



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
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Call for proposals: Tunisia–South Africa Bilateral Call 2026 (NRF)

Please note that the **Tunisia–South Africa Bilateral Call** is now open on **NRF Connect** under the **Research Grants** category.

UFS internal closing date: 3 September 2026 at midnight

Background:

The South Africa–Tunisia Joint Research Programme outlines a bilateral funding opportunity that will support collaborative research between South African and Tunisian researchers. The programme is jointly managed by the National Research Foundation and Tunisia's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research under their scientific and technological cooperation agreement.

Programme aim:

The programme aims to strengthen long-term scientific collaboration between South Africa and Tunisia through jointly developed research projects and researcher mobility. Furthermore, international research collaboration and knowledge exchange between South Africa and Tunisia is aimed at promoting scientific excellence, innovation, capacity development, and sustainable international partnerships.

Areas of cooperation:

This call will only support joint research projects in the following thematic areas:

- Nanotechnology
- Artificial intelligence
- Water, food, and energy nexus
- Health
- Space and astronomy.

Financial support:

South Africa:

The total amount requested from the NRF should not exceed R450 000 per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of three years, to be paid in annual instalments (R150 000 per year) and exclusively for research activities commencing in 2027.

Tunisia:

Each project will be funded up to TND 60 000 per year for a maximum period of three years (maximum total budget will be TND 180 000).

**Tunisian and South African researchers should, therefore, note that two separate budgets would be required for each project.*

Duration of the projects:

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

Research activities to be supported:

The purpose of this call is to support the mobility **of researchers, scientists, postdocs, and doctoral students** within joint research projects. Funding will be made available for the following activities:

- Exchange Visits for Project Team Members:
 - For researcher exchanges, the sending party will cover round-trip economy-class airfare to the relevant entry city of the host country, as well as medical insurance.
 - The receiving party will provide accommodation and cover living expenses.
- Support for Consumables: Up to 30–40% of the total budget may be allocated for consumables and accessories.
- Human Resources: The participation of young researchers (postdoctoral researchers and PhD students) is requested.
- Scientific Events and Meetings: Support is available for organising and participating in scientific conferences, seminars, and meetings.
- Research-Related Expenses:
 - Coverage includes publication and filing fees for scientific publications and patent applications.
 - Expenses for conducting analyses and processing samples are also supported.

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

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 additional information here:

- [South Africa–Tunisia NRF Call framework May 2026](#)