



SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION



National
Research
Foundation

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Swiss South African Joint Research Programme (SSAJRP)

Joint Research Projects: Call for Proposals 2016

A maximum of 12 joint projects will be funded

Opening date: 1 March 2016
Closing date: 31 May 2016

1. Introduction

Established in December 2007 by the Swiss and South African governments to promote scientific and technological cooperation between Switzerland and South Africa, the Swiss South African Joint Research Programme (SSAJRP) rests on the principles of mutual interest, scientific excellence, and reciprocity (matching funds).

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) have been mandated to launch a third call for Joint Research Projects (JRPs), organize the evaluation of the submitted proposals and monitor the funded projects.

2. Joint Research Proposals

Grants for JRPs are aimed at promoting collaborative projects with clearly defined goals involving at least one partner based in Switzerland and one based in South Africa. Applications should describe *ambitious* research and propose innovative approaches. The research is to be carried out at the research facilities involved. Reciprocal visits and short stays in Switzerland for researchers from South Africa and vice versa are also included within the scope of a JRP.

With this Phase of funding, both Switzerland and South Africa have agreed to make fewer awards (reduce from the 25 awards made in the previous phase to 12 awards for this phase) but with increased levels of support for longer periods (four-year funding instead of the usual three years) in order to facilitate the development of sustainable institutional links between the two countries. Extending the period of funding to 4 years will also ensure the development of research capacity in identified research fields through the support of PhD students within each project. Therefore, PIs should ensure that a certain portion of the funds per project are used for the mobility of the assigned PhD students per project.

The aim with this third call is not only to build on existing, outstanding and established research partnerships but to also foster new linkages and engagements with small cohorts of young researchers for new links between South Africa and Switzerland. The basis of selection will be excellence with a clear intention to address diversity.

3. Duration of the projects

The projects will be supported for a period of 4 years.

4. Research fields

In order to make targeted use of the financial resources available, the following thematic areas have been chosen for this call:

- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being: from new tools to systems understanding
- Sustainability, focusing on the following fields: Environmental Sciences, Engineering and energy-related issues
- Social sciences and humanities (including law) in the context of current and coming societal challenges
- Methodologies and technologies for data intensive applications

Proposals outside the thematic areas defined above will not be accepted.

5. Eligibility

Each proposal for a JRP must have one main applicant based in Switzerland and one main applicant based in South Africa; they are the principal investigators on the Swiss and South African sides respectively. They bear the main responsibility for the project including its technical and administrative coordination as well as timely delivery of scientific and financial reports. Further applicants based in Switzerland and/or in South Africa can also participate in the consortia. Applicants are allowed to collaborate with other partners such as NGOs or companies, but none of the funding can go to these. Former PIs are welcome to participate in the call; however, the project should not only be a continuation of the current/past project.

Eligibility criteria in Switzerland

Applicants requesting funding must meet the eligibility requirements of the SNSF. The SNSF Funding Regulations (in effect from 1 January 2016) and the Regulations on Project Funding (in effect from 2 April 2016) are applicable or applicable mutatis mutandis where not stated otherwise. Each applicant/co-applicant may only apply for one project. Project partners are not eligible.

Eligibility criteria in 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 or science council. The South African principal investigator must be in possession of a PhD. Commercial institutions and private education institutions are not eligible to apply under this programme.

6. Funding

JRP proposals contain two separate budgets: one budget in CHF for the Swiss part (paid by the SNSF according to the SNSF's rules) and one budget in ZAR for the South African applicant(s) (paid by the NRF according to the NRF's rules).

- The maximum budget allowed for a project is CHF 350,000. The total budget available in Switzerland is CHF 4.2 million.
- The total amount applied for from the NRF should not exceed ZAR 2.6 million per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of four years, to be paid in annual instalments (ZAR 650,000 per year) and exclusively for research activities commencing in 2017.

The available budget will enable funding of up to 12 joint projects. The funding per project is sufficient for each side to cover its consumables, small equipment and the travel costs related to the project. Additionally, the Swiss side will typically be able to provide for salaries.

Eligible costs in Switzerland

The funding categories are:

- **Equipment:** costs of material of enduring value (indicate manufacturer, type and distributor). Quotations – if possible, from different competitors – must be enclosed for items whose purchase price exceeds CHF 20,000.
- **Research funds:** funds needed to carry out the project, such as travel costs, room and board costs, field expenses, expendable items and unavoidable sundry expenses. The SNSF does not

finance the acquisition or maintenance of expendable items that are part of the infrastructure of an institution (books, PCs, rental costs, etc.).

- **Salaries:** the funding is sufficient to finance the salary of a PhD student or part of the salary of a postdoc (salaries for main or co-applicants are not eligible).
- **Social security contributions**

The SNSF regulations apply to the Swiss budget. Overhead costs are not admissible.

Eligible costs in South Africa

Cooperative activities covered include:

- Consumables
- Equipment (max. 10% of the South African budget)
- Joint seminars, workshops and symposia
- Other research costs

South African researchers are urged to encourage their PhD students (who have been selected as members of the project team under this scheme) to apply for Bursaries through the NRF's "Scholarship and Fellowship Funding Programmes" which are usually launched June/July of every year and close 2 months following the opening date. A full list of these PhD students (indicating their names, gender, race, and an anticipated research topic) should be submitted with the project proposal (see Annex 3). The NRF would like to be able to track and trace the students' applications once submitted through these programmes. Actual opening and closing dates of these student support funding programmes should be verified with Dr Kwezi Mzilikazi, Director: Human Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD) at either +27 12 481 4191 or e-mail address: Kwezi.mzilikazi@nrf.ac.za. This is a very central component to this call as both the NRF and SNSF need to ensure the development of research capacity in identified research fields through the support of PhD students within each project.

Salaries and temporary staff fees, project management fees, and large equipment will not be included in the funds for South African researchers.

Visiting costs between Switzerland and South Africa

When budgeting for visits between the Swiss and South African partners, the travel expenses are to be charged to the budget of the visitor and the living expenses to the budget of the host. Health insurance should be arranged and paid for by the visitor.

The following flat-rates are to be used:

- Living expenses for visiting scientists from South Africa to Switzerland:
 - Short-term visits (up to two weeks): CHF 160 per day
 - Long-term visits: CHF 3,600 per month
- Living expenses for visiting scientists from Switzerland to South Africa:
 - Short-term visits (up to two weeks): ZAR 1,200 per day
 - Long-term visits (more than two weeks): ZAR 37,200 per month
- Travel expenses for visiting scientists from Switzerland to South Africa:
 - To Johannesburg: CHF 1,500 per person
 - To other places in South Africa: CHF 1,700 per person

- Travel expenses for visiting scientists from South Africa to Switzerland
 - From Johannesburg: ZAR 18,000 per person
 - From other places in South Africa: ZAR 20,000 per person

7. Submission

Proposals are to be jointly prepared by Swiss and South African applicants. They must be submitted by the Swiss main applicant to the SNSF via its electronic submission system (*mySNF*, www.mysnf.ch). South African partners can have access to the electronic submission system through their Swiss partner.

South African researchers are asked to note that all applications must be submitted via the SNSF online system, as indicated above. Applications submitted in South Africa and not via the SNSF online system in Switzerland will not be processed.

Swiss researchers are asked to note that their submission falls under the new SNSF Funding Regulations, which came into effect on 1 January 2016 and under the new Regulations on Project Funding, which will come into effect on 2 April 2016. The SNSF Funding Regulations and the Regulations on Project Funding are applicable or applicable mutatis mutandis where not stated otherwise.

No hard copies will be accepted. The call process is highly competitive, therefore an application does not guarantee funding. Only the best rated applications will be considered for funding.

After logging into *mySNF*, applicants must select the correct funding scheme (Programmes (national and international) > Bilateral Cooperation (Initiatives of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation) > Swiss South African Joint Research Programme (SSAJRP)).

The application consists of two parts:

- The administrative part, which must be completed online
 - Personal data of the Swiss main applicant
 - Personal data of the South African main applicant
 - Personal data of the co-applicant(s) from Switzerland and/or South Africa
 - Basic data on the project (e.g. title, research field, starting date, duration, summary)
 - Funding requested from the SNSF
 - Information on authorisations required in Switzerland
 - Other information (e.g. whether the project is related to other SNSF projects, the name of the Swiss university/research institution at which the planned project will be implemented, information on national and international collaborations, statement concerning already available funds or funds requested elsewhere)
- PDF documents to be uploaded to *mySNF*
 - The research plan (must have the structure indicated in Annex 1) including the funding requested from the NRF
 - The CVs and publication lists of **all** applicants and other researchers involved. The CVs of the South African partners must indicate their Identity Document (ID) Number and/or passport number, their race and gender

- Document indicating names (incl. gender, race and an anticipated research topic) of South African PhD students who will form part of the project team and who will be applying for the NRF scholarship schemes (see Annex 3)
- Confirmations from the South African institute bearing the relevant stamps and signatures (see Annex 2)
- If applicable, equipment quotes
- Other documents

For specific questions related to www.mysnf.ch, please contact the support team by e-mail (mysnf.support@snf.ch) or telephone (+41 31 308 22 00). Please note that you need a user account in order to submit proposals via *mySNF*. To open an account, please [register with the SNSF as a user](#). Applicants with existing user accounts need not apply for new ones.

Deadline for submission of applications: 31 May 2016 (midnight CEST). Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Language: All the information provided in the administrative part and all uploaded documents must be in English.

8. Evaluation

Peer review: Proposals for JRPs will be reviewed according to international peer review standard procedures, jointly organised by the SNSF and the NRF. The peer review experts are designated by the members of the evaluation panel. These external experts do a peer review of the applications in a score system, verifying the scientific quality of JRPs.

Evaluation panel: An evaluation panel will be set up; it will be composed of experts proposed by the SNSF and the NRF. Based on the peer reviews, the evaluation panel will assign each project to one of six evaluation categories. Recommendations will include rationale. Priority will be given to applications in the highest categories regardless of the research area.

Decision: At the SNSF, the rating effected by the evaluation panel will need to be approved by the Specialised Committee for International Co-operation and the Presiding Board. At the NRF, it will be approved by the Executive Director (in consultation with the DST). Finally, the SNSF and the NRF will present a consolidated recommendation to the Swiss-South African Joint Committee. This body will take the final decision.

The criteria used to evaluate the scientific quality of the proposals:

- Scientific relevance and interest of the project at national and international level
- Originality of the aims and objectives
- Appropriateness of the methodology
- Experience and past performance of applicants
- Competence of research partners with respect to the project
- Complementary qualities of research partners
- Feasibility of the project
- Capacity building

The evaluation results will be communicated to the researchers as soon as the final decision is taken and also approved by all parties involved (probably December 2016). The Swiss main

applicant will receive a decision letter from the SNSF. In case of rejection, the main reasons leading to the decision will be given. In case of approval, the Swiss budget and the conditions will be listed. If applicable, the Swiss main applicant will be responsible for transmitting the decision to the other Swiss applicants. The South African main applicant will be informed by the NRF via a standard decision letter.

Earliest possible starting date for the JRPs: February 2017

9. Reporting

Swiss and South African project partners will report separately to the SNSF and to the NRF respectively. Scientific and financial reports are to be submitted annually. The SNSF and the NRF will prepare a common template for the scientific report, so that the consortia will only need to prepare one report to be submitted to both organisations.

In Switzerland:

The Swiss main applicant will be responsible for reporting to the SNSF. Both for the financial and the scientific report, the standard SNSF rules will apply. However, scientific reports must be submitted annually. They include a qualitative and a quantitative part (output data).

In South Africa:

A commitment to both scientific and financial reporting on the project annually, and upon its completion, to the NRF, is the responsibility of the South African Principal Investigator and an obligatory condition of funding for subsequent years.

10. Payments

In Switzerland (SNSF funding):

The standard SNSF rules apply. In principle, the budgets for JRPs are transferred in annual instalments to the Swiss PI at the beginning of a project year.

In South Africa (NRF funding):

Funding is paid into the account and administered by the institutions to which PIs are affiliated. The funds are transferred in annual instalments (taking into consideration the annual progress reports from PIs).

11. VAT

In Switzerland (SNSF funding):

The JRP grants are not subject to VAT or other taxes and charges. However, research expenses are not excluded from VAT. All costs budgeted in a JRP (e.g. equipment, consumables, etc.) can therefore be charged to the programme, VAT included, unless the research institution (e.g. university, public research organisation, etc.) is able to recover the VAT.

In South Africa (NRF funding):

There are no VAT implications for South African researchers.

12. Publications and intellectual property

The PIs are obliged to publish research results coming from the JRPs in appropriate form and according to SNSF and NRF standards. Applicants must consult both the Swiss and South African host institution concerning their internal intellectual property regulations. For market-oriented projects, it is important that an agreement be reached in advance. It is the responsibility of both PIs to make sure such an agreement is signed before the project starts.

13. Further information and contacts

In Switzerland

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Annex 1: Guidelines for writing the research plan (scientific part of the proposal)

The research plan should be organised in 5 sections (2.1. – 2.5.), preceded by a summary (1.) and followed by additional information requested for the South African side (requested funding from the NRF, research authorisation in South Africa) (3.).

We kindly ask you to use the section headings indicated below. The proposals will be sent out for external review. In order to ensure that the scientific content of your proposal can be adequately assessed, please provide a detailed research plan which sets out clearly the aims, objects and methods of the project you are planning.

1. Summary of the research plan (max. 8000 characters)

Should briefly describe the most important aspects of your research plan and place your project in a broader scientific context. This summary should be an exact copy of the one you have written in the *mySNF* data container “Basic data II”.

2. Research plan

Maximum 20 pages and 80,000 characters including blank space, figures, tables, formulae and references. The font size should be 10 pt with a line spacing of 1.5. In general, appendices are to be avoided.

2.1 Current state of research in the field

By citing the most important publications in the relevant field, please set out the scientific background and basis of the project, explain the need to perform research on the topic you propose, and briefly describe important research currently being conducted internationally.

2.2 Current state of your own research and partnership aspect

- Please describe briefly the work done by the different applicants in the relevant research field or in related fields and indicate the relevant publications.
- Explain how the different applicants complement each other for the proposed research project
- Describe past collaborations that involved the Swiss and South African partners (if applicable).

2.3 Detailed research plan

Information on aims, rationale, methods and data

Against the background described in sections 2.1 and 2.2., please state the aims that you plan to attain during the lifetime of the project. Please consider the following points:

- Which investigations and / or experiments do you plan to carry out / are necessary to attain the stated aims?
- What is the rationale for getting the project started and how will the work most likely develop later on?

Information concerning the methods necessary to attain the aims:

- Which are the methods available to you?
- To which other methods do you have access and how?
- Which methods need to be developed?

Data and data collection:

- Which data are available to you and from where?
- Which data still need to be collected?

2.4 Work division, schedule and milestones

- Please indicate how you plan to divide the work among the different partners
- As far as possible, please give an approximate schedule for the work to be carried out within the scope of the project and indicate the most important milestones. In particular, please describe the major tasks of the staff to be employed in the project by the different partners.
- List the planned visits between the Swiss and South African research groups (visiting scientist, hosting scientist, purpose of visit, date and duration of visit).

2.5 Importance and impact

Scientific importance and impact

Please describe briefly the importance of your research to the scientific community and the impact you expect the project to have on research and training/teaching in your field/discipline and on human capacity development (e.g. to what extent will the project benefit the PhD students). Please indicate how you will publish/communicate your results.

Broader impact

If your application concerns use-inspired research, please indicate whether and to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be. The following points should be addressed:

- Need for research as perceived by practitioners/industry: Are there any knowledge gaps? Are innovations and improvements expected?
- Transferability of results: To what degree can research results be put into practice?
- Other potential impacts: In which spheres outside science could the implementation of the research results entail changes and what is the nature of these changes?

3. Additional information requested from the South African side

3.1 Budget requested from the NRF

Please indicate the budget requested by the South African partners in ZAR. The budget should be subdivided by year (year 1, year 2, year 3, year 4 and total), by South African partner (e.g. South African PI, other South African partner – including the PhD students – and total) and by funding category (consumables; equipment, joint seminars, workshops and symposia; International travelling, accommodation and subsistence; total). The table below provides an example of what the budget requested from South Africa should look like.

| Category | SA Partner | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Total |
|--|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Consumables | PI | | | | | |
| | 2 nd | | | | | |
| | PhD student | | | | | |
| | Total | | | | | |
| Equipment | PI | | | | | |
| | 2 nd | | | | | |
| | PhD student | | | | | |
| | Total | | | | | |
| Joint seminars, workshops and symposia | PI | | | | | |
| | 2 nd | | | | | |
| | PhD student | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | Total | | | | | |
| International travelling, accommodation and subsistence | PI | | | | | |
| | 2 nd | | | | | |
| | PhD student | | | | | |
| | Total | | | | | |
| Total | PI | | | | | |
| | 2nd | | | | | |
| | PhD student | | | | | |
| | Total | | | | | |

The budget requested from the SNSF does not need to be indicated here. It is to be specified in the *mySNF* data container “Requested funding from SNSF”.

3.2 Research authorisations required in South Africa

Scientists from South Africa who intend to perform research requiring authorisation or notification (for research on humans, human embryonic stem cells, vertebrates, decapods, cephalopods, pathogens and genetically modified organisms) in their project must declare this below. Copies of the authorisation or notification can either be scanned and uploaded in the course of the online submission or sent to the SNSF by regular mail.

The research authorisations required in Switzerland do not need to be indicated here. This information is to be provided in the *mySNF* data container “Research requiring authorisation or notification”.

Annex 2: Confirmation of South African institute

Please upload, in *mySNF* under the data container “Other annexes”, a confirmation from each participating South African institute (Research Authorizing Officers) bearing the relevant stamps and signatures. The table below provides an example of what the requested confirmation should look like.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Principal Investigator Name (SA): | |
| Position: | |
| Signature: | Date: |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Research Authorising Officer Name: | |
| Signature: | Date: |

Annex 3: South African PhD students

Please list all of the PhD students who will be involved in the project on the South African side.

| Name | Gender | Race | Research topic | Would the student be applying for an NRF Scholarship for 2016? |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|---|
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