18 September 2025

**RESEARCH DIVISION COMMUNIQUÉ**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: CSIR PHOTONICS CENTRE RENTAL POOL PROGRAMME (RPP) 2026

Dear Staff

**PLEASE NOTE: INTERNAL CLOSING DATE – 21 OCTOBER 2025**

All applications must be forwarded to **Ms Nondumiso Radebe** at radeben4@ukzn.ac.za COPYING **Mrs Patricia Ngwenya** at ngwenyap@ukzn.ac.za

**PROGRAMME BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

At the establishment of the CSIR Photonics Centre (previously known as the CSIR National Laser Centre) in 2000, the centre started a laser equipment access programme, which is now funded by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI). The Rental Pool Programme (RPP) provides Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa the opportunity to access a large number of laser systems, laser diagnostic equipment and laser laboratories available at or from the CSIR Photonics Centre. Over the years, the equipment programme has grown and the equipment base has expanded through careful management of funding allocated to expand and maintain the equipment base of the programme.

Through a grant received from the DSTI, the CSIR Photonics Centre has again made funding available to support the CSIR Rental Pool Programme, which will be used to support HEI research specifically within the multidisciplinary laser environment in 2026.

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Researchers from all higher education institutions (public universities) may participate in the CSIR Photonics Centre Rental Pool Program Grant Scheme. The programme considers applications from researchers who are:

* Involved in laser-based research in any field in natural science, engineering and health sciences;
* Hold at least a Master's degree and have a reasonable research track record.
* Employed at South African Higher Education Institutions on a full-time or full-time contract basis. If on a contract basis, the length of the contract should at least be for
* the duration of the research project applied for and be clearly indicated in the application

**IMPORTANT TO NOTE**:

Participation of postgraduate students (Doctoral and Master’s students as key drivers), registered at a recognised South African HEIs, is of paramount importance, as well as the collaborations with other researchers based at the applicant’s institution and other institutions. These should be stated clearly by the researcher in the application. Although student involvement is a priority, the primary motivation for the research grant is to address a specific research question. Proposals that request funding support merely for the training of students will not be considered.

 **For Programme – related queries kindly contact**:

**Mr. Thomas du Plooy** at 012 841 3511 or 082 443 1128, email nlcrentalpool@csir.co.za.

**Issued by the University Research Division**