UK–SA Newton Fund for Science and Technology Partnership

On 9 September 2014, the United Kingdom and South Africa launched the Newton Fund for science and technology collaboration. This partnership is based on the principles of co-ownership and co-responsibility. The UK-South Africa Newton Fund will bring together contributions from both countries to support science, technology and innovation, creating a catalyst to stimulate socio-economic development in South Africa and more widely across sub-Saharan Africa. Both countries will also eventually active engagements with other African countries in this initiative.

The primary purpose of the fund is to develop scientific capacity in partner nations for their long-term sustainable economic growth. This will be done through:

- research capacity building – assisting partners to undertake and disseminate scientific research; and
- broader scientific capacity building – supporting the ability of developing countries to both support and make proper use of research and other outputs of science (all inclusive) and engineering.

The UK Minister for Africa, James Duddridge, and South Africa’s Minister of Science and Technology (DST), The Honourable Naledi Pandor, signing a memorandum of understanding during the launch in Cape Town on 9 September

Up to £4 million will be spent on engagements with South Africa, with contributions from both DST and the NRF to match collaboration. Additional agreements have been concluded with the SKA, MRC, CSIR, ARC and others. Each of the country programmes are organised around three broad activities:

- **People**: Building research & innovation capacity – e.g. PhD partnering, Research Chairs Initiative, industry & research fellowships, mobility schemes, research & innovation bridges, joint centres, direct training.
- **Programmes**: Working together on research – e.g. development topics identified through discussion with partner country and managed through joint calls.
- **Translation**: Translating research into innovation – e.g. challenge focussed partnerships, tech partnering events, innovation platforms.

The NRF will pursue collaboration under the Newton Fund’s ‘People’ and ‘Programme’ pillars.

**UK Partners**

Under the ‘People’ strand, the NRF will partner with prominent UK academies (i.e. the Academy of Medical Sciences, the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the Royal Society) and the British Council. Such long-term sustainable partnerships will support the research and innovation capacity of South Africa. The collaboration builds on existing UK-South Africa science, research and innovation agreements, and will not preclude other bilateral or multilateral cooperation activities to which each participant is or will be committed. This collaborative activity will be known as the UK/South Africa Postdoctoral Fellowship and Research Mobility Grant. The Fellowship Grants are aimed at supporting early to midcareer postdoctoral researchers from South Africa and the UK in their career development. The fields they will cover are the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, and medical sciences (including clinical and patient-orientated research). Through the mobility grants early career and established researchers based in South Africa will get the
opportunity to form and develop new collaborations with their UK counterparts. The partnership will be based on a joint research project in the fields of natural sciences and humanities, and engineering. These mobility awards will mainly cover costs for travel and subsistence.

For the ‘Programme’ pillar the NRF will partner with the Research Council UK (RCUK). This partnership with RCUK will focus mainly on Research and PhD training. The aim is to facilitate capacity building of individuals, and the building of sustainable, long-lasting links between the UK and South African institutions through research and PhD partnerships and placements. Increasing mobility at the doctoral level is an important factor in facilitating cross-border research collaboration as connections made at this level can be sustained over longer periods. It is believed that this kind of partnership will also offer benefits to doctoral researchers in terms of intellectual development, career progression, and access to existing facilities and comparative research.

For upcoming Newton calls, please visit http://www.nrf.ac.za/funding