate prior to the evaluation taking place, and in accordance with tenets set in the RE Directorate’s Guidelines

6.4 Utilisation of funding instrument review findings and recommendations

The results of the evaluation will be used in line with the purposes set in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, as well as for instrument improvement and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application process related</th>
<th>Framework Strategic related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Ms. Jane Mabena</td>
<td>Name: Dr Zolani Dyosi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:jane@nrf.ac.za">jane@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:zolani@nrf.ac.za">zolani@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: 012 481 4067</td>
<td>Telephone: 012 481 4131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name: Ms. Tebogo Raphetane</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:traphetane@nrf.ac.za">traphetane@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone: 012 481 4195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIST OF ACRONYMS

1. APRs- Annual Progress Report
2. CI-Co-Investigator
3. CV- Curriculum Vitae
4. DMP-Data management plan
5. FAP- Focus Areas Programme
6. GMSA- Grant Management Systems Administration
7. KAS- Knowledge Advancement and Support
8. NRF- National Research Foundation
9. PI-Principal Investigator
10. RE-Reviews and Evaluations
11. RISA-Research and Innovation Support and Advancement
12. SA-South Africa
Ethical considerations and clearances for grant proposals are the responsibility of the research institute and/or institution of the applicant. Where such ethical considerations and clearances are required, grant applicants will be expected to submit to the NRF signed statements and/or copies of clearance certificates before any grant funds are released.

ANNEXURE 1: Panel Assessment Scorecard – Blue Skies Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Sub-Criteria</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Score / 4</th>
<th>Weight (Total 100%)</th>
<th>Weighted score (Total = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific merit and feasibility</strong></td>
<td>Progress to date</td>
<td>Has sufficient progress been made in year 1 to justify further investment?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research design</td>
<td>Reflect on the proposed rationale, approach and methodology. Reflect on the scientific, ethical\textsuperscript{8} logistics and technical feasibility as proposed</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Is the relevant expertise evident from the proposed collaborations? Are the roles of collaborators clearly articulated?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equity and redress</strong></td>
<td>Of applicant</td>
<td>Race / Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Of students supervised</td>
<td>M and D degrees</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Impact on knowledge production</td>
<td>Will the proposed work significantly advance discovery and understanding in the field?</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wider impact</td>
<td>Has the possibility for economic, societal or environmental impact been appropriately embedded in the proposal?</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Is it clear how such impact will be measured?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data management and use</strong></td>
<td>Plans for digital data storage, usage &amp;/or dissemination</td>
<td>A data management plan (DMP) is a formal document that describes the data you expect to acquire or generate during the course of a research project, how you will manage, describe, analyze, and store those data, and what mechanisms (including digital data storage) will be used at the end of your project to</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

\textsuperscript{8} Ethical considerations and clearances for grant proposals are the responsibility of the research institute and/or institution of the applicant. Where such ethical considerations and clearances are required, grant applicants will be expected to submit to the NRF signed statements and/or copies of clearance certificates before any grant funds are released.
## ANNEXURE 2: Proposal Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Meaning of score</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Application demonstrates evidence of <em>outstanding</em> performance across all the stated criteria, as determined by the panel and relative to the knowledge field under consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>Application demonstrates evidence of <em>above average</em> performance across all the stated criteria, as determined by the panel and relative to the knowledge field under consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Application demonstrates evidence of <em>average</em> performance across all the stated criteria, as determined by the panel and relative to the knowledge field under consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>Application demonstrates evidence of <em>below average</em> performance across all the stated criteria, as determined by panel and relative to knowledge field under consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>There are <em>major shortcomings or flaws</em> as relates to the scientific / scholarly merit and feasibility of the proposed work, as determined by the panel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Context:
Proposal grading is done with sensitivity to the context within which each application is submitted. The score of each criterion for each application will be contextualised to accommodate variability in such things as knowledge fields, institutional capacity, etc. Should a criterion not be applicable to a specific application (e.g. plans for digital data storage; collaborations; etc.), the weighting of that specific criteria will be made to equal zero, and the overall score normalised.