

South Africa / France Science and Technology Research Collaboration

PROTEA Call for Joint Research Proposals

Closing Date: Consult the General Application Guide 2024
(on the NRF website at <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>)

Note: South African applicants **must** consult their institutions for internal closing date.

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.

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 two years (projects starting in 2025 and ending at the end of 2026).

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 exchange of scientists, personnel and experts conducting joint research in their area of specialisation as well as reciprocal visits undertaken as part of joint research projects and the attendance of meetings, workshops and seminars.

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 2025.

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 €1 600 per return ticket (subject to revision).
- For a stay in South Africa of researchers including PhD students, daily allowances of €125/day.

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 for funding will be carried out at the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) Meeting and the results of this JTC meeting will preferably be announced by the end of December 2024.

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-researchand-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

All proposals by South African researchers must be submitted by the **30 May 2024**. Applicants are also encouraged to consult their institutions for internal closing dates. Applications submitted to the NRF after this cut-off date 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>For programme queries: Teuns Phahlamohlaka Tel: +27 12 481 4385 Email: T.Phahlamohlaka@risa.nrf.ac.za</p> <p>For submissions Stephen Dlamini Tel: +27 12 481 4037 Email: sm.dlamini@risa.nrf.ac.za</p> <p>For system or technical queries: Sibulele Sibulali Tel: +27 12 481 4155 Email: supportdesk@mrf.ac.za or S.Sibulali@risa.nrf.ac.za</p>	<p>French Embassy in South Africa</p> <p>Aurelien LEYNET Attaché for Science and Technology Ambassade de France en Afrique du Sud Tel: +27 12 425 1713 Email: aurelien.leynet@diplomatie.gouv.fr</p>

Annex I: NRF Review Criteria Description

1	Scientific quality of the proposal (20%)	<p>Scientific originality/innovation/conceptualisation & relevance - positioning of the research vis-à-vis current research/technology development in the field</p> <p>Is the proposal strong, well conceptualized and strongly motivated. Are the research question and problem statement well advocated. Is the idea novel/show potential to contribute to the generation of both new methodology and new knowledge in the field? Is the research rationale - (reasons offered by a researcher for conducting more research into a particular subject) clearly articulated?</p> <p>The clarity of the Aim, Objectives and the tasks</p> <p>Does the aim indicate the overarching goal of the project, and does it align with the problem statement and the knowledge gap? Are the objectives clearly stated, providing an accurate description of intended activities for accomplishing research aims? Do the objectives concisely indicate key issues of the research focus and are they well aligned with the problem statement and research aim.</p> <p>Applicability and replicability of the Research Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comment on the research design and framework, - Are the methods realistic and innovative for achieving beneficial results? - Does the research methodology describe the reason behind the use of specific/unique procedures/techniques in the field - Does the application describe data collection and analysis methods, the use and dissemination of results - Are validity and reliability methods defined?
2	Science Engagement (10%)???	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public engagement with science, communication, literacy, accumulation of knowledge, enjoyment, opinion formulation, outreach and awareness of science by targeted groups of society in a programme aimed at generating mutual understanding and responses to science. - Has the project plan included communication and engagement activities with relevant stakeholders/users throughout the project period? - Are engagement types (e.g., publications, debate, social media etc), the objective & desired outcome of the engagement with target audiences indicated? - Are proposed tools for knowledge sharing & research uptake relevant and sufficient for comprehensive stakeholder engagement. -
3	Project Management and Implementation: (Suitability & Feasibility). (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitability and feasibility of the outlined research plan, distribution of tasks and activities, coordination, management, synthesis & timelines - Is there a thoroughly formulated project workplan, have tasks & activities and where each activity will be done been explained?
4	Plans for future cooperation (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organised, and based on a sound rationale? - Are details of how many individuals/samples/sites etc will be involved in each activity described, - Does the project have a realistic, clearly defined and relevant time frame,
5	Human Capacity Development.	Transformation, equity and redress refers to capacity building opportunities for emerging researchers and how the proposed

	(10%)	research complies with transformational objectives relevant to the NRF. Does the project include appropriate transformational, ethical, gender considerations and other diversity perspectives where relevant. Does the proposal make provision for the Historically Disadvantaged Groups (HDGs) in terms of students and young researchers to attend and present at science meetings explained?
6	Proposed Budget (Financials) (10%)	<u>Proposed budget (maximum of the R300 000)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a detailed and well justified budget with requested amounts that are within the specified limits? - Are the budget line items listed in line with the criteria for which funds can be utilised?