



HUMAN AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS

FUNDING INSTRUMENT

KNOWLEDGE FIELDS DEVELOPMENT

Framework Document

October 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	FUNDING INSTRUMENT TITLE AND DESCRIPTION
1.1	Name
1.2	Description of funding instrument
2	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
3	STRATEGIC CONTEXT
3.1	Environmental scan
3.2	Objectives
3.3	NRF perspective
3.4	Institutional structure
3.5	Financing support
3.6	Key stakeholders
3.7	Information sources
4	<i>MODUS OPERANDI</i>
4.1	Call for proposals
4.2	Eligibility
4.3	Application assessment
4.4	Rules of participation
4.5	Timelines
4.6	Management of funding Instrument
4.7	Lines of authority
5	FINANCIALS
5.1	Funding model
5.2	Funding ranges
5.3	Funding support
5.4	Funding instrument budget
5.5	Financial controls and reporting
6	MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE FUNDING INSTRUMENT
6.1	Reporting
6.2.	Timeframes for funding instrument review
6.3	Broad terms of reference for funding instrument review
6.4	Utilisation of funding instrument review findings and recommendations
CONTACT DETAILS	
LIST OF ACRONYMS	
ANNEXURE 1	Panel Assessment Scorecard
ANNEXURE 2	Proposal Grading

1 FUNDING INSTRUMENT TITLE AND DESCRIPTION

1.1 Name

HUMAN AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS FUNDING INSTRUMENT

1.2 Description of Funding Instrument

The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument is a discipline-specific funding instrument which supports basic research in Social Science and the Humanities. The Human and Social Dynamics Funding Instrument is theme driven and will support new or existing research initiatives in the following thematic focus areas:

- Science, technology and society
- The dynamics of human and social behavior
- Social cohesion and identity
- Societal change and the evolution of modern society

These four thematic focus areas provide the basis for a structured research agenda to improve the understanding of social conditions and issues

As a competitive funding instrument, the chief eligibility criteria are:

- **Basic research in the disciplines of Social Sciences or the Humanities**
- **Scientific/scholarly merit and feasibility of the research proposal**
- **Evidence of associated human capacity development**

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Research Foundation (NRF) recognises that in order for South Africa to be internationally competitive and to meaningfully contribute to the global economy, the country must have the capability to understand the knowledge produced by others. This understanding can best be developed through performing research. Publicly funded basic and applied research is viewed as a source of new ideas, opportunities, methods, and most importantly, the means through which problem solvers can be trained.

The Research and Development Strategy (2002), details three operational objectives, namely

- achieving mastery of technological change in the economy and society
- increasing investment in human capital and transformation
- creating alignment and delivery

It also outlines the basic principles that underpin government support for scientific or scholarly programmes, namely that the programme contributes towards social or economic goals and that the programme is potentially world class.

On this basis, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) published its Ten-Year Innovation Plan in 2008 to help drive South Africa's transformation towards a knowledge-based economy, in which the production and dissemination of knowledge would lead to economic benefit, enriching all fields of human endeavour. The core projections for the plan are summarized as South Africa's "grand challenges" in science and technology. These grand challenges address an array of social, economic, political, scientific and technological benefits, and are designed to stimulate multidisciplinary thinking and to challenge South African researchers to answer existing questions, create new disciplines and develop new technologies.

The Human and Social Dynamics in Development grand challenge was conceptualized to contribute to a greater global understanding of shifting social dynamics. By investing in socially and policy relevant research, the DST aims to foster and support research collaboration and to respond to the vulnerable and marginalized groups in society. To address this challenge, the DST has developed a science plan to give long-term guidance to programme development. Under this plan, the DST will support new research addressing developmental problems facing the country, as identified by the National Planning Commission's Diagnostic Overview and further reflected in the National Development Plan.

The key aims of the Human and Social Dynamics in Development grand challenge are to:

- promote and support social science and humanities research which is central to knowledge production;
- encourage and support research for the public good;
- strengthen the research-policy nexus;
- accelerate human capital development; and
- stimulate the production of South Africa's next generation of social science and humanities scholars.

The Human and Social Dynamics research plan emphasises that there are strong links – both theoretical and empirical – across the four designated thematic focus areas, and hence room for integration to enable multidisciplinary research approaches

3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The mandate of the NRF is to support and promote research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary research facilities in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, and innovation and development in all fields of science and technology, including indigenous knowledge and thereby to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of the Republic (NRF Act, 1998). In support of its purpose, the NRF launched Vision 2015 that aims to promote world-class research, and create a transformed society and sustainable environment.

3.1 Environmental scan

The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument resonates with the NRF mandate by promoting and supporting research through funding and human resource development. By facilitating the creation of knowledge, the NRF contributes to the innovation and the commercialisation value chain, and hence the socio-economic development and improved quality of life of all the people of the Republic.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the funding instrument are:

- To contribute to knowledge production in the Social Sciences and the Humanities;
- To support world-class basic research alongside the development of the associated human capacity; and
- To advance or develop paradigms, theories and /or methodological innovation in the disciplinary fields of Social Science and the Humanities.

3.3 NRF Perspective

The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument is a demand-driven funding instrument that focuses on basic research activities in the disciplines of the Social Science and the Humanities. This is in line with the NRF's view that support for

research is an investment in South Africa's learning capabilities. The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument addresses the NRF Vision 2015, which envisages the following for South Africa:

- World-class research
- Transformed society; and
- Sustainable environment

The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument directly addresses the following strategic goals of the NRF Vision 2015:

- The promotion of internationally competitive research as the basis for a knowledge economy;
- The growth of a representative science and technology workforce in South Africa; and
- The contribution to a vibrant national innovation system

3.4 Institutional structure

The funding instrument is managed by the Knowledge Fields Development (KFD) Directorate. The Reviews and Evaluation (RE) Directorate is responsible for the review processes up to the award of grants. The Grant Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate's responsibilities include disbursement of grant funds and ensuring adherence to the conditions of the grant.

3.5 Financing support

The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument is made possible through contract funding from the DST. The DST will fund a three year cycle of research funding from 2015-2017.

3.6 Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders involved in the Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument are persons doing basic research under one of the four thematic focus areas in the disciplines of Social Science or the Humanities, and based at public research institutions that are recognised by directive of the Minister of Science and Technology. These include mainly, Universities, Museums and Science Councils.

3.7 Information sources

2002 *National Research and Development Strategy*, accessed on 26 March 2013, from <http://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/resource-center/strategies-and-reports/174-national-research-a-development-strategy-2002>

2008 *Innovation towards a knowledge based economy 10-year plan for South Africa (2008 – 2018)*, accessed 26 March 2013, from <http://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/resource-center/strategies-and-reports/143-the-ten-year-plan-for-science-and-technology>

2008 National Research Foundation. *NRF Vision 2015: Strategic Plan of the National Research Foundation*, accessed on 10 December 2009. http://www.nrf.ac.za/doc/nrf_vision_2015.pdf>

2013 The Department of Science and Technology. *The ministerial guidelines for improving equity in the distribution of DST/NRF bursaries and fellowships*.

4 MODUS OPERANDI

4.1 Call for proposals

All application materials **must** be submitted electronically via the NRF's Submission system at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>

The **NRF closing date** for endorsed applications is **19 November 2014**. All applications **must** be endorsed by the research office of the principal applicant before submission to the NRF. It is the responsibility of each applicant to familiarise himself/herself with the **internal closing dates**, set by institution in order to meet the NRF closing date.

Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

Call opens: 21 October 2014

Call closes: 19 November 2014

4.2 Eligibility

- Researchers must be doing basic Social Science or Humanities research in one of the four thematic areas specified in 1.2 above; and be based at public research institutions that are recognised by directive of the Minister of Science and Technology. These include mainly, Universities, Museums and Science Councils.
- Part-time employees on contract at a recognised research institution (as defined above) in South Africa may apply, but on condition that their appointment at the South African institution is for (at least) the duration of the project applied for in the submission. The length of the contract should be stated in the application form. Salaries must be paid by the research institution and the primary employment of the individual concerned must be at that institution. A contract researcher appointed at a research institution on behalf of a third party to fulfill a very specific function for the latter does not qualify for support.
- Successful applicants will be eligible for funding **for three years (2015 – 2017)**.
- Retired academics/researchers, provided that they meet all set criteria as stipulated below:
 - are resident in SA;
 - are formally affiliated to a recognised institution (as defined above) e.g., appointed as an emeritus professor, honorary research associate/professor, supernumerary/contract employee;
 - are active researchers with a distinguished track record in research and postgraduate student supervision;
 - are actively mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff and
 - the institution ensures that a minimum of reasonable time (6 months minimum) is spent at the facility for the purpose of research and research capacity development.

4.3 Application assessment

In general, the NRF's funding decisions are informed by the accumulative grading of the review panels in respect of each assessed application, as per

the assessment criteria outlined in **Annexure 1**. The final funding decisions and level of funding are subject to the budget available to the specific programme.

The assessment of applications will be guided by a Panel Assessment Scorecard (**see Annexure 1**), and scored according to the Proposal Grading (**see Annexure 2**). Application assessment will occur by way of a two-tiered process:

- **Remote (Postal)-peer review**

The remote -peer reviewers will be specialists in the ambit of the respective proposals. Requests for written reviews will be solicited electronically, or through appropriate media / means from peers located at remote locations from the NRF.

- **Panel-peer review**

Panels will be broadly constituted to include specialists in such areas as Social Sciences, Law and Humanities; Natural Sciences and Engineering. Panel members will be selected based on their broad overview of the respective knowledge field and their research standing. Panel meetings will be held at central locations or by way of tele- or video-conferencing. Panel members will deliberate on submitted written reviews and will be expected to offer their own expert opinions.

4.4 Rules of participation

a) Principal Investigator

Only researchers based at NRF recognized research institutions in South Africa (as defined above) are eligible to apply as principal investigators in this funding instrument.

The principal investigator (i.e., the applicant/PI) must be an active researcher who takes intellectual responsibility for the project, its conception, any strategic decisions required in its pursuit, and the communication of results. The PI must have the capacity to make a serious commitment to the project and cannot assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be placed in the hands of others. S/he will take responsibility for the management and administration of resources allocated to the grant award. S/he will also take responsibility for meeting reporting requirements.

A PI **SHOULD NOT** submit a research proposal for their own degree purposes; or on behalf of a student where the student in the main will be carrying out the research.

The research team may also include:

b) Co-investigators

A co-investigator is an active researcher who provides significant commitment, intellectual input and relevant expertise into the design and implementation of the research application. S/he will be involved in all or at least some well-defined research activities within the scope of the application. South African-based co-investigators are eligible to receive NRF funds from the grant if the team's application is successful.

Post-doctoral fellows, students, technical and support staff should NOT be listed as co-investigators

The project may also include:

c) Research Associates / Collaborators

These are individuals or groups who are anticipated to make a relatively small, but meaningful contribution to the research endeavours outlined in the application, but who have not actively participated in the research design. They are not considered a part of the core research team, and are not eligible to receive NRF funds from the grant if the team's application is successful.

4.5 Timelines

The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument will award funding for a period not exceeding **THREE YEARS (2015 – 2017)**.

4.6 Management of funding instrument

The KFD Directorate of the NRF – Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (RISA) manages the Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument and is primarily responsible for:

- Strategic oversight and management of the funding instrument;
- Conceptualizing and developing the funding instrument;

- Coordinating and facilitating activities of the funding instrument;
- Compiling funding instrument research and evaluation reports;
- Stakeholder engagement; and
- Ensuring that the funding instruments delivers on its intended goal(s).

The RE Directorate is responsible for managing the adjudication process including:

- sourcing of reviewers both for remote reviews and panels;
- managing the peer review process;
- organizing and managing the review panels as and where appropriate;
- providing feed-back as appropriate; and
- awarding of grants

The GMSA Directorate is responsible for

- Managing the call process, that is,
 - Posting the call;
 - Receiving and assessing applications eligibility;
- Coordinating and facilitating the granting processes
- Managing the granting including the administration of awards;
- Administering grant payments; and
- Ensuring adherence to conditions of grants

4.7 Lines of authority

The funding instrument Director in the KFD Directorate generally manages the Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument with the assistance of a Professional Officer. Where and when appropriate, a call may be managed by a specially appointed Project Leader supported by Project team of staff drawn from RE, GMSA; Knowledge Management and others. The Director responsible for this instrument reports to the Executive Director of the KFD Directorate. Directors from GMSA and RE will normally manage the granting and review processes, respectively with the assistance of Professional and Liaison Officers. The Directors in both the GMSA and the RE report to their respective Executive Directors

5 FINANCIALS

5.1 Funding model

The grants of this funding instrument are to be primarily used for **research purposes** and development of associated human resources under the auspices of the NRF standard grant and finance policies. The money is released upon acceptance of the conditions of grant, both by the applicant and his/her employing institution. These grants will fall under the NRF audit requirements of beneficiary institutions.

5.2 Funding ranges

Successful applications will receive funding that accommodates the following budget items:

- a) Grant holder-linked student support
- b) Staff development grants
- c) Research-related operating costs, including:
 - Sabbaticals
 - Materials and Supplies
 - Travel and subsistence
 - Research / Technical / *Ad hoc* Assistants
 - Research Equipment

The application assessment process will consider proposed budget items in terms of cost, risk and reward ratios. Decisions relating to budget items will also be governed by the overall funding instrument funds available for the period. Awards will be made in line with the NRF funding rules and guidelines as outlined in **Section 5.3**.

5.3 Funding support

The NRF funds the Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument in line with contractual obligations. NRF-recognised institutions (as defined above) are the primary beneficiaries of this funding instrument.

GRANT HOLDER-LINKED STUDENT SUPPORT

Grant holder-linked student support will be awarded in accordance with eligibility criteria as detailed in the **Ministerial Guidelines for Improving Equity in the Distribution of DST/NRF Bursaries and Fellowships** (January 2013).

The equity distribution for these bursaries is targeted at the ratio:

- 80% Black
- 55% Female
- 4% Disabled

The awarding of postdoctoral fellowships will not be guided by, but not governed by, equity targets.

The citizenship distribution for these bursaries is targeted at the ratio:

- 87% South African (including permanent residents)
- 5% SADC
- 4% Rest of the African continent
- 4% Non-African

Postdoctoral fellowships will not be governed by citizenship targets, and remain open to all who undertake research in South Africa.

Values of Student Assistantships

- Honours / BTech (Full-time) R30 000 pa

ALL South African citizens are eligible to apply.

The maximum support period for Honours/BTech students is 1 year.

Values of Bursaries & Fellowships

- Masters degree (Full-time) R40 000 pa
- Doctoral degree (Full-time) R65 000 pa
- Postdoctoral (*pro rata* per month) R150 000 pa

The maximum support period for a Masters student is 2 years.

The maximum support period for a Doctoral student is 3 years

The maximum support period for a Postdoctoral fellowship is 2 years.

RESEARCH-RELATED OPERATING COSTS

These costs include: materials and supplies, travel (including conferences and subsistence), equipment, and research / technical / *ad hoc* assistance. Sabbaticals to other research organisations and institutions of higher learning may also be included within the context of the project proposals. These costs should be justified and commensurate with the planned outputs, as they will be assessed on this basis. The amount awarded within this framework **can be used at the discretion of the applicant**.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Materials and Supplies

Generally, the NRF **does not** provide financial support for:

- Basic office equipment including computers and consumables unless the computer is required for the research itself or the applicant/team member is based at a museum.
- Basic office stationery, photocopying costs, printing costs unless these items form part of the research tools or the applicant/team member is based at a museum.
- Journal publication costs, journal subscription costs, book costs unless the applicant / team member is based at a museum.
- Telephone, fax and internet costs unless the applicant / team member is based at a museum.

Travel and subsistence

- **International conference attendance:**

Generally the NRF restricts this amount to R50, 000 per application per year for a team proposal, i.e., for principal investigators, co-investigators (local only) and local post-graduate students. This amount may be reduced proportionately if there is no team member and/or post-graduate student involvement.

- **International visits:**

These will be considered on a case by case basis. Such visits must be integral to the research plan and strong motivations should accompany these requests. Realistic funding allocations will be based on the requested activities. Both incoming and outgoing visits will be considered depending on the availability of funding.

- **Local conference attendance:**

Generally the NRF restricts expenditure against this item to R5 000 per person (all costs). Support for local conference attendance could be requested for all listed co-investigators and post-graduate students. The applicant should motivate for:

- The value of attending more than one local conference per annum if so requested
- The number of people that should be funded to attend local conferences.

- **Local travel:**

The NRF does not stipulate any rate for mileage as this will depend on the research institutions' rate, which varies per institution. Applicants are requested to provide details of this rate, as well as the estimated distance to be travelled within the given year.

- Local accommodation costs should not exceed a three-star rating establishment, per night per person.

Research / Technical / *Ad hoc* Assistants

- The NRF **does not pay for any salaries.**
- Requests for research / technical / *ad hoc* assistance should be treated judiciously. Generally the NRF would encourage applicants to engage students to undertake the research rather than employing research consultants. This guideline however does not apply when specific and / or highly specialized research / technical expertise is required. **This should be CLEARLY motivated for in the proposal.**
- **Administrative assistance does NOT qualify as technical assistance.**

STAFF DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Grant-holders may apply for Staff Development grants for South African staff members, who are not grant-holders in their own right, at their own or other institutions. These staff members **must** be registered for Masters or Doctoral degrees and be supervised by the grant-holder or a team member. They must be directly involved in the NRF approved project. These grants can be used to contribute towards the operating costs for research undertaken at the supervisor's facility, as well as the cost of travel and accommodation to enable staff members to meet with (co) / supervisors. These grants are awarded to a maximum of R30 000, depending on the nature of the research and the proximity of the student in relation to the supervisor.

Grant holders themselves are not eligible for Staff Development Grants.

The maximum period of support is **three years for a Masters** degree and **up to five years for a Doctorate** from a valid grant.

FUNDING TO CATER FOR DISABILITIES

Additional funding support to cater for disability will only be allocated to people with disabilities as specified in the Code of Good Practice on Employment of People with Disabilities as in the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998.

5.4 Funding instrument budget

The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument is made possible through contract funding from the DST.

5.5 Financial control and reporting

Upon receipt of the signed Conditions of Grant letter, the NRF will release the awarded amount for the year. Grant holders will then be required to comply with the standard NRF financial management procedures, including the submission of an Annual Progress Report. These are to be submitted before the end of March of the following year, and are a prerequisite for the release of the subsequent year's funding. Failure to submit the Annual Progress Report will result in the cancellation of the grant award.

6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE FUNDING INSTRUMENT

The NRF is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument.

6.1 Reporting

The funding instrument Director is responsible for reporting quarterly on the contribution of the Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument to the KFD Directorate's Key Performance Indicators. In addition, the funding instrument Director is responsible for reviewing and reporting on the progress of the funding instrument.

6.2. Timeframes for programme review

The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument will be evaluated by an appropriate external reviewer as appointed by the NRF. RISA will determine and set timeframes for the review, when deemed appropriate, or in line with existing guidelines.

6.3 Broad terms of reference for the programme review

The broad terms of reference for the programme review of the Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument will be determined by RISA with preliminary input by the KFD Directorate, and in consultation with the RE Directorate.

6.4 Utilisation of programme review findings and recommendations

The results of the evaluation will be used in line with the purposes set in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation. Evaluation results will also be used for funding instrument improvement and development.

QUERIES

REFER ALL QUERIES TO:	
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ACRONYMS

DST	Department of Science and Technology
GMSA	Grant Management and Systems Administration
KFD	Knowledge Fields Development
NRF	National Research Foundation
PI	Principal Investigator
R&D	Research and Development
RE	Reviews and Evaluation
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement

ANNEXURE 1

Annexure 1: Panel Assessment Scorecard					
The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument					
Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Details	Score / 4	Weight (Total = 100%)	Weighted score (Total = 4)
Ethics	Ethical research	If relevant, have ethical considerations been addressed? ¹		0%	Hurdle
Proposal	Alignment with funding instrument	Does the proposal meet the objectives of the funding instrument?		0%	Hurdle
	Scientific/scholarly merit and feasibility	Reflect on the scientific/scholarly objectives. Has knowledge of relevant literature been articulated? Are the approach and methods suitable to the research objectives? Is the research well-planned and achievable within the stipulated timeframes?		50%	0.00
Track record of applicant	Past students (graduated)	M and D degrees.		6%	0.00
	Past research	Publications, designs, performances, etc.		6%	0.00
Equity and redress	Of applicant	Differently Able = 4 Black Female = 4 Black Male, young ² = 4 Black Male, not young = 3		5%	0.00

¹ Ethical considerations and clearances for grant proposals are the responsibility of the research institute and/or institution of the applicant. Where such ethical considerations and clearances are required, grant applicants will be expected to submit to the NRF signed statements and/or copies of clearance certificates before any grant funds are released.

² Young is defined as 5 years post PhD / post first academic appointment

		White Female, young = 3 White Female, not young = 2 White Male, young, =2 White Male, not young = 1.			
	Of students supervised	M and D degrees.		5%	0.00
Collaboration	With other individuals (Do they add value?)	This will include collaborations at both an international and national level. Are the roles of these collaborators clearly indicated in the proposal?		2%	0.00
	Within a team (Is it appropriate?)	Are the roles of these team members clearly indicated in the proposal?		3%	0.00
Impacts	Expected research outputs	Scientific/scholarly products as appropriate in each case.		5%	0.00
	Impact on knowledge production/field	How does the research advance discovery and understanding in the field?		10%	0.00
	Human and Research Capacity Development	Are students appropriately embedded in the research proposal? Will the proposed research further the academic development of junior researchers?		5%	0.00
	Plans to communicate research results, both within and beyond the academic community	If relevant, are the proposed plans appropriate and /or adequate?		5%	0.00
Totals				100%	0.00

ANNEXURE 2

Annexure 2: Proposal Grading		
The Human and Social Dynamics funding instrument		
Score	Meaning of score	Notes
4	Excellent	Application demonstrates evidence of outstanding performance across all the stated criteria, as determined by the panel and relative to the knowledge field under consideration
3	Above average	Above average performance across all criteria, as determined by the panel and relative to the knowledge field under consideration
2	Average	Application demonstrates average performance across all the stated criteria, as determined by the panel and relative to the knowledge field under consideration
1	Below average	Below average performance across all the criteria, as determined by panel and relative to knowledge field
0	Poor	There are major shortcomings or flaws within and across the stated criteria, with particular emphasis on the scientific/scholarly merit
Context: <p>Proposal grading is done with sensitivity to the context within which each application is submitted. The score of each criterion for each application will be contextualised to accommodate variability in such things as knowledge fields, institutional capacity, etc. Should a criterion not be applicable to a specific application (e.g. plans for digital data storage; collaborations; etc.), the weighting of that specific criteria will be made to equal zero, and the overall score normalised.</p>		