



Strategic Platforms Programme (SPP)

Equipment-related Mobility and Training Grants 2011

MANUAL

Grants Management and Systems Administration

2011/2012

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Endorsements

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List of Acronyms

CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CV	<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DST	Department of Science and Technology
NECSA	South African Nuclear Energy Corporation
NEP	National Equipment Programme
NNEP	National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme
NRF	National Research Foundation
RISP	Research Infrastructure Support Programme
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SRIP	Strategic Research Infrastructure Programme

1. Introduction

The NRF has over the past several years, identified some challenges with respect to the larger science community being unable to access state-of-the-art equipment not available at the home research institution or region, including access to synchrotron facilities and other global research infrastructure.

In order to address these challenges, the NRF through mobility grants makes available funds for both national and international travel costs in order to support researchers who require access to equipment that is not available either regionally or nationally. The mobility grants are divided into two portfolios of opportunities, namely:

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

2. Objectives

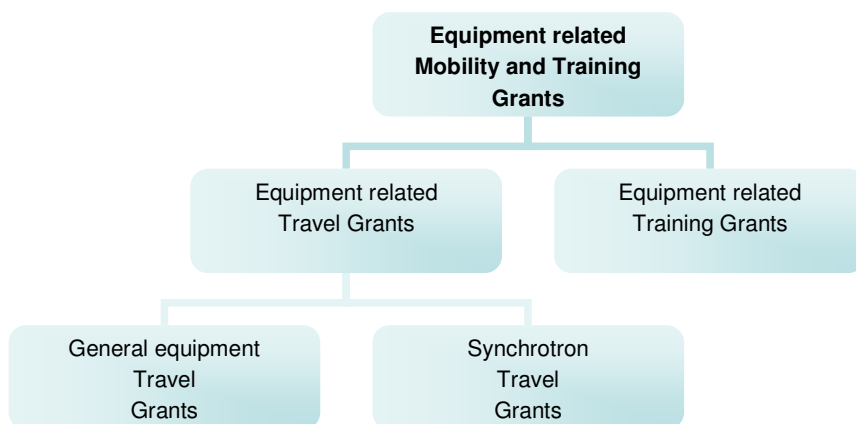
Equipment-related Mobility Grants aim to support world-class research, enhance research collaborations nationally and internationally, thereby supporting the development of specialised skills required to sustainably manage and operate state-of-the-art research equipment.

The objectives of this programme are to make funding available to support:

- The larger research community to access state-of-the-art equipment (not necessarily NRF-funded) that is not available regionally and/or nationally;
- Researchers and postgraduate students in South Africa to access global research infrastructure such as synchrotron radiation facilities; and
- Grantholder institutions hosting training workshops on the use of specialised equipment that is acquired through NRF equipment grants.

3. Scope

The Programme structure is shown below:



3.1. Equipment-related Travel Grants

The objective is to provide financial support for researchers to access state-of-the-art equipment, within South Africa and abroad, that is not available at their own research

institution, region or nationally. This funding instrument is subdivided into two categories, namely:

- 3.1.1. **General Equipment Travel Grants**, which makes funding available to researchers requiring access to specialised equipment that is not available regionally or nationally. The grant will cover national or international travel and subsistence as required.
- 3.1.2. **Synchrotron Travel Grants**, which makes funding available to researchers requiring access to a synchrotron radiation facility. The applicant must provide evidence that he/she was successful in his/her application to utilise a beam line(s) at a synchrotron radiation facility.

3.2. Equipment-related Training Grants

This intervention makes funding available to support advanced short courses/workshops focussed on training technical staff, postgraduate students and other users of specialised and state-of-the-art equipment that were acquired either through NEP, NNEP and/or SRIP grant awards. This will include practical training and short courses on advanced techniques used on specialised research equipment.

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.

This document provides information on issues of eligibility, 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.

4. Application Process

The Call for Applications will be open throughout the year and applications may be submitted at any time. However, the review and funding decisions will be made on **a quarterly basis**.

Submission of applications for funding for each of the academic quarters (January-March, April-June, July-September and October-December) should be submitted well in advance as funding decisions will be made during the month preceding the relevant quarter. **No retrospective applications will be considered.**

Applications submitted to the NRF may be for a single applicant or multiple applicants. Supervisors may apply on behalf of their technician(s) and/or student(s).

The NRF encourages the local design and development of the next generation of research equipment in South Africa. Therefore, institutions are encouraged to apply for support for access to training on design, procurement, construction, testing and certification of novel research equipment.

The awarded grant should be claimed within the financial year (1 April to 31 March, but in the case of last quarter awards, the visit/training course had to be completed within at least six (6) months after the grant has been awarded.

Please plan carefully to ensure that **the travel and training course dates occur after the funding decision date.** ***No retrospective funding*** will be considered.

The NRF will contribute up to a maximum of
R45 000 per application in respect of **Equipment-related Travel and Synchrotron Grants; and**
R25 000 per application in respect of **Equipment-related Training Grants.**

4.1 Eligibility Criteria

All applicants must be full-time or fixed-term contract staff members at publicly funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Science Councils, National Laboratories, Museums and other publicly funded research intensive institutions approved by the NRF. In addition, the following programme-specific criteria apply:

Travel Grants: *Full-time masters and doctoral students, registered at South African universities, and postdoctoral fellows are also eligible for support, on condition that the supervisor is the applicant and will be accountable for the conditions of the grant award.*

Training Grants: *The applicant must be a grantholder to a SRIP, NEP and/or NNEP grant award and may apply on behalf of an operator or technician responsible for the equipment.*

4.2 Exclusion criteria

Undergraduate and Honours students are not eligible to apply for equipment related travel and training grants. In addition, the following programme-specific exclusions are applicable:

Travel Grants: Requests for funding to support:

- *Research that advances private enterprise;*
- *Visiting scientists,*
- *Attendance of conferences and/or non-equipment training workshops; and*
- *Testing the functionality of equipment that an applicant envisages to procure through SRIP, NEP and/or NNEP grants. This should be achieved by the applicant in partnership with the supplier.*

Training Grants: Requests for funding to support:

- *Training that addresses only the applicant's institutional needs;*
- *Basic training of operators and technicians, provided by the supplier as part of equipment acquisition; and*
- *Training on equipment that has not been funded through an NRF grant.*

4.3 Application requirements

The submitted proposal must address the following:

General Equipment Travel Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There must be a clear indication that the equipment the applicant proposes to access is not available in the applicant's own institution, regionally or nationally. The motivation must include letters from other institutions explaining that similar equipment will not be able to support the research activities of the applicant;• Applications must be supported and validated by the designated authority at the research institution; and• Where the cost of the trip exceeds R45 000 (forty five thousand rand), the applicant must clearly demonstrate that additional funding has been secured to cover the full cost of travel.
Synchrotron Travel Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A strongly motivated proposal that includes supporting documentation such as invitations, training and a beamline access schedule from the synchrotron radiation facility that the applicant proposes to visit;• Applications for students must be submitted by the supervisor who will be held accountable for ensuring that the conditions of the grant award are met; and• Costs associated with a typical international synchrotron radiation facility visit of two weeks that exceed R45 000 (forty five thousand rand), must be strongly motivated. The applicant must clearly demonstrate that additional funding has been secured to cover the full cost of travel.
Training Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate motivation must be provided illustrating the need for the envisaged training, which should have either regional and/or national impact;• The proposed training should include knowledge dissemination to researchers based at historically disadvantaged institutions, black and female researchers as well as postgraduate students;• Where the cost of the workshop exceeds R20 000 (twenty thousand rand), the applicant must clearly demonstrate that additional funding has been secured to cover the full cost; and• Applicants are encouraged to actively engage with suppliers for such training workshops.

4.4 Application documentation

If the applicant **is not** registered on the NRF Online System (<http://nrffonline.nrf.ac.za>), he/she needs to do so, completing especially the CV section as it will be part of the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that **existing Online CV's** is **updated** before final submission. This is necessary for the SPP-Grants unit to process the application.

Applications with incomplete or out-dated NRF Online Registration and CV sections, will not be considered for funding.

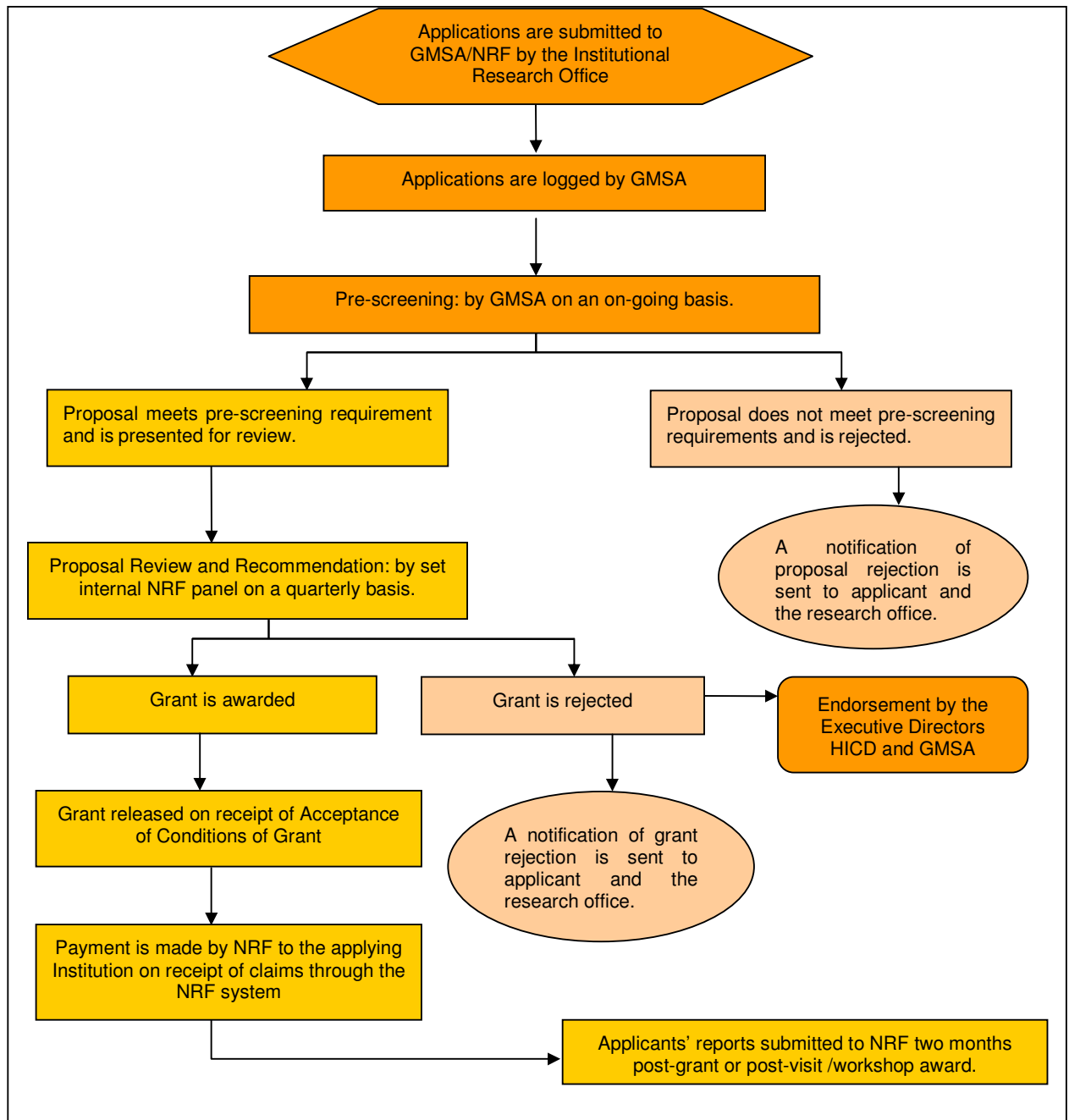
All applicants must submit the following documentation:

- Completed NRF application form, through the Research Office of their institution;
- Confirmation from the institution to be visited of allocated time on the equipment;
- Invitation and / or the training schedule for the training workshop to be attended; and
- A detailed budget indicating funds secured (through other means, should the costs exceed the NRF grant amount) and requested from the NRF.

The following additional information is required for **Training Grants**:

- *A letter of confirmation indicating that a trainer has been appointed by the supplier/manufacturer for a specific date, time and venue as well as a CV of the trainer.*

4.5 Application process flow diagram for Equipment-related Mobility Grants in the NRF



5. Evaluation Process

The evaluation process includes two distinct steps:

1. Internal / Pre-screening by GMSA on an on-going basis; and
2. Proposal Review and Recommendation by an NRF-appointed panel on a quarterly basis.

5.1. Internal / Pre-screening

The applications will all be screened by GMSA staff for completion and adherence to Programme guidelines. If the criteria listed below are not met, the applications will be rejected and not taken further into the evaluation process:

5.1.1. Common to all Equipment-Related Mobility and Training Grants

- Completed/updated NRF Online registration and CV of applicant;
- A fully completed NRF application form, signed off by the relevant Designated Authorities of the institutional research office;
- Where the cost of the trip or workshop exceeds R45 000 and R20 000 respectively, proof must be provided that additional funding has been secured to cover the full cost of the travel; and
- A detailed budget that indicates funds secured from the applicant's institution or other sources and/or funds requested from the NRF.

5.1.2. Specific to General Equipment-related Travel Grants

- A letter from the institution to be visited, confirming allocated time on the equipment or confirming acceptance on training course.

5.1.3. Specific to Synchrotron Travel Grants

- The application should be completed by the supervisor on behalf of and in addition to the student/technician details.
- Where costs exceed R45 000, a motivation must be provided.
- **Synchrotron travel:** A letter must be provided indicating:
 - Confirmation of allocated beam time from the host synchrotron facility;
- **Synchrotron training:**
 - A letter must be provided from the host institution, indicating that a suitable trainer has been appointed by the host synchrotron facility for a specific date, time and venue; and

5.2. Proposal Review and Recommendation

An NRF appointed panel undertakes the evaluation of the proposals according to criteria as listed below, and makes funding recommendations to the Executive Directors of HICD for the funding of applications.

5.3. Evaluation criteria

Below are the criteria and scoring that will be used by the NRF to select proposals for funding:

5.3.1. Evaluation criteria specific to Equipment-related Travel Grants

Criteria	Detail	Approved	Not Approved	Additional information required
Host Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation for using this particular institution/facility (see section 3.2 of application) 			
Research Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of research equipment (see section 4.2 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation provided for inaccessibility to equipment at own institution, region or nationally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: Details provided on local researchers contacted and their responses International: Details provided on local researchers contacted and their responses why local SA equipment is unsuitable (see section 4.3 of application)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synchrotron-specific: training and access schedule from the synchrotron radiation facility to be visited 			
Purpose of Visit (Potential for creating research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem Identification / Proposed scientific impact on own research and / or envisaged research (see section 4.4 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationale and motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitability of technique; and Objectives for using this research equipment (see section 4.5 of application)			
Potential for knowledge transfer which may occur as a result of the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research outputs as a result of visit (see section 4.6 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentoring plan/ proposal of young researchers from HDIs (see section 4.7 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impact on HR Development (see section 4.8 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impact on equity and redress (see section 4.9 of application) 			

5.3.2. Evaluation criteria specific to Training Grants

Criteria	Detail	Approved	Not Approved	Additional information required
Purpose of Visit (Potential for creating research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation for proposed training / workshop (see section 5.1 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed scientific impact of the training on own research and possible future research (see section 5.2 of application) 			
Training equipment information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRF Funded piece of equipment (see section 5.4 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear differentiation provided on proposed training versus training that should have been supplied by the supplier / manufacturer (see section 5.5 of application) 			
Potential for knowledge transfer which may occur as a result of the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research outputs as a result of visit (see section 5.6 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentoring plan/ proposal of young researchers from HDIs (see section 5.7 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impact on HR Development (see section 5.8 of application) 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impact on equity and redress (see section 5.9 of application) 			

6. Payment of grant

Grants are paid directly to the organisation where the grantholder is employed.

Ninety percent (90%) of the grant will be released for claiming by the institution on receipt of the signed Acceptance of Conditions of Grant, by the applicant and the employing institution

Ten percent (10%) will be released on submission and approval of a report on the visit/workshop submitted on the prescribed template (available from SPP-GMSA) within **TWO (2)** months of the conclusion of the visit.

The awarded grant should be claimed within the financial year (1 April to 31 March), but in the case of last quarter awards, the visit/training course/workshop has to be completed within **six (6)** months after the grant has been awarded.

The maximum value of Mobility Grants will be reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted for inflation linked increases as required.

Travel grants R 45 000

Training grants R 20 000

7. Reporting

All grantholders are required to submit a report to the NRF no later than **TWO (2)** months after a visit/workshop has been completed. The following types of outputs are expected to emanate from the visit:

- Scarce skills development on the use of specialised equipment and analytical systems;
- Knowledge dissemination by means of workshops/seminars to the local science community;
- Training of students – particularly black and female students;
- Training of black and female researchers, as well as researchers from historically disadvantaged institutions; and
- Research outputs:
 - Publications
 - Conference Proceedings
 - Collaborations
 - Improved laboratory processes
 - Other (explain).

8. How to apply

The Call for Applications will be open throughout the year and applications may be submitted at any time. However, the review and funding decisions will be made on a quarterly basis (*section 4 of this manual*). The application can be downloaded from the NRF website, http://www.nrf.ac.za/funding_overview.php

All sections of the Application Form must be completed.

Submission to the NRF: Copies of the Application Form in BOTH hard-copy **AND** electronic format should be submitted:

- A **hard copy** of the completed form duly signed and approved by the institution's Research Management or Designated Authority must be delivered to Winnie Motsatsi, Liaison Officer: SPP-G, GMSA, National Research Foundation, PO Box 2600, Pretoria 0001
- Electronic versions of the completed Application Form should be signed using electronically-appended signatures by both the applicant and the relevant research administrator.
- The **validated electronic version** of the completed form should be e-mailed to Ms Winnie Motsatsi at winnie@nrf.ac.za, with a cc to Mrs Stephanie Harris at stephanie@nrf.ac.za.

Should the requisite signatures be omitted, the application WILL NOT proceed to the evaluation stage.

NRF contacts for queries:

<p>Ms Winnie Motsatsi Liaison Officer: Strategic Platforms Grants GMSA National Research Foundation Tel: +27 (0) 12 481 4118 E-mail: winnie@nrf.ac.za</p>	<p>Mrs Stephanie Harris Coordinator: Strategic Platforms Grants GMSA National Research Foundation Tel: +27 (0) 12 481 4024 E mail: stephanie@nrf.ac.za</p>
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