



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

Call for Proposals: The Switzerland/South Africa (SNSF/NRF) Call 2026 (NRF)

Please note that the **Switzerland/South Africa (SNSF/NRF) Lead Agency Call** is now open on **NRF Connect** under the **Research Grants** category.

UFS internal closing date: 25 August 2026 at midnight

Background:

The NRF promotes international research collaboration through strategic partnerships, including a Lead Agency Procedure (LAP) agreement with the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), building on the long-standing research relationship between South Africa and Switzerland. Under the LAP, one funding organisation acts as the lead agency by managing the review and evaluation process, while the partner organisation endorses the decision and determines its national grant allocation. Each organisation funds its own country's research team, eliminating the need for cross-border transfer of funds. For the 2025 funding opportunity, the NRF will serve as the lead agency, following the SNSF's role in 2024, with the LAP operating within existing funding allocations rather than providing additional funding.

Programme aim:

The South Africa–Switzerland partnership aims to strengthen existing high-quality research collaborations by supporting joint research projects in priority fields. It seeks to advance scientific knowledge in both countries, promote basic and applied research, provide opportunities for emerging researchers to build international collaborations and develop their careers, and contribute to research capacity development.

Areas of cooperation:

Submitted research proposals should clearly indicate how they aim to address the 17 SDGs as indicated below:



Figure 1: United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda

Financial support:

The total NRF funding amount should not exceed **R1,5 million**. These funds should be used exclusively for research activities commencing at the beginning of 2027. Funds can be utilised as follows:

R500 000 for all activities of the collaborative project. These research funds will be released annually for a three-year period in line with the researchers' budget requests. Disbursement of funds in subsequent years is dependent on submission of satisfactory progress reports.

R740 000 for one postdoctoral position at R370 000 per annum for two years (R320 000 non-taxable stipend, R50 000 contribution towards research costs, and R15 000 compulsory institutional contribution). The funds for postdoctoral support will be released on condition that nominated candidates meet the NRF equity targets.

Duration of the projects:

Projects will be supported for a maximum period of three years (2027 to 2030).

Research activities to be supported:

Collaborative projects must promote human capacity development, equity, and transformation by involving emerging researchers, historically disadvantaged groups, and historically disadvantaged higher education institutions. Funding supports research activities, including

- research costs;
- one postdoctoral fellowship per project;
- short-term international research placements for emerging researchers; and
- knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities such as workshops, conferences, and research exchanges.

Projects should strengthen existing partnerships, foster new collaborations, and enhance researcher mobility, while ensuring that all scholarly outputs are accompanied by accessible public-facing communication where appropriate. In addition, up to 20% of the budget may be allocated to small equipment, consumables, and accessories. Budgets should be sent to DRD Finance for approval two weeks before submission on *Connect*.

****Please consult the attached framework for further information on the eligibility criteria, application procedure, the scorecard used for proposal assessment, and budget exclusions.***

****Researchers are advised to ensure that their Swiss research partners engage directly with the SNSF lead agency process ([snf.ch](https://www.snf.ch))***

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

- Thabi Mosoetsa (Mosoetsat@ufs.ac.za / +27 51 401 7708) – NRF Grants Coordinator
- Mark Naidoo (Naidoom4@ufs.ac.za) – Manager: International Grants and Partnerships
- Sibusiso Lukhele (Lukheles1@ufs.ac.za) – Grant writing specialist

Access more information here:

- [NRF Profile Registration Guide](#)
- [Swiss Lead Agency Funding Opportunity July 2026](#)