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## **Communiqué: Cancellation of the 2026 National Equipment Programme (NEP) Call**

The National Research Foundation (NRF) wishes to inform all stakeholders of an important update regarding the National Equipment Programme (NEP) funding cycle. The NEP is a strategic funding instrument that supports the acquisition, upgrading, and development of advanced research equipment, enabling multi- and interdisciplinary research across South Africa. The NEP typically funds large-scale equipment investments ranging between R1 million and R10 million.

Since 2020, NEP calls have been issued on a biennial basis, with the most recent call released in 2024. The next call was planned for 2026, with awards anticipated for the 2027/2028 financial year. However, due to significant budget reductions, the NRF regrets to announce that the **2026 NEP call will not be launched** and has been formally removed from the 2026 NRF call schedule.

The NRF recognises the critical role of the NEP in strengthening South Africa's research infrastructure and advancing scientific excellence. We remain committed to engaging with the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) to review the future sustainability, design, and timing of subsequent NEP calls.

We thank the research community for its continued support, understanding, and collaboration during this period.

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