

# **2020 South African/ German Collaborative Research Programme (SAG-CORE)**

**On:**

The Interface between Global Change and Social Sciences – post  
COVID-19

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## **Call for proposals**

For German applicants: the legally binding announcement is published in the German Federal Gazette ([Bundesanzeiger](#)).

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

There is a long history of scientific collaboration between South Africa and Germany in the field of research and innovation. The South African Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) in partnership with the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) have conceptualised a new **South African/German Collaborative Research Programme** (SAG-CORE) aiming to further stimulate long term research collaboration between the two countries by funding joint research, to strengthen the international position and global impact of their research. Funding is provided for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary consortia of South African and German research groups and stakeholder partners, for high quality research that has the potential for societal and scientific impact.

The NRF and BMBF have jointly agreed on strategic knowledge and innovation agendas. Funded research should be in alignment with national research agendas and or priorities, as well as international initiatives such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and build bridges between different actors in the knowledge chain, fundamental and applied research, and scientific disciplines.

## 1.2 Available budget

Total budget for this call amounts to:

**1 643 000 Euro (R31.7 mil)** (*South Africa and Germany combined*).

With the available total budget, the NRF and BMBF aim to fund a maximum of up to five joint projects for the maximum period of up to 48 months (4-years). Researchers can apply for projects of:

- Up to R2.1 mil per project from NRF. Only R1 050 mil (R262 500 per annum) will be released for research and mobility-related costs. More information on the doctoral students is outlined in the *NRF Postgraduate Funding Policy* and section 3.2.1 of this call guideline.
- 220 000 Euro per project from BMBF for the 4-year period of the project.

NRF supports researchers from South Africa and BMBF supports researchers from Germany. Please refer to section 3 for the application details.

Researchers should ensure that their budgets are aligned to eligible research costs as outlined by each funding agency (see section 3.2 for guidelines on budget allocation against eligible research activities per funding agency).

## 1.3 Application Deadline for proposals

The deadline for submitting SAG-CORE applications in electronic form is: Friday, 13 November 2020, 12:00 CET (for German researchers) and 24:00 SAST (for South Africa). The deadline for submission is not a cut-off deadline, but it will not be possible to consider project proposals received after the above date.

South African researchers must submit their proposals to the NRF. From the German side the BMBF has entrusted the DLR Project Management Agency with implementing the funding measure. Therefore, German researchers must submit through the DLR Project Management Agency please refer to section 3.3.2 for details.

Proposals which have not been received in both countries will not be considered for funding. The call process is highly competitive therefore submission of an application will not guarantee funding. The evaluation of applications from both countries should have positive ratings before consideration for funding. Both the NRF and the DLR Project Management Agency will not be held responsible for non-submission, administration or evaluation of the application in the partner country.

Please refer to section 3 for details of the application process of both funding agencies.

## 2 Aim

Many societal challenges are global in nature, and require flexibility and creativity to find solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic is currently one of the toughest challenges for our societies. The collaborative research supported by NRF and BMBF in this Call is intended to work towards scientific knowledge and innovative solutions for high scientific and societal impact. At the same time, NRF and BMBF aim to enhance and strengthen sustainable research collaboration between the two countries, by inviting consortia in which researchers from knowledge institutions from both countries will work with societal partners from public, semi-public and private organisations, in order to increase the societal relevance of their research.

The SAG-CORE Programme therefore, serves as a national and regional research platform designed to provide the knowledge needed to support transformations towards sustainability in a post-COVID-19 society. The call seeks to:

- build and connect knowledge to increase the (societal) impact of research;
- explore new development pathways; and
- find new ways to accelerate transitions towards sustainable development.

Through this bilateral Call, South Africa and Germany aim to bring together partners in society to co-develop the knowledge needed to support decision-makers and contribute to societal change at all scales and in diverse contexts, by focusing on the social behaviours of a post-COVID-19 society affecting global change as the main research area. This socio-ecological research is a global, regional and national challenge that cannot be solved by one country alone. It requires multi-country partnerships, and trans-, multi- and interdisciplinary approaches to addressing the problem.

The funding measure is being carried out within the framework of the BMBF's Africa Strategy and the Federal Government's Strategy for the Internationalization of Science and Research. In particular, the topic of sustainable socio-ecological transformation takes up the objectives of the BMBF's Africa Strategy (Field of Action 4: Research cooperation to implement the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and Field of Action 5: Exploiting synergy potentials). The Federal Government's Internationalization Strategy is taken into account in Target Field 5 "Overcoming Global Challenges".

### 2.1 Thematic focus

This SAG-CORE Call focuses primarily on the interface between Global Change and the Social Sciences. The main aim of SAG-CORE is to support collaborative research that seeks to interrogate ways in which human societies engage with their natural environment to satisfy basic needs, stabilise and grow economies as well as improve the overall quality of life. Humans have always been an integral component of the ecosystem. The ecosystem has co-evolved with its human inhabitants into today's landscape of increasingly urban and monoculture agricultural systems. These developments have brought with them significant improvements in many aspects of human well-being. However, these improvements have not been experienced by all, especially in rural and impoverished communities, and they have often come at a cost to biodiversity, available freshwater as well as the quality of land, soil and vegetation. Additional challenge for all societies is the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 was probably created by the transfer of the novel corona virus (SARS-CoV-2) from animals to humans. Such scenarios, according to the assumption of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), will become more acute in the future due to radical human intervention in nature.

A significant body of research has been conducted globally on understanding changes within our ecosystems, and the speed at which these changes are occurring. However, much of this is basic research that does not and has not necessarily resulted in influencing human behavioural adjustment to accommodate the changes and or enhance sustainable use of the natural resources. The 2020 SAG-CORE endeavours to address this issue by supporting collaborative research and innovative projects that can:

- provide greater understanding of the earth's natural processes, the human influence on these processes and the interactions between the two;
- outline innovative societal processes in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- offer ways to mitigate all these challenges where possible, adapt human behaviour and start societal transformative processes towards sustainability.

The overall theme of this bilateral call therefore is:

***Global Change: Towards Sustainable Societal Transitions and Transformations – post-COVID-19.***

It has been demonstrated that the quality and availability of the planet's ecosystems, on which human populations depend, are deteriorating, with serious and often detrimental consequences on social development and welfare. There is therefore, an urgent need to discover new ways to support and improve human well-being, in a manner that is consistent with the welfare of our ecosystems and those who rely on them. There is a need to ensure that current and future generations have equal chance to experience decent quality of life. This calls for the balancing of socioeconomic development imperatives and environmental protection and sustainability.

The relationship between humans and the environment is complex, interconnected and interdependent. Responding to the challenges presented by global change and the COVID-19 pandemic brought about by this relationship would require a range of technological, methodological and systems innovations involving collaboration between earth system science and the social, economic and engineering sciences. Innovation is not just a process of technological change, but of change at the institutional and social levels. The lessons learnt from innovation studies over the past few years show that innovations only take root when there is an investment in social learning and social learning systems, as well as support for the role of human development in social change across the spectrum.

Fragmentation of the research system (i.e. research councils, universities and research orientated NGOs) compromises the ability of researchers to respond to the above challenges. Knowledge-bridging institutions are required to foster collaboration among leading researchers working in energy, water, sanitation, waste management, soils/food, ecosystems, industrial design and construction in the following broad research sectors: applied engineering, economics, social sciences, ecology, and life sciences, amongst others.

Applicants should pay due regard to the focus of research commissioned. Proposals should consider the achievements of other European, African and (inter)national initiatives recently completed, underway, or at an advanced stage of planning. Every research project should therefore focus on at least one of the following themes:

- **Theme a:** Governance of societal transformations to sustainability – post-COVID-19.
- **Theme b:** Economy and finance of transformations to sustainability – post-COVID-19.
- **Theme c:** Well-being, quality of life, identity, and social and cultural values in relation to transformations to sustainability - post-COVID-19.

The topics are closely related to the research program "Transformations to Sustainability (T2S)" of the NORFACE and Belmont Forum<sup>1</sup>. Research cooperation between South Africa and Germany is not funded under the T2S programme. Applicants should describe how they intend to complement or differentiate themselves from the above-mentioned existing programme and projects funded by the BMBF and/or NRF or third parties.

## 2.2 Specific project requirements

### 2.2.1 Integrated research approach and Co-creation

The challenges to be addressed through this bilateral Call are interrelated complex, and multi-scalar, therefore, addressing them will require a holistic approach or collaborative efforts in the form of consortia that spans the entire research and innovation chain. Eligible consortia should be composed of researchers based in South Africa and Germany, with active involvement in the project of a senior Principal Investigator (PI) on both the South African and German side. The consortium must also include a partner from the public, semi-public or private practitioner organisation (for-profit or not-for-profit).

The consortia should be knowledge-chain wide, meaning they should cross-cut scientific disciplinary boundaries (interdisciplinarity) and integrate scientific and practitioners' knowledge in joint research (transdisciplinarity). The proposed research itself should be characterised by integrated perspectives and should evolve in a process of co-design and creation with different partners from both countries (South Africa and Germany).

Researchers from both countries and societal partners should be actively involved throughout the entire project, in (advising on) defining and conducting the research as well as in communicating the progress and results, in order to jointly produce a mutually valued outcome. Proposals should furthermore be characterised by equal partnership and sustainable collaboration between the South African and German partners. This includes inter-institutional cooperation, a balanced contribution to the proposed research, and frequent exchange between the partners, including a focus on capacity building. Added value may be achieved by integrating and synthesising various sources of knowledge to create new knowledge and by creating sustainability through the development of long-term knowledge relations.

***Therefore, a Consortium Agreement (CA) is obligatory and should be signed by all consortium partners within two months of the start of the project. PIs should submit a copy of a Letter of Intent (LoI) signed by all members stating that, should an application become successful, a CA will be signed.*** The aim of this CA is to confirm that all parties understand their roles and responsibilities in the consortium. The CA should also clearly indicate the contributions of all other consortium partners whether in monetary value or in kind. Please note that a signed CA by all consortium partners is obligate for funding. There is no desired standard template for this. PIs are free to design this CA whichever way they deem fit.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://t2sresearch.org/>

Projects are also expected to collaborate with the other project(s) awarded in this Call, so as to enhance the impact of the SAG-CORE aims as a whole. As a part of this, projects will be expected to attend joint kick-off and closing workshops. Projects should budget for this accordingly.

### 2.2.2 Impact Pathway

The research conducted in this Call for Proposals should have relevance and potential for impact beyond the academic world, such as in societal, technical, economical or cultural realms. This is why, in addition to having a societal or industry partner within the consortium, consortia should consider how relevant stakeholders can be involved in, or benefit from, the design and realisation of the proposed research project. Consortia are also advised to present a strategy which reflects the timeframe (short-, medium- and long-term) within which the proposed benefits are intended to be reached.

To further enhance the potential for impact of the proposed research, the application should state how approaches for achieving impact are integrated in the research design and conducted by the consortium in engagement with end-users, such as practitioners, policymakers, and industry.

Researchers should describe how the research process can contribute to impact, taking into account the context, actors involved and describing the sequence of logically-linked cause-effect relations. Developing an impact pathway in a joint effort with research partners as well as stakeholders allows for making explicit which (and whose) problem is being tackled, and how the desired change is perceived to happen through research efforts. Projections on expected change will be based on a myriad of assumptions; documenting these assumptions allows for reflection on whether and how expected pathways to impact remain adequate or need adjustment.

In dealing with potential impact, researchers are expected to explain the expected change process that the proposed project contributes to through the realisation of output and outcomes, and the desired contribution to impact (**see Box 1** below).

**See [Annexure I](#) for the format/template to be used when completing the Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level. A completed template should be attached as an Annexure to the joint proposal.**

#### **Box 1: Output, outcome and impact**

**Research outputs** relate to the direct and immediate results obtained by a research project or programme.

**Research outcomes** relate to the changes in behaviour, relationships, actions, or activities of stakeholders as a result of sharing and uptake of research.

**Research impact** is defined as changes in economic, environmental and social conditions a project or programme is aiming at. Change is a complex process that depends on a variety of actors and factors of which research is only one. Where research outputs fall under the direct sphere of control of a research project or programme, outcomes belong to their sphere of influence, and impact to their sphere of interest.

## 3 Guidelines for applicants

### 3.1 Who can apply

Eligible consortia should be composed of researchers based in South Africa and in Germany, with active involvement in the project of Principal Investigator (PI) on both the South African and the German side. Therefore, a proposal should have two PIs: one based in South Africa, and one based in Germany. The two PIs will serve as the main contact points for NRF and DLR-PT, respectively and will submit the proposal to both organisations.

The consortium must also include, from either Germany or South Africa, a partner from at least the public, semi-public or private practitioner organisation (for-profit or not-for-profit).

Together, the consortium members must: 1) formulate relevant research questions and approaches; 2) formulate and submit the joint proposal through the PIs in each country separately; 3) conduct the project activities; 4) coordinate knowledge sharing and support the application, disseminate and communicate project results to a broader group of possible knowledge users that are not a member of the consortium; and 5) take responsibility for the adequate and timely reporting conditions. Each PI and consortium can only submit one proposal.

Proposals which have not been received in both countries will not be screened and will not be considered for review. A “**Letter of Intent**” (LoI) which states that, should an application become successful, a consortium agreement will be signed within two months of the start of the project, is obligatory and should be submitted with the proposal. A signed Consortium Agreement articulating consortium governance, task division, resource management and ownership of results between the collaborating consortium organisations/individuals is obligatory if the project outline is selected for funding (see section 2.2.1 for details or refer to national rules). A completed Impact Pathway template must be attached as an Annexure to the joint proposal. Further additional national eligibility criteria might apply. See Chapters 3.1.-3.4 below.

#### 3.1.1 South African national regulations

For South African-based PIs, the NRF eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Only working researchers/scientists residing in South Africa and affiliated with a recognised South African public higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology or science council are eligible to apply.
- Private higher education institutions are not eligible to apply under this programme.
- The SMEs, private companies/industries, and NGOs cannot serve as a PI but can form part of the research consortium.
- It is “*obligatory*” for South African PIs based at historically advantaged institutions to include, as part of the consortium, a research partner from any of the historically disadvantaged institutions. Proposals submitted by an applicant based at a historically advantaged institution without a research partner from a historically disadvantaged institution will be ineligible (and will not be submitted for review). The research partner from the historically disadvantaged institution in this case, can serve as a co-applicant in the proposal.
- Applicants based at historically disadvantaged institutions can act as PIs and submit proposals without the involvement of and/or partnering with researchers based at historically advantaged institutions if they so wish.
  - o Please note that only the following eight universities will be recognized as historically disadvantaged in line with the Department of Higher Education and Training November 2015 Ministerial Statement on university funding:

- University of Limpopo (UL)
- University of Fort Hare (UFH)
- University of Venda (Univen)
- Walter Sisulu University (WSU)
- University of the Western Cape (UWC)
- University of Zululand (UniZulu)
- Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT)
- Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU).

### 3.1.2 German national regulations<sup>2</sup>

- Applications may be submitted by universities, university hospitals, non-university research institutions and other institutions contributing to research as well as commercial companies.
- Applicants are required to have a plant or branch (company) or another entity to act as funding recipient (university, non-university research institution or institution contributing to research) in Germany at the time of payment of the grant.
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the meaning of this call are companies that meet the requirements of the EU definition of SMEs (cf. Annex I of the AGVO or the Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (notified under document number C(2003) 1422) (2003/361/EC):

[<https://eurlex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=EN>]

- The funding recipient will declare its classification according to Annex I of the AGVO to the granting authority in its written application for funding.
- Research institutions which receive basic funding from the Federal Government and/or the *Länder* can only be granted project funding supplementary to their institutional funding to cover additional project-related expenditure or costs under certain preconditions.
- In accordance with No. 13a.2 of the administrative regulations pertaining to Section 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO), funding recipients are not permitted to transfer a grant that is calculated on the basis of eligible project-related costs.
- Concerning the conditions for when state aid is or is not deemed to be involved, and the extent to which funding can be provided without constituting aid, please consult the Commission communication concerning the Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation of 27 June 2014 (OJ C 198 of 27 June 2014 p.1 ff); in particular Section 2.

## 3.2 What can be applied for

The R&D projects should not exceed a period of four years (48 months). Funding to a maximum of R1.050m can be requested from the NRF and will be awarded as non-repayable

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<sup>2</sup> For German applicants: the legally binding announcement is published in the German Federal Gazette (Bundesanzeiger).

project grants, and a maximum of €220.000 can be requested from BMBF. All consortium members have to be involved in the formulation of the research questions, in the development of the proposal and in the execution of the research project. Each partner of a consortium can apply for one project or participate in one consortium only.

The funders will also organise joint kick-off and closing workshops (maximum of 2-days per workshop) for the SAG-CORE programme and researchers should include costs of attending these workshops (i.e. travel and accommodation), in their budget plans. The kick-off workshop will be held in Bonn (Germany) in September 2021 and the closing workshop in Pretoria (South Africa) in September 2024.

### 3.2.1 NRF funding regulations

From the NRF side, funding will be made available for the following joint research activities undertaken as part of the joint research project:

- **Research-related costs**  
Activities to be supported may include expenses relating to field work such as conducting interviews / surveys / laboratory experiments, research-related trips, etc. Airfare, accommodation, ground transport and subsistence should be calculated using rates as stipulated in institutional travel policies.
- **Staff exchange programmes**  
Short term mobility or travel expenses (i.e. transport, accommodation, subsistence, visa and health insurance costs) of the research teams between the partnering countries. Please note that the costs for travelling incl. visa will be covered by the sending institution and the costs of accommodation, subsistence and health insurance will be covered by the host.
- **Up to 2 (3-year) doctoral positions**  
Applicants are to indicate the number of PhD students they wish to enrol. For further details on the eligibility criteria refer to the *NRF Postgraduate Funding Policy*.

#### **NRF Postgraduate student funding policy:**

The NRF has developed a new Postgraduate Student Funding Policy that will use postgraduate student funding as a lever to address the challenges of inequity of access, success and throughput. The policy is underpinned by the pursuit of research excellence in all of its dimensions and has transformation of the postgraduate cohort as the core objective. Its purpose is to retain high academic achievers in the system to pursue postgraduate studies up to the doctoral level, as part of a national drive to grow the next generation of academics to sustain South Africa's knowledge enterprise. The NRF is prioritising postgraduate students with research inclination, with the aim to grow the pool of early career researchers. Another motivation for this policy is to fast-track the development of postgraduate students in high-impact, priority and vulnerable disciplines critical for national socio-economic development.

From the 2021 academic year onwards, the NRF will be phasing out the block grant nomination process as well as the grant-holder linked modalities of funding postgraduate students. All the postgraduate students will be expected to apply on the NRF Online Submission System by accessing the link: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>. This single entry point will allow the NRF to co-ordinate the applications that have not yet had the financial means test conducted, this financial means test will be conducted by Ikusasa Students Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP). Postgraduate students will be funded either at Full Cost of Study (FCS) or Partial Cost of Study (PCS) under the new policy.

To ensure equity of access to postgraduate studies, financially needy students (i.e., those whose combined household income is R350 000 per annum or less) and students with a disability will be funded at FCS. Academic high fliers achieving a distinction or first-class pass will also be eligible for funding at FCS. International students as well as any other South African students who could not be funded under FCS will be funded at PCS. The academic minimum requirements for NRF postgraduate funding is 65% in order to be eligible for FCS and PCS support.

Upon creating an application on the NRF Online Submission System, the Principal Investigator (PI) will receive a ***Reference number***. The PI is expected to encourage his or her Doctoral Students to apply when the call for postgraduate student support is published in April 2021. Students should add the reference number of the PI when listing the PI as the supervisor on the application. The use of the reference number will only apply if researchers have not yet been awarded their research grants. However, students of those PIs who have already been awarded their research grants should be provided with the PI's ***UID number***. For further details on the NRF Postgraduate Funding policy, kindly refer to the framework document which is available on [www.nrf.ac.za](http://www.nrf.ac.za).

- **Doctoral research placements**

The placements should enable the postgraduate students within the project to learn valuable new skills or techniques; access facilities or resources not readily available at home; build relationships with potential new collaborators; and advance complementary collaborative research. The duration of each placement is expected to be 3-6 months with flexibility to split the placement into several shorter visits. Longer placements may be undertaken where this would add value and these should be justified within the application. Placements must enhance, not replace, the standard training and study support that the postgraduate students receive. These placements must be managed to fit within the original funded period of the studentship. Additional funding will not be made available through this Call to support studentship extensions for those undertaking international placements. Applicants should include information about how these exchanges will be managed within their proposal.

- **Knowledge sharing costs (research uptake and science communication)**

In support of activities organised by the partners, such as joint workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, lecture presentations, capacity building sessions, meetings, local/regional dissemination of results aimed at involving stakeholders, and/or end-users from outside the consortium. Airfare, accommodation, ground transport and subsistence should be calculated using rates as stipulated in institutional travel policies.

- **Programme kick-off and closing workshops**

It's mandatory for researchers to make budgetary provisions (travel and accommodation) to participate at these workshops as they serve as part of the reporting requirements under this Programme (see section 3.3).

- **Small equipment, consumables and accessories**

Up to a maximum of 10% of the budget may be budgeted for this item.

The following ***will not*** be funded from the South African side:

- consultant's fees
- salaries
- temporary staff fees

- large equipment
- Project management fees

The total amount requested from the NRF should not exceed R2.1 mil per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of 4-years, to be paid in annual instalments and exclusively for research activities commencing in 2021. The funds per project have to be utilised as follows:

- R1.050 mil per project for research activities, mobility costs of the research team, small equipment and knowledge sharing costs per project (R262 500 per year).
- Support for identified doctoral students will only be released provided they meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in the *NRF Postgraduate Funding Policy*.

### 3.2.2 BMBF Funding Regulations<sup>3</sup>

Grants for commercial companies and for projects of research institutions which fall into the category of economic activities [For the definition of economic activity, see no. 17 of the R&D&I state aid Framework], will be calculated on the basis of the eligible project-related costs. As a rule, up to 50% can be covered by government grants, taking state aid legislation into account and depending on the project's relevance to application. The BMBF's policy requires an appropriate own contribution of at least 50% towards the eligible costs incurred.

The basis for calculating the grants for higher education institutions, research and science institutions and similar establishments which do not fall into the category of economic activities is the eligible project-related expenditure (in the case of the Helmholtz centres and Fraunhofer, eligible project-related costs), which can receive up to 100% coverage in individual cases, taking into account state aid legislation.

For non-economic research projects at universities and university hospitals, a flat-rate project allowance of 20% is granted in addition to the eligible expenditure.

The determination of the respective rate of funding must take account of the AGVO.

The following expenditures/costs will be eligible for funding:

- a) Funds for project-related personnel required in Germany. The projects require a high degree of coordination and, in order to implement the project successfully, up to one full-time equivalent who can demonstrate appropriate experience and knowledge can be funded (usually up to TVöD 13).
- b) Project-related non-cash resources and equipment. Funding for project-related resources (such as consumables, office supplies, appliances, award of contracts) can be provided to a limited extent.

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<sup>3</sup> For German applicants: the legally binding announcement is published in the German Federal Gazette (Bundesanzeiger).

- c) In justified cases, appropriations may also be requested for contracts with third parties.
- d) Travel and stays by German and South African researchers and experts. The following applies to the funding of travel and stays by German project researchers and experts:
  - The costs/expenditure for travel to and from the project partner's location in South Africa will be covered including the necessary visas (if by air: economy class) and the expenditure/costs for the stays as well as travel within Germany in accordance with the applicable rules of the institution or company.

The following applies to the funding of stays by South African project researchers and experts:

- The costs/expenditure for travel to and from the project partner's location in Germany (if by air: economy class) will be covered by the sending country. Stays in Germany will be funded at a fixed rate of 104 euros per day or 2300 euros per month and a subsidy of 77 euros for individual days of the following month. The day of arrival and day of departure are counted as one day. Contributions to health insurance and, if applicable, other types of insurance are included in this allowance and must be paid by the South African partner.
- e) Means of transport for international events: Travel expenses for the participation of staff financed by the project in international conferences at home and abroad with a technical project relevance can be subsidised in justified cases.
- f) Workshops in Germany and in the partner country can be funded as follows: Funding will be provided to cover various expenditure and/or costs related to the organization of workshops. For example, grants can be provided towards expenses such as accommodation of guests, transfers, provision of workshop documents, adequate hospitality and rental of premises. The exact amount of the grant depends on the size of the event and the number of foreign guests. In such cases, no per diem allowances (see d. above) will be provided.

For consortium partners from South Africa who are not eligible for funding there but whose participation is absolutely essential for the success of the measure, the German beneficiary may, in justified exceptional cases, apply for funding of up to 10 % of the funding amount. In this case, the German beneficiary (first recipient) receives a grant, including the grant to be passed on to the last recipient. The German beneficiary concludes a forwarding contract with the African partner in accordance with administrative regulation no. 12 to § 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO). In accordance with administrative regulation No. 13a.2 of section 44 (BHO), onward transmissions of funds is not possible for beneficiaries whose basis of assessment is the eligible project-related costs.

It can be applied for:

- i. Personnel funds (normal local remuneration)
- ii. Project-related material resources (not including equipment and basic fittings),
- iii. Travel (arrival and departure costs/expenses, for air tickets: economy class, see point d., and within South Africa).

Both funding entities will organize a joint kick-off workshop and a final workshop of a maximum duration of two days each. The participation will be mandatory for the applicants. As a result, applicants must calculate their budget in accordance with the rules above to participate. The kick-off workshop will take place in September 2021 in Bonn, Germany, and the final workshop in September 2024 in Tshwane, South Africa.

The usual basic equipment of the participating institutions is generally not taken over or subsidized.

The AGVO must be taken into account when determining the applicable eligible costs.

### Other terms and conditions

The *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Kostenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung an gewerbliche Unternehmen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsvorhaben* (NKBF 2017) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to Commercial Companies for Research and Development Projects on a Cost Basis) will be part of the notification of award for grants on a cost basis. Notification of award for grants on an expenditure basis will include the *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Ausgabenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung zur Projektförderung* (NABF) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research for the Promotion of Projects on an Expenditure Basis).

Further auxiliary terms and conditions and information of the BMBF regarding this funding measure may also form part of the notification of award of funds. For the purpose of conducting progress reviews within the meaning of administrative regulation (VV) 11a pertaining to section 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO), funding recipients are required to provide the data necessary for the progress review to the BMBF or the institutions charged with such tasks without delay. The information will be used exclusively for the purposes of supporting research and any subsequent evaluation; it will be treated confidentially and published in anonymized form, making it impossible to trace it back to individual persons or organizations. Funding recipients commit themselves to participate in central monitoring activities of the funding provider (e.g. the kick-off and concluding workshops in Germany and South Africa).

Open Access Funding recipients are expected to ensure open access if they publish the results of the research project in a scientific journal. This can be done through publication in an electronic journal which is accessible to the public free of charge. If the results are initially published in a way which does not provide the public with free electronic access, the article must be made publicly available free of charge by electronic means following an embargo period where appropriate (secondary publication). Embargo periods for secondary publication must not exceed 12 months. The BMBF expressly welcomes secondary open access publication of scientific monographs resulting from the project.

## 3.3 Application Process

The entire application for a research project must be submitted in English with a summary in German (only applicable to German applicants). DLR-PT and NRF will share the (pre-) proposals with each other.

### 3.3.1 NRF regulations

South African PIs must submit their full proposals to the NRF through the official NRF Online Submission System: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/> on or before **Friday, 13 November 2020, 24:00 SAST**. Please note that the above-mentioned deadline is for DA submission to NRF. South African PIs **must** consult their institutions for internal closing dates.

Applicants are advised to consult the NRF General Application Guide 2021 available at <https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/framework-documents/funding-framework-documents> for further details on how to apply for this opportunity (and for making use of the NRF Online Submission System).

- All compulsory sections and the CV sections on the NRF Online Submission System must be completed in full.
- Required compulsory documents should be attached in PDF format. Failure to submit compulsory documents will result in the disqualification of the application.
- Complete applications will go to the host institutions for verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing.
- Applications submitted outside the NRF Online Submission System will not be submitted for reviews.
- No hard copies will be accepted and will automatically be disqualified by the NRF.
- Only applications endorsed by the research office or its equivalent at higher education institutions will be accepted.
- Researchers are encouraged to contact their research office or Designated Authority if they have any queries.

### 3.3.2 BMBF regulations<sup>4</sup>

Application forms, guidelines, leaflets, information and auxiliary terms and conditions are available online at:

[https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy\\_index.php?auswahl=easy\\_formulare&formulars=chrank=bmbf](https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare&formulars=chrank=bmbf) or can be obtained directly from DLR-PT.

This call follows a 2-stage application process for the German applicants, i.e. the pre-proposal and the full proposal stage. Please note that only approved projects will be formally invited to submit full proposals after the evaluation of the pre-proposals.

#### - Procedure for submitting pre-proposals:

Partnering German researchers are expected to submit in parallel with the South African partner a pre-proposal directly to DLR-PT. The deadline for submitting applications in electronic form is: **Friday, 13 November 2020, 12.00 CET**. The deadline for submission is not a cut-off deadline, but it may not be possible to consider project outlines which are received after the above date.

Applicants must use electronic drafting tool PT-Outline (<https://ptoutline.eu/app/ZAF20WTZ>) and the 'easy-Online' electronic application system for drafting formal proposals (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>).

One project leader must be named for the German side and one for the South African side. A precondition for taking part is that the German applicants draw up a letter of intent together with all the participants in the German- South African consortium and add this to the project outline. It must be made clear from the text that, in the case of a positively evaluated project outline, a consortium agreement will be signed for the second stage of the procedure. In

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<sup>4</sup> For German applicants: the legally binding announcement is published in the German Federal Gazette (Bundesanzeiger).

addition, a short CV of the project leaders with a list of the five most recent publications must be attached.

In the case of submission of an English project outline, a one-page German summary is essential. The project outline should not exceed a cover page plus 10 pages (without annexes). The joint outline should include the following aspects of the project:

- I. Information on the project coordinator and all the project partners
- II. Summary of goals, research priorities, exploitation of results
- III. Scientific framework of the project:
  - a. Planned activities for implementing the goals of the funding measure mentioned in chapter 2 above
  - b. Description of the scientific objective of the project
  - c. Information on the state of development of the methods applied
  - d. possible participation of third parties e.g. SME participation
- IV. International cooperation in the framework of the project
  - a. Added value of international cooperation
  - b. Contributions of international partners, access to international resources
  - c. Experience of the partners involved in international cooperation, previous cooperation
- V. Sustainability of the measure/utilization plan
  - a. expected scientific results
  - b. Continuation of cooperation with partners in South Africa
  - c. planned cooperation in follow-up projects
  - d. planned extension of cooperation to other institutions and networks
  - e. Strategy for the implementation of the research results (Impact Pathway (orm, to be attached in the appendix),
- VI. Description of the planned work steps of the project
- VII. Estimated expenditure/costs.

The outline must show clearly how all the partners will participate in the project's tasks and results. The protection of intellectual property should also be reflected an important role in this context. The final selection is made in a joint "Review Panel" of the NRF and BMBF/DLR project management agency (criteria see chapter 4.2. Applicants will be informed in writing of the result of the selection process. The project outlines and any other documents submitted in this phase of the procedure will not be returned.

#### - [Submission of formal proposals and decision-making procedure](#)

In the second phase of the procedure, the applicants whose project outlines have been successful will be invited to submit formal proposals. An application for funding is only considered complete if at least the requirements of Article 6(2) AGVO are fulfilled. The "easy-Online" electronic application system must be used for drafting formal applications (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>). In the case of collaborative projects, applications for funding must be submitted in agreement with the planned collaborative project coordinator.

Formal proposals must include:

- I. A detailed (partial) project description
- II. A detailed work plan and time schedule
  - Feasibility of the work plan
  - Plausibility of the time schedule
- III. Detailed information about the financing of the project
  - Appropriateness and necessity of the requested funding
  - Security of overall financing during the entire project period

The proposals received will be carefully reviewed in accordance with the criteria (II and III). Requirements with regard to content or funding regulations or recommendations of the experts on the implementation of the project must be observed and implemented in the formal application for funding.

It is absolutely imperative for German applicants to include a project description in German in their formal proposals. This should not exceed 12 pages.

A funding decision will be taken after final consideration on the basis of the stated criteria and evaluation.

Regulations to be observed: The approval and payment of and accounting for the funds as well as the proof and examination of the proper use and, if necessary, the revocation of the award and the reclaiming of the funds awarded are governed by sections 48 to 49a of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVfG), sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the related administrative regulations unless deviation is allowed from the administrative regulations under the present funding regulations. The *Bundesrechnungshof* is entitled to carry out audits in accordance with Section 91 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO).

### 3.4 Ethical clearance and Intellectual property

The researchers of each country, particularly the PIs, must take adequate steps to ensure that all research activities are carried out in compliance with the laws and regulations of the country in which the research activities are conducted.

#### 3.4.1 NRF regulations

It is the responsibility of the South African PI, in conjunction with the institution, 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 at:

<https://www.nrf.ac.za/media-room/news/statement-ethical-research-and-scholarly-publishing-practices>

### 3.5 Project Follow-up and Reporting

Funders will organise joint kick-off and closing workshops bringing together all relevant stakeholders (research consortia, funders, policy makers and other interested parties) as part of Programme monitoring and reporting. During these workshops researchers will be expected to report in accordance with the submitted Impact Pathway templates (see Annexure I). PIs are therefore, urged to continuously review and evaluate their Impact Pathway Templates throughout the lifespan of the funded project.

The joint publications by researchers must mention the support from the funders (i.e. the South African Department of Science and Innovation, the NRF and BMBF).

The funders reserves the right to make the research outcomes available to policy makers including researchers within and outside this programme in similar disciplines.

- **From the NRF side:** a final project report has to be submitted in English no more than 3 months after the end of the project. Successful submission of the first annual report is an **obligatory** condition of funding in subsequent years. South African PIs should follow the reporting format/structure, rules and regulations of the NRF as outlined on the NRF Online Submission System. All reports by South African PIs must mention project outputs as compared to the objectives and aims of the proposal.
- **From the BMBF side:** please refer to chapter 3.2.2 BMBF funding regulations and please note in particular the section on “Other Terms and Conditions”.

### 3.6 When can applications be submitted

All applications must be submitted by both the South African and the German project leader by Friday, 13 November 2020, 12:00 CET (for German researchers) and 23:59 SAST (for South Africa).

Once submitted, changes to the proposal will no longer be possible. The deadline for submission is not a cut-off deadline, but it may not be possible to consider project outlines which are received after the above date.

***Please note that no applications submitted after the DA closing date will be considered from the South African side.***

## 4 Review procedure

After submission, proposals will first be checked by NRF and DLR-PT for the general eligibility criteria.

The review of applications from both countries should have positive ratings before consideration for funding.

Neither the NRF nor the DLR-PT nor BMBF will be held responsible for non-submission, administration or review of the application in the partner country.

The fundamental principles governing the evaluation of project proposals are:

- *Transparency.*

The process for reaching funding decisions will be clearly described and available to any interested party.

- *Equality of treatment.*

All proposals shall be treated alike, irrespective of where they originate or the identity of the proposers.

- *Ethical considerations.*

Any proposal that contravenes fundamental ethical principles of a funding organisation may be excluded from being evaluated and selected at any time.

### 4.1 Review process

A proposal that has been deemed eligible by both the NRF and DLR-PT will be submitted for review. Both the NRF and DLR-PT shall submit, in parallel, eligible proposals to their national experts who will assess the proposals remotely and submit reviewers' reports.

These reviewed proposals and their accompanying reviewers' reports will be submitted to a Review Panel of the NRF and BMBF/DLR-PT for final recommendation.

### 4.2 Criteria for reviewing proposals

Expert reviewers will assess all eligible proposals based on the following criteria:

- I. Compliance with the funding aims of the call stated in section 2
- II. Scientific Criteria:
  - a. Scientific quality and originality of the project
  - b. Relevance to other NRF or BMBF programmes on the topic
  - c. Expertise of the applicant and the German and international partners involved
  - d. Scientific and societal benefits and prospects for the exploitation of the expected results
- III. Criteria concerning bilateral cooperation
  - a. Initiation/development of new bilateral partnerships

- b. Experience of the applicant in international cooperation
- c. Creation of lasting bilateral/international partnerships
- d. Quality of the cooperation and added value for the partner institutions
- e. Support for young researchers

IV. Plausibility and feasibility of the project (financing; milestones; time frame)

#### 4.2.1 Expected Impact on bilateral cooperation

- Strong potential to generate (or develop existing) bilateral partnership/cooperation with other research organisations.
- Strong potential to support young researchers to develop a bilateral/international network.

#### 4.2.2 Excellence of the project

- Strong potential to generate new knowledge, insights and/or innovations and sufficient complementarity to other research programmes.
- Adequacy of the research approach including the robustness of the conceptual framework and experimental set-up and the coherence of the hypotheses, research questions and methods.
- Clear alignment of the proposed research scope with the thematic focus of the Call.
- Disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary value add.

#### 4.2.3 Expected Impact of the project

- Clear rooting of the proposal in the demands of partners and/or stakeholders, including appropriate integration of gender and youth.
- Quality and feasibility of the research impact pathway with indicators.
- Adequate potential for uptake/application of results including quality of the knowledge sharing approach with appropriate stakeholder engagement, capacity development and communication strategy.
- Scientific benefits and prospects for the exploitation of the expected results.

#### 4.2.4 Quality and efficiency of the implementation

- Complementarity, range and level of integration of the consortium and research team, appropriate for implementing the proposed research project.
- Adequacy and feasibility of the research methodology/approach and activities, in relation to research questions and objectives as well as the related work plan.
- Adequacy, feasibility and coherence of the various activities to enhance impact, in particular by influencing national and/or regional policies.

## 5 Contact details and other information

### 5.1 Contact

Prior to submission of an application, prospective applicants should contact the respective national agency for detailed information about respective national requirements pertaining to applications and funding.

#### 5.1.1 Specific questions

For specific content-related questions about this call for proposals please contact:

Contact person NRF:  
Teuns Phahlamohlaka  
+27 12 481 4385  
[Teuns.phahlam@nrf.ac.za](mailto:Teuns.phahlam@nrf.ac.za)

Contact persons DLR-PT:  
Dr Kerstin Silvestre Garcia  
+49 228-3821-1480  
[Kerstin.Garcia@dlr.de](mailto:Kerstin.Garcia@dlr.de)

Christian Schache  
+49 228-3821-1465  
[Christian.Schache@dlr.de](mailto:Christian.Schache@dlr.de)

#### 5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system

For technical questions on the NRF online submission system please contact Mr Stephen Dlamini on tel. +27 12 481 4037 or email. [dlamini@nrf.ac.za](mailto:dlamini@nrf.ac.za) OR the NRF Support Desk on email: [supportdesk@nrf.ac.za](mailto:supportdesk@nrf.ac.za).

For technical questions about the DLR-PT online submission system PT-Outline please contact the support desk: [support-request@ptoutline.eu](mailto:support-request@ptoutline.eu) .

### Call Annexures

Annexure I: Format for Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level

