

MEMORANDUM

To: The NRF Stakeholder Community

From: Dr Gansen Pillay (DCEO: Research and Innovation Support and Advancement - RISA)

Date: 10th April 2017

INFORMATION UPDATE: NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION (NRF)

Dear Members of the NRF Stakeholder Community

The purpose of this communication is to update you on some of the changes and emerging developments at the NRF, and more specifically, the Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (RISA) business unit at the NRF.

- ***Re-alignment and Renewal of NRF and RISA***

As you are aware the NRF has transited from its previous *Vision 2015 Strategy* to its current *NRF Strategy 2020* in which the vision of the organisation is “catalyzing knowledge production for societal benefit”. In the *NRF Strategy 2020*, the organisation places renewed emphasis on its agency function and its role in influencing and implementing policy within the National System of Innovation (NSI). In order to realise our vision, we have identified five strategic outcomes that will lead to the attainment of this vision, viz.:

- Creating an internationally competitive, transformed and representative research system;
- Establishing and maintaining leading-edge research and infrastructure platforms;
- Growing the NRF into a reputable agency that will shape the science and technology system;
- Pushing for science literacy and actively engaging with society; and
- Managing and improving on a committed and representative NRF research and technical workforce.

In order to optimise delivery of *NRF Strategy 2020*, it has become necessary to re-align current NRF structures. Within the RISA environment, the following changes have been made:

- (i) Given the closure of the THRIP programme by *the dti* at the NRF, it has become necessary to discontinue the Applied Research and Industry Collaboration (ARIC) directorate. Other funding instruments that were located within ARIC have been appropriately relocated within RISA. However, the conceptual framework of THRIP has been retained by the NRF and may manifest itself through a new funding instrument when resources become available.
- (ii) The Institutional Engagement and Partnership Development (IEPD) directorate responsible for, *inter alia*, the NRF Flagship Programme has been discontinued because of current financial constraints. The two Flagship Programmes that have been awarded have been re-located to the Research Chairs and Centres of Excellence (RCCE) directorate for administrative purposes. The NRF has received several other applications from HEIs. These applications are at different stages of review. Given the current economic climate and the funding constraints facing the NRF as is evident on its three-year MTEF allocation, it is becoming increasingly challenging to support more Flagship Programmes at this stage. This is further exacerbated by the funding challenges faced by the HEIs. However, the NRF will continue with the review processes for those applications already received and will keep the universities duly informed. Should funds become available to the NRF, additional Flagship

Programmes may be rolled out over time. Dr Makobetsa Khati, Executive Director of RCCE is the contact person for the NRF Flagship Programme (makobetsa.khati@nrf.ac.za).

- (iii) The International Relations and Collaboration (IRC) directorate within RISA has been discontinued. The partnership aspects of IRC have been re-located to a newly created Strategic Partnerships (SP) directorate within a new NRF business unit, viz., Strategy, Planning and Partnerships (SPP). All grant making activities of IRC including bilaterals, trilaterals, multilaterals, KIC, etc. have been relocated to the Knowledge Fields Development (KFD) directorate. Dr Andrew Kaniki, Executive Director of KFD, is the contact person for all grant making activities of IRC (andrew@nrf.ac.za).
- (iv) The RISA directorates of Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA), Reviews and Evaluation (RE), Research Chairs and Centres of Excellence (RCCE), Knowledge Fields Development (KFD) and Human and Infrastructure Development (HICD) will continue to serve the NRF Stakeholder Community as previously.

- **Recent THRIP developments**

As you may be aware the former THRIP programme managed by the NRF on behalf of *the dti* was discontinued. However, at the stage of closure, the NRF still had commitments to grant holders for the outer years of the 3-year funding cycle. *the dti* has now made some funds available to honour this commitment. THRIP grant holders within this cycle have been duly contacted and funds made available for the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 financial years. Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Executive Director of GMSA, is the contact person (bernard@nrf.ac.za).

- **Predatory Publishing**

The NRF has issued a statement on "*Predatory Journals and Deceptive Publishers*". This has been duly communicated to the NRF Stakeholder Community and is available on the NRF website.

- **Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID)**

ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) is a nonproprietary alphanumeric code to uniquely identify scientific and other academic authors and contributors. The NRF requires that all researchers applying for funding and rating to the NRF have an ORCID identifier. A communication in this regard has been sent out to all NRF stakeholders. The NRF ORCID statement is also available on the NRF website.

- **POPI Act**

The Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPI) has not yet been gazetted. However, the NRF has decided to make compliance with PoPI one of its top priorities for 2017. In an effort to be proactive the NRF introduced PoPI in all NRF stakeholder engagement processes and interactions, including Applications, and Conditions of Grants (CoGs). It is expected that all NRF stakeholders, when entering into a relationship with the NRF, provide the NRF with their consent to process, collect, receive, record, organise, collate, store, update, modify, retrieve, alter, consult, use, disseminate, distribute, merge, link, erase, share or destroy personal information in compliance with the PoPI Act 4 of 2013, so as to avoid unnecessary disruptions in NRF and stakeholder activities once PoPI comes into effect.

The NRF thanks you for your continued partnership and support and looks forward to our further engagements with you.

Yours sincerely



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