



Development Grants Programme

Managed by the Knowledge Fields Development Directorate of the NRF

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Framework Document

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PART A:

Background

A1. Purpose of the directorate

The purpose of the Knowledge Fields Development (KFD) directorate is: ***To facilitate the advancement of the frontiers of existing knowledge; and the development of new fields of knowledge, and the necessary associated research capacity within the context of national research and developmental challenges and strategic initiatives.***

KFD's primary focus is to facilitate and support activities at the beginning-end, i.e. basic research, of the research-innovation - commercialization value chain. In addressing its goals, the directorate also complements and works in tandem with other research value-chain directorates of Research and Innovation Support and Advancement.

The Knowledge Fields Development Directorate identifies and coordinates a number of knowledge field development activities for implementation each year. These activities are supported by way of short term grants that are typically once off. It is only under very special circumstance that additional support will be made available for further development of the same initiative. Choice and setting of priorities of activities are done either through the directed or non-direct approach. The **directed approach** involves activities that are aligned with national strategic priorities, and may be identified internally by the NRF or in collaboration with the research community. The **non-directed** approach involves activities identified and coordinated by the research community itself, and funded by KFD.

A2. Purpose of the development grants programme

The NRF recognizes the need for the development of new knowledge fields, the creation of new or sub-fields that spin-off from existing fields, as well as the need to revitalize fields (or parts thereof) that may be in decline. Development grants are specifically designed to target knowledge fields that have been neglected in some way, or are new and require some initial support. The NRF also recognizes the importance of pulling together like minded people to stimulate new thinking and advance existing ideas.

The Development Grants Programme support the examination and analysis of research interests, trends, gaps and strengths within and across disciplines and knowledge **fields**. The Directorate provides Development Grants in an effort to support and promote the development of new fields; as well as to re-invigorate and stimulate existing fields or subfields that may be lagging behind or deteriorating. The support may be focused on pure fields, or interdisciplinary and / or trans-disciplinary fields. The programme thus strives to support initiatives that examine, analyse and pave the way for the advance knowledge **fields**.

Knowledge Fields Development is achieved by, inter alia:

1. Promoting active interaction between researchers within and across disciplines and knowledge fields;
2. Strengthening scientific and professional organisations of the South African research community; and
3. Strengthening networks within and beyond the South African research community

Such activities (and others not specified here) will only be considered for support under the Development Grants Programme if there is a strong argument for how the activity will develop or contribute to the advancement of a specific **knowledge field, fields or sub-field**. Only activities that specifically relate to **research field/s** development will be supported, and not activities understood to be development work as widely defined. Development grants aim to move a wider knowledge field forward, and as such are not concerned with individual research interests. Development grants are only concerned with research development, and **only** at the **field** level.

Development activities as identified and co-ordinated by the research community are thus focused on:

- Particular fields;
- Interdisciplinary and/ or
- Trans-disciplinary combinations.

These activities typically include *inter alia* roundtable discussions, advisory committees, workshops; forum meetings; symposia, audits of professional associations etc., in support of the development of a field, both with the research community and with other stakeholders (government; industry; etc.).

This means that the following initiatives will NOT be considered for supported by way of Knowledge Fields Development Grants:

- Activities that are/or could be supported by way of **other NRF funding programmes** like the , Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration (KIC), science liaison, mobility grants, human and institutional capacity, and research programmes etc. and applicants may therefore be re-directed to these programme offerings;
- **Conferences and conference attendance**, as these are supported by the Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration (KIC) programme;
- Initiatives that could be directly funded through **strategic initiatives** with specific funding programmes, such as those funded through the Grand Challenges or geographic advantage contracts;
- Individual research interests or **research projects** (i.e. research into questions posed by scientific or scholarly theories and hypotheses);
- **General (community/people) development initiatives** unless they are **research** development focused;
- **Community engagement** initiatives;
- **Curriculum development**;
- **Human capacity development**, unless such applications contain a strong argument for how the activity will **also** examine, analyse and / or advance a specific knowledge **field** or **fields**.
 - **Training courses** are therefore not supported.
 - **Post-graduate studies and bursaries** will also not be considered;

A3. Forums

Development grants will also make available start-up funds to support the coming together of **forums** that are specifically aimed at addressing the development and/or strengthening of new, “breakaway”/spinoff fields and or emerging areas or trends that arise in the national or global interest and require specific attention.

Of particular interest will be applications that look to develop emerging or new, scientific trends or new field combinations, emerging or unexplored fields. Such coming together will ideally be to decide on the way forward for the new initiative, with a view to it ultimately developing into a professional body or scientific organization in its own right.

Clearly then, the normal functioning of associations or “working groups” (or equivalent) will not qualify for support under this programme. Successful forum applications will include an exposition on sustainability of the forum into the future, as well as clearly justify how they are different from the ordinary workings of an association or society.

Support for new forums will be **limited** to 1 event per annum for not more than 2 years.

It is understood that the framework document will be revised and updated from time to time.

The Knowledge Fields Development Directorate reserves the right to amend the Knowledge Fields Development Grants Programme criteria.

PART B:

Submission and Assessment Process

B1. Eligibility

Development Grants will be awarded for the development of any discipline or field of research, including those in of the Social Sciences, Humanities, the Law, Natural science, Engineering and Technology.

Grants will only be awarded to applicants employed at the NRF recognised research institutions, like , science councils, museums and publicly funded higher education institutions.

B2. Submission & Adjudication Process

The submission and assessment process consists of the following processes:

Proposal submission to the NRF »» Assessment by KFD adjudication panel
»» Decision and outcome »» Award

There is a monthly deadline for all submissions to be considered in the following month. Applications submitted to the NRF on or before the 25th of each month will be considered within 2 weeks by a constituted KFD panel, and outcomes will be available in the following month. Applications received after the 25th of the month will be considered in the next round.

For example: Applications received on the 24th May will be adjudicated in the June adjudication panel, and the outcomes will be available towards the end of June. Applications received on the 26th May will be assessed in the July adjudication panel, and the outcomes will be made available towards the end of July.

It is advisable that applicants allow for a **2 month** lead time for their activity; and that they thus submit applications at least 2 months before the proposed intervention.

All applications **must be**:

- Endorsed by the appropriate institutional designated (Research) authority
- Converted to PDF format
- Submitted to **Ms. Pamela Mteto** (Pamela@nrf.ac.za) of the Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA).

Please see further detail in section B4 below.

B3. Selection Criteria

The development grant proposal must demonstrate evidence of the following considerations:

- The extent to which the proposal sets out the case for developing or rejuvenating a particular field or sub-field.
- How the development of the field or sub-field aligns with national strategies or priorities.
- The potential capacity outcomes as a function of the development grant activity.
- A clear and demonstrated rationale for the chosen activity.

B4. Submission of Proposals

Proposals will be submitted using the standard application template provided (<http://www.nrf.ac.za/projects.php?pid=52>). The proposal submission must carry the research office stamp, and must include a signed endorsement from a designated authority within the applicant's institution.

Proposals can be submitted throughout the year, and will be considered as per the NRF internal panel adjudication process detailed in section B2 above.

Endorsed proposals must be submitted in electronic PDF format to Pamela@nrf.ac.za.

PART C:

Management of the Development Grants

C1. Duration of the Development Grant

Development Grants vary widely in nature, and as such vary in their duration. These are however, understood to be **short-term grants**, and as such **may not continue for more than one year**. Typically, the modalities for support may include: roundtable meetings, workshops, seminars, colloquia, winter schools or any other relevant activity that will support the development of a research field.

C2. Management of the Development Grant

On accepting the award, the development grant grantholder will be required to comply with the Conditions of Grant (supplied separately by the Grants Management and Systems Administration – GMSA of NRF); and deliver on the stated activities and outcomes, as outlined in the proposal. Grantholders will be required to submit a project report on the grant within 2 months after the completion of the activity.

C3. Funding Levels

The Knowledge Fields Development Directorate's development grants normally range **from approximately R 20 000 to not more than R200 000** per proposal. This award can cover expenses such as travel costs, venue hire, operating costs and a 10% administration levy for management or co-ordination of the event. This information serves as a guide, and well motivated variations can be tabled in the application and negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The assessment process will consider proposed budgets in terms of cost, risk and reward ratios. The assessment process will be governed by the overall programme funds available.

C4. Payment of Grants

Upon receipt of the signed Conditions of Grant letter, the NRF will release 90% of the awarded amount. Grantholders will then be required to comply with the standard NRF financial management procedures.

Upon receipt and approval of the final project report, the NRF will release the remaining 10% of the awarded amount.

C5. Reporting

Development grant reports must be submitted within 1 calendar month after the completion of the activity, in electronic PDF format using the report template provided (<http://www.nrf.ac.za/projects.php?pid=52>).

Development grant reports will be submitted to Pamela@nrf.ac.za. These reports should address:

- the outcomes and highlights of the development intervention
 - the implications of these for the further development of the field
- and**
- must also include a financial statement of income and expenditure incurred on the project.

Contacts:

Should you require clarification on any of the process, criteria or approach presented in this Guide, please contact Mrs. Tracy Klarenbeek (tracy@nrf.ac.za)

Should you require any information on the administration of your grant once it has been awarded, please contact Ms. Pamela Mteto (Pamela@nrf.ac.za)