

Call for Applications

Concept Notes for Large Integrated Team Projects

Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP)

UCT Internal Deadline: 15 April 2025

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The aim of the Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) is to fund the generation, mobilization and integration of priority foundational biodiversity knowledge and information so that this can be managed, secured and disseminated to address the needs of society, the Department of Science Technology & Innovation (DSTI) Global Change Programme and the bioeconomy. The Programme has four main strategic objectives which deal with the generation of knowledge, the mobilization of information, integration of data, ensuring the management and dissemination of knowledge and data, capacity development and development of an understanding of how best to ensure the uptake and application of outputs in foundational biodiversity knowledge. FBIP aims to fund large, collaborative / integrated team projects which align with knowledge needs, or which involve participants along the entire value chain from knowledge generation to application for decision-making.

The call for proposals is a two-step process:

1. Concept document call, evaluation and selection for full development (**this call**); Concept notes will be assessed by a panel within 2-3 months after submission and a limited number (usually 2-4) will be selected for further development into full proposals.
2. Development of full proposals for selected concept documents; Evaluation and selection of 2 proposals for funding for a three-year period (2025-2027).

FOCUS AREAS

Projects falling within the following seven focus areas have been identified for support:

Environmental sustainability:

1. Multi-taxa surveys, with the geographic area clearly identified on the basis of a large scale proposed development, or neglected areas for which no spatial plan exists for biodiversity, resulting in potentially poor decisions or management.
2. Surveys of the biodiversity of a particular habitat / biome that is neglected and important for ecosystem services, across a broad geographic area.

Agro-biodiversity and food security:

3. Crop Wild Relatives (CWR): taxonomy and distribution of crop wild relatives in South Africa.
4. Crop and livestock pests, parasites and disease vectors, with a focus on indigenous taxa.

Human health and biocultural diversity:

5. Vectors of disease, parasites, pathogens, allergens. Documenting diversity.
6. Cultural significance of biodiversity.

Taxonomic revisions of priority South African taxa:

7. The purpose of this theme is to substantially shift the taxonomic knowledge of taxa that require large scale revision, and that have a large component of their diversity in South Africa / have high proportion of South African endemics and that include economically or ecologically important species.

ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants (Principal investigator) must be either:
 - Full-time UCT researchers.
 - Part-time UCT researchers on contract, on condition that the appointment is for (at least) the duration of the project applied for in the submission. The length of the contract should be stated on the application form (Salaries must be paid by UCT, and the primary employment of the individual concerned must be at UCT)
 - Retired researchers affiliated with UCT, provided that institutional support is evident in the form of an employment contract, office space, administrative support, and access to research equipment and space. The institution will have to ensure that a minimum of six months is spent at the facility for the purpose of research and research capacity development. The researchers must have a research publication track record and must be actively supervising postgraduate students at present.
- The core research team must consist of a principal investigator (i.e. applicant) and one or more co-investigator(s). The project may also include research associates/collaborators.
- Funding will only be allocated to projects involving **at least four institutions**, but teams must be led by an identified principal investigator. Funds will be made to a recognised research institution under the name of the principal investigator, who can allocate part of the grant to team member institutions.
- Projects must include a **minimum of five team members** from a minimum of four institutions, but teams that involve all relevant specialists will be favoured.
- Project teams must include at least two young researchers (younger than 40 at the time of application) and ensure adequate mentorship and involvement as necessary.
- Project teams must include at least one researcher from a Historically Disadvantaged Institute (HDI).
- Contribution to equity in terms of race and gender of young and senior researchers will be positively considered as part of the capacity development/transformation criteria.
- Projects should include postgraduate training. A minimum of three postgraduates involved in each large, funded project are recommended (including MSc and PhD).
- Projects must identify specific users of the knowledge generated and co-ordinated information and must indicate how engagement with users has been or will be addressed to ensure that data needs are met in terms of what is generated and mobilized and how it is accessed by users.
- Projects must clearly state the impact of the project on understanding and mitigation of global change and / or the bio- economy.
- Projects must be in line with one of the seven focus areas identified.
- Projects must generate primary biodiversity data sets according to the Darwin Core standard.
- Projects must contribute to the compilation of species pages according to the specifications provided by the FBIP.
- Projects must produce DNA barcodes for species, using the recognised barcoding gene/s for the taxon and must submit data to BOLD.
- Projects must contribute to science engagement with the aim of creating a society that is knowledgeable about science, critically engaged and scientifically literate.
- Only research within South Africa (including Prince Edward and Marion Islands) is eligible for FBIP grants.
- Postdoctoral fellows, students, technical and support staff are NOT eligible to apply.

FUNDING

- The range of funding available per project is R500,000 to R1.5 million per annum for a three-year period (R1,500,000 – R4,500,000 in total per project. The total amount of funding requested should not exceed R4.5 million in total with a maximum of R1.5 million in any one year. The grant covers research operating costs and postdoctoral fellowships and excludes postgraduate student support which will be covered separately by the NRF's Postgraduate Student Funding.
- Depending on funding availability, one or two full projects are selected for support for a three-year period, with the first transfer of funds being made in the year after the review process has been completed. Funding will be made available in annual instalments (maximum of R1.5 million per year) commencing in 2026.
- No funding is available for the development of the concept notes.
- Limited seed funding is available as a once off payment in order to assist teams whose concept note is selected for further development into full proposals (R20,000 per team).

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

The application must be completed on the **NRF Connect System**: <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>

1. Register / Login using your ORCID and password.
2. Update your CV (These Curriculum Vitae are used in the assessment processes, and incomplete or outdated inputs will jeopardise the success of the application).
3. On the Menu, click on Applications under My Applications tab.
4. Click on the + sign next to **Concept Notes**.
5. Click on the *Create* button next to **Concept Notes for Large Integrated Projects Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme**
6. Complete all compulsory sections and the relevant non-compulsory sections.
7. Attach all the supporting documents in PDF format
8. Submit the application on completion.

IMPORTANT NOTE

It is of utmost importance that applicants consult the [Framework Document and Funding Guide](#) for more detailed information about the funding instrument as well as financial support, the assessment process and funding conditions.

The NRF recommends the use of the DCC Checklist for Data Management Plan as a guide when drafting the Data Management Plan for the application proposal. For UCT Research Data Management information and resources, please go to <http://www.digitalservices.lib.uct.ac.za/dls/services/rdm>

For technical enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk: Supportdesk@risa.nrf.ac.za