



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
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NRF call for proposals: South Africa-Canada Seed Grants for Collaborative Research (SACUN)

The South Africa-Canada Seed Grants for Collaborative Research (SACUN) call is now open on NRF Connect under the Research Grants category. *Kindly distribute within your respective departments.*

UFS internal closing date: 22 May 2026

Scope and aim:

The South Africa-Canada Seed Grants for Collaborative Research (SACUN) aim to strengthen academic partnerships between South African and Canadian institutions by funding joint projects that foster knowledge exchange, capacity building, and solutions to shared global challenges.

Budget:

The National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa has committed to support a maximum of up to ZAR300 000 per project per year over the next three years. The NRF portion of the grant will be disbursed to the South African PI upon signature of the Conditions of Grant (CoG) Contract.

The SSHRC grant will support Canadian PIs advancing research and research-related activities in the social sciences and humanities at up to CAD \$100 000 over two years with a one-year no-cost extension.

Besides the SSHRC-NRF financial support, universities in both countries are encouraged to solicit other funding resources. Leveraged funds should be clearly indicated in the application.

Objectives:

- Promoting international collaboration: The grants are designed to encourage researchers from South Africa and Canada to work together on projects that address pressing social, economic, and scientific issues.
- Supporting early-stage partnerships: These are seed grants, meaning they provide initial funding to establish or expand collaborations that can later grow into larger, long-term research initiatives.
- Focusing on global challenges: The programme emphasises research that contributes to solving issues of mutual importance, such as sustainability, social justice, health, and digital transformation.
- Capacity building: By supporting joint training, workshops, and exchanges, the grants aim to build research capacity and strengthen institutional ties between universities in both countries.

Duration of the grant:

All projects will be supported for a minimum duration of 24 months and a maximum duration of 36 months, starting from 2026.

Call themes:

1. Just and Resilient Societies (topics: reconciliation, diversity, gender equality, the rule of law, democratisation, security, good governance, addressing poverty, ethical environmental practices, quality education, indigenous knowledge systems)
2. Environmental Sustainability (topics: sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural systems, food security, pollution, clean energy, renewable energy, energy transitions, clean water, sustainable sourcing)
3. Artificial Intelligence (topics: technological futures, smart transport systems, nanotechnology, urbanisation – smart cities, informed policymaking, digital economy, digital innovation, digital infrastructure, big data and data science)
4. Sustainable Growth (topics: critical minerals and supply chains, advancing AfCFTA, innovation in the blue economy, infrastructure, green economy, labour supply/skills development)
5. Mathematics Education

***Canadian applicants seeking funding from SSHRC should look at the eligibility section.**

***Eligibility criteria: Attached is the call framework for your perusal. Kindly adhere to the institutional closing dates.**

For more information and assistance with proposal writing, please contact:

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More information:

- [SA Canada Funding Framework](#)
- [NRF Profile Registration Guide](#)