



THE NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

JOINT PROGRAMME ON DIMENSIONS OF BIODIVERSITY

Call for Joint International Research Coordination Networks (IRCNs) in Environmental Biology

Closing Date: Call is open all year round until November 2018

Applications from Stellenbosch University submitted before or on the 24th of each month will be processed

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Directorate of Biological Sciences and the National Research Foundation (NRF) have formed a partnership to promote opportunities for collaboration between researchers of the United States and South Africa. This collaboration offers the United States and South African researchers an opportunity to apply for funding for International Research Coordination Networks (IRCNs) in Biodiversity.

Areas of Cooperation and Aims of the IRCN

The IRCN mechanism provides an opportunity for South African and U.S. research communities to communicate and coordinate their research activities on a wide range of environmental biology topics, including ecosystem forecasting and monitoring, community origin, maintenance and function, species diversity and evolutionary relationships, emerging diseases and pests, and biodiversity theory. Projects are expected to enhance current collaborations and establish new collaborations between the U.S. and South African biodiversity research communities to help prioritise research topics, enhance complementary research activities, and identify new synergistic research directions. The overall aim of the IRCN mechanism is to facilitate networking and knowledge sharing. Therefore, direct research-related activities will not be funded through this Programme. Proposals outside the above-mentioned broad thematic area of focus will not be accepted.

Please Note:

- In terms of human capital development, joint projects that involve young scientists and pay attention to gender equality (a balanced involvement of female and male researchers) will be positively considered.
- In terms of the South African transformation agenda, South African applications from previously disadvantaged higher education and research institutions and the involvement of previously disadvantaged individuals will be prioritised.

Duration of projects

Funded networks will be supported for a period of five years starting from 2018.

Who may apply?

Each proposal under this Programme must have one main applicant based in South Africa and one main applicant based in the United States; they are the **Principal Investigators (PIs)** and they bear the main responsibility for the project including its technical and administrative coordination as well as timely delivery of scientific and financial reports.

South Africa

This call is open to working researchers residing in South Africa and affiliated with a recognised public higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology or science council. Private higher education institutions are not eligible to apply under this programme. The South African applicant must be in possession of a PhD.

United States

Details on who is eligible to apply for IRCN funding from NSF can be found at:

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2018/nsf18024/nsf18024.jsp>

Which activities may I apply for?

The purpose of this programme is to support existing and new coordination networks to facilitate research and knowledge sharing between researchers, scientists, post-docs and doctoral students of the two countries. The funding of the bilateral networking activities is based on the **principle of reciprocity**. Research activities as such **will not be supported in this programme**. Therefore, the funds for this programme can only be used to finance the cost of the exchange of researchers, such as:

- Networking events and/or knowledge sharing events (i.e. joint workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, lecturer presentations, meetings, regional conferences, etc.).
- International travel, accommodation, subsistence and local travel of researchers.
- Short-term exchanges of the partnering researchers' postgraduate students.
- Other networking activities as defined and motivated by the partnering researchers. (Note from DA: this could include consumables and small equipment)

The following **will not** be funded from the **South African** side: consultant's fees, educational expenses (scholarships and/or bursaries), large equipment, project management /administration fees, overheads, salaries and temporary staff fees.

Funding modalities

South Africa

The total amount requested from the NRF should not exceed R2.5 mil per IRCN. Funding will be made available for a maximum of 5-years, to be paid in annual installments (of R500k per annum).

United States

Total amount requested from the NSF should not exceed \$500 000 US dollars per IRCN. Funding will be made available for a maximum of 5-years.

How do I apply?

The onus is on applicants to find their own research partners. **Proposals must be received in both South Africa (NRF) and United States (NSF)**. Proposals which have not been received in both countries will not be considered for funding. The call process is highly competitive therefore application does not guarantee funding. Both the NRF and NSF will not be held responsible for non-submission of the application in the partner country.

South Africa

Applicants can apply by following the steps below:

- Applications must be submitted electronically on the NRF Online Submission System at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za/>
- Register/Login using your ID/passport number and password.
- Go to "My Applications" and select "Create Application".
- Select the call for which you are applying: **NRF/NSF International Research Coordination Networks (IRCNs) Joint Call for Proposals 2018**.
- Complete all compulsory sections and the CV sections in full. (Note from DA: detailed project description **needs to be attached - the application form does not provide space for this**)
- **Please attach the required compulsory documents in PDF format in the following order:**
 - CV of partner and the budget of the partner (Note from DA: CV of partner PI, not all team members; detailed budget of USA partner not needed, but indicate amount of annual contribution and for what type of activity)
 - Description of the network (provide in detail the scientific underpinning of the network, mode of cooperation, methodology and plan of work describing respective roles of the co-operating partners and activities, possible impact of the cooperation (max. 12 000 words))
 - A table listing the student involved and of all other participants (e.g. Researcher, Student, Country collaborators, Partner Country Participants) (Note from DA: Participants from both the SA and US teams should be indicated - names, contact details and professional levels)
 - Placement Plan for doctoral and post-doctoral students
 - South African Principal Investigator Budget
- Failure to submit compulsory documents will result in the disqualification of the application.
- Remember to **submit** your application on completion.
- Completed applications will go to the host institution for verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered.
- Applications submitted outside the NRF Online Submission System will not be accepted.
- 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 or research institutions will be accepted.
- Please contact your Research Office (Designated Authority) if you have any queries.
- **This call requires an endorsement letter from the Institution's Research Office (Designated Authority - DA) - Riana Coetsee (mjc@sun.ac.za) at Stellenbosch University - to confirm that the application was submitted to the NRF in South Africa. This letter should be sent to the Partner Principal as indicated on the application.**

United States

Details on how to apply for IRCN funding from NSF can be found at:

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2017/nsf17594/nsf17594.htm>

How are applications evaluated?

Following the closing date indicated below, applications will be submitted to a joint panel review and the following criteria will be used to evaluate eligible proposals:

- Intellectual merit and broader impact.
- The means by which Principal Investigators plan to share information and ideas, coordinate ongoing or planned research activities, foster synthesis and new collaborations, develop community standards, and in other ways advance science through communication and sharing of ideas.
- Mutual benefit of the collaboration, true intellectual collaboration with the foreign partner(s), benefits to be realised from the expertise and specialised skills, facilities, sites and/or resources of the international partner.
- Active research engagement of South African students and early-career researchers, where such individuals are engaged in the IRCN activities.

The project selection will be carried out by both funders through consultations.

Project follow-up and reporting

- Principal Investigators are expected to submit progress reports to the NRF annually. Funds for the subsequent years will not be released by the NRF without a progress report.
- A final scientific and financial report should be submitted by both the South African and the United States project Principal Investigators no more than 3 months after the end of the project.
- The report should mention the outputs of the projects compared with the objectives and aims of the proposal.
- The joint publications by the researchers should mention the support from the NRF and NSF.

Intellectual property

The researchers of each country, particularly the PIs, must take adequate steps to ensure protection and sharing of the intellectual property that could result from the joint projects.

When is the closing date for applications?

This call is open all year round until **November 2018**. Please note that neither the NRF nor NSF will be held responsible for applications that were not received. Researchers are also advised to ensure that their research partners' applications are submitted and have also been received in the partner country.

Where can I obtain more information?

For National Research Foundation (SA)	For National Science Foundation (USA)
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