



ESRC-NRF Newton Call for Collaborative Research Urban Transformations in South Africa Call specification

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Aim and summary of funding opportunity

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) invite collaborative projects between UK and South African researchers which can offer additional value to existing programmes of urban research, and contribute to the economic development and welfare of South Africa and Africa more broadly.

In particular we invite proposals which address the following topics:

- Urban economies and livelihoods
- Land, infrastructure and sustainable urban development

- Urban politics, citizenship and participation
- Diversity, migration and practice

Further details on these topics as they are used can be found below. Proposals are invited for joint UK and South African projects; each proposal may request £300,000-£500,000 at 100 per cent full economic cost (fEC) from the ESRC and RAND 1 million to 1.5 million from NRF over three years. In accordance with the RCUK policy, the ESRC will contribute up to 80 per cent fEC of UK costs and research organisations will be expected to honour the remaining 20 per cent.

The ESRC has allocated up to £1.5 million and NRF has allocated RAND 4.5 million; we expect to fund between three-five research projects through this joint call.

Consortia should consider how their proposal makes the best use of available expertise in the UK and South Africa, the added value of collaboration and how the proposal will meet the ODA requirements (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/international/ODAguidanceRCUKspecific.pdf>) of this Newton Fund activity and contribute towards the economic development and welfare of Africa.

ESRC-funded costs of each grant will be issued and managed by the ESRC in accordance with its normal research funding guidelines and procedures (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/applicants/research-funding-guide.aspx>). NRF-funded costs of each grant will be issued and managed by the NRF in accordance with its normal guidelines. Please liaise closely with prospective South African partners to ensure that both ESRC and NRF-supported elements of the proposal abide by all regulations for both funders.

Proposals should be submitted by **16.00 BST** and **17.00 SA time on 16 July 2015**.

Background of the funders

The ESRC is an international leader in the social sciences. It fosters international collaboration with a wide range of international partners and, through joint schemes, enables United Kingdom (UK) social scientists to collaborate on challenging global issues with the very best international researchers from around the world.

The NRF is an independent government agency that promotes and supports research in all fields of knowledge. It also conducts research in specific national strategic areas and provides access to National Research Facilities. The NRF provides services to the research community especially at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Science Councils with a view to promote high-level human capital development and the production of internationally competitive knowledge. Its aims are to uphold excellence while at the same time transforming the system in all its investments in knowledge, people and infrastructure.

The ESRC funding for this initiative is coming from the Newton Fund (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/international-funding/newton-fund/index.aspx>) which is aimed at developing science and innovation partnerships that promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. As the fund forms part of the UK's official development assistance (ODA), the partnerships must clearly demonstrate that they will support the development of research collaborations

addressing the economic development, improvement in welfare enhancement and alleviation of poverty in South Africa or developing countries.

The NRF funding for the initiative comes from the core parliamentary grant. It is generally aimed at supporting or enhancing the production of internationally competitive research, its uptake and the development of the related human capacity.

Thematic focus

Background

Urbanisation is a fundamental global trend, although one that is marked by complexity and regional variation. The majority of people now live in urban areas and the urban population in many developing countries is expected to exceed 50 per cent by 2030. While prominent global cities receive the vast majority of investment and attention, the majority of urban population growth is taking place in smaller towns and cities in the global south that are undergoing rapid transformation.

Cities and urban areas play a fundamental role in shaping patterns of economic growth, innovation, social relations and resilience locally, nationally and internationally which impact in complex ways on the prosperity and wellbeing of urban citizens. Globally, cities face a number of challenges including growing inequality, population growth, climate change, financial volatility, pressures on public service provision, congestion, and the need for affordable housing. These can become magnified by the scale and pace of change in urban areas, especially in places that are less adaptable due to low levels of business or public investment, policy and public capacity, or insufficient civil society structures and social resilience. While presenting a host of challenges, urban transformations are also the source of potential solutions such as harnessing agglomeration effects to promote economic growth, as well as environmental and social change for local advantage. How successful individual cities and urban areas are at adapting to these changes is often the key to their development.

The process to determine the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will reach its conclusion in late 2015. The SDGs will seek to integrate the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability, and the final agenda, which is expected to include an explicit goal around cities and human settlements, will frame a central role for cities in establishing 21st century development agendas. What this will mean for South Africa, and what role national and urban governments across the continent will play in addressing the SDGs, will be pivotal to the transition to sustainable and inclusive development.

South African cities will have a fundamental role to play in developing sustainable development pathways for the continent, including the potential to act as test-beds in urban growth and environmental innovation with lessons for African and other cities in the global south. Economic growth in South Africa will have consequences for economic development more widely, including implications for an emergent urban hierarchy in southern Africa.

However, South African cities face challenges in overcoming legacies of segregation and inequality, and their position in global flows of trade, finance, people and resources can mean that they face greater challenges in urban development around manifest issues such as job creation and growth, housing and infrastructure, as well as social and environmental

resilience. They are also sites of contestation and social mobilisation in the struggle for a more equitable and just global society.

These significant challenges require the generation of new evidence and data, as well as the analysis of existing data, to inform coherent urban development plans for the future of South Africa.

Scope of the call

The purpose of this call is to fund high-quality collaborative research on urban transformations in South Africa and/or wider Africa. The more specific topics that this call is seeking to address are set out below.

This call is interested in urban transformations at a variety of scales including the region, city, town, and smaller settlement level. We also welcome projects that encompass a comparative approach and this might include research:

- looking at an individual city across sectors or time-frames
- across different urban areas within South Africa or wider Africa
- comparing the South African experience with urban contexts in other African countries
- opportunities for shared lessons with other regions of the global south.

It could include comparative projects that encompass a historical perspective and draw lessons from the past for addressing contemporary issues.

It is intended that the projects funded under this call will develop context-specific knowledge on urban transformations in South Africa or other contexts in Africa, but may also develop our understanding of urban transformations in other settings including higher income countries.

In addition to the academic assessment criteria, a successful proposal must:

- Be a joint activity involving research groups from both the UK and South Africa.
- Be able to meet the ODA requirements (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/international/ODAGuidanceRCUKspecific.pdf>) stipulated under the Newton Fund for the economic development and welfare of Africa.
- Offer contributions to the knowledge and understanding of urban transformations under one or more of the priority topics.

Proposals must show a true joint partnership between UK and South African researchers. The added benefit of the collaboration to each party should be clearly demonstrated in the proposal.

Proposals must demonstrate the ambition and novelty of the research and demonstrate how the outputs of the project will be communicated to relevant stakeholders in academia, industry and government, in both South Africa and the UK.

It is important to note that a key goal for this funding opportunity is to ensure that knowledge exchange between partners occurs both ways and continues throughout the

project in order to build upon and strengthen bilateral relationships between South African and the UK.

Research topics

Proposals should clearly identify one or more of these topics as the focus of the research project.

- Urban economies and livelihoods
- Land, infrastructure and sustainable urban development
- Urban politics, citizenship and participation
- Diversity, migration and practice

In addition to the topic priorities, which are explained further below, we welcome proposals which feature elements of comparative urban research and/or the exploitation of existing data resources.

Urban economies and livelihoods

Cities and urban areas are often seen as springboards for economic growth and enhanced livelihoods. However, the reality in many urban contexts in South Africa, Africa and the global south more broadly are often very different, complicated by the degrees of informality in these economies. The challenges facing urban economies in Africa are complex and an understanding of different urban growth trajectories is a necessity against the backdrop of accelerating urbanisation. This should include developing understanding of how formal and informal economies interact, the dynamism of these economies, the opportunity afforded by green economies, as well as the barriers to agglomeration economies in different contexts.

The creation of sustainable livelihoods connected to productive urban centres also requires new thinking in the context of limited financial and natural resources. This includes the need to understand how policymakers, businesses and communities in urban areas - through formal initiatives or less formal activity - are working to generate value from available resources and to improve livelihoods in the process. The role of frugal innovation and other innovation pathways is one dimension of this, including the lessons such approaches might offer for urban centres in African countries and more widely.

The disadvantages of un- and under-employment is also relevant to this call including the impact on social inclusion, productive power and individual wellbeing.

Potential areas for research might include:

- Urban economic trajectories, their main drivers, and barriers to growth
- How the benefits of agglomeration economies can be realised and sustained
- The presence of formal, informal and non-cash economies in urban areas and how they are sustained
- The opportunity arising from the emerging green economy at a range of scales
- The role of alternative innovation pathways in urban development
- The influence of a range of factors on labour markets and how urban areas generate employment opportunities and the conditions which help sustain these

- How individuals and households generate livelihood opportunities (including formal and informal employment, entrepreneurship, human and social capital), whether this is changing and the consequences of that change
- The impact of un- and under-employment at a range of scales.

Land, infrastructure and sustainable urban development

Productive and livable cities, whether existing or new, require efficient provision of land, infrastructure and services; and the effective planning, regulation and management of these is central to ensuring sustainable urban development. In South Africa, challenges around financing urban development, exacerbated by long-term underinvestment in existing infrastructure, generate fundamental issues for individuals, business and government at different scales. Furthermore the delivery of housing, along with land ownership and property rights, are central concerns. Many housing initiatives have been established in the past two decades; however success has been mixed often depending on the availability of land and the different pressures placed upon it.

Understanding the drivers and barriers to spatial transformation in urban centres is a key question under this theme as is understanding who is included/excluded in the urban development process. This might include the role of design, planning, and regulation in delivering positive outcomes for urban citizens, and how land and infrastructure development can be better balanced against national goals of sustainability and resource efficiency. It might also comprise work to comprehend the range of actors involved in decisions about urban infrastructural projects or the delivery of key services, the role of civil society and communities in development projects, and who is included and excluded in the goal of generating sustainable urban areas.

Potential areas for research might include:

- Exploring the barriers to equitable, sustainable and secure access to land, infrastructure and services
- The flexibility of urban infrastructure to absorb change, taking into account past, present and future needs
- Identifying which forms of urban development make the most efficient use of land, with reference to both spatial structure and land use
- The potential of (and challenges presented by) new sources of finance and business models to promote sustainable infrastructure investment
- The factors that determine different outcomes of urban density; whether functional or dysfunctional, given scarcity and the pressures on land
- How governance decisions are taken on small to large-scale infrastructural and built environment projects and how these projects shape and limit the possibility of democratic (participatory) decision-making.

Urban politics, citizenship and participation

Achieving more equitable and just societies is a key global policy goal. This includes social, economic, and environmental justice. There are multiple costs to injustice including social conflict, violence and environmental degradation. A better understanding of city governance and urban politics is important to allow disenfranchised groups to have a voice in the politics, policies and projects that affect their daily lives. The rise of urban protests and conflict, and the levels of social innovation in generating urban goods, demonstrate that current formal governance systems fall short in ensuring fair distribution and participation.

Understanding the dynamics and relations between urban transformations ‘from below’ and changing forms of authority and politics ‘from above’ is a key question in this theme. As urban areas are transformed, the relations between communities, political parties, the government and the city need to become more connected in the challenge to achieve a more democratic and progressive society.

Potential areas for research include:

- Understanding how political institutions, processes, actors and cultures shape urban transformations
- Exploring how and why progressive laws, policies, resources and regulations (modern, traditional and non-formed) can generate perverse outcomes
- The conditions that support innovation in urban development within and beyond the state
- How civil society and community mobilisation work at different levels
- The character of contemporary urban protest, and why it has become widespread in particular contexts.

Diversity, migration and practice

South African cities are more diverse than ever before. Socio-economic inequalities, spatial segregation, different forms of migration, and diverse lifestyles are all contributing factors. The challenges urban policymakers and institutions face to meet the needs of South Africa’s increasingly diverse population are numerous and complex; urban diversity can positively affect social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance, however it can also result in conflict, inequality and forms of social exclusion.

Understanding the dynamics of diversity, migration (rural-urban and cross-border) and the routine performance of identity and community in urban areas is a central to this theme. This includes how individual and group attachments impact on experiences of place, and how this is mediated through migration and movement between places and between less and more urbanised areas: also how the aspirations and practices of different groups shape urban form and the provision of public service and goods.

Potential areas for research include:

- How urban transformations enable and constrain experiences of belonging, wellbeing, inclusion and exclusion
- The relationships between aspirations, diversities and politics in changing urban environments
- How different forms of migration and mobility influence and create urban change
- The shifting meanings, experiences, continuities/discontinuities of urban and rural in South Africa
- How emerging identities and the performance of identity through every day norms and practice relate to changing forms of cultural and material expression and space(s).

Research impact

Researchers are encouraged to be innovative in the kinds of user engagement, communications and research uptake activities they plan to undertake during and beyond the period of research funding. It is important that applicants appreciate that outreach and engagement activities in and of themselves do not constitute impact. The development of a clear impact strategy will be important to ensure research impact is achieved. When completing the impact summary section of the form, applicants may find it helpful to refer to ESRC guidance on developing an impact strategy (www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-andguidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/developing-plan/index.aspx)

Open Access Policy

RCUK (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/>) have an Open Access policy. Researchers funded under this call will be expected to comply with the requirements outlined in these policies. UK institutions are no longer able to apply for Article Processing Charges as part of a research proposal, but instead funds will be provided to research organisations at an institutional level in order to set up publication funds.

NRF (<http://www.nrf.ac.za>) has a Statement on Open Access to Research Publications from NRF Funded Research. Researchers funded under this call will be expected to comply with the requirements outlined in the NRF's Open Access Statement (http://ir.nrf.ac.za/bitstream/10907/103/1/oastatement_2015.pdf).

Eligibility

ESRC eligible applicants

UK applicants must meet the ESRC eligibility and remit criteria outlined in the ESRC Research Funding Guide (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/applicants/research-funding-guide.aspx>)

The Newton Fund requires that the funding be awarded in a manner that fits with Official Development Assistance (ODA) requirements. All proposals under this call must therefore be compliant with these guidelines, see <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/international/ODAguidanceRCUKspecific.pdf>.

NRF eligible applicants

Full-time employees at an NRF-recognised research institutions in South Africa, who are eligible to apply according to the general NRF regulations and conditions, are invited to apply.

Part-time employees on contract at an NRF-recognised research institution (as defined above) in South Africa are invited to apply, but on condition that their appointment at the South African institution is for (at least) the duration of the project applied for in the submission. The length of the contract should be stated in the proposal form. Salaries must be paid by the research institution, and the primary employment of the individual concerned must be at that institution. A contract researcher appointed at a research institution on behalf of a third party to fulfil a very specific function for the latter does not qualify for support.

Retired academics/researchers are invited to apply, provided that they meet all set criteria as stipulated below:

- Are resident in South Africa
- Are formally affiliated to a South African higher education institution (eg appointed as an emeritus professor, honorary research associate/professor, supernumerary/contract employee)

How to apply

Proposals are invited for joint UK and South African research projects. Each proposal may request £300, 000-£500, 000 at 100 per cent FEC from the ESRC and RAND 1 million to 1.5 million from NRF over three years.

It is expected that the ESRC funding will be used to support the UK component of the partnership and that NRF funding will support the South African component. Each proposal should have UK Principal Investigator who will submit the proposal to the ESRC and a South African Principal Investigator who will submit an identical proposal to NRF.

Proposals must be submitted by **16.00 BST or 17.00 SA time on 16 July 2015**. Any proposal received after this deadline will not be considered for funding and proposals must be submitted to both funders in order to be considered.

Proposals should be submitted to ESRC through the UK Research Councils' grant submission system known as 'Je-S' (see accompanying guidance) and to NRF through their Online Submission System (<https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>).

Proposals should include all supporting documents as requested below and in the accompanying submission guidance from ESRC and NRF. Applicants should ensure the following documents are submitted to both the ESRC and NRF:

- Case for support (six pages max)
- Justification of resources (two pages per country)
- Pathways to Impact (two pages max)
- CV (two pages max for each named researcher)
- List of publications - cited in proposal (one page max)
- Letters of support (only if applicable)
- Management Plan (two pages max)
- International Funding Agency Resource Form and NRF Individual Financial Template
- Statement of ODA relevance (one page max)

Assessment of proposals

Once a proposal has been received by the ESRC and NRF, it will be considered according to eligibility and adherence to the criteria of this call by both funding agencies and then sent to expert peer reviewers for comment. Applicants will be given the opportunity to respond to peer review comments and proposals will be considered by an independent expert commissioning panel which will make final recommendations for funding. Funding recommendations from the panel will be subject to approval by each of the national funding agencies.

There will be one review process and a single decision on each proposal, however please note that proposals will only be funded if both funding agencies agree. It is anticipated that final funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in November 2015. The earliest start date for successful projects is from 1 January 2016.

Assessment criteria

Proposals will be assessed by a joint international peer review panel established between ESRC and NRF. The criteria for the selection of proposals will include:

- Meeting the requirements of the Newton Fund in relation to ODA requirements
- Assessment of the relevance to the call topics
- The originality and potential contribution to new knowledge or practice
- The appropriateness of the research design, work plan and research team
- Assessment of the South Africa-UK collaboration
- The costings and value for money of the research
- Appropriate consideration of ethical issues
- Dissemination and communication plans and the potential impact

Timeline

- Announce call for proposals – May 2015
- Closing date for proposals – **16 July 2015**
- ESRC and NRF Joint Panel – November 2015
- Decisions announced – December 2015
- Grants commence – February 2016

National contacts

ESRC

Any enquiries related to this call should be directed to:

- Jeanine Woolley
Email: urban@esrc.ac.uk
Phone: +44 (0) 01794 413031
- Helen Dewberry
Email: urban@esrc.ac.uk
Phone: +44 (0) 01793 413073

The Je-S Helpdesk may be contacted by email (jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or phone (+44 (0) 1793 44 4164) and is staffed Monday-Friday 9.00-17.00 (excluding public or other holidays).

NRF

- Andrew M Kaniki
Email: andrew@nrf.ac.za
Telephone: +27 (0) 12 481 4260

- Tracy Klarenbeek
Email: tracy@nrf.ac.za
Telephone: +27 (0) 12 481 4177

Enquiries relating to the NRF submission system should be addressed to:

- Email: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za