



science
& technology

Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



SCIENCE PLATFORM MONTHS 2007

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
&
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Implemented by:
*South African Agency for Science and Technology
Advancement (SAASTA)*

On behalf of:
Department of Science and Technology (DST)

SCIENCE PLATFORM MONTHS 2007

1. INTRODUCTION

For the fourth year running, the South African Department of Science and Technology (DST) has declared a series of four thematic months for 2007, namely Antarctica (June), Marine Biosciences (August), African Origins (September) and Astronomy (October).

The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SASTA), a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF), has been mandated to implement the four DST thematic months in 2007 to promote the public awareness, appreciation and engagement with Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) and to awaken public interest in science.

The major aim of thematic months is to attract more women, rural and previously disadvantaged communities to the sciences and to retain them in these sectors. There is a need to counter current demographics in the scientific arena of the predominantly white, male and ageing scientific population. As stated in the National R&D Strategy (2002), the four specific scientific themes have been selected due to their obvious geographical advantage to South Africa.

SASTA is the agency of choice for implementation of these programmes with an institutional aim of developing scientists and innovators of tomorrow, adding value to this national awareness project by bridging the gap between science and society.

2. OBJECTIVES

The overall aims of this project are to:

- Engage the broad South African public (especially women, previously disadvantaged and rural communities) by highlighting, communicating and popularising South African cutting edge research in each of the four themes;
- Highlight potential careers in each of the four thematic areas to inspire South African graduates and postgraduates to pursue related careers and remain in these scientific sectors; and
- Increase the media coverage (quality and quantity) in South Africa around the four themes.

These will be achieved through:

- Identifying a range of innovative, exciting communication products and events;
- Stimulating and facilitating public dialogue and debate;

- Promoting wide stakeholder and provincial/geographic participation in project implementation, involving science centres, higher education institutes, the education community, science councils, academia, other government departments, NGOs etc as well as building partnerships with industry, especially with regard to the profiling of careers;
- Optimal implementation to ensure raised awareness throughout the whole year (from science platform month to science platform month), but most concentrated in the specified months through a main event plus a number of satellite events;
- Integrating wherever possible, the four themes with other relevant initiatives and projects e.g. Women's day, National Science Week, International Polar Year (2007) etc;

Focusing on:

- **Antarctica Month** (June) – the unique and exciting research done by South African scientists in this frozen continent and the sub-Antarctic island, and coinciding with the celebration of winter solstice in mid June.
- **Biosciences Month** (August) - Marine ecosystem research and the African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP).
- **African Origins Month** (September) - South Africa's remarkable palaeontological and archaeological heritage.
- **Astronomy Month** (October) - South Africa's unique global position in astronomy and the cutting edge astronomical research being undertaken around the country.

3. TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audiences are:

- University students, ranging from undergraduates to postgraduates, to encourage them to remain in the SET system and pursue careers in science and research related to the four themes;
- The general public, especially women, rural and disadvantaged communities. Although this will by definition include learners and educators to some degree, as well as all other sectors of society, **learners and educators are not a priority target audience of this project.**

4. CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

SAASTA has earmarked a certain amount of funds to support projects and activities to be implemented through various SET stakeholders around South Africa. DST and SAASTA are inviting the science centre network including science councils, universities, museums and the

NRF facilities, as well as other relevant interest groups and individuals, to submit innovative and creative proposals for organising and implementing projects during 2007, which will contribute towards raising public awareness around the four themes, and specifically, on research done in this area and profiling of potential careers.

Proposals are invited for each of the four themes (Antarctica, Marina Biosciences, African Origins and Astronomy), and:

- Up to **four** proposals can be submitted per applicant, **one in each thematic category** as outlined in the objectives;
- Proposals ranging from **R20 000 – R40 000** (VAT inclusive) will be considered;
- Proposals can be submitted on projects to be implemented **during the platform month itself** (i.e. June, August, September and October). This will account for approximately 70% of the funding distributed for each of the months.
- Proposals focusing on activities (e.g. competitions) to be **undertaken throughout the year**. For example, competitions launched in a 2006 platform month could culminate in the same platform month in 2007 i.e. from June 2006-June 2007 for Antarctica. August 2006 – August 2007 for Biosciences, September 2006 - September 2007 for African Origins, and October 2006 – October 2007 for Astronomy month. This will account for approximately 30% of the funding distributed for each of the months.

Suggested deliverables may include, but are not limited to¹:

- Popular lecture programmes on cutting edge research done in the thematic areas by key scientists and role models;
- Open days/visits at relevant institute specialising in each of the four themes e.g. planetaria, observatories, research labs, World Heritage Sites, especially for women, rural and PDA communities;
- Interactive talks by role models and researchers with students, educators, learners and general public;
- A series of popular written articles that could be submitted to the popular press; and
- Development of printed materials, including maps, highlighting the location of relevant sites in South Africa;
- Development of interactive, portable exhibits and activities suitable for a range of non-specialist audiences;

¹ **Note:** Wherever possible, profiling opportunities should be provided to enable the participation of the DST Ministry i.e. speech opportunities for Minister and Deputy Minister of S&T

- Educator workshops to help educators' source relevant material for their classroom;

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be considered in the selection of projects:

- Adherence and contribution to achieving the objectives for the four themes as outlined in section 2;
- Relevance and inclusion of target audiences as outlined in Section 3 (i.e. University students, women, PDA and rural communities);
- Quality and relevance of content (i.e. profiling of careers and communicating cutting edge research being undertaken in the four focal areas);
- Innovativeness and creativity of approach;
- Focus on public participation through dialogue and debate (two way communication);
- Wide range of stakeholder participation, including industry partnerships where possible;
- Optimal and widespread provincial involvement;
- Clear indication of media (i.e. specific radio stations, newspapers etc) to be alerted to the specific event or materials proposed;
- Inclusion of monitoring and evaluation measures to demonstrate success of project;
- Clear timelines indicated;
- Cost-effectiveness of the project, including integration into other events and sharing of costs; and
- Race and gender sensitivity² of the proposal

6. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

All proposals must be submitted to SAASTA electronically by completing the application form (available at www.saasta.ac.za). Proposals submitted not using this form will not be considered.

7. REPORTING STRUCTURE

SAASTA reserves the right to apply reporting requirements in terms of corporate policy. Details of this will be specified in the document agreement between the successful applicants and SAASTA.

²**Gender sensitivity:** Recognition between the differences and inequalities between women's and men's needs, roles, responsibilities and identities and be fair, equitable and gender responsive for the mutual benefit of women and man. Visit www.womeninscience.org.za for more information.

CLOSING DATES

Appropriate deadlines are given to ensure that all administration around transfer of funding to successful applicants is completed well in advance of implementation.

The deadlines for submitting proposals:

Antarctica Month

Deadline for submission of proposals - close of business, **31 January 2007**.

Submissions received after this date will not be considered.

All applicants will receive feedback regarding the selection committee's decision.

Biosciences Month

Deadline for submission of proposals - close of business, **14 February 2007**.

Submissions received after this date will not be considered.

All applicants will receive feedback regarding the selection committee's decision.

African Origins Month

Deadline for submission of proposals - close of business, **28 February 2007**.

Submissions received after this date will not be considered.

All applicants will receive feedback regarding the selection committee's decision.

Astronomy Month

Deadline for submission of proposals - close of business, **14 March 2007**.

Submissions received after this date will not be considered.

All applicants will receive feedback regarding the selection committee's decision.

9. ENQUIRIES

Please visit www.saasta.ac.za for more information and the required submission form.

Enquiries should be directed to:

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