



South African Medical Research Council Terms and Conditions of Funding

2015

The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) plays a key role in developing, facilitating and supporting high quality and relevant health research in South Africa. The SAMRC has a number of ongoing research and career support mechanisms and continues to enter into new partnerships with local and international partners to bring in additional funding to support key health research and product development priorities. These Funding Terms and Conditions set out the general terms under which funding is provided by the SAMRC and the obligations of funding recipients. Terms and conditions specific to the different funding mechanisms can be found in the relevant Request for Proposals/ Applications (RFP/RFA) documents.

The SAMRC reserves the right to amend these Terms and Conditions from time to time at its discretion. Changes will be applicable from the date of posting on the SAMRC website. Any funding terms and conditions in specific funding calls that are contrary to these SAMRC Funding Terms and Conditions will take precedence for that particular funding mechanism only.

Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for application for SAMRC funding differ depending on the type of funding. SAMRC funding mechanisms are generally aimed at investigators from South African universities and other public research organizations who are either South African citizens or permanent residents.

Private companies (South African and foreign entities registered as private, for-profit companies) are generally ineligible to apply for SAMRC funding unless specifically stated in the funding call, but may be included as sub-contractors if they provide a service or capability that is not available among the project partners but is essential for the completion of project deliverables. Any individual involved either directly or indirectly in any of the SAMRC granting processes may not apply for funding from the SAMRC.

All applications / proposals submitted to the SAMRC for funding must be signed off by an authorized representative of the applicant's institution. It is the responsibility of host institutions to verify and certify the appropriateness, completeness and correctness of all information submitted by their researchers to the SAMRC as part of their applications for funding. By co-signing applications institutions commit themselves to administering the allocated funding according to the relevant Terms and Conditions of Funding.

Project Selection

The selection of projects for funding by the SAMRC is based on scientific quality (as assessed through independent peer review), relevance to South African health priorities and the specific call, and transformation imperatives. The SAMRC may also consider additional factors such as a balance in the range of topics and institutions supported in its funding decisions. The SAMRC is committed to applying fair and consistent processes for selecting projects for funding, taking into account the above criteria. The Executive Management Committee of the SAMRC must approve all funding decisions and may take into account other SAMRC strategic considerations in making the final decisions.

Allowable Costs

Allowable costs for most SAMRC funding mechanisms include the following (all direct line items must be auditable):

- Personnel: Soft-funded posts for individuals working on the project (e.g. post-docs, students, technicians, project managers) will be funded, provided an accurate estimation of time allocation is provided and they are not already funded from other means.
- Consultants: These may include both local and/or foreign consultants who provide a service or capability that is not available among the project partners but is essential for the completion of project deliverables.
- Equipment: Partial or full support for the cost of equipment may, in some instances, be requested, provided that it is directly required for the project. A budget limitation may apply.
- Supplies, consumables and other direct laboratory or research costs.
- Sub-contracts: These may be to any local or international organization that provides a service or capability that is not available among the project partners but is essential for the completion of project deliverables.
- Travel and accommodation that is directly related to the execution of the project.
- Institutional overhead: An indirect costs rate of 5% to a maximum of R250k per year (or any revised indirect costs rate specified by the SAMRC from time to time) is allowed on selected funding mechanisms only, e.g. for SHIP grants. An institutional overhead is not permissible on self-initiated research and Extra Mural Unit funding.

Non-allowable costs include the following:

- Salaries of permanent or fixed term staff, e.g. tenured staff, professors etc., that are fully covered by the host institutions.
- Purchase or construction of a building.
- Rental costs for space that is owned by the institutions participating in the project.
- Recruitment or retrenchment costs for staff.
- Purchase of office furniture.

If research equipment is purchased using SAMRC funding, unless specified otherwise by the specific funding mechanism, it becomes the property of the host institution. Under no circumstances may equipment become the property of the individual researcher to whom the funding was allocated. The equipment may not be removed from the host institution and/or transferred to another institution without the express written approval of the host institution and concurrence by the SAMRC. The institution must take responsibility for any necessary maintenance of and insurance on the equipment.

Disbursement of Funds

Successful applicants must enter into a Funding Agreement or sign a Letter of Acceptance of Grant Conditions with the SAMRC before any funds are disbursed. The Funding Agreement will usually be with the primary /lead institution (lead consortium member), which will also be responsible for managing all sub-contracts with and disbursements to project partners. No administration fee may be charged by the institutions for disbursements to sub-contractors or other project partners.

The frequency of funding disbursements will be as stipulated in the approved budget. Funding disbursements are subject to the submission of ethics approvals and satisfactory progress and financial reports. The MRC may, in some cases and at its sole discretion, withhold a total amount of 10% of the final instalment amount until the final report for the project has been received and approved.

Funding disbursements will only be processed on receipt of an original VAT invoice in a format acceptable to the SAMRC. The standard payment term of 30 (thirty) days from receipt of the invoice will apply for all invoices.

Fund Management

The host institution and Principal Investigator are required to ensure that the procurement of any goods, equipment and/or services for the purposes of the project are in strict accordance with the provisions of the institution's procurement and travel policies. Funds may be spent solely according to the approved project budget and proposal and any required movement of funds between budget categories that exceeds 10% of the annual budget or roll-over of funding to the following period shall be subject to the agreement of the SAMRC in writing in advance. If this agreement is not obtained, the institution will be responsible for covering the non-approved amounts.

The institution must open a separate project or book of accounts to record all sums received from the SAMRC for the project and all expenses incurred, and is obliged to invest unexpended funds from the funding in a separate interest bearing cost centre at the institution. Any interest earned on such unexpended funds shall accrue to the institution to disburse on the project and must be reported in the financial statements. At the end of the contractual term and/or upon completion of the project deliverables, any surplus funds are to be re-paid to the SAMRC unless an alternative use for the funds by the institution has been agreed in writing by the SAMRC.

The SAMRC is entitled, at any reasonable time during or after the project, to appoint an independent team of auditors to inspect and take copies of the project books of account, records and supporting documents of the institution to the extent necessary to verify any statement on reasonable notice and during office hours. The institution must for this purpose provide the auditors with reasonable access to the books of account, technical reports and all records relating to the management of the project together with any other information required by the auditors for this purpose.

The Institution is also required to inform the SAMRC in writing of any and all prospective funding for the project from third parties, which is used in the furtherance of the project. The institution may not accept any funding from a third party for the purposes of furthering the project without the prior written consent of the SAMRC.

Reporting

The reporting requirements differ depending on the type of funding. For most SAMRC funding mechanisms, Principal Investigators are required to submit to the SAMRC written biannual reports within 14 (fourteen) days of the end of each 6 month period following execution of the Funding Agreement and a final report within 30 (thirty) days of completion of the project. The reports must follow the format provided by the SAMRC and provide details on the progress in terms of completion of deliverables as set out in the approved project proposal. Each report must be accompanied by a financial statement in a manner and form prescribed by the SAMRC.

Funds must be used for the purpose and the research activities for which they were intended and approved by the SAMRC. Any deviations to the approved project and budget (of >10%) must be approved by the SAMRC in writing prior to implementation.

Publication

Recipients of SAMRC funding are expected to maximize the impact and utility of their work, including through timely dissemination of their findings, preferably through open access publication. Recipients may delay the publication of data and results generated from the projects in order to first protect any potential intellectual property therein.

All publications, press releases and other documents which include results obtained in projects funded by the SAMRC must acknowledge the SAMRC in the form indicated in the relevant Funding Agreement or Letter of Acceptance of Grant Conditions. Publications, press releases and other documents from Extra Mural Research Units of the SAMRC must further include the SAMRC as a secondary affiliation of any authors from the Unit. Principal Investigators are required report on their publications in their progress reports and as requested by the SAMRC, and to submit a copy of each publication to the SAMRC. Publications which do not contain the correct acknowledgement and/or affiliation will not be accepted as outputs of the project or Unit.

Intellectual Property

Ownership of any intellectual property (IP) and associated rights arising from SAMRC-funded projects (Foreground IP) shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act, 51 of 2008 and associated regulations as amended from time to time (IPR Act) and the institution's Intellectual Property Policy. The institution is obliged to appropriately protect, manage and commercialize the Foreground IP in accordance with all applicable provisions of the IPR Act and, in the case of some funding mechanisms, in consultation with the SAMRC. The institution / Principal Investigator is required to report any Foreground IP developed to the SAMRC as part of the reporting requirements.

The SAMRC is committed to ensuring that any Foreground IP resulting from research conducted with public funds (through the SAMRC) is commercialized to the benefit of the people of South Africa. Recipients of SAMRC funding are therefore required to ensure that any agreement concluded for the commercialization of Foreground IP provides that any resulting products shall be made available and accessible at an affordable price to people most in need within developing countries, including the Republic of South Africa.

In some instances, the SAMRC may require participation in the sharing of benefits that may arise from the commercialization of Foreground IP. The participative interest of the SAMRC will be negotiated with the institution and any other relevant parties on a case by case basis, based on the relative contributions of the parties.

Regulatory and Ethical Compliance

All SAMRC grantees are required to obtain approval for any research involving human or animal subjects or samples therefrom from the appropriate institutional review board or ethics committee and provide the SAMRC with a copy of such approval prior to embarkation on the research. This requirement extends to all sites participating in the research. Any such research must, in addition to ethical approval compliance, be conducted in accordance with the generally accepted principles of “Good Clinical Practices”, which shall include but not be limited to, requiring prior informed consent from the human subjects and shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable national and international regulations and guidelines pertaining to research involving human subjects, management of data confidentiality, research involving animals, use or release of genetically modified organisms, research use of recombinant DNA, and/or use of any organism, substance or material considered to be a biohazard, including adherence to all applicable standards for transport of specimens, both locally and internationally, as appropriate.

Contacts

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