Long Term Africa-Japan Research and Innovation Partnership

Africa-Japan Collaborative Research

("*AJ-CORE*")

on

Environmental Science

Third Call for Proposals
Framework and Application Guidelines

Opening Date: May 2023

Closing Date: 14 July 2023

23:59 (SAST)/ 16:00 (JST)

Long Term Africa-Japan Research and Innovation Partnership
AJ-CORE 3rd Call for Proposals 2023

Content

1. Introduction

AJ-CORE is a partnership between the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) which aims to support joint research and innovation projects in designated fields of science between researchers from Japan, South Africa and the 17 African countries whose ministries and granting councils are a participating member in the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI). See **Annex I for a list of eligible African countries within SGCI**.

The AJ-CORE call for proposals operates on a co-funding model financed by the NRF, JST, and some of the SGCI African countries. This call for proposals invites consortia composed of at least three research organisations (and/or private and public practitioners) from three different countries (i.e. South Africa, Japan and an SGCI African country) to submit project proposals for research and innovation on designated fields of science in the countries concerned. The proposal development and execution should be driven by local demand and include an approach that contributes to enhancing impact.

1.1 Objectives of the AJ-CORE

With just less than 10 years left for the world to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the role of science and technology has become increasingly important. The rapid population growth and increasing access to education has created a pool of highly skilled human resources and accelerated economic growth in Africa but it has also brought other societal problems. A partnership between Africa and Japan has a great potential to contribute to the kind of sustainable global society we are all currently aiming for. AJ-CORE therefore, serves as a national and regional research platform designed to provide the knowledge needed to support transformations towards sustainability. AJ-CORE seeks to:

- build and connect knowledge to increase the impact of research;
- explore new development paths;
- enhance human capacity development in Science, Technology and Innovation;
- find new ways to accelerate transitions to sustainable development; and
- contribute to SDGs.

AJ-CORE aims to bring together partners in society to co-develop the knowledge needed to support decision-makers and societal change at all scales and in diverse contexts, by focusing on the research area contributing to resolving common problems in Africa.

1.2 Focus Research Area for third AJ-CORE call

Environmental science is a global, regional and national challenge that cannot be solved by one country alone. It requires multi-country partnerships, multi- and interdisciplinary research (e.g. climate change, agriculture, living environment, infectious diseases, etc.) with a range of diverse participants in a single project (while emphasising cooperation led by researchers, it is expected that the private sector and NGOs would be involved in the funded projects – at their own cost of participation). Therefore, just like in the first and second calls, we designate environmental science as the focus area for our third call. The call seeks technological solutions to the environmental factors affecting quality of life in Africa – climate change, water quality, atmosphere, geological environments, and ecosystems – and ultimately contribute to building African STI capacity and sustainability.

Through supporting research and innovation projects in environmental science, the partnership aims to contribute to SDGs 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Applications should pursue a holistic (system) approach to finding integrated solutions that can be implemented in the relevant context and should address the following aspects:

- solving of complex economic, ecological and social challenges to improve lives in a sustainable way using comprehensive system-oriented approaches;
- expected impact of research and likelihood of uptake contributes to solutions and evidence for policy change to significantly improve economies, wellbeing and resilience;
- research and innovation projects with potential impact at national or regional scales; and
- contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Possible projects may, for example, include the following topics:

- Development of climate change resilient and sustainable rice production in Africa (SDG #2)
- Improving sustainable water and sanitation systems in Africa (SDG #6)
- Production of Biofuels Using Biomass (SDG #7)
- Development of innovative sustainable land management method to prevent desertification (SDG #15)

1.3 Countries participating in the AJ-CORE

For a consortium to be eligible it should consist of researchers from at least:

- one South African institution,
- one Japanese institution and
- one institution in an SGCI African country

Please note that a proposal submitted by only South African and Japanese researchers will be considered ineligible.

African countries participating in the SGCI:

Botswana, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. See **Annex I for information on SGCI**.

- Both South African and Japanese researchers in the proposal must clearly indicate the benefit of co-opting a third African partner and the research activities that will be carried out in the third African partner country.

- The researchers should also indicate the type of contribution (in kind / otherwise) to be made by the 3rd / 4th / 5th / 6th African partner country.

1.4 Governance of the AJ-CORE

Both the NRF and JST take responsibility for the administration and overall management of the call (from the call publication phase to awards).

A proposal should be submitted by a South African Principal Investigator (PI) to the NRF through the NRF Online Submission System at (https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/) before the stipulated deadline.

The same proposal should also be submitted by the Japanese PI to JST through the National Online Submission System at (https://www.e-rad.go.jp/) before the stipulated deadline.

Two identical copies of a proposal must be submitted to both the NRF and the JST.

Detailed information on project proposal and submission guidelines can be found in the sections below. Please note:

- Proposals received by the NRF and not submitted to JST (and vice versa) will automatically be considered ineligible.

- Submitted proposals to both the NRF and JST without a third African partner country will be considered ineligible.

When submitting your application through both the NRF and the JST Online Submission Systems, you will also need to enter some details online. Therefore applicants are advised to start submitting their applications at least one week before the deadline of this Call for Proposals. Applications that are submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

An Independent International Review Panel (IRP) consisting of experts from South Africa, Japan and some of the SGCI African countries will assess the proposals and provide advice on ranking to the NRF and JST. The NRF and JST will ensure that all parties involved in the evaluation and selection procedure and its administration, sign confidentiality and conflict of interest forms.

1.5 Budget information

The total budget for this call amounts to **2 107 000 USD**.

With the available total budget, the partners aim to fund a maximum of around five large collaborative consortia projects for not more than 36 months (3-fiscal years).

See the table below for maximum eligible amount per funder.

Country	Funding organisation		Total funds available for the call	Maximum funding per project	Total number of projects to be funded
Botswana	Department of Research, Science and Technology (DRST)		P3,000,000.00	P1 000 000.00	Three
Japan	Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)		90,000,000 JPY	18,000,000 JPY	Five
Kenya	National Research Fund (NRF)		90,000USD	45,000 USD	Two
Mozambique	Fundo Nacional de Investigação (FNI)		300 000 USD	100 000 USD	Three
Sierra Leone	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE)		200,000 USD	100,000 USD	Two
South Africa	National Research Foundation (NRF)		R10,8 mil	R1.8 mil	Six

The above-mentioned funding organisations will each support researchers from their respective countries in a collaborative project. The contributions of the other consortium partners from other SGCI countries whether in monetary value or in kind must be captured in the proposal. See **section 3.2** for guidelines on budget allocation against eligible research activities.

Further to this, researchers should consult **Annex V: Individual National Eligibility and Funding Regulations** for detailed information on the budget.

2. Cross-cutting issues for all proposals

2.1 Integrated and flexible research approach

The challenges addressed in this call are interrelated and multi-scalar, and to reach impact require a holistic approach that spans the entire research and innovation chain. The consortia should crosscut scientific disciplinary boundaries (interdisciplinarity) and integrate scientific and practitioners' knowledge in joint research (transdisciplinarity). Research should focus on the entire knowledge chain, from fundamental to applied and practical research. The proposed research itself should be characterised by integrated perspectives. It should evolve in a process of co-creation with different partners: researchers from South Africa and the Japan, including researchers from any of the 17 African countries whose ministries and granting councils are a participating member in the SGCI (if part of consortium), and societal partners should be actively involved throughout the entire project, in (advising on) defining and conducting the research as well as in communicating the progress and results, in order to jointly produce a mutually valued outcome. Added value may be achieved by integrating and synthesising various sources of knowledge to create new knowledge and by creating sustainability through the development of long-term knowledge relations.

Proposals should be based on a thorough review of existing knowledge and should preferably be complementary to existing research initiatives and reinforce these were possible. Project teams are encouraged to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative and quasi-experimental research methods, including operational research, and should include research-into-use approaches.

Research consortia have to adopt a flexible and stepwise research approach and project management, in order to accommodate the intermediate feedback and/or changing realities in policy and practice and to maximise the relevance, potential for use and the sustainability and scalability of results. Throughout project duration, consortia will proactively engage with relevant stakeholders, including policy dialogues. As a consequence, research protocols, planning, design, and budget may need further refinement or revision along the way to maximise the relevance and potential impact of research findings. AJ-CORE Programme workshops are formal moments to reflect on and adapt the research process.

2.2 International Collaboration

Proposals should be characterised by equal partnership and sustainable collaboration among the South African, Japanese and SGCI African partners (if part of consortium) and with stakeholders. This includes inter-institutional cooperation, a balanced contribution to the proposed research, gender

equality, a focus on capacity building and a frequent exchange between the partners and stakeholders and taking into consideration the South African transformation agenda.

2.3 Societal impact

New knowledge and insights from scientific research can make an important contribution to solutions for current and future societal issues. Examples are the energy transition or climate change. Knowledge utilisation increases the chances of research having a societal impact and is therefore an important aspect of the AJ-CORE Programme as a whole.

2.4 Impact plan approach

The research conducted in this Call for proposals should have relevance and potential for impact beyond the academic world, such as in societal, technical, economical or cultural realms. Societal impact is never solely an outcome of knowledge and insight from research. Furthermore, societal impact is often only realised in the years after a research project has been concluded. This is why, in addition to having a societal or industry partner within the consortium, consortia should consider how relevant stakeholders can be involved in, or benefit from, the design and realisation of the proposed research project.

To further enhance the potential for impact of the proposed research, the application should state how approaches for achieving impact are integrated in the research design and conducted by the consortium in engagement with end users, such as practitioners, policymakers, and industry. To this end, applicants are asked to include an Impact Plan that sets out the potential for impact of the proposed research. The Impact Plan approach to knowledge utilisation should be integrated into the research design and serves as an aid to increase the impact potential of the proposed research.

The Impact Plan consists of the following elements:

- ***Productive interactions*:** Exchanges between researchers and stakeholders in which knowledge is produced and valued that is both scientifically robust and socially relevant. Examples of productive interactions are: formulation of research questions and approaches jointly with potential end-users (co-design), joint execution of research projects and interactive dialogue on research results (co-creation). Interactions can be direct/personal, indirect or financial. The quantity as well as quality of the productive interactions forms an indicator for the potential for societal impact.

- A ***Theory of Change*** describes how the research process can contribute to societal/economic impact, taking into account the context, actors involved and describing the sequence of logically-linked consequential relations. Developing a Theory of Change in a joint effort with research partners as well as stakeholders allows for making explicit which (and whose) problem is being tackled, and how the desired change is perceived to happen through research efforts. Projections on expected change will be based on a myriad of assumptions; documenting these

assumptions allows for reflection on whether and how expected pathways to impact remain adequate or need adjustment. A Theory of Change is not fixed, but rather reflected on continuously throughout the research process. For this reason, it is also used as part of the monitoring, evaluation and learning trajectory.

- The ***Impact Pathway***, which is part of the Theory of Change, is the visualisation of the change process following from research execution as described in the Theory of Change. It makes explicit how the research activities will lead to results (output) and how exchange of knowledge and the uptake of research output will contribute to desired changes in behaviour, relationships, actions and activities of partners and stakeholders (outcome) that are considered essential to achieving the desired impact.

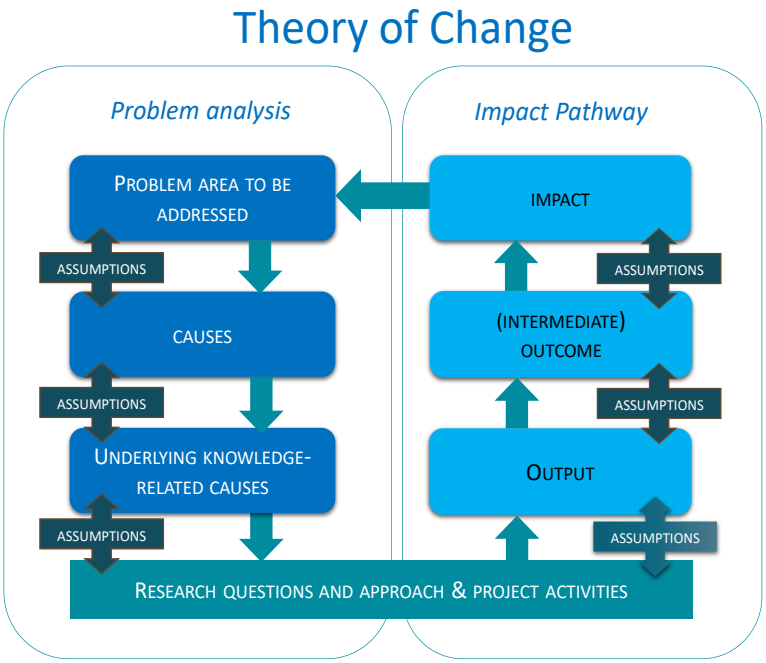
- A ***Strategic Activity Planning*** spells out how the proposed productive interactions contribute to achieving outcomes. Outputs do not automatically lead to outcomes, thus strategies are needed of the research consortium to plan and monitor how their efforts will enhance the potential for outcomes. This planning should include specific activities for:

  - *Stakeholder engagement*: Who are the relevant stakeholders to engage with according to context analysis, how are the productive interactions organised and when?;
  - *Communication strategy*: How are engagement dialogues organised and results exchanged and translated, and whose responsibility is it?;
  - *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning*: How are results of activities monitored and evaluated, such that assumptions can be tested and activities adjusted accordingly and whose responsibility is it?;
  - *Capacity strengthening*: How are required capacities (of consortium partners and stakeholders) strengthened in order to achieve the outcomes, how is this organised and whose responsibility is it?

An important part of your Theory of Change and Impact Pathway is to identify assumptions and make them explicit. This concerns assumptions of the members of the consortium as well as stakeholders. Making these assumptions explicit can help you identify where change may happen in a different way than you envision, and where you may find that you need adjustment.

Box 1: Defining output, outcome and impact

Research outputs relate to the direct and immediate results obtained by a research project or programme.
Research outcomes relate to the changes in behaviour, relationships, actions, or activities of stakeholders as a result of sharing and uptake of research.
Research impact is defined as changes in economic, environmental and social conditions a project or programme is aiming at.



See **Annex II for the format/ template to be used when completing the Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level**. A completed template should be attached as an Annex to the joint proposal.

2.5 Knowledge sharing and research uptake activities

To increase research impact the funded research projects shall contribute to the development of a comprehensive set of recommendations. Being embedded in a large Africa-Japan network, the research should involve target group and key players, including local players from the private (both for-profit and not-for-profit) and policy sector. Involving, where possible, entrepreneurs, policymakers and NGOs already during the research provides a voice to demand and facilitates scaling-up.

A certain percentage of the budget should be allocated for use for the knowledge sharing and research uptake components. Project consortia should organise activities as well as produce adequate tools such as radio programmes, videos, training modules, policy briefs, demonstrating the results of the research and elaborating on the potential for adaptation and options for up-scaling.

Funding organisations in this programme envisage to present the knowledge sharing and research uptake tools and videos with success-stories from the funded projects at other national, regional and global platforms.

3. Eligibility criteria and funding regulations

3.1 Eligible applicants

The submission of an AJ-CORE proposal is only possible by consortia of at least three partner **Principal Investigators (PI)** from three different countries. At least two African institutions (from two different African countries – one from South Africa and the other from any of the SGCI African countries) and one Japanese institution must be part of the consortium. Next to these three required project partners, additional consortium partners from other public and/or semi-public sectors and/or industry are allowed as **Associated Partners (AP)**. Associated Partners cannot request financing from the NRF and JST, but could be funded by other Funding Agencies, either national, regional or international, including Development Banks such as the World Bank.

South African-based principal investigator

For South African applicants, the NRF eligibility criteria apply as follows:

- Only working researchers / scientists residing in South Africa and affiliated with a recognised South African public higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology, science council or other research institution as declared by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) are eligible to apply.
- South African applicants and the HDI based co-PIs must be in possession of a PhD.
- Private higher education institutions are not eligible to apply under this programme.
- The SMEs, private companies / industries, and NGOs cannot serve as a principal investigator but can form part of the research consortium.
- South African applicants will have to submit an application to the NRF through NRF Connect at https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/ and attach the Joint Application Form (JAF).
- Please consult **Annex V: Individual National Eligibility and Funding Regulations** for further details on the NRF eligibility criteria.

Japanese-based principal investigator

For Japanese applicants, the JST eligibility criteria apply as follows:

- Any independent researcher personally affiliated with (and actively conducting research at) a domestic Japanese research institution, regardless of nationality, is eligible to apply.
- 'Domestic Japanese research institution' refers to universities, independent administrative institutions, national/public testing and Research Institutions, specially authorized corporations,

public-service corporations and enterprises, etc. that satisfy requirements predetermined by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Please refer to the MEXT homepage for more information: https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kansa/houkoku/1324571.htm

- The Japanese applicants must also complete a research ethics training program conducted by the research institute with which the PI is affiliated, and then declare the completion of the program to JST. If it would be very difficult for the Japanese PI to undertake a program provided by his or her own affiliated institute, they should contact JST. Please note that unless applicants complete a research ethics program, his / her application will be deemed ineligible. For more details, please refer to call announcement page linked from the JST homepage.
- Japanese applicants will have to register their applications on the Cross-Ministerial R&D Management System (e-Rad: https://www.e-rad.go.jp/index.html).
- See **Annex IV: Individual National Eligibility and Funding Regulations** for further details.

3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Partner principal investigator/s from any of the SGCI African countries

A 3rd/4th and 5th partner principal investigator from any of the SGCI African countries should:

- Be a researcher from any of the public higher education and research institutions in their home country, who has an employment contract for at least the duration of the application procedure and the duration of the research grant.
- Have at least a PhD or an equivalent qualification.
- **Department of Research, Science and Technology** (DRST of Botswana), the **National Research Fund** (NRF of Kenya), the **Fundo Nacional de Investigação** (FNI of Mozambique) and the **Ministry of Technical and Higher Education** (MTHE of Sierra Leone) as the SGCI member countries contributing financial support for their researchers within this partnership have indicated eligibility criteria in their national regulations document. **See Annex IV: Individual National Eligibility and Funding Regulations**.

Together, the consortium members should:

- formulate relevant research questions and approaches;
- formulate and submit the proposal through the principal investigators;
- conduct the project activities;
- coordinate knowledge sharing and support the application, dissemination and communication of the project results to a broader group of possible knowledge users that are not a member of the consortium; and
- take responsibility for the adequate and timely reporting conditions.

Proposals must address the thematic area supported within the framework of this call. Each PI and consortium can only submit one proposal. Consortia submitting proposals are obliged to report

submission of the same or similar proposals to other funding schemes, as well as funds awarded as a result of such submission. The NRF and JST retains the right to reconsider the granting of funds should the concerned project consortium fail to report double submissions or the funds awarded as a result of such submissions.

This Call aims at knowledge chain-wide collaboration, to enhance demand articulation, ownership, and the effective uptake of results. For this reason, all consortium partners, as well as relevant stakeholders, are expected to be engaged in all phases of the project execution, from its inception to sharing the (emerging) results. Evidence of such active engagement will be an important element in the assessment of project proposals and may be demonstrated through references to involvement in project preparation, active involvement as a project partner and links between the proposed research project and ongoing projects of NGOs, private enterprises, and/or policy implementation.

3.2 Eligible activities

The funding of an individual proposal will depend on the nature and duration of the proposed activities and must be justified in terms of the resources needed to achieve the objectives of the project. The funding requested should therefore be realistically adjusted to the actual needs of the proposal, taking into account the maximum limit as indicated in **section 1.5** above and any other external funds.

Eligible costs depend on the *National Funding Regulations* of each funder. The following general categories may apply:

- Research-related costs
- Mobility costs (travel and subsistence expenses)
- Short-term research placements for postgraduate students
- Costs related to organisation and attendance of seminars and workshops within the project
- Costs for attending the kick-off and final workshops of all funded projects
- Acquisition of material and small-scale research equipment
- Capacity building costs (training, module presentations, etc.)
- Postgraduate scholarships / bursaries
- Knowledge sharing and dissemination

Other relevant costs may be funded according to the individual national funding regulations, while some of the items listed above may not be eligible for funding. For this reason, it is imperative that applicants take notice of the rules of the national funding organisations concerning the costs they are able to fund prior to proposal preparation. The national contact should be consulted well before the submission deadline. See **Annex V: Individual National Eligibility and Funding Regulations**.

3.3 Obligations of Funded Projects

Consortium members are guided by the general requirements of this Call. During the granting process, a specification of requirements will be included by the funder in the grant letter for the consortium partners. The PIs are responsible for ensuring the consortium meets all the general obligations.

3.3.1 Letter of Intent

For research partnerships to be effective, they have to be fair. A Letter of Intent (LOI) is obligatory and should be signed by all consortium partners prior to submit the joint proposal. This LOI is to confirm that a researcher understands his or her responsibilities in the consortium.

3.3.2 Published information on granted projects

A list of the funded projects will be published after granting and updated during the execution of the projects. Therefore applicants should be aware that the following information from the proposals will be published by the NRF and JST:

- Project title and project acronym;
- Duration of the project;
- Total funding of the project;
- Name of the project PIs (including contact information i.e. email and telephone number);
- Country, organisation and name of each partner;
- A short publishable summary of the project.

This information will be updated with an annual progress summary, activities and output. Projects are expected to provide this information in their reporting.

4. Application Procedure

Only submissions through the official NRF Connect *{*https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za*}* and the Japanese National Online Submission System *{*https://www.e-rad.go.jp/*}* will be accepted.

Researchers from the third and fourth partner countries do not have to submit their proposals through to their funding organisations (i.e. FNI, Mozambique, DRST Botswana, NRF, Kenya and MTHE Sierra Leone). The NRF and JST will ensure that the funding organisation has access to all submitted proposals.

Proposals sent by mail, e-mail, telex, or facsimile will be rejected without further notice.

All proposals must be submitted by the Principal Investigators before the deadline. Once finally submitted, changes to the proposal will no longer be possible. Delayed proposals and/or proposals submitted outside this deadline will be considered non-eligible.

After submission by institutions, proposals will first be screened by the NRF and JST for the following general eligibility criteria. Each proposal must:

- be complete according to the rules and in line with the required proposal structure described in the guidelines;
- conform to the scope and the thematic focus of the call;
- be submitted by at least 3 applicants (2 African (South African + other) and 1 Japanese) from 3 different countries;
- South African applications from historically advantaged institutions must have a co-applicant from a historically disadvantaged institution;
- comply with the maximum allowed duration of three fiscal years (36 months);
- comply with the funding requirements, including those of the funders;
- comply with the terms of the submission procedure;
- be submitted in English;
- be submitted electronically using the National Online Submission Systems of South Africa and Japan; and
- meet the submission deadline.

4.1 Structure of the Proposal

See **Annex III for details on this**.

Applicants are required to follow the structure as outlined in the NRF and JST Online Submission Systems. Only applications submitted with the correct template and in the correct format will be allowed into the procedure. The online submission systems will require more/less information on:

Part.1 General Information

1. Title of the collaboration project
2. Acronym of the collaboration project
3. Contribution to SDGs
4. Keywords
5. Publishable summary of research project
6. Budget overview for whole duration (3 fiscal years)

Part.2 Project team members

Part.3 Project description

Part.4 Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level

Part.5 Budget plans

Part.6 CVs

Refer to **Annex III for the required attachments**.

5. Evaluation and selection procedure

The fundamental principles governing the evaluation of project proposals are:

- **Transparency.** The process for reaching funding decisions will be clearly described and available to any interested party.
- **Equality of treatment.** All proposals shall be treated alike, irrespective of where they originate from or the identity of the proposers.
- **Ethical considerations.** Any proposal that contravenes fundamental ethical principles of a funding organisation may be excluded from being evaluated and selected at any time.

The evaluation and selection procedure will be monitored by independent observers invited by the NRF and JST.

5.1 Evaluation process

A proposal that has been deemed eligible by both the NRF and the JST will be submitted for review. Both the NRF and the JST shall submit, in parallel, eligible proposals to their national experts who will assess the proposals remotely and submit reviewers' reports. These reviewed proposals and their accompanying reviewers' reports will be submitted to an Independent International Joint Review Panel for final recommendation.

5.2 Criteria for evaluating proposals

The Independent International Joint Review Panel will assess all eligible proposals based on the following criteria:

I. Excellence of the project:

- Strong potential to generate new knowledge, insights and/or innovations and sufficient complementarity to other research programmes.
- Adequacy of the research approach including the robustness of the conceptual framework and experimental set-up and the coherence of the hypotheses, research questions and methods.
- Clear alignment of the proposed research scope with the thematic focus of the Call.
- Disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary value add.

II. Expected Impact of the project:

- Clear rooting of the proposal in the demands of partners and/or stakeholders, including appropriate integration of gender and youth.
- Quality and feasibility of the research impact pathway with indicators.
- Adequate potential for uptake/application of results including quality of the knowledge sharing approach with appropriate stakeholder engagement, HCD and communication strategy.

III. Quality and efficiency of the implementation:

- Complementarity, range and level of integration of the consortium and research team, appropriate for implementing the proposed research project.
- Adequacy and feasibility of the research methodology/approach and activities, in relation to research questions and objectives as well as the related work plan.
- Adequacy, feasibility and coherence of the various activities to enhance impact, in particular by influencing national and/or regional policies.

5.3 Timetable

Dates	**Activities**
May 2023	Launch of the AJ-CORE 3rd Call for Proposals.
14 July 2023	Deadline for submission of applications to NRF and JST.
November 2023	Independent International Joint Review Panel Meeting.
January 2024	All approved projects should be awarded by end of January 2024.
February 2024	Start of Joint Projects
March 2024	Kick-off workshop with all the funded projects. This workshop will be hosted jointly with the closing workshop of AJ-CORE Call 1 projects and the mid-term review workshop of AJ-CORE Call 2. The host of the workshop will be confirmed at a later stage. Projects consortia are also encouraged to make use of this opportunity to also have their own individual projects meetings.
November 2025	Deadline for consortia to submit mid-term progress reports.
December 2026	Closing workshop with all the funded projects (host and venue to be confirmed).
31 January 2027	Deadline for consortia to submit final project reports.

Funding organisations reserve the right to change the above-mentioned dates (and location) at any stage

6. Important Contact Details for Queries

Consortium partners of proposals selected for funding will have to follow national/institutional procedures after a positive funding decision by NRF and JST. It is also advisable to contact your funding body as soon as possible in case your proposal is granted, to discuss the national requirements that have to be met before the start of the project.

For specific content-related questions please contact:

NRF Contact Person	JST Contact Person
Nombuso Madonda +27 12 481 4285 NP.Madonda@risa.nrf.ac.za	SHIRAISHI Junko, YODA Akira +81 3 5214 7375 jointza@jst.go.jp

Technical questions about the online submission systems contact:

For technical questions on the NRF Connect {https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/} please contact Mr Jan Phalane on tel. +27 12 481 4157 or email. JR.Phalane@risa.nrf.ac.za OR the NRF Support Desk on email: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za and tel. +27 12 481 4202.

For technical questions on the National Online Submission System {https://www.e-rad.go.jp/} please contact the Help desk at 0570-057-060 (Available 9:00 am 6:00 pm). If you cannot Navi Dial, you can reach them on the direct line below 03-6631-0622 (direct line).

Contact details: SGCI member countries contributing financial support for their researchers

SGCI Member Country	Contact Person
Botswana Department of Research, Science and Technology (DRST)	Abraham Mathodi amathodi@gov.bw / +267 3960153
Kenya National Research Fund (NRF)	Kioko Nzuki Mwania kmwania@gmail.com / 254 727701861
Mozambique Fundo Nacional de Investigação (FNI)	Edson Lobato Frazão Faria Edsonlffaria2012@gmail.com / 00258 844122705
Sierra Leone Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) Njala University (NU)/ Sierra Leone Research & Education Network (SLREN)	Fatmata Kaiwa fatmata.kaiwa@mthe.gov.sl / 00232 78331979 Dr Thomas Songu tsongu@njala.edu.sl /00232 79453322

Call Annexes:

- **Annex I:** Information on the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI)
- **Annex II:** Format for Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level
- **Annex III** Structure of the proposal (details)
- **Annex IV:** Scorecard for assessment
- **Annex V:** Individual National Eligibility and Funding Regulations
- **Annex VI:** Information on 3rd/ 4th / 5th Partner Principal Investigator

Annex I

Information on the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI)

The Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) is a multi-funder initiative that aims to strengthen the capacities of 17 science granting councils in Sub-Saharan Africa in order to support research and evidence-based policies that will contribute to economic and social development. Launched in April 2015, the Initiative contributes to strengthening the ability of science granting councils to manage research; design and monitor research programmes based on the use of robust science, technology and innovation indicators; support knowledge exchange with the private sector; and strengthen partnerships between Science Granting Councils and other science system actors.

The Initiative is being implemented mainly through on-site coaching and mentoring, few regional training workshops by a number of specialist organisations, and support for collaborative research projects. This Initiative was designed on the premise that more effective Councils will strengthen national science systems and lead to nationally led research that contributes to development in participating countries.

The Initiative is currently supported and funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the South African Department of Science and Technology, the National Research Foundation, and the German Research Foundation (DFG). There are 17 African countries participating in the Initiative representing East, West and Southern African regions as follows:

SGCI Participating Countries in East Africa	SGCI Participating Countries in Southern Africa	SGCI Participating Countries in West Africa
1. Ethiopia	6. Botswana	12. Burkina Faso
2. Kenya	7. Malawi	13. Côte d'Ivoire
3. Rwanda	8. Mozambique	14. Ghana
4. Tanzania	9. Namibia	15. Nigeria
5. Uganda	10. Zambia	16. Senegal
	11. Zimbabwe	17. Sierra Leone

For more detailed information on the SGCI please visit the website: https://sgciafrica.org/.

Annex II

Format for Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level (max. 2 page)

Research outputs	Indicators

Research outcomes	Indicators

Impact

Note: Outputs, outcomes and impacts need to be given with information when they are expected to happen in time.

Annex III

Structure of the proposal (details)

		Consortium members								
		Required						Optional		
		PIs(s)						PI(s)		Associated Partners
		South African based PI	South African based co-PI	Japanese based PI	Japanese based co-PI	3rd African country PI	3rd African country co-PI	4th/ & 5th (>) African country PI	4th, 5th, 6th (>) African country Co-PI	
Joint Proposal form	Part.1 General information	Part.1 -4: **Req** as consortium (prepared by all consortium members)								
	Part.2 Project team members									
	Part.3 Project description									
	Part.4 Impact Pathway with indicators at output and outcome level									
	Part.5 Budgets plan	**Req** as South African team		**Req** as Japanese team		**Req** as 3rd African country team		**Req** as 4th / 5th / 6th African country team		N/A
	Part.6 CVs	**Req**	**Opt**	**Req**	**Opt**	**Req**	**Opt**	**Req**	**Opt**	**Opt**
	Annex.1 Letter of Intent	**Req** as consortium (signed by all Principal Investigators in the consortium.)								
	Annex.2 Institutional endorsement Letter	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**Req**	**Req**	**Req**	**Req**	**Req**
	Annex.3 Information on 3rd, 4th & 5th Principal Investigator/s	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**Req** (3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th partner/s only)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Annex IV
Scorecard

Review Criteria/ Weight	Description	Four Point Likert Scale, and Descriptors				
		4 = Excellent	3 = Good	2 = Satisfactory	1 = Unsatisfactory	0 = Poor
1. Scientific Quality of the Proposal (35%)	Critically assess the Scientific originality/innovation/conceptualization and relevance. The clarity of the aim, objectives, and tasks. Applicability and replicability of the research methodology	- Scientifically and technically sound - Very clear, feasible, and realistic research objectives - Excellent literature review - Applicants and team renowned for this research/ have an excellent track record. - Innovative research - Clearly defined alignment of the proposed research scope with the thematic focus of the Call	- Scientifically and technically sound - Clear, feasible, and realistic research objectives - Sufficient literature review - Applicants and team renowned for this research/ have a good track record. - Novel research - Fairly defined alignment of the proposed research scope with the thematic focus of the Call	- Scientifically and technically sound - Clear, feasible, and realistic research objectives - Sufficient literature review - Satisfactory track record of the research team - Satisfactorily defined alignment of the proposed research scope with the thematic focus of the Call	- Technically the project is not well composed. - Does not give sufficient background. - Objectives not well formulated, unrealistic, and not feasible - Unsatisfactory alignment of the proposed research scope with the thematic focus of the Call	- Does not meet the objectives of the funding instrument. - The conceptualization is weak; the literature is irrelevant & outdated, not cited/ referenced & but the gaps being addressed in the extant literature are unclear, and the objectives are misaligned with the study aims/not mentioned.
2. Broader Societal Impact of the project (35%)	Critically assess the Technological, economic, and/or societal benefits from research outcomes and their alignment to National and Global Imperatives	- Outstanding demonstration of technological, economic, and social benefits of the project - Excellent alignment with the National and Global imperatives - Sound articulation of the quality and feasibility of the research impact pathway with indicators - Outstanding indication of public engagement with science - Excellent description of each funder's	- Sufficient description of the technological, economic, and social benefits of the project - The project is well aligned with the National and Global imperatives. - Good articulation of the quality and feasibility of the research impact pathway with indicators - Good indication of public engagement with science	- Adequate description of the technological, economic, and social benefits of the project - The project is adequately aligned with the National and Global imperatives. - Satisfactory articulation of the quality and feasibility of the research impact pathway with indicators - Satisfactory indication of public engagement with science	- Unsatisfactory description of the technological, economic, and social benefits of the project - The project is not clearly (unsatisfactory) aligned with the National and Global imperatives. - Vague indication of public engagement with science - Unsatisfactory narrative and indication of	- The PI has not defined the significance and the merits of the research to enable a fair assessment of the potential research impact.

		transformational compliance	- Good narrative and indication of compliance with each funder's transformational objectives	- Acceptable narrative and indication of compliance with each funder's transformational objectives	compliance with each funder's transformational objectives.	
3. Quality and Adequacy of Resources and Competencies (30%)	Critically assess the Synergy, appropriateness, and added value of the joint research plan.	- The role of the PI and the roles of others in the project are fully defined. - Excellent articulation of the added value of the joint research plan - The Consortium and individual members demonstrate a high level of expertise/knowledge and experience to tackle the identified research topic. - Outstanding demonstration of adequacy, feasibility, and coherence of the various activities to enhance the impact by influencing national and/or regional policies. - The PI and the partners have fully demonstrated the appropriateness of the project and the requested budget	- The role of the PI and the roles of others in the project are reasonably defined. - Sufficient articulation of the added value of the joint research project - The Consortium and individual members possess relevant expertise/knowledge and experience to tackle the identified research topic. - Sufficient demonstration of adequacy, feasibility, and coherence of the various activities to enhance the impact by influencing national, and regional policies. - The PI and the partners or team members have sufficiently demonstrated the appropriateness of the project and the requested budget	- The role of the PI and the roles of others in the project are satisfactorily defined. - Satisfactory articulation of the added value of the joint research project - The Consortium and individual members possess satisfactory expertise, knowledge, and experience to tackle the identified research project. - Satisfactory demonstration of adequacy, feasibility, and coherence of the various activities to enhance the impact by influencing national, and regional policies. - The PI and the partners or team members have satisfactorily demonstrated the appropriateness of the project and the requested budget.	- The role of the PI and the roles of others in the project are ambiguously defined. - The PI and project team have not articulated the added value of the joint research project sufficiently. - The Consortium and individual members possess insufficient expertise, knowledge, and experience required to tackle the identified research project. - Unsatisfactory demonstration of adequacy, feasibility, and coherence of various activities to enhance the impact by influencing national, and regional policies. - The PI and the partner team members have poorly demonstrated the appropriateness of the project and the requested budget.	- Insufficient information is included to make an informed assessment of all aspects of this section.

HDIs* Historically Disadvantaged Institutions will be those deemed as such by the Department of Higher Education and Training (November 2019 Ministerial Statement on university funding) as listed below:

- **University of Fort Hare.**
- **University of Limpopo.**
- **Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University**
- **University of Venda.**
- **University of the Western Cape.**
- **Walter Sisulu University.**
- **University of Zululand**
- **Mangosuthu University of Technology**

Annex V

Individual National Eligibility and Funding Regulations

SOUTH AFRICA

National Research Foundation (NRF)

Who can apply?	Only working researchers/scientists residing in South Africa and affiliated with a recognised South African public higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology or science council are eligible to apply. Researchers based at private higher education institutions are not eligible to apply under this programme. Researchers from SMEs, private companies/industries, and NGOs cannot serve as a PI but can form part of the research consortium. NGO and/or industry/ SME participants are expected to meet their own participation costs in the joint project. South African applicants and the HDI based co-PIs must be in possession of a PhD. It is "***mandatory***" for South African PIs based at historically advantaged institutions (and science councils) to include, as part of the consortium, a research partner from a historically disadvantaged institution. Proposals submitted by an applicant based at a historically advantaged institution without a research partner from a historically disadvantaged institution will be ineligible (and will not be submitted for review). The research collaborator from the historically disadvantaged institution in this case will serve as a co-applicant in the proposal. Applicants based at historically disadvantaged institutions including those based at the two new universities, i.e. the Sol Plaatje University (SPU) and the University of Mpumalanga (UMP), can act as PIs and submit proposals without the involvement of and/or partnering with researchers based at historically advantaged institutions if they so wish. Please note that only the following eight universities are currently recognised as historically disadvantaged in line with the Department of Higher Education and Training November 2019 Ministerial Statement on university funding: University of Limpopo (UL), University of Fort Hare (UFH), University of Venda (Univen), Walter Sisulu University (WSU), University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of Zululand (UniZulu), Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU). In terms of human capital development, PIs are encouraged to ensure the involvement of young scientists (i.e. doctoral and postdoctoral students) and pay attention to gender equality (a balanced involvement of female and male researchers) and previously disadvantaged individuals.

What type of activities are eligible for funding?	NRF funds can be used to cover the following costs: **Research-related costs** - activities to be supported may include expenses relating to field work such as conducting interviews, surveys, laboratory experiments, research-related trips, small equipment (consumables), etc. Airfare, accommodation, ground transport and subsistence should be calculated using rates as stipulated in institutional travel policies. **Postdoctoral research support** – funds within this programme make provision for one postdoc position equivalent to the NRF Freestanding postdoctoral fellowships. Therefore, PIs are expected to supervise and mentor a postdoctoral researcher who should be allowed to conduct research, either on a pre-specified aspect of the joint project or on their own designed topic within the joint project and should be supported to publish the work. The responsibilities of this position may also include assisting the PI with the management and administration of the joint project. The postdoctoral fellows should be prepared to become principal investigators so they also take on senior responsibilities like mentoring, grant writing, and teaching. **Reciprocal research visits/ mini sabbaticals by young researchers** - the placements should enable the postgraduate students within the project to learn valuable new skills or techniques; access facilities or resources not readily available at home; build relationships with potential new collaborators; and advance complementary collaborative research. The duration of each placement is expected to be 3-6 months with flexibility to split the placement into several shorter visits. Longer placements may be undertaken where this would add value and these should be justified within the application. Placements must enhance, not replace, the standard training and study support that the postgraduate students receive. These placements must be managed to fit within the original funded period of the studentship. Additional funding will not be made available through this Call to support studentship extensions for those undertaking international placements. Applicants should include information about how these reciprocal research visits will be managed. Funds within this programme can only be used for these reciprocal research visits/ mini sabbaticals and not for scholarship/ bursary/ students fees. The honours are on the PIs (and doctoral students) to secure funding for educational expenses of participating students. Doctoral students are hereby advised to apply for scholarship through the NRF call for Student Support which opens in April each year. **Knowledge sharing costs (science engagement)** - in support of project-related activities, such as joint workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, lecturer presentations, meetings, local and regional dissemination of results to relevant stakeholders. **AJ-CORE workshops:** It's mandatory for researchers to make budgetary provisions (travel and accommodation) to participate at workshops organised by AJ-CORE funders as part of the reporting requirements (i.e. kick-off and final workshops).

	NRF funds can only be used to support research activities executed by the South African members of the consortium. The following will **NOT** be funded from the NRF grant allocation: consultant's fees, project management fees, and large equipment (costing more than R200 000). Educational expenses (scholarships/ bursaries/ student fees/ educational expenses, etc.) cannot be covered from the research costs. Doctoral students in need of financial support are advised to apply for scholarship through the NRF call for student support which opens the beginning of April each year.
Funding limits for eligible activities	The total amount requested from the NRF should not exceed R1.8 mil per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of 3 years, to be paid in annual instalments (R600 000 per annum per project) and exclusively for research activities commencing in 2024. The funds per project have to be utilised as follows: R1.3 mil per project for research activities, mobility costs of the research team, doctoral research placements, small equipment, knowledge sharing costs, etc. ▪ R430 000 for 1 postdoctoral position at R215 000 per annum for 2-years (R155 000 non-taxable stipend, R45 000 contribution towards research costs, and R15 000 compulsory institutional contribution).
Additional requirements	**Science Engagement** Science engagement refers to scientific and initiative activities, events, interventions, or interactions characterised by mutual learning and dialogue among people of varied backgrounds, scientific expertise, and life experiences, who articulate and discuss their perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and values. It is an overarching term for all aspects of public engagement through suitable communication channels with science, science awareness, science education, science communication, and science outreach, aiming to develop and benefit individuals and society. The NRF supports science engagement by coordinating and implementing the Department of Science and Innovation's Engagement Strategy. The strategy embraces a broad understanding of science, encompassing systematic knowledge spanning (natural and physical sciences, engineering sciences, medical sciences, agricultural sciences, mathematics, social sciences and humanities, and technology) all aspects of the innovation chain and indigenous knowledge. Therefore, researchers funded through the NRF programmes must contribute to science engagement and report the related outputs in their project's progress report. **Intellectual Property** The researchers of each country, particularly the leaders, must take adequate steps to ensure protection and sharing of the intellectual property that could result from the joint projects. **Ethical Considerations** In conjunction with the institution, it is the responsibility of the grant-holder to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside South Africa comply with the laws and regulations of South Africa and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted. These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigor of all research prior to the commencement of the research and acceptance of the grant. The

	awarded amount will not be released for payment if a copy of the required ethical clearance certificate, as indicated in the application, is not attached to the Conditions of Grant. Please also refer to the "Statement on Ethical Research and Scholarly Publishing Practices" on the NRF website at https://www.nrf.ac.za/statement-on-ethical-research-and-scholarly-publishing-practices/. **Protection of personal information** The National Research Foundation ensures compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), Act 4 of 2013, committing to ensure the privacy of those submitting applications and proposals to the NRF on the NRF Connect (https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/). The National Research Foundation will protect the personal information provided by applicants or the third party against misuse, loss, unauthorized access, modification, or disclosure. The Privacy Policy of the NRF outlines the practices relating to the protection of personal information and can be accessed on the NRF website at https://www.nrf.ac.za/privacy-policy.	
Contact details for further information	***Name***	Nombuso Madonda
	Position	Professional Officer: Overseas Collaborative Grants
	Phone	+27 12 481 4285
	Email	NP.Madonda@risa.nrf.ac.za
	Website/link	https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/framework-documents/funding-framework-documents
	Full address	Meiring Naude Road, Brummeria, Pretoria, South Africa

JAPAN

Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

Who can apply?	Any independent researcher personally affiliated with (and actively conducting research at) a domestic Japanese research institution, regardless of nationality, is eligible to apply. 'Domestic Japanese research institution' refers to universities, independent administrative institutions, national/public testing and Research Institutions, specially authorized corporations, public-service corporations and enterprises, etc. that satisfy requirements predetermined by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Please refer to the MEXT homepage for more information: https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kansa/houkoku/1324571.htm Refer to Section 3.1 of this document for eligibility criteria of Japanese applicants.
What type of activities are eligible for funding?	JST funds can be used to cover the following direct and indirect costs: **Eligible direct costs:** In principle, eligible direct costs are those costs directly necessary for accomplishing the research, indicated below. Please refer to the guidance documents available at the following link for further details of eligible direct costs (available in Japanese only). https://www.jst.go.jp/contract/index2.html (a-1) Facilities, Equipment and Consumables: costs of research equipment, spare parts, prototypes, software (in-line products) and purchase of books, reagents, materials and consumables. (a-2) Travel Expenses: costs and associated living expenses of the project members registered in the project plan, and costs of inviting external experts. (a-3) Personnel costs: costs of the researchers, temporary staff, post-docs, etc., who are hired for the research and other costs such as honoraria for invited lecturers. (a-4) Others: costs for the organisation of small scientific events in Japan including rental costs for the venue, food & beverage (excluding alcohol) costs and other costs which are deemed to be necessary for organizing the event. Expenses for creating software, renting or leasing equipment, transporting equipment, etc. **Eligible indirect costs:** Please refer to the following link for the provisions regarding indirect costs: https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/compefund/shishin2.pdf (available in Japanese only)
Funding limits for eligible activities	JST will support 18 million yen per project in total (6 million yen per project annum). Please be noted that 18 million yen includes overhead cost (30% of direct cost). The

	budget for a project may differ each year, depending on the content of activities. The amounts will be adjusted each year due to the budgetary limitations for this program.	
Additional requirements	n/a	
Contact details for further information	***Name***	SHIRAISHI Junko / YODA Akira
	Position	Deputy Manager / Senior Program Coordinator
	Phone	+81 3 5214 7375
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	Website/link	https://www.jst.go.jp/inter/english/program_e/announce_e/announce_aj-core_3rd.html https://www.jst.go.jp/inter/program/announce/announce_aj-core_3rd.html
	Full address	7, Gobancho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0076 Japan

BOTSWANA

Department of Research, Science and Technology (DRST)

Who can apply?	1. Researchers and scientists residing in Botswana and affiliated with a recognised public higher education or research institution such as a university, college of education, research and technology are eligible to apply. 2. Researchers based at private higher education institutions, NGOs, SMEs, private companies/industries, cannot serve as a PI but can form part of the research consortium. 3. PIs are encouraged to ensure the involvement of young scientists (i.e. doctoral and postdoctoral students) and pay attention to gender equality (a balanced involvement of female and male researchers)
What type of activities are eligible for funding?	**Research-related costs**: Activities to be supported may include expenses relating to field work such as conducting interviews / surveys / laboratory experiments, research-related trips, small equipment (consumables), etc. **Exchange programmes:** To support short-term mobility or travel expenses (i.e. transport and accommodation costs) of the research team between the partnering countries. **Doctoral research placements:** The placements should enable the postgraduate students within the project to learn valuable new skills or techniques; access facilities or resources not readily available at home; build relationships with potential new collaborators; and advance complementary collaborative research. **Knowledge sharing costs:** In support of activities organised by the partners, such as joint workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, lecture presentations, capacity building sessions, meetings, local/regional dissemination of results aimed at involving stakeholders, and/or end-users from outside the consortium. **AJ-CORE workshops:** Budget to participate at workshops organised by AJ-CORE funders as part of the reporting requirements (i.e. kick-off and final workshops). Funds from DRST will only be used to support researchers from Botswana. The following will **NOT** be funded from the allocation: (1) salaries for researchers, consultant's fees and project management fees, and (2) large Equipment (costing more than P50 000.00).
Funding limits for eligible activities	DRST will support a maximum of Six (6) projects at P1 000 000.00 per project. The funds will be available for three (3) years. Please note that the funds include overhead cost (30% of direct cost). The budget for a project may differ each year, depending on the content of activities.

Additional requirement	N/A	
Contact details for further information	***Name***	Abraham Mathodi
	Position	Chief Research Science and Technology
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	Email	amathodi@gov.bw
	Website/link	https://www.gov.bw
	Full address	Private Bag BR 279, Gaborone, Botswana

KENYA

National Research Fund (NRF)

Who can apply?	▪ Kenyan public and private research centers and institutes, training institutions, departments of R&D, industrial establishments and relevant implementing bodies are eligible to apply. ▪ Applicants must have wide knowledge and experience in the National Research Priority areas. ▪ The applicants must have demonstrated competence and experience in their grant application areas. ▪ Applicants must be in possession of at least a master's degree or equivalent experience in a relevant area or be innovators recognized by the Kenya National Innovation Agency; ▪ The Principal Investigator must be a Kenya citizen. ▪ Non Kenyans may apply under a Kenyan Principal Investigator. ▪ All applicants must be affiliated to a recognized Kenyan research institution and in case of a university or research institution, they must not be on an extended unpaid leave. ▪ Partnering and collaborative institutional or corporate entities must formally indicate willingness to release staff involved in the project, have the facilities to implement the project or indicate how the facilities will be availed.
What type of activities are eligible for funding?	**Research-related costs**: Researchers may request for funds for the following categories of expenditure: • Daily Subsistence Allowance for field activities for professional and non-professional personnel; • Research equipment; • Consumables; • Essential infrastructure/upgrading; • Costs of prototype production; • Project management costs must not exceed 7.5%; • Project mobility costs must not exceed 20% of the total budget.
Funding limits for eligible activities	The total amount requested from the NRF-Kenya should not exceed (USD 4,500[KES 5,496,395) per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of 3 years
Additional requirements	**Intellectual Property:** The researchers of each country, particularly the leaders, must take adequate steps to ensure protection and sharing of the intellectual property that could result from the joint projects. **Ethical Considerations:** In conjunction with the institution, it is the responsibility of the grant-holder to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside Kenya comply with the laws and regulations of Kenya and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted. These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research

	ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigor of all research prior to the commencement of the research and ac-acceptance of the grant. The awarded amount will not be released for payment if a copy of the required ethical clearance certificate, as indicated in the application, is not attached to the Conditions of Grant. Please also refer to the NRF-Kenya website. https://researchfund.go.ke/. Additional information is also found in the following link https://www.nacosti.go.ke/accreditation-of-institutional-ethics-review-committees-iercs/	
Contact details for further information	***Name***	Kioko Nzuki Mwania
	Position	Ag. Deputy Director, Grant Management
	Phone	254 727701861
	Email	kmwania@gmail.com
	Website/link	https://researchfund.go.ke/.
	Full address	Kioko Nzuki Mwania National Research Fund, NACOSTI Building, Upper Kabete, 3rd Floor, P.O. Box 260360 00100, Nairobi, Kenya

MOZAMBIQUE

Fundo Nacional de Investigação (FNI)

Who can apply?	Only working researchers/scientists residing in Mozambique and affiliated with a recognised Mozambican public higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology or science council are eligible to apply. Researchers based at private higher education institutions are eligible to apply under this programme. Researchers from SMEs, private companies/industries, and NGOs cannot serve as a. NGO and/or industry/ SME participants are expected to meet their own participation costs in the joint project. Mozambican applicants and the HDI based co-PIs must be in possession of a PhD. In terms of human capital development, PIs are encouraged to ensure the involvement of young scientists (i.e. doctoral and postdoctoral students) and pay attention to gender equality (a balanced involvement of female and male researchers) and previously disadvantaged individuals.
What type of activities are eligible for funding?	FNI funds can be used to cover the following costs: **Research-related costs** - activities to be supported may include expenses relating to field work such as conducting interviews, surveys, laboratory experiments, research-related trips, small equipment (consumables), etc. Airfare, accommodation, ground transport and subsistence should be calculated using rates as stipulated in public travel policies. **Postdoctoral research support** – funds within this programme make provision for one postdoc position equivalent to the FNI Freestanding postdoctoral fellowships. Therefore, PIs are expected to supervise and mentor a postdoctoral researcher who should be allowed to conduct research, either on a pre-specified aspect of the joint project or on their own designed topic within the joint project and should be supported to publish the work. The responsibilities of this position may also include assisting the PI with the management and administration of the joint project. The postdoctoral fellows should be prepared to become principal investigators so they also take on senior responsibilities like mentoring, grant writing, and teaching. **Reciprocal research visits/ mini sabbaticals by young researchers** - the placements should enable the postgraduate students within the project to learn valuable new skills or techniques; access facilities or resources not readily available at home; build relationships with potential new collaborators; and advance complementary collaborative research. The duration of each placement is expected to be 3-6 months with flexibility to split the placement into several shorter visits. Longer placements may be undertaken

	where this would add value and these should be justified within the application. Placements must enhance, not replace, the standard training and study support that the postgraduate students receive. These placements must be managed to fit within the original funded period of the studentship. Additional funding will not be made available through this Call to support studentship extensions for those undertaking international placements. Applicants should include information about how these reciprocal research visits will be managed. Funds within this programme can only be used for these reciprocal research visits/ mini sabbaticals and not for scholarship/ bursary/ students fees. The honours are on the PIs (and doctoral students) to secure funding for educational expenses of participating students. Doctoral students are hereby advised to apply for scholarship through the FNI call for Student Support which opens in January each year. **Knowledge sharing costs (science engagement)** - in support of project-related activities, such as joint workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, lecturer presentations, meetings, local and regional dissemination of results to relevant stakeholders. **AJ-CORE workshops:** It's mandatory for researchers to make budgetary provisions (travel and accommodation) to participate at workshops organised by AJ-CORE funders as part of the reporting requirements (i.e. kick-off and final workshops). FNI funds can only be used to support research activities executed by the Mozambican members of the consortium. The following will **NOT** be funded from the FNI grant allocation: consultant's fees, project management fees, and large equipment (costing more than 800 000 MT). Educational expenses (scholarships/ bursaries/ student fees/ educational expenses, etc.) cannot be covered from the research costs. Doctoral students in need of financial support are advised to apply for scholarship through the FNI call for student support which opens the beginning of January each year.
Funding limits for eligible activities	The total amount requested from the FNI should not exceed (6000 000 MT) per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of 3 years, to be paid in annual instalments and exclusively for research activities commencing in 2024. The funds per project have to be utilised as follows: • Daily Subsistence Allowance for field research activities for the research team not exceed 20% of the total budget; • Small research equipment; • Consumables; • Essential infrastructure/upgrading; • Costs of prototype production; • Project management costs must not exceed 7.5%;
Additional requirements	**Science Engagement** Science engagement refers to scientific and initiative activities, events, interventions, or interactions characterised by mutual learning and dialogue among people of varied backgrounds, scientific expertise, and life experiences, who articulate and discuss their perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and values. It is an overarching term for all aspects of public engagement through suitable communication channels with science, science

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">awareness, science education, science communication, and science outreach, aiming to develop and benefit individuals and society.

<u>Intellectual Property</u>
The researchers of each country, particularly the leaders, must take adequate steps to ensure protection and sharing of the intellectual property that could result from the joint projects.

<u>Ethical Considerations</u>
In conjunction with the institution, it is the responsibility of the grant-holder to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside Mozambique comply with the laws and regulations of Mozambique and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted. These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigor of all research prior to the commencement of the research and acceptance of the grant. The awarded amount will not be released for payment if a copy of the required ethical clearance certificate, as indicated in the application, is not attached to the Conditions of Grant.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Contact details for further information</td><td>Name</td><td>Edson Lobato Frazão Faria</td></tr>
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</table>

SIERRA LEONE

Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE)

Who can apply?	Only working researchers/scientists residing in Sierra Leone and affiliated with a recognised Sierra Leonean public higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology or science council are eligible to apply. Researchers based at private higher education institutions are eligible to apply under this programme. Researchers from SMEs, private companies/industries, and NGOs cannot serve as a PI but can form part of the research consortium. NGO and/or industry/ SME participants are expected to meet their own participation costs in the joint project. Sierra Leonean applicants and the HDI based co-PIs must be in possession of a PhD. In terms of human capital development, PIs are encouraged to ensure the involvement of young scientists (i.e. doctoral and postdoctoral students) and pay attention to gender equality (a balanced involvement of female and male researchers) and previously disadvantaged individuals. In terms of human capital development, PIs are encouraged to ensure the involvement of young scientists (i.e. doctoral and postdoctoral students) and pay attention to gender equality (a balanced involvement of female and male researchers) and previously disadvantaged individuals.
What type of activities are eligible for funding?	Funds can be used to cover the following costs: **Research-related costs**: Activities to be supported may include expenses relating to field work such as conducting interviews / surveys / laboratory experiments, research-related trips, small equipment (consumables), etc. **Exchange programmes:** To support short-term mobility or travel expenses (i.e. transport and accommodation costs) of the research team between the partnering countries. **Doctoral research placements:** The placements should enable the postgraduate students within the project to learn valuable new skills or techniques; access facilities or resources not readily available at home; build relationships with potential new collaborators; and advance complementary collaborative research. **Knowledge sharing costs:** In support of activities organised by the partners, such as joint workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, lecture presentations, capacity building sessions, meetings, local/regional dissemination of results aimed at involving stakeholders, and/or end-users from outside the consortium. **AJ-CORE workshops:** Budget to participate at workshops organised by AJ-CORE funders as part of the reporting requirements (i.e. kick-off and final workshops).

	Funds from will only be used to support researchers from Sierra Leone. The following will **NOT** be funded from the allocation: (1) salaries for researchers, consultant's fees and project management fees, and (2) large Equipment (costing more than 20,000 USD).	
Funding limits for eligible activities	The total amount requested should not exceed (USD 100,00) per project. Funding will be made available for a maximum of 3 years	
Additional requirements	**Science Engagement** Science engagement refers to scientific and initiative activities, events, interventions, or interactions characterised by mutual learning and dialogue among people of varied backgrounds, scientific expertise, and life experiences, who articulate and discuss their perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and values. It is an overarching term for all aspects of public engagement through suitable communication channels with science, science awareness, science education, science communication, and science outreach, aiming to develop and benefit individuals and society. **Intellectual Property** The researchers of each country, particularly the leaders, must take adequate steps to ensure protection and sharing of the intellectual property that could result from the joint projects. **Ethical Considerations** In conjunction with the institution, it is the responsibility of the grant-holder to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside Mozambique comply with the laws and regulations of Sierra Leone and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted. These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigor of all research prior to the commencement of the research and acceptance of the grant. The awarded amount will not be released for payment if a copy of the required ethical clearance certificate, as indicated in the application, is not attached to the Conditions of Grant.	
Contact details for further information	***Name***	Mrs Fatmata Kaiwa and Dr Thomas Songu
	Position	Director, MTHE ICT Director, Njala University, Sierra Leone
	Phone	00232 78331979/ 00232 79453322
	Email	tsongu@njala.edu.sl
	Website/link	https://www.mthe.gov.sl
	Full address	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, New England Ville, Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa

Annex VI

Information on Botswana Principal Investigator

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title	
Academic title	
Family Name	
First Name	
Name of Institution	
Type of Entity	
Department	
Position	
Institution Address	
City	
Country	Botswana
Phone	
Email	
Which funding body are you applying to?	DRST

BUDGET (indicate currency in USD)

FINANCIAL YEAR	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Research costs			
Travel and meeting costs			
AJ-CORE kick-off and final workshops			
Knowledge Sharing and Research Uptake costs			
Student support costs			
Employment costs			
Overheads			
Other costs (specify)			
Total budget requested			

I hereby confirm that as the 3rd, 4th OR 5th Partner Principal Investigator I meet the funding requirements of my national funding body.

……

Signature ……Date……

Annex VII

Information on Kenyan Principal Investigator

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title	
Academic title	
Family Name	
First Name	
Name of Institution	
Type of Entity	
Department	
Position	
Institution Address	
City	
Country	Kenya
Phone	
Email	
Which funding body are you applying to?	NRF

BUDGET (indicate currency in USD)

FINANCIAL YEAR	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Research costs			
Travel and meeting costs			
AJ-CORE kick-off and final workshops			
Knowledge Sharing and Research Uptake costs			
Student support costs			
Employment costs			
Overheads			
Other costs (specify)			
Total budget requested			

I hereby confirm that as the 3rd, 4th OR 5th Partner Principal Investigator I meet the funding requirements of my national funding body.

……

Signature ……Date……

Annex VII

Information on Mozambican Principal Investigator

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title	
Academic title	
Family Name	
First Name	
Name of Institution	
Type of Entity	
Department	
Position	
Institution Address	
City	
Country	Mozambique
Phone	
Email	
Which funding body are you applying to?	FNI

BUDGET (indicate currency in USD)

FINANCIAL YEAR	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Research costs			
Travel and meeting costs			
AJ-CORE kick-off and final workshops			
Knowledge Sharing and Research Uptake costs			
Student support costs			
Employment costs			
Overheads			
Other costs (specify)			
Total budget requested			

I hereby confirm that as the 3rd, 4th OR 5th Partner Principal Investigator I meet the funding requirements of my national funding body.

……

Signature ……Date……

Annex VII

Information on Sierra Leonean Principal Investigator

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title	
Academic title	
Family Name	
First Name	
Name of Institution	
Type of Entity	
Department	
Position	
Institution Address	
City	
Country	Sierra Leone
Phone	
Email	
Which funding body are you applying to?	MTHE

BUDGET (indicate currency in USD)

FINANCIAL YEAR	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Research costs			
Travel and meeting costs			
AJ-CORE kick-off and final workshops			
Knowledge Sharing and Research Uptake costs			
Student support costs			
Employment costs			
Overheads			
Other costs (specify)			
Total budget requested			

I hereby confirm that as the 3rd, 4th OR 5th Partner Principal Investigator I meet the funding requirements of my national funding body.

……

Signature ……Date……