



BRICS Multilateral Joint Science and Technology Research Collaboration

2019 Call for Joint Project Proposals

DA Closing Date: 28 March 2019

*Please note that the NRF Online Submission System will only open on the 1st week of February 2019 for submission of applications. Researchers **must** consult their institutions for internal closing dates*

From the South African side a maximum of 10 joint projects will be funded for this call

Background

On 18 March 2015, the BRICS Ministers of Science and Technology signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a research and development collaborative programme between the BRICS countries. Following the signing of this MoU, the BRICS Group of Research Funding Parties held a meeting in July 2015 to discuss the BRICS Research and Innovation Initiatives and the establishment of the BRICS Working Group consisting of eight parties namely; National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq, Brazil), Foundation for Assistance to Small Innovative Enterprises (FASIE, Russia), Ministry of Education and Science (MON, Russia), Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR, Russia), Department of Science and Technology (DST, India), Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST, China), National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC, China) and National Research Foundation (NRF, South Africa).

On 28 October 2015 the III BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Ministerial Meeting signed the Moscow Declaration defining the guidelines for Research & Development cooperation among BRICS countries. In line with the objectives of the Moscow Declaration and the BRICS STI framework the NRF is pleased to announce the 3rd BRICS Multilateral Pilot call for 2019, and herewith invite all interested parties to submit their applications, by a date no later than that indicated.

Aims of the Programme

- To support excellent basic and applied research joint projects submitted in specified research fields identified by the BRICS partners through a multinational approach;
- To provide an opportunity for young and emerging researchers within BRICS countries to meet and interact;
- To contribute meaningfully to research capacity development through the provision of Masters' and Doctoral scholarships and student exchange programmes.

Areas of Cooperation

Joint research proposals should be submitted within the following six designated thematic areas prioritised by all BRICS countries:

1. Aeronautics
2. Astronomy
3. Biotechnology and biomedicine including human health and neuroscience
4. Geospatial technology and its applications
5. Information technologies and high performance computing
6. Material science including nanotechnology

7. New and renewable energy, and energy efficiency, including SSL
8. Ocean and polar science and technology
9. Photonics
10. Prevention and monitoring of natural disasters
11. Water resources and pollution treatment.

Please see the attached “BRICS STI Framework Programme” for a full description on each thematic area mentioned above.

Duration of projects

The projects will be supported for a period of three years (projects starting in January 2020).

Who may apply?

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 applicant must be in possession of a PhD and must have experience in supervising both Masters and PhD students.

A multi-institutional/ consortia approach will be preferred. Therefore, applicants are allowed to collaborate with other partners such as NGOs or companies. However, the NGOs and industry participants are expected to meet their participation costs in the joint project.

Please note:

- Cooperation projects with the potential to be sustained beyond the funding period will be favourably considered.
- Only joint proposals that involve at **least three or more** partners from the BRICS countries will be considered for funding.
- Joint projects that involve young scientists (through postgraduate fellowship support, exchange programmes or short placements) and pay attention to government equity targets by ensuring a balanced involvement of female and black researchers will be positively considered and will receive a higher rating.
- In terms of South Africa's transformation agenda applications from previously disadvantaged individuals and the involvement of historically disadvantaged higher education and research institutions will be prioritised.

How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted to the BRICS Call Secretariat and to each of the respective funding organisations in BRICS countries according to national regulations. Therefore, the same proposal to be received in South Africa should have been received by the BRICS Call Secretariat and the other BRICS partner countries (through their national rules). The expectation is that applicants will, amongst themselves, appoint a Project Coordinator whose responsibility will be to act as a point of contact between the project members and the Call Secretariat as well as to **submit a Joint Application Form (JAF) to the Call Secretariat by 25 April 2019.**

- (i) BRICS Call Secretariat:
 - Applicants are expected to download the Joint Application Form (JAF) available at http://brics-sti.org/files/JAF_BRICS_3rd_Call_2019.docx and submit to BRICS Call Secretariat.
 - The project coordinator must submit the JAF to the BRICS Call Secretariat through the online **BRICS STI Framework Programme Application Management System (AMS)** <http://ams.rfbr.ru/BRICS> **by 25th April 2019, 15:00 Moscow Time (UTC+3).**
 - A proposal not received by the BRICS Call Secretariat and by each of the respective funding organisations by the due date will not be considered for funding.
- (ii) South African applicants should further submit their applications by following the steps below:
 - Applications must be submitted through an online application process to the NRF on the NRF Online Submission System at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za/>. The NRF Online Submission System will open on the 1st week of February 2019 for submission of joint research proposals
 - An application with less than 3-BRICS countries as partners will not be accepted for funding.

- The onus is on the applicant to find their own research partners. The call process is highly competitive therefore application does not guarantee funding. The evaluation of applications from all countries should have positive ratings before consideration for funding. The NRF and BRICS Call Secretariat will not be held responsible for non-submission, administration or evaluation of the application in the partner countries.

Which activities may I apply for?

The purpose of this call is to support excellent research on priority areas which can best be addressed by a multinational approach. The initiative should facilitate cooperation among the researchers and institutions in the consortia which consist of partners from at least three of the BRICS countries.

Support will be provided for collaborative multilateral basic, applied and innovation research projects. Funds can be used to cover the following costs:

- **Research-related costs** - activities to be supported may include expenses relating to field work such as conducting interviews, research-related trips, publication, and running costs.
- **Exchange programmes** - mobility of researchers, postdocs and doctoral students between the partnering BRICS countries.
- **Masters and Doctoral positions** – The funds make provision for 1 Masters' and 1 Doctoral student per project. However, it is important to note that *scholarship support will be released on condition that nominated students meet the government equity targets.*
- **Knowledge sharing costs** - in support of project-related activities, such as joint workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, lecturer presentations, meetings, local and regional dissemination of results to relevant stakeholders.
- **Small equipment, consumables and accessories** – Up to a maximum of 25% of the budget may be budgeted for this item.

The PhD and Masters placements must be managed to fit within the original funded period of the studentship. Additional funding will not be made available through this call or by the funders to support studentship extensions for those undertaking international placements. Applicants should include information about how these exchanges will be managed within their proposal.

In the case of meetings, research visits and exchanges of scientists, personnel, experts and students, as well as reciprocal visits undertaken as part of joint research projects and the attendance of seminars, symposia and other meetings funded under this agreement, ***the sending side will be responsible for financing international travel, visas, medical insurance, accommodation and living expenses.*** Fees relating to the organisation of events (venue, catering, audio-visual equipment etc.) will also be the financial responsibility of the host investigator which is to be paid from his / her allocation of the joint funding.

The following may **NOT** be funded from this allocation: consultant's fees, large equipment, project management fees, salaries and temporary staff fees.

How much may I apply for?

The total amount requested from the NRF should not exceed **R2.640 mil per project.** Funding will be made available for a maximum of **3-years**, to be paid in annual installments (R880.000 per year) for research activities including both Masters and Doctoral students support commencing in 2020. The funds per project have to be utilised as follows:

- R2.1mil (at R700 000 per annum) for research activities, mobility costs of the research team, small equipment and knowledge sharing costs per project.
- R360.000 for 1 PhD scholarship per project (at R120.000 per student per annum for 3-years).
- R180.000 for 1 Masters' scholarship per project (at R90.000 per student per annum for 2-years).

Please take note that:

- should you be successful you will be funded only for the activities within the scope of the guidelines;
- scientific and financial reporting on the project is an **OBLIGATORY** condition of funding in subsequent years; and
- the requested amounts do not necessarily imply that this amount will be awarded upon selection for funding.

How are applications evaluated?

Following the closing date indicated, applications will be subject to a scientific peer review. The panel will include recognised local experts in the various fields of research represented by the proposals received. These experts will evaluate each proposal based on the following broad criteria:

- Scientific quality and innovation of the joint research plan
- Sound project management, methodological approach, feasibility and appropriateness of the joint research plan
- Added value to be expected from the research collaboration
- Balanced cooperation
- Competence and expertise of teams and complementarities of consortium (interdisciplinary / all necessary expertise)
- Appropriateness of resources and funding requested
- Expected impacts: e.g. scientific, technological, economic, societal
- Opportunities for early career researchers – i.e. student involvement through exchange programmes and short-term placements (for capacity building purposes)
- Partnership/ potential partnership with industry
- Potential for promoting equity and redress / capacity building

Following local evaluation, a shortlist of projects to be funded will be constituted through consultations between the NRF and the other BRICS partners based on the results of the evaluations done in all countries.

Please note that, although all Parties undertake to execute the evaluation and selection process as quickly as possible so as to notify applicants of the results as soon as possible, the nature of the multilateral process requires the alignment of the commencement of each phase of the process with the partnering countries, whose schedules may differ significantly.

Project follow-up and reporting

- A final scientific and financial report will be submitted in English by the South African PI and the other project leaders no more than 3 month after the end of the project.
- The report will mention the outputs of the projects compared with the objectives and aims of the proposal.
- The joint publications by the researchers will mention the support from the NRF and partner organisations.

When is the closing date for applications?

South Africa

South African researchers must consult their institutions for internal closing dates. The cut-off date for the Designated Authorities (DAs) to submit applications to the NRF is **28 March 2019**. Applications submitted to the NRF after this cut-off date will not be considered for review.

BRICS Call Secretariat

Applications must be submitted to the call secretariat by **25th April 2019**, 15:00 Moscow Time (UTC+3).

Please note that the NRF or BRICS Call Secretariat will not 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 by the BRICS Call Secretariat as well as in the partner country.

Where can I obtain more information?

For content related queries	For technical related queries
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