



**RIISA**  
Research, Innovation and Impact  
Support and Advancement

Celebrating 25 Years of Research, Innovation, Impact and Partnerships

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**To: Interested Applicants, Research Directors, Postgraduate Directors and Designated Authorities at the NRF Recognized Research Institutions**

### **The 2024 NRF Next Generation and Emerging Researchers Symposium**

The National Research Foundation (NRF) is the biggest funding agency that supports next generation and emerging researchers and in addition, has over the years until 2017 hosted a number of national symposiums and forums for postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows. These initiatives and forums played a key role in providing a platform for engagements, academic and grant writing, publication, ethical research, research collaboration, networking and professional development opportunities. Furthermore, these allowed for valuable feedback from the NRF stakeholders and beneficiaries on improving service culture of the organization. In October 2024, NRF would be hosting newly reconceptualized *Next Generation and Emerging Researcher Symposium*, envisioned to occur on an annual basis.

The aim of the symposium will be to provide the next generation and emerging researchers funded by the NRF with a platform that offers varied opportunities for networking, creating local and global workforce connections, knowledge exchange, sharing the latest groundbreaking insights on topics of their interest and thought-provoking research projects in relation to the NRF's 2030 vision "**research for a better society**" and aligned to the thematic areas in the DSI decal plan. The objectives of the symposium are to develop and support the next generation and emerging researchers through the following: One-stop-shop clearing house; Encouraging Innovation and Impact; Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange; Mentorship; Providing a Platform for Science Communication; and Leadership and Strategic Direction in Research.

The 2024 symposium is expected to bring together a diverse group of up to 300 delegates, featuring the next generation and emerging researchers funded by NRF, stakeholders from South African universities and across NSI, along with senior NRF executives, A and B-rated NRF researchers, industry leaders who will provide invaluable support. The target audience will be the emerging researchers (i.e., postgraduate students, postdoctoral fellows and other researchers in the early stages of their careers) and undergraduate students interested in postgraduate studies and/or seeking to explore research/networking opportunities.

The NRF is thus inviting all **South African and South African Permanent Residents final year Doctoral Students; all Postdoctoral Fellows and Early Career Researchers (e.g., Thuthuka, first to third year PhD) currently funded by the NRF**, to submit applications (incl. abstracts) for the

symposium to be hosted by the NRF in October 2024. The application template is designed to provide the applicant with an opportunity to present the information that is required and will be assessed (Table 1). The sections of the application will require information on the following:

- Abstract that describes the topic to be presented at the symposium,
- Impact of the applicant’s research study; and
- Motivation to participate in the symposium and respective expectations.

All eligible applications will be reviewed by the Organizing Committee, and approved applicants will be formally approved and accepted as Participants/Speakers to present an oral and/or poster at the symposium. The applications received will be reviewed against a set evaluation criteria described in the table 1.

**Table 1. Review scorecard and evaluation dimensions for the NRF Next Generation and Emerging Researchers Symposium Application**

EVALUATION DIMENSION	DESCRIPTOR	WEIGHTING
<b>Track record of the applicant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work and publication record of the applicant in their research area.</li> <li>• Strength of the motivation submitted by applicant for participation in the symposium.</li> </ul>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Quality of the abstract</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well conceptualized abstract to be presented at the symposium, highlighting the significance of the research study and outcomes.</li> </ul>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Alignment of the proposed study with the theme of the symposium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment of the proposed study to with the theme of the symposium, i.e., <b>“research for better society”</b>.</li> </ul>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Impact of the project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impact of the project in line with national priority areas and specifically with regard to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The NRF’s Vision 2030 “research for better society”; and</li> <li>b) Thematic Areas listed in the DSI Decadal Plan 2022-2032.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Strength of the motivation by Supervisor or Host of Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength of the motivation by Supervisor or Head of Research.</li> </ul>	<b>15%</b>

To be eligible as a Participant/Speaker, interested individuals must submit applications on the NRF Connect System and with a fully updated CV on the link <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>. All applications must be completed on the system and submitted through the research office of an NRF Recognised Research Institution by the Designated Authorities (DAs) for submission to the NRF. **Applications that are not recommended by the supervisor or host of research will be ineligible, and no late submissions will be allowed.**

**The Closing Date for Applicants is 11 July 2024.**

**The Closing Date for Designated Authorities (DAs) is 26 July 2024.**

**Applicants will be informed of the outcome by Mid-August 2024.**

The symposium will be hosted physically, the details will be shared with all the successful applicants and participants at a later stage. Successful applicants will have all their basic expenditures including travel and accommodation covered.

**NRF Contact Persons for enquiries:**

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