

FBIP APPLICATION INSTRUCTION GUIDE

Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP)

FBIP Small Grants

Call year: 2024

Proposals for small, strategic projects that address critical gaps relevant to foundational biodiversity information and knowledge are invited.

Programme background information:

The primary focus of the Programme is to generate, mobilize, co-ordinate and make accessible foundational biodiversity knowledge in line with the needs of society, the Department of Science & Innovation (DSI) Global Change Programme and the bio-economy. The priority knowledge needs to relate to species occurrence, species identity, population abundance, and DNA information, particularly barcoding. This type of information is often referred to as “fundamental” or “foundational” because it forms the basis of so many other aspects of biodiversity research and decision-making.

Application process:

There are two application windows for FBIP Small Grants (Review Period 1 & 2). Please refer to the **NRF General Application Guide 2024** for the number of applications allowed within an application category within a call year and cut-off dates.

The NRF will publish the One Call for Applications for funding in March 2024 (Review Period 1). The One Call includes applications for FBIP Small Grants (Review Period 1) which must be submitted electronically on the new NRF Connect system at <https://nrconnect.nrf.ac.za/>. Instructions for Review Period 2 will be published later.

Applicants applying for FBIP grants must read the **FBIP Framework Document and Funding Guide** to make sure that all the essential information is submitted through the proposals. The FBIP Framework Document and Funding Guide is available on the NRF website.

Applications must reach the NRF by the cut-off dates as indicated in Appendix 1 of the **NRF General Application Guide 2024**.

FBIP Specific Instructions:

It is recommended that applicants follow the standard NRF application instructions along with the FBIP-specific instructions below.

We also recommend that applicants pay special attention to the review criteria and scorecards highlighted in the FBIP Framework Document and Funding Guide.

Note: Small Grant proposals must score a minimum of 3 points for two of the criteria in order to be eligible for funding: (a) Feasibility and (b) Impacts and Outputs. Proposals that do not include a very detailed workplan,

including a breakdown of activities, with details of the timeframes and the people involved and details of their responsibilities for each activity, are generally scored below the threshold score of 3 for feasibility. For Impact and Outputs, the extent to which the outputs are in line with the FBIP targets, and the number of outputs (eg. number of specimens and species barcoded and submitted to BOLD, number of occurrence records in line with Darwin Core standard, number of species pages) is assessed, as well as the impact of these outputs in terms of who would use them, for what purpose, and how they would contribute to global change understanding or to solving a problem of relevance to the bioeconomy.

FBIP instructions for sections and categories on the NRF call application template:

Project Information

The maximum duration for FBIP Small Projects is **two years**. Project funding will commence in 2024 (Review Period 1). Data generated through projects funded by the FBIP must be made available no later than 26 months after the starting date of the project.

Details of Research:

- Potential Impact and Outputs

"Impact" refers to both the tangible and intangible influence derived and/or caused by the research outcomes/outputs. "Impact" statements indicate what the researcher hopes to achieve, without introducing any bias, through his/her research (i.e. impact on Global Change and/or Bio-economy, etc.).

FBIP instruction:

Please indicate the relevance of the proposed activities in relation to the impact on Global Change understanding and /or the Bio-Economy knowledge field(s). Describe what will change because of the project, who will use the knowledge and information and for what purpose, and in what way users will be able to access the information / knowledge. A brief assessment must be provided to illustrate that the work has not been previously done (ie. the current status of knowledge).

- Problem Statement

The "research problem" statement refers to an area of concern, a condition to be improved upon, a challenge to be explored, a difficulty to be eliminated, or a scholarly question that requires further interrogation to ground theory and praxis, that points to the need for meaningful understanding and deliberate investigation.

FBIP instruction:

Please provide a brief introduction to the proposed project and indicate why the project is needed.

- Rationale and Literature Review

- The rationale for the research is a set of reasons offered by a researcher for conducting more research into a particular subject. This could take a number of forms such as descriptive research, experimental research, etc.
- A literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. It is a review of existing corpus of literature to affirm/amplify diverse theoretical underpinnings.

FBIP instruction:

Provide the context of the proposed project together with a brief review of the literature and other relevant resources. State the strategic importance of the project and how it is relevant to this call.

- Aims and Objectives

- Aims are the broad statements of desired outcomes/ the general intentions of the research, which 'paint a picture' of an envisaged research project.
- The objectives of the research provide an accurate description of the specific actions the researcher intends to take in accomplishing research aims.

FBIP instruction:

No FBIP specific instructions.

- **Methodology and Proposed Research Plan**

- The research methodology describes the rationale for the application of specific procedures or techniques used to identify, collect, select, and analyse information applied to understanding the research problem, thereby, allowing the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.
- Please ensure that a full proposed research plan outlining activities, who will be involved in each activity, where they will be done (with details of how many individuals / samples / sites etc.) and timelines is included in this section and this should substantiate the requested budget.

FBIP instruction:

Provide an explanation of what will be done, the method and approach, who will be involved in each activity, where the activities will be carried out (with details of how many individuals / samples / sites etc.) and what the timeframes for each activity are (ie. the start and end date or duration for each activity).

Note: For projects involving the capturing of third party data (i.e. not belonging to the Grantholder), all data owners will need to sign a consent form (examples of Third Party Data Release Agreements are attached to the FBIP Framework Document and Funding Guide, Appendix C and/or D). The consent form will be provided by the NRF upon awarding the grant. The signed consent form must be submitted to the FBIP Manager.

- **Transformation**

Give a brief description of how your research complies with transformational objectives relevant to the particular Call. Some or all of the following transformation contributions may be highlighted:

- Summary of the young researchers who will be involved in the project;
- General or specialist training to be offered to postgraduate students and young researchers;
- Support for postgraduate students and young researchers to attend and present at science meetings;
- Collaborative initiatives with HDIs;
- Involvement of women and black students and researchers in the project;
- Special support offered to disadvantaged students.

Note: Small Grant applicants will **not** be scored on this category, but applicants are encouraged to contribute to this initiative.

- **Anticipated Outputs**

This refers to the envisaged output ("product") of the research project in line with the Funding Instrument objectives and may take the form of publications, public presentations, data, patents, artefacts, exhibitions, design, etc. The outputs should be detailed and quantified as far as possible.

FBIP instruction:

What will be produced by the project in line with the FBIP objectives? Please quantify the data outputs as far as possible (eg. 1,000 primary records, barcode data for 50 species, 10 species pages, etc.). When assessed, the return on investment will be considered in terms of how many records generated / mobilised, species pages compiled, or species / specimens barcoded.

- **Alignment to National Imperatives**

Please outline how this will contribute/is aligned to one or more national priorities/strategies/imperatives.

Note: FBIP projects must explicitly align with and contribute to the implementation of one of the following national strategies: The Bioeconomy Strategy of the Department of Science and Technology (2013); Biodiversity Economy Strategy (Bes) for the Department of Environmental Affairs (2015); or South Africa's 2nd National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2025.

- **Data Management and Utilisation**

Provide a summary of what processes and systems will be used to compile and manage data for the project. This could include a list of data fields that will be included in the data set, the software that will be used, how data will be captured, who will be responsible for the data capture and management, and whether any data quality checking and upgrading will be carried out. If there are other plans for long term data management and dissemination, briefly discuss these.

Note: Data generated through projects funded by the FBIP must be made available no later than 26 months after the starting date of the project. More information about data standards and data release requirements can be found in the FBIP Framework Document and Funding Guide in Appendix A (Format and Standards for Data Submission) and Appendix B (Data Release Requirements).

Attachments

Please consult the Call documents to determine the compulsory attachments.

FBIP instruction:

Any supporting documentation should this be deemed necessary.

Ethical Clearance

- Select whether this project requires ethical clearance from an international or national research ethics committee.
- If this project requires ethical clearance, select whether it has been obtained and add any relevant comments.
- Upload proof of granting of ethical clearance, if available.

FBIP instruction:

Under “Ethical clearance”, please also indicate that due consideration has been given to all permitting requirements for implementation of the project. Making ethical and permitting issues more explicit and transparent in the protocol will assist the review process. Upload proof, if available, in the Attachments section.

Note: Any material sent outside the country for analysis must have the required Material Transfer Agreements and export permits.

Reviewers

This is a compulsory field on the standard NRF online template. FBIP Small Grant proposals submitted will be peer-reviewed by a panel. Panels will be selected based on their broad experience in terms of the respective knowledge field and their research standing.

Financials: Operating Costs

Please ensure that you read all the Call Information Documents and abide by the eligibility rules.

FBIP instruction:

The total amount requested should not exceed R250,000 per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of two years for research activities commencing in 2025. Research related costs should be justified and correspond with the scope of the planned project activities and outputs. Guidelines are provided in the FBIP Framework Document and Funding Guide, Page 25 - 29.

Financials: Student support

Note: FBIP Small Grants exclude postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellowships support. All postgraduate students will be expected to apply on the NRF Online Submission System by accessing the link: at <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/>

National Infrastructure Platforms

Follow NRF instructions.

Science Engagement

Follow NRF instructions.

Note: FBIP Small Grant proposals will **not** be scored in this category although applicants are encouraged to contribute to this initiative.

Participating Members

Follow NRF instructions.

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