

Call for Proposals: South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP) - NRF – 2026

Please note that the South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP) is now open on **NRF Connect** under the **Research Grants** category.

UFS internal closing date: 28 August 2026

Background:

The **South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP)** is a **theme-based, demand-driven funding programme** that supports research in the **Southern Ocean**, including the **Prince Edward Islands, Gough Island, and Antarctica**. It is delivered through a partnership between the **National Research Foundation (NRF)**, the **Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)**, and the **South African Polar Research Infrastructure (SAPRI)**.

Applicants must consult **all three sections** of the framework document:

- **Part A (SANAP/NRF RIISA):** Research proposal requirements.
- **Part B (DFFE):** Logistics, operational requirements, and compulsory supporting documents.
- **Part C (SAPRI):** Research infrastructure, facility access, and data storage requirements.

All three frameworks are complementary and must be considered together, as each partner has specific application and compliance requirements.

Programme aim:

The aim of the National Research Foundation (NRF) South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP) is to

- support high-quality, strategic research in the Southern Ocean, Antarctica, Prince Edward Islands, and Gough Island;
- address national research priorities through theme-based and demand-driven research aligned with South Africa's interests in the polar regions;
- advance scientific knowledge of polar and Southern Ocean systems, including their role in global climate, biodiversity, ocean processes, and environmental change;
- strengthen South Africa's research capacity by developing skilled researchers and fostering collaboration among universities, research institutions, government, and international partners;
- maximise the use of South Africa's polar research infrastructure and logistics, including those provided through the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and the South African Polar Research Infrastructure (SAPRI); and
- generate evidence to inform policy and environmental management, supporting South Africa's obligations and leadership in Antarctic governance and conservation.

Financial support:

The NRF SANAP grant does not have a fixed maximum amount per project. Instead, it is a demand-driven funding instrument, meaning that applicants request the budget needed to carry out their proposed research.

- There is no limit to the amount an applicant can request.
- The requested budget must be fully justified and align with the scope and needs of the research.
- Excessive or poorly justified budgets will be viewed unfavourably during the review process.
- Funding is awarded to the highest-ranked proposals until the available programme budget is exhausted.

The grants from this funding instrument will support research, over-wintering personnel salaries, and the associated (and approved) logistics costs. It will also support capacity development.

Budgets should be sent to DRD Finance for approval two weeks before submission on Connect.

Duration of the projects:

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

Research activities covered:

- Field research in Antarctica, the Southern Ocean, and the sub-Antarctic islands, including data and sample collection.
- Laboratory research and analysis of samples collected during SANAP expeditions.
- Long-term environmental monitoring, including climate, oceanographic, atmospheric, geological, and ecological observations.
- Data analysis, modelling, and interpretation to improve understanding of polar and Southern Ocean processes.
- Interdisciplinary research that addresses complex environmental and societal challenges.
- Research that informs policy and environmental management, including conservation and sustainable use of polar ecosystems.
- Student training and capacity development, particularly for postgraduate (master's, PhD, and postdoctoral) researchers participating in SANAP-funded projects.
- Collaboration between South African and international researchers where it strengthens the proposed research and aligns with SANAP priorities.
- Use of South African polar research infrastructure, including research stations, research vessels, laboratories, and data infrastructure provided through SAPRI.

Note:

*Both rated and unrated researchers can apply.

*Postdoctoral fellows *are not eligible to apply* as principal investigators in this call. They may, however, find support for their proposed research by embedding it into applications submitted by eligible principal investigators, as detailed above.

****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:

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Access additional documentation here:

- [2026 SANAP Framework Document](#)
- [NRF Profile-Registration-Guide](#)