Funding Instrument: **Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants**

Functional Domain: **Grants Management & Systems Administration**

Document: **Funding Guide**

Date: **January 2017**

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CONTACT DETAILS

The Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate of the National Research Foundation (NRF) processes all grant applications and is responsible for the management and administration of grants. Full details of application procedures are explained in this document.

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1 Introduction

The Funding Guide provides a brief overview of the Equipment-Related Travel and Training Grants (ERTTG) funding instrument, including issues of eligibility, exclusions, the application process, funding guidelines and review procedures. It does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF. It should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Framework, which is accessible at the following URL: https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za

2 Equipment-Related Travel and Training Grants

2.1 Overview

The ERTTG funding instrument seeks to improve the competitiveness of South African research by advancing the national research agenda as defined in the *National R&D Strategy*[1], the DST *Ten-Year Innovation Plan*[2]; and the strategic objectives of the NRF. Collectively, these seek to promote and support research through human resource development and facilitate access to state-of-the-art research equipment.

The NRF has, over the past several years, co-funded with the DST through a contractual agreement, both national and international travel costs in order to support researchers who require access to research equipment that is not available either regionally or nationally as well as the facilitation of workshops that focus on on-site training of instrumentation specialists, technicians, operators, researchers, postgraduate (masters and doctoral) students and other users.

2.2 Objectives

The ERTTG aim to support world-class research, enhance research collaboration nationally and internationally, and support the development of specialised skills required to sustainably manage and operate state-of-the-art research equipment.

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1 DST (2002). *South Africa's National Research and Development Strategy.* Pretoria, South Africa. Accessible at: http://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/resource-center/strategies-and-reports/159-south-africas-national-research-and-development-strategy

2 DST (2011). *The 10-Year Innovation Plan*. Pretoria, South Africa. Accessible at http://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/resource-center/strategies-and-reports/143-the-ten-year-plan-for-science-and-technology

The objectives of this funding instrument are to make funds available to support:

- The larger research community to access:
  - State-of-the-art equipment that is not available regionally and/or nationally;
  - Natural science collections such as those located at museums; and
  - Training workshops on the use of specialised equipment or feeder equipment that have been acquired through public funds and high-end equipment donated by the private sector;
- Researchers and postgraduate students in South Africa (SA) to Access Global Infrastructure (AGI) located nationally (e.g. SALT) or abroad such as synchrotron radiation facilities;
- Researchers and postgraduate students in SA to access natural science collections for the completion of their dissertations;
- Research institutions hosting training workshops on the use of feeder and/or specialised equipment that is acquired either through NRF and/or DST funds; and
- Hosting of Visiting Expert Instrument Scientists, that can aid NEP/NNEP grant-holder institutions to build capacity relating to the sustainable management of high-end equipment.

3 Scope

The rationale for this funding instrument is to make funds available to support the broader science community to access state-of-the-art research equipment that is not available at the home research institution, regionally or nationally. This will also include access to synchrotron facilities and other global infrastructures. The grants are divided into two categories, namely:

- Equipment-related **Travel Grants**; and
- Equipment-related **Training Grants**.

The travel and training grants are aimed at:

- Full-time postgraduate (masters and doctoral) students that require training and/or access to infrastructure for the completion of their dissertations - ***supervisor must apply on behalf of the postgraduate student;***
- Post-doctoral fellows - ***supervisor must apply on behalf of the post-doctoral fellow;***
- Technicians, instrument specialist and operators that are full-time employees at a public research institution; and

- Researchers that are ***full-time employees or staff on contract employment for 2 to 5 Years*** or at a public research institution.

3.1 Equipment-related Travel Grants

The objective of this intervention is to provide financial support for researchers, technical staff and postgraduate (master and doctoral) students to access state-of-the-art research equipment within SA or abroad, that is not available at their own research institution, nor other institutions regionally or nationally. This intervention is subdivided into two categories, namely:

3.1.1 General Equipment Travel Grants

This make funds available to researchers requiring access to specialised research equipment that is not available at their own institutions, regionally or nationally. The grant will cover national or international travel and subsistence costs as required as well as contributions towards the cost of equipment utilisation.

3.1.2 Outbound or inbound travel grants to Access Global Infrastructure (AGI).

The two options for AGI are:

- **Outbound Global Infrastructure** located outside of SA such as the Joint Institute of Nuclear Research (JINR) in Dubna, Russia, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland and European Synchrotron Radiation Facilities (ESRF) in Grenoble, France. Currently research cooperation agreements between SA and JINR, CERN and ESRF respectively are in place. However, access to other synchrotron radiation facilities and global research infrastructure will also be considered for support.
- **Inbound Global Infrastructure** located in SA such as the South African Large Telescope (SALT), MeerKAT, the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biology (ICGEB) and the National Facilities (NFs).

3.2 Equipment-related Training Grants[3]

This intervention makes funds available for:

- **Researchers** to host or attend workshops focused on training technical staff, postgraduate students and other users of:

[3] The initial training that forms part of the commissioning of new equipment **will not** be covered by this training grant as this may be factored into the purchase price of the equipment.

- Specialised or state-of-the-art research equipment; or
- Feeder equipment that complements the capabilities of state-of-the-art research equipment.

Such equipment must have been acquired either through NRF and/or DST grant awards. This type of intervention may include practical training and short courses on the use of such research equipment; and

- Institutions that have been awarded NEP/NNEP grants, and require skills training from expert instrument scientists on the sustainable management of the research equipment. These institutions may apply for funding to host a visiting instrument scientist. The instrument scientist may be hosted by the applying research institution for a minimum period of one (1) month to a maximum period of six (6) months due to his/her scarce skill in the use of a specific instrument that has been acquired through NRF and/or DST funds.

4 Application Process

4.1 Eligibility criteria

All applicants must be **full-time staff members or staff on contract employment for 2 to 5 Years** at a South African public research institution, including universities, Science Councils, NFs, museums or public corporations such as NECSA. In addition, the following funding instrument-specific criteria apply:

Travel Grants:

- Full-time postgraduate (masters and doctoral) students that require training and/or access to infrastructure for the completion of their dissertations - ***supervisor must apply on behalf of the postgraduate student;***
- Post-doctoral fellows - ***supervisor must apply on behalf of the post-doctoral fellow***;
- Technicians, instrument specialist and operators that are full-time employees at a public research institution; and
- Researchers that are full-time employees at a public research institution.

Training Grants:

Support is available for the following:

- Researchers hosting training programmes on the use of high-end equipment. This training programme must have regional and/or national benefit.
- Hosting of an expert instrument scientist that is required to stay at a research institution for a minimum period of one (1) month to a maximum period of six (6) months due to his/her scarce skill in the use of a specific instrument that has been acquired through NRF and/or DST funds.

4.2 Exclusion criteria

Undergraduate and Honours students <u>are not</u> eligible to apply for ERTTG. In addition, the following funding instrument-specific exclusions are applicable:

Travel Grants:

Requests for funding to support:

- Research that advances private enterprise;
- Outbound visiting scientists;
- Attendance of conferences and/or training workshops that are not equipment related; and
- Testing the functional capability of equipment that an applicant may procure through NEP and/or NNEP grants. The applicant, in partnership with the supplier, must achieve this.

Training Grants:

Requests for funding to support:

- Training that addresses the applicant's institutional needs only; and
- Basic training of operators and technicians, provided by the supplier as part of equipment acquisition (if training is needed over and above the initial training with the supplier, a strong motivation is needed).

Grantholders who do not submit post-travel/training reports within one month after completion of travel/training will not be considered for further funding in this programme.

Grants awarded are not transferable

4.3 Application requirements

The submitted proposal must address the following:

National and International Equipment Travel Grants	• There must be a clear indication that the research equipment the applicant proposes to access ***is not*** available in the applicant's own institution, nor at other institutions regionally or nationally. This may include letters from other institutions explaining that similar equipment will not be able to support the research activities of the applicant; • Applications for students must be submitted by the supervisor who will be accountable for the ***Conditions of Grant*** awarded; • Applications must be supported by the Designated Authority (DA) at the research institution; • **National Travel:** Travel grants to support access to research equipment nationally may not exceed R35 000 (thirty-five thousand rand) per individual applicant unless strongly motivated for by ***both the applicant and the DA*** at the research institution; and • An applicant may travel with one co-applicant (preferably a postgraduate student) and a maximum of two co-applicants. The applicant will be awarded an additional R10 000 (ten thousand rand) for the first applicant and R15 000 (fifteen thousand rand) for the second co-applicant. The maximum budget will be R60 000* (sixty thousand rand) when travelling with two co-applicants i.e. a maximum of three individuals travelling at the same time (NB: This number is inclusive of the applicant). • **International Travel**: International travel grant maximum per individual applicant may not exceed R75 000 (seventy five thousand rand) unless strongly motivated for by ***both the applicant and the DA*** at the research institution. An applicant travelling with two applicants (preferably postgraduate students) will be awarded an additional amount of R25 000 per applicant. The maximum budget will be R125 000 (one hundred and twenty five thousand rand) when travelling with two applicants i.e. a maximum of three individuals travelling at the same time (NB: This number is inclusive of the applicant).

	Where the cost of the trip exceeds R60 000 (sixty thousand rand) for a national trip and R125 000 (one hundred and twenty five thousand rand) for an international trip, the applicant must clearly demonstrate that co-applicants will accompany the applicant and that additional funding has been secured to cover the full cost of travel. ***See budget guidelines in 4.3.1 hereunder**
Synchrotron Travel Grants	• A strongly motivated proposal that includes supporting documentation such as invitation letters (or any other supporting documentation) from the synchrotron radiation facility that the applicant proposes to visit; • Letter of acceptance from the synchrotron facility, indicating the applicant was successful in securing beamtime; • Applications for students must be submitted by the supervisor who will be accountable for the *Conditions of Grant* awarded; • Applications must be supported by the DA at the research institution; and • The maximum request per individual applicant may not exceed R75 000 (seventy five thousand rand) unless strongly motivated for by ***both the applicant and DA*** at the research institution. An applicant travelling with two applicants (preferably postgraduate students) will be awarded an additional amount of R25 000 per applicant. The maximum budget will be R125 000 (one hundred and twenty five thousand rand) when travelling with two applicants i.e. a maximum of three individuals travelling at the same time (NB: This number is inclusive of the applicant). **Where the cost associated with an international synchrotron radiation facility visit of two weeks exceeds R125 000* (one hundred and twenty five thousand rand), the applicant must clearly demonstrate that co-applicants will accompany the applicant and that additional funding has been secured to cover the full cost of travel**. ***See budget guidelines in 4.3.1.**
Hosting a Workshop	• Adequate motivation must be provided for the need for the training, which must have either regional and/or national impact;

	• The proposed training programme must include the training of researchers based at historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs), black and female researchers/technicians as well as postgraduate students; • Where the cost of ***hosting*** a workshop exceeds R75 000 (seventy five thousand rand), the applicant must clearly demonstrate that additional funding has been secured to cover the full cost; • It is encouraged that applicants engage with suppliers for such training workshops.
Visiting Instrument Scientist	• Where a visiting instrument scientist is required to stay at a research institution for a minimum period of one (1) months and maximum period of six (6) months due to his/her scarce skill in the use of a specific instrument. A commitment letter from the institution must be attached to the application; • A Visiting Instrument Scientist may be hosted for a minimum period of one (1) month at an amount of R20 000 (twenty thousand rand) per month and may be hosted for a maximum period of six (6) months at a maximum amount of R120 000 (one hundred and twenty thousand rand); • The return airfare of the visiting scientist will be capped at R40 000 (forty five thousand rand) for an economy air ticket. ***See budget guidelines in 4.3.1.**

4.3.1 *Budget Guidelines: Maximum NRF Investment per Activity

	NATURE OF THE ACTIVITY			
	Maximum National Travel Support	**Maximum International Travel Support/ and Synchrotron/ other Global Infrastructure**	**Maximum to host a training workshop**	**Visits by Instrument Scientists**
	R	**R**	**R**	**R**
Access to Research Infrastructure				
Applicant	35 000	75 000	N/A	N/A
Applicant plus one Co-applicant	45 000	100 000	N/A	N/A
Applicant plus two Co-applicants	55 000	125 000	N/A	N/A
Host a Workshop				
Applicant	N/A	N/A	75 000	N/A
Visiting Instrument Scientists				
Accommodation, subsistence, local travel for 1 to 6 months				20 000 per month
Cheapest economy return Airfare				40 000

Retrospective funding that spans a period of ***six*** months can be considered in this funding instrument.

4.4 Application Process

The NRF issues a Call for Proposals for ERTTG funding instrument, which is placed on the NRF website, is disseminated to the Research Offices of the various institutions, and the application is accessible online at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. All applications must be duly authorised and approved by the DA of the research administration at the institution that submits the application.

The Call for Proposals will be open from **Monday, 16 January 2017 to Monday, 27 February 2017** **No late applications** will be considered.

Applications submitted may be for a single researcher and/or on behalf of one or two postgraduate student/s.

Applications, where applicants fail to complete/update the NRF Online *Curriculum Vitae* (CV) sections, will not be considered for funding.

All applicants must submit the following:

- A completed NRF online application form that has been endorsed by the DA at the research institution;
- A confirmation letter, from the institution to be visited, of allocated time on the research equipment; and
- A detailed budget indicating how additional funds have been secured.

The following additional information is required for Synchrotron Travel Grants, Equipment-Related National and International Travel Grants, Hosting of Training Workshops and Visiting Instrument Scientists:

Type of Travel or Training	Requirements
Synchrotron Travel Grant	• A confirmation of the outcome of the peer review process and allocated beam time from the host synchrotron facility, and • Copy of Quotation/proof of flights, accommodation, and cost of subsistence and travel allowance;
National and International Travel Grants	• Letter of invitation from the research infrastructure facility; and/or Confirmation Letter that you have been allocated time to access the equipment • Copy of Quotation/proof of flights, accommodation, and cost of subsistence and travel allowance;
Hosting Training Workshop	• Detailed Workshop Costing Plan, • Programme for the workshop, • CV of Trainer and, • Confirmation letter of Attendance from the trainer
Visiting Instrument Scientist	• Letter of invitation to the visiting Scientist, • Letter of acceptance from the visiting scientist, • CV of visiting Scientist; • Motivation letter from the DVC-Research indicating need for hosting the visiting scientist, confirmation of institution's financial commitment and confirmation of the scientist's duration of stay, and • Copy of Quotation/proof of flights and accommodation,

4.5 Institutional Responsibility

The institutional DA must:

- Ensure that the online applications are completed in full with all the necessary supporting documentation attached;
- Ensure compliance to the requirements of the Call for Proposals as advertised in the funding instrument Framework and this Guide;
- Validate and authorise all applications submitted on the NRF Online Submission System; and
- Submit a letter to the NRF confirming the date of commencement of the activity applied for **within one (1) month**, from the date of commencement.

5 Evaluation process

5.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All applications validated by institutions and submitted to the NRF are screened by GMSA for compliance with the requirements of the Call for Proposals, the stipulations set out in this Funding Guide, and the system requirements indicated in the online application screens. Applications that fail to meet the requirements and stipulations are rejected.

5.2 Overview of the Panel Peer Review

All applications submitted are subjected to a Peer Review Panel. Panel members are selected from the NRF database, which is updated on a continuous basis, as well as other sources. In making the selection, the expertise and experience of individuals in application adjudication are taken into account. In assessing the proposals, agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard.

The Peer Review Panel provides recommendations to the NRF on all proposals. The final funding decision is made by the NRF. In awarding grants in this funding instrument, the NRF takes into account these recommendations, the budget motivations by the applicant, as well as the availability of funds within the funding instrument.

The following score card will be used to evaluate all applications for ERTTG grants.

ERTTG Score Card

Criterion	Details	Weight	Poor	Un-satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good
Scientific Motivation 50%	**Scientific motivation** of proposed: • Travel request; or • Training attendance; or • Hosting of training/ workshop; or • Hosting visiting instrument scientist.	50%	1	2	3	4	5
Potential Impact 10%	**Proposed impact** on: • Potential advancement and impact in the applicant's field of study on national priorities	10%	1	2	3	4	5
Expected Outputs 20%	**Expected Outputs:** • Completion of a dissertation; and/or • Human capital development (staff or postgraduate training); and/or • Publications; and/or • Other outputs.	20%	1	2	3	4	5
Financials 20%	Feasibility of proposed budget	20%	1	2	3	4	5

Descriptor	General guiding notes
Poor	The proposal provided insufficient information regarding the requirements of the funding instrument[4], and/or has numerous inconsistencies for a fair evaluation to be conducted.
Unsatisfactory	The proposal only partially addresses the requirements of the funding instrument and has significant issues that should be addressed by the applicant.
Satisfactory/ Adequate/ Fair	The proposal meets all minimum/ necessary requirements of the funding instrument.
Good	This is a strong proposal that fully addresses the entire requirements of the funding instrument.
Very Good	This is an exceptionally strong proposal that is well thought through and strongly motivated, as well as exceeds all the requirements of the funding instrument.

[4] Funding instrument requirement refers to: Scientific motivation, potential impact, expected outputs and feasibility of the proposed budget.

6 Grants Administration

- Grants are paid to the organisation where the grantholder is employed.
- The grants awarded are to be used for the purpose stated in the application and according to the NRF and institutional financial policies.
- The release of NRF funds for payment will be made according to the normal granting rules used by the NRF, that is, 90% of the grant will be released upon **receipt of the Signed Conditions of Grant**
- The balance of the grant (10%) will be released for payment upon **receipt of a satisfactory Completion Report** as outlined in section 7.1 of this document.

7 Grantholder Responsibilities

7.1 Reporting

All grantholders are required to submit a completion report to the NRF no later than **30 (thirty) days** after the activity applied for has been completed. The completion report template will be provided by the NRF during the awarding process. The report should be scrutinised and validated by the relevant DA.

The following types of outputs are expected to emanate from the activities and should be reported stating the:

- Scarce skills development on the use of specialised equipment and analytical systems;
- Training of black and female researchers, as well as researchers from historically disadvantaged institutions; and
- Research outputs:
  - Publications;
  - Conference Proceedings;
  - Collaborations;
  - Improved laboratory processes; and
  - Other (explain).

Successful applicants who do not submit post-travel/training reports within **thirty (30) days** after completion of the activity will not be considered for further funding in this funding instrument.

8 General

8.1 Intellectual Property Rights

The intellectual capital generated by NRF funded research must be appropriately protected and exploited for the benefit of South Africa. This condition should not interfere with the Intellectual Property Rights arrangements already made on condition that the majority of the benefits arising from the intellectual capital accrue to South Africa and its citizens. This condition is aligned with the *Intellectual Property Rights Act*[5] which will override this condition of grant.

8.2 Ethics

The grantholder is required to maintain the highest ethical and safety standards in conducting the research, particularly when human and animal subjects are involved. It remains the responsibility of the project leader to comply with all relevant regulations in this regard, including those of the institution at which the research is carried out. An ethical clearance certificate (where applicable) must be submitted to the NRF in respect of successful applications before funding can be released.

8.3 Access to data

The data generated from the proposed research must become available to other researchers working in the same field. Therefore, it is important that the data is provided to domain specific databases or in their absence, to the South African Data Archive (SADA).

8.4 Data Storage, Usage and Dissemination

In the event the outputs of the research project not being protected, conscious plans need to be made to make the data available to the larger research community through existing databases, some of which can be specific to the research field and others to generic research fields. Furthermore, measures need to be undertaken to ensure effective data management and integrity.

8.5 Change of Applicant to travel or train

In the event of the Grantholder leaving the Institution for whatever reason, or is unable to undertake the activities as stipulated in the proposal, the NRF must be informed (where possible, prior to the departure of the grantholder from the institution) and the funds be returned to the NRF. No transference of the grant is allowed within this funding instrument.

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5 Republic of South Africa, 2008, *Intellectual property rights from publicly financed research and development*. Act 51 of 2008. Government Gazette, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, no 31745, RSA.