

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowships

The National Research Foundation (NRF) in partnership with the Green Fund, a green finance initiative of the Department of Environmental Affairs, invites applications for Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowships to undertake postdoctoral research at South African public institutions to support the development of institutional capacity building on the green economy.

1. Background

The Government of South Africa through the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has set up the Green Fund to support the transition to a low carbon, resource efficient and pro-employment development path. The DEA has appointed the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) as the implementing agent of the Green Fund. The Green Fund aims to support innovative, catalytic projects and programmes which support South Africa's green economy transition. Investments are structured across three functional focus areas, i.e. project development, capacity development and research and policy development. In addition, the Green Fund supports knowledge development through its research funding programme, as well as capacity development programmes such as the Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowships.

It is envisaged that these fellowships would stimulate research, teaching and learning on the green economy. In addition, this intervention is expected to play a key role in developing a new cohort of emerging researchers who can initiate teaching and learning on the green economy in South Africa, and create the institutional capacity to entrench green economy knowledge areas in the South African policy and research agenda.

2. Objectives

The Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowships will support fellows to undertake full-time research at South African public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Science Councils, National Research Facilities as well as other Public Research Institutions.

The main objectives of the Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowships are to:

- Obtain teaching experience at higher education institutions to foster green economy thinking;
- Enable world-class experience in strategic and applied green economy research;
- Expand transformation initiatives through equity and career growth opportunities in the tertiary sector by building a pipeline of next generation academics;
- Attract young scientists and professionals of the highest calibre to influence green economy policy and practice through full-time research; and
- Contribute towards the increase in the number and quality South African postdoctoral fellows within Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) fields as well as the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH).

3. Areas of Support

Applications from candidates intending to pursue a postdoctoral fellowship in green economy research areas will be supported. Fellows from the Social Sciences and Humanities will also be considered for support. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines the green economy as one that results in *“improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.”* The South African Government has initiated a range of strategic policy imperatives to accelerate the entrenchment of green approaches in the development process and thus aid South Africa in transitioning to a green economy.

The green economy is expressed as a “*just transition to a resource-efficient, low carbon and pro-employment growth path*” in the National Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan (DEA, 2011). Emerging from the first national Green Economy Summit (2010), a suite of supportive macro-economic policies, framework and strategy documents, and sector-specific policies support the South African Government’s commitment to green economy objectives. Commitment to a green economy is captured in both the long-term vision of the *National Development Plan 2030* (NPC, 2013) as well as the *2020 New Growth Path* (EDD, 2010) which expressly identifies the green economy as one of the key sectors for investment. Supportive policies which relate to key economic sectors such as energy, agriculture and manufacturing, as well as cross-cutting policies related to Research and Development (R&D) and skills development, endorse South Africa’s transition to a green economy.

Efforts to support South Africa’s transition to a green economy include the development of the knowledge, skills and technologies which spans the entire knowledge spectrum, including science, mathematics and engineering as well as the social and business sciences. The Green Fund supports the development of green economy knowledge areas across a range of disciplines which:

- Promote high quality applied and policy research which addresses national green economy policy objectives;
- Develop products, instruments or frameworks which advance policy objectives in various economy sectors;
- Explore, evaluate, discuss and synthesise data on best practice in economic sectors;

- Address innovation – *technological, financial and institutional*, which can transition South Africa to a green economy; and
- Investigate ways of mainstreaming environmental and climate change imperatives into policies, regulations, institutions, services and programmes.

The *Environment Sector Research, Development and Evidence Framework* (2012) of the DEA sets out nine key green economy areas which identify key green economy research areas. In addition, policy research which addresses broader planning, institutional and financial instruments which relate to the green economy, are also key knowledge areas of relevance to building our understanding of the green economy. While these research areas provide a useful reference point for the emerging themes, green economy research is likely to adopt inter and transdisciplinary research approaches which extend across the research areas outlined below:

- Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Green Buildings and the Built Environment
- Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure
- Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency
- Environmental Sustainability including Research and Capacity Development
- Resource Conservation and Management
- Sustainable Waste Management Practices
- Agriculture, Food Production and Forestry
- Sustainable Water Management

4. Value of the Scholarships

Successful applicants will receive funding for a period of up to three years and must commence the fellowship no later than January 2016. Scholarships not taken up by December 2015 will be cancelled. The total Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowship package for 2015 is indicated below.

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| Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowship | R250 000 p.a.(Non-taxable stipend) R50 000 p.a.(Contribution towards research costs) R15 000 p.a.(Institutional contribution) |
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Host institutions will be expected to supplement the fellowship by a minimum of R15 000.00 per annum as part of the institutional commitment. In addition, the host institutions will also ensure provision of an enabling environment for fellows' research training and skills development.

Successful candidates may also apply for a travel grant to a maximum value of R60 000.00 that may be used to contribute towards the costs of attending local or international conferences or workshops or, for technical visits to another institution or laboratory during the tenure of the award.

The Green Economy Postdoctoral fellows will be encouraged to contribute to the teaching programmes at South African public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The successful applicants will be required to sign a conditions of grant document with the NRF before the award is released.

5. Criteria for Selection

5.1. Eligibility

In selecting applicants for consideration for funding, the following criteria will apply:

Fellowships are open to **bonafide South African citizens or permanent residents and foreign citizens** including applicants from the SADC region.

- Up to 30% of recipients may be foreign citizens including applicants from the SADC region.
- Applicants already in possession of a PhD, must have obtained their PhD within the last five (5) years.
- Applicants that are not yet in possession of a PhD will be required to fulfill all requirements for the awarding of the PhD before the fellowship may be taken up.
- Full time employees of Higher Education Institutions are not eligible to apply.
- All NRF scholarships awards shall be held as primary funding towards the research study.
- Fellowships must not be held simultaneously with a fellowship from any other government or NRF source or NRF administered source.
- Fellowship-holders are allowed to hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to half the value of the NRF award or should the host university have an institutional capped value, the award can be supplemented to the university capped value for the level of study.
- Fellowship-holders must not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the fellowship.
- Fellowship-holders will be required to undertake a maximum of 12 hours of teaching, and or tutorials per week on average during the year of scholarship and may be remunerated for these duties, provided that they are remunerated at a rate not exceeding the normal institution tariff for services rendered.

5.2 Equity

In line with the national imperative of equity and redress, the funding instrument prioritises support for appropriately qualified blacks, women and fellows with disabilities without sacrificing quality. The instrument will strive to meet the set equity targets of 80% blacks, 60% women and 4% people with disabilities.

5.3 Conditions of award for the Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowship

- The award of the Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowship will be based on past, current and potential academic performance. Selection criteria will include academic merit, research ability, leadership qualities and previous awards, prizes and honours.
- In addition to the above criteria, the award will be based on the feasibility and merit of the applicant's research project proposal.
- Individual candidates must submit applications to the NRF.
- Applications must bear the endorsement of the host researcher, at the host institution.
- Applications without the endorsement of the host researcher will not be considered.
- A list of successful candidates will be published on the NRF website as soon as the internal NRF approval processes of the award are finalised.

6 How to apply for funding

Applicants must apply by following the steps below:

- Applications must be submitted through an online application process to the NRF.
- **Applicants can apply for the NRF- Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for 2015 by accessing the link: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>**
- **Register/ Login using your ID number and password.**
- Select create new application from the list of existing calls.
- Select the call for which you are applying: **NRF - Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for 2015.**

- Remember to complete all sections of the application.
- Please attach the necessary documents in **one PDF file in the following order: ID document, proof of permanent residence (if applicable), endorsement by the host institution and certified academic transcripts.**
- Should you not follow the guidelines for attaching the necessary documents your application will not be considered.
- Remember to **submit** your application on completion.
- Complete applications will be directed to the host institution for verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered (please refer to call document for details on eligibility for the NRF- Green Economy Postdoctoral Fellowship Call).
- Please contact the university post graduate office or research office if you have any queries.
- The closing date for submitting applications is **30 April 2015.**
- **Please take note of your institutions internal closing dates as these may be set before the actual call closing date.**

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