

## South Africa / France Science and Technology Research Collaboration

### PROTEA Call for Joint Research Proposals

**Closing Date: Consult the General Application Guide 2024**  
available at <https://www.nrf.ac.za/nrf-call-for-proposals-for-funding-in-2023-and-2024/>

*South African applicants **must** consult their institutions for internal closing dates.*

**A maximum of 8 joint projects will be funded for this call**

The South Africa/France PROTEA Programme is a bilateral incentive programme dedicated to strengthening collaborative research between the two countries. It is co-funded by both the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research from the French side, and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) from the South African side. The development of the PROTEA Programme was based on a shared conviction regarding the importance of science, technology and innovation in building and sustaining a knowledge-based economy. The programme is a financial instrument supporting mobility and training of “incoming and outgoing” researchers, contributing to the development of new partnerships and to the strengthening of advanced scientific and technological exchanges between research institutions in South Africa and France.

The Programme therefore provides a springboard for initiating, developing, and expanding research projects. The Programme was first launched in 1997 and in December 2017 the two countries celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and agreed, based on the successes that have been achieved in the past 20 years, to continue investing in and supporting the Programme on an annual basis.

#### AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

This Programme aims to:

- contribute to scientific advancement in both countries by funding researchers’ mobility in the frame of joint research projects in specified research fields;

- provide an opportunity for **young and emerging researchers** to cooperate in an international setting and to develop their scientific careers, especially for early-stage, mid-career as well as female researchers;
- support the advancement of basic and applied research; and
- contribute meaningfully to research capacity development.

## AREAS OF COOPERATION

The call is open to all scientific disciplines and thematic areas, including social sciences and the humanities as well as Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS).

### ***Please Note:***

Joint projects with the potential to lead to future bilateral and multilateral co-operations within the French, South African and European research programmes will be favourably considered. Also, the joint projects by **young scientists** incorporating PhD students, and those that pay particular attention to a balanced involvement of female and male researchers (gender equality) will be positively considered and will receive a higher rating.

## DURATION OF PROJECTS

The projects will be supported for a period of two years (projects starting in 2024 and ending in December 2025).

## WHO MAY APPLY?

- An application must designate two Principal Investigators (PIs), one in South Africa and one in France, who will bear the main responsibility for the project, including its technical and administrative coordination as well as scientific and financial reporting.
- Project proposals submitted by early-to-mid career researchers as well as project proposals with involvement of PhD (doctoral) students and/or female researchers, will be prioritised for funding by both sides.
- The focus of the Programme lies in new international partnerships. Therefore, follow-up proposals with the same research partners will not be prioritised for funding (if they have already been funded under this Programme).

### ***South Africa:***

This call is open to working researchers residing in South Africa and affiliated with a recognised higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology, science council or any other research institution as declared by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI).

Commercial institutions and private education institutions are not eligible to apply under this programme. The South African applicant must be in possession of a PhD. In terms of human capital development, South African applications from historically disadvantaged individuals and the involvement of historically disadvantaged higher education institutions will be prioritised.

**France:**

This call is open to working researchers residing in France with a recognised French higher education university/college, research institution, or enterprise.

**HOW DO I APPLY?**

The onus is on the applicants to find their own research partners. Proposals must be received in both South Africa and France. Proposals which have only been received in either South Africa or France, but not both, will not be considered for funding. The call process is highly competitive; therefore, submission of an application does not guarantee funding. The availability of funds and the evaluation of applications from both countries should be positive for projects to be considered for funding. The NRF will not be held responsible for non-submission, administration, or evaluation of the application in the partner country.

**South Africa:**

Applications must be submitted through an online application process on the NRF Connect link: <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>

**France:**

The French team's project proposals, in French, must be submitted online at: [protea on line submission of the French proposals](http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/protea): <http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/protea>.

**WHICH ACTIVITIES MAY I APPLY FOR?**

The purpose of this call is to support the mobility of researchers between the two countries to carry out joint research projects. In this regard, funding will be made available for visits and exchanges of scientists conducting joint research in their area of specialisation.

In the case of meetings, research visits and exchanges of scientists, personnel and experts, as well as reciprocal visits undertaken as part of joint research projects and the attendance of workshops, seminars, symposia and other meetings funded under this partnership, the sending side will be responsible for expenses associated with international travel (flights), visas, medical insurance and subsistence while the receiving party covers accommodation costs, local/ground transport and all expenses associated with hosting of events, e.g. venue for workshops, etc.

The following will **NOT** be funded from the funds allocation:

- Consultant's fees
- Project management fees
- Educational expenses (scholarships and/or bursaries, etc.)
- Large equipment
- Salaries and temporary staff fees

## FUNDING MODALITIES

Funding will be available for a maximum of two years for collaborative research projects jointly developed and completed by researchers on both sides. In both countries, all the approved projects will get funding support from the two parties in terms of the cost of activities mentioned above. Apart from the financial support from the two parties, institutions and universities in both countries are encouraged to solicit other funding resources.

## FUNDING LIMITS

- Should you be successful you will be funded only for the activities within the scope of this guideline.
- Scientific and financial reporting on the project is **obligatory**.
- Research stays in both countries are **obligatory**.

### **South Africa:**

The total amount requested from the NRF should not exceed **R300 000** per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of two years, to be paid in annual instalments (**R150 000 per year**) and exclusively for research activities commencing in 2024.

### **France:**

Funding requests from France should not exceed €20 000 (10.000€ per year). The following indicative rates apply:

- The travel from France to South Africa will be reimbursed up to €1 200 per return ticket (subject to revision).
- For a short stay in France of researchers including PhD students, daily allowances of €125/day up to 10 days.
- For a long stay in France of researchers including PhD students, daily allowances of €50/day (between 11 and 90 days).

## HOW ARE APPLICATIONS EVALUATED?

Following the closing date, applications will be submitted to recognised national experts in the various fields of research represented by the proposals received. These experts will evaluate each proposal based on the following broad criteria:

- Scientific quality of the intended joint research project.
- Feasibility and/or plans for future cooperation.
- Human Capacity Development.

Please note that other national criteria may be applicable in line with the national policies and regulations of the partnering countries. Following national evaluation, a shortlist of projects to be funded will be constituted through consultations between the two Parties based on the results of the expert evaluations done in both countries. The project selection will be carried out at the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) Meeting. The minutes of this meeting (indicating approved joint projects for funding) shall be signed by both Parties to indicate a joint consensus on projects to fund. The results of this JTC meeting will preferably be announced by the end of December 2023.

## PROJECT FOLLOW-UP AND REPORTING

- A final scientific and financial report has to be submitted in English by both the South African and the French PIs no more than 3 months after the end of the project.
- From both the South African and French sides, successful submission of the first annual report is an **obligatory** condition of funding in subsequent years.
- The French PI should download and use the template for a report within the defined timeframe. The project report from the French side should be forwarded to the Attaché for Science and Technology at the French Embassy in South Africa.
- All project reports must mention project outputs as compared to the objectives and aims of the proposal.
- The funders reserve the right to make the final reports available to researchers within and outside this programme in similar disciplines.

The joint publications by researchers must mention the support from the funders (i.e. the South African Department of Science and Innovation, the National Research Foundation, the French Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development).

## **IMPACT**

Applicants are encouraged to ensure that their research have relevance and potential for impact beyond the academic world, such as in societal, technical, economical, or cultural realms. In line with this, applicants may include societal or industry partners within their projects or consider how relevant stakeholders can be involved in, or benefit from, the design and realisation of the proposed research project. These stakeholders, however, must cover their own costs of participation in the joint projects. In this regard, the NRF aims to facilitate sustainable institutional links between partnering countries by building on existing, outstanding and established research partnerships, and fostering new linkages and engagements with small cohorts of young and emerging researchers for new linkages.

## **SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT**

Science engagement refers to scientific and initiative activities, events, interventions, 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. It is an overarching term for all aspects of public engagement through suitable communication channels with science, science awareness, science education, science communication, and science outreach, aiming to develop and benefit individuals and society. The NRF supports science engagement by coordinating and implementing the Department of Science and Innovation's 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. Therefore, researchers funded through the NRF programmes must contribute to science engagement and report the related outputs in their project's progress report.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING**

Projects must demonstrate potential for promoting human capital development, equity and redress through the involvement of young, early-stage, and/or mid-career researchers, historically disadvantaged individuals (female and disabled), and the involvement of historically disadvantaged higher education institutions.

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

The researchers of each country, particularly the Principal Investigators, must take adequate steps to ensure the protection and sharing of the intellectual property that could result from the joint projects.

## **ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

In conjunction with the institution, it is the responsibility of the grant-holder to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside South Africa comply with the laws and regulations of South Africa and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted. These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigor of all research prior to the commencement of the research and acceptance of the grant. The awarded amount will not be released for payment if a copy of the required ethical clearance certificate, as indicated in the application, is not attached to the Conditions of Grant.

Please also refer to the “Statement on Ethical Research and Scholarly Publishing Practices” on the NRF website <https://www.nrf.ac.za/statement-on-ethical-research-and-scholarly-publishing-practices/>.

## **PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

The National Research Foundation ensures compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), Act 4 of 2013, committing to ensure the privacy of those submitting applications and proposals to the NRF on the NRF Online Submission System (<https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/>). The National Research Foundation will protect the personal information provided by applicants or the third party against misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. The Privacy Policy of the NRF outlines the practices relating to the protection of personal information and can be accessed on the NRF website at <https://www.nrf.ac.za/privacy-policy>.

## **CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS**

Applicants are encouraged to consult their institutions for internal closing dates. Applications submitted to the NRF after the cut-off dates as indicated in the General Application Guide, will not be submitted for review nor will it be considered for funding. Researchers are also advised to ensure that their research partners' applications are submitted and have also been received in the partner country in time. Both the French and the South African funders will not be held responsible for applications that were not received on the either side.

## CONTACT DETAILS FOR QUERIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

In South Africa	In France
<p>National Research Foundation (NRF)</p> <p><b>For programme queries: Teuns Phahlamohlaka</b> Knowledge Advancement and Support (KAS) Directorate Tel: +27 12 481 4385 Email: <a href="mailto:T.Phahlamohlaka@risa.nrf.ac.za">T.Phahlamohlaka@risa.nrf.ac.za</a></p> <p><b>For submissions: Stephen Dlamini</b> Grants Management and Systems Administration Tel: +27 12 481 4037 Email: <a href="mailto:sm.dlamini@risa.nrf.ac.za">sm.dlamini@risa.nrf.ac.za</a></p> <p><b>For system or technical queries:</b> <a href="mailto:supportdesk@nrf.ac.za">supportdesk@nrf.ac.za</a></p>	<p>French Embassy in South Africa</p> <p><b>Mr Moncef MEDDEB</b> Attaché for Science and Technology Ambassade de France en Afrique du Sud Tel: +27 12 425 1713 Email: <a href="mailto:moncef.meddeb@diplomatie.gouv.fr">moncef.meddeb@diplomatie.gouv.fr</a></p>