



**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
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NSF 18-024

Dear Colleague Letter: NSF and NRF Accepting Proposals for Collaborative International Research Coordination Networks (IRCNs) comprised of U.S. and South African Researchers

November 9, 2017

Dear Colleagues:

With this Dear Colleague Letter, the National Science Foundation (NSF) Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) within the Directorate for Biological Sciences and National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF) announce a co-funding opportunity to support collaborative International Research Coordination Networks (IRCNs) comprised of U.S. and South African researchers in the field of environmental biology. The IRCN mechanism provides an opportunity for the South African and U.S. research communities to communicate and coordinate their research activities on a wide range of environmental biology topics, including: ecosystem forecasting and monitoring, community origin, maintenance and function, species diversity and evolutionary relationships, emerging diseases and pests, and biodiversity theory. Projects are expected to enhance current collaborations and establish new collaborations between the U.S. and South African biodiversity research communities to help prioritize research topics, enhance complementary research activities, and identify new synergistic research directions. The IRCN mechanism facilitates networking and knowledge sharing; direct research-related activities will not be funded via this collaborative activity.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

U.S.- South Africa collaborative IRCN proposals can be submitted to NSF and NRF for consideration at any time. Proposals submitted to NSF must follow the format and submission procedures for regular Research Coordination Network (RCN) proposals described in [NSF 17-594](#). IRCN proposals can request support for up to five years and will be jointly funded by NSF/DEB and NRF. NSF/DEB will support the participation of U.S researchers and will contribute up to \$500,000 (USD 100,000 per year) per award, and NRF will support the participation of South Africa researchers and contribute up to 2,500,000 Rands (R 500,000/year). A maximum of 2 environmental biology IRCN awards per year is anticipated to be available.

The same PI/co-PI(s) must appear on the proposal submitted to both NSF and NRF, and the same

project description must be submitted to both funding agencies in the appropriate format. The proposal budget submitted to NSF must include only the costs of U.S. participants. The anticipated budget for South African participants must be submitted as a supplementary document to the NSF proposal. The proposal budget submitted to NRF must include only the costs of South African participants. The anticipated budget for U.S. participants must be submitted as a supplementary document in the proposal submitted to NRF.

PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW

Standard NSF and NRF eligibility requirements apply. Individuals are restricted to appearing as Principal Investigator (PI), co-PI or other senior personnel on only one full U.S.-South Africa IRCN proposal per year. This limitation includes proposals submitted by a lead organization, any sub-award submitted as part of a proposal, or any collaborative proposal. All proposals that do not meet this requirement will be returned without review.

All proposals will be evaluated at NSF in accordance with the two U.S. National Science Board approved merit review criteria: intellectual merit and broader impacts. In addition, reviewers will be asked to place emphasis on the IRCN criteria that the proposal should describe, i.e., the means by which investigators plan to share information and ideas, coordinate ongoing or planned research activities, foster synthesis and new collaborations, develop community standards, and in other ways advance science through communication and sharing of ideas. For all U.S.-South African collaborative IRCN proposals, reviewers will consider: mutual benefits, true intellectual collaboration with the foreign partner(s), benefits to be realized from the expertise and specialized skills, facilities, sites and/or resources of the international counterpart, and active research engagement of U.S. students and early-career researchers, where such individuals are engaged in the research or IRCN activities.

Questions about U.S.-South Africa IRCN projects should be directed to Simon Malcomber, National Science Foundation (smalcomb@nsf.gov) or Nomboso Madonda, National Research Foundation, South Africa (nomboso.madonda@nrf.ac.za).

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