

Overview of the RDI Call Process

June 2025





Overview of RDI calls and general information on project terms

Thematic areas within the RDI programme

Image: Jaco Roselt/Wikimedia

*The RDI call covers all thematic areas.
Senior Research Managers are the point of contact
regarding information contained in the call.*

1

Water Availability
led by
Dr Shafick Adams

2

Water Use
led by
**Prof Sylvester
Mpandeli**

3

Water Quality &
Health
led by
Mr Jay Bhagwan

4

Advisory Support
led by
**Dr Valerie
Naidoo**

5

Knowledge
Dissemination

Types of WRC Calls



OPEN CALLS (*usually annually*)

- Researchers propose a research topic.
- Guidance provided on priority areas in different themes.
- Targeted applicants
 - *South African citizens who are emerging researchers (35 years and younger)*
 - *South African citizens who are women*
- Duration of the proposed research topic is not stipulated - (2-5 years).
- Budget is usually not prescribed.



DIRECTED CALLS (*annual/anytime*)

- WRC publishes a Title or Terms of Reference on the topic .
- Time frame and budget indicated.
- Often short-term projects responding to urgent needs.
- Co-funding from other partners/stakeholders



How to write a successful WRC proposal

1

Carefully study the annual call document/TOR

- Understand the water challenges and priority areas for the current call.
- Strategic objectives of the WRC and investment plan for new projects.
- Formulate the research idea – **NB: specific idea vs interest in a general specific field.**
- Multi-disciplinary/trans-disciplinary – consider the WRC Knowledge tree.
- Screen through the entire call.
- Refer to the WRC knowledge hub – completed projects in relation to the call.

2

Give some thought to the expected impacts of the research

- Sub-headings provided by the WRC for the proposer to clearly state the potential impacts of the project.
- Impacts can be on a national, international level.
- Impacts that can be achieved throughout the life cycle of the project any Potential IP.
- Dissemination and communication strategies (who is interested in your results and how can they use them).

3

Assemble an appropriate project team

- **Project leader vs proposer** – consider WRC strategic objectives e.g., transformation and redress, capacity building objectives
- Appropriate project team – especially for multi/trans-disciplinary research
- Collaborations are encouraged – with other HEIs, small medium enterprises, end users, government representatives, etc.
- Send a “cold” email (be wise when sharing novel ideas)
- Capacity building – students/interns

4

Writing the research proposal

- Motivation and rationale - The research proposal must respond to a real multi/trans disciplinary challenge
- Contextualization - Demonstrate an understanding of the water challenges, what research has been done and clearly state research gap - access WRC knowledge hub
- SMART goals – state aims of the research clearly
- Method – clearly state how each goal will be achieved
- Deliverables = aims divided into ‘work packages’ - deliverables must be in sync with aims and method

5

Keep in mind basic writing principles

- Write for a general audience BUT maintain technical relevance.
- Find examples of successful proposals and send completed proposals through an internal review process.
- Do not resend a previously submitted proposal without effecting the necessary changes.
- Use appropriate nomenclature, terminology, references and referencing style.
- Research contribution – clearly state the new knowledge / innovative / novel aspects

6

Budget accurately but realistically for proposal deliverables

NB: Funds are not provided upfront

- As a proposer it is important to have a detailed explanation of the resources needed for the project.
- Deliverable amounts should correspond to the yearly allocations.
- Where necessary – have formal sub-contracting agreements with partners / collaborators.
- Modifications and reallocations can occur if the proposal is approved.
- Co-funding should be stated.

f) Budget Summary

Expenses						
Financial Year	HR	Capital	Running	Uptake	Total	Deliverables
2025/2026	R276 000,00	R0,00	R574 000,00	R0,00	R850 000,00	R850 000,00
2026/2027	R77 000,00	R0,00	R423 000,00	R50 000,00	R550 000,00	R550 000,00
2027/2028	R69 000,00	R0,00	R481 000,00	R50 000,00	R600 000,00	R600 000,00
Totals	R422 000,00	R0,00	R1 478 000,00	R100 000,00	R2 000 000,00	R2 000 000,00

Example of budget summary

7

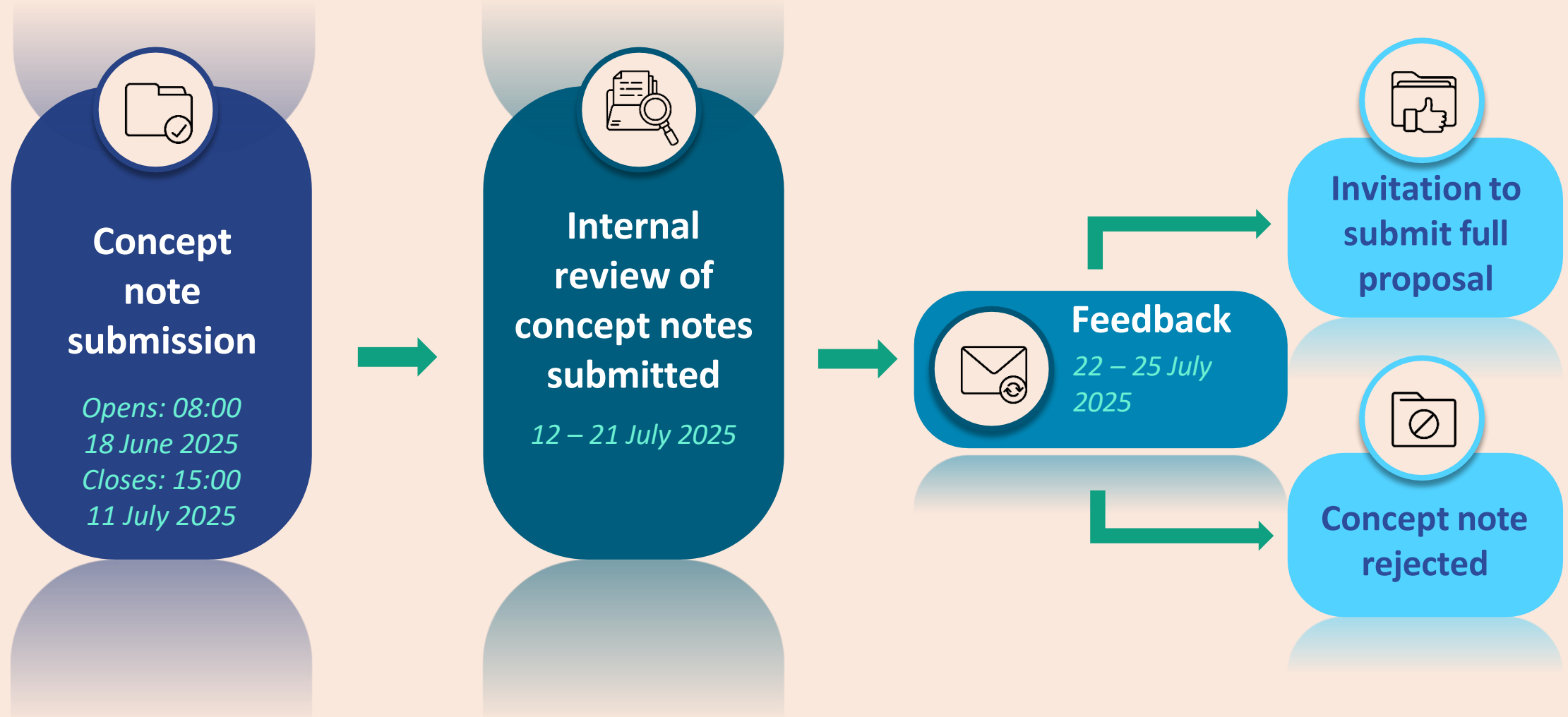
Become part of the WRC Community

- Become a project team member
- Accept a reviewer invitation
- Become a reference group member
- Be part of a WRC community of practice / advisory team / specialist group
- Attend relevant WRC events (workshops, dialogues, launches)

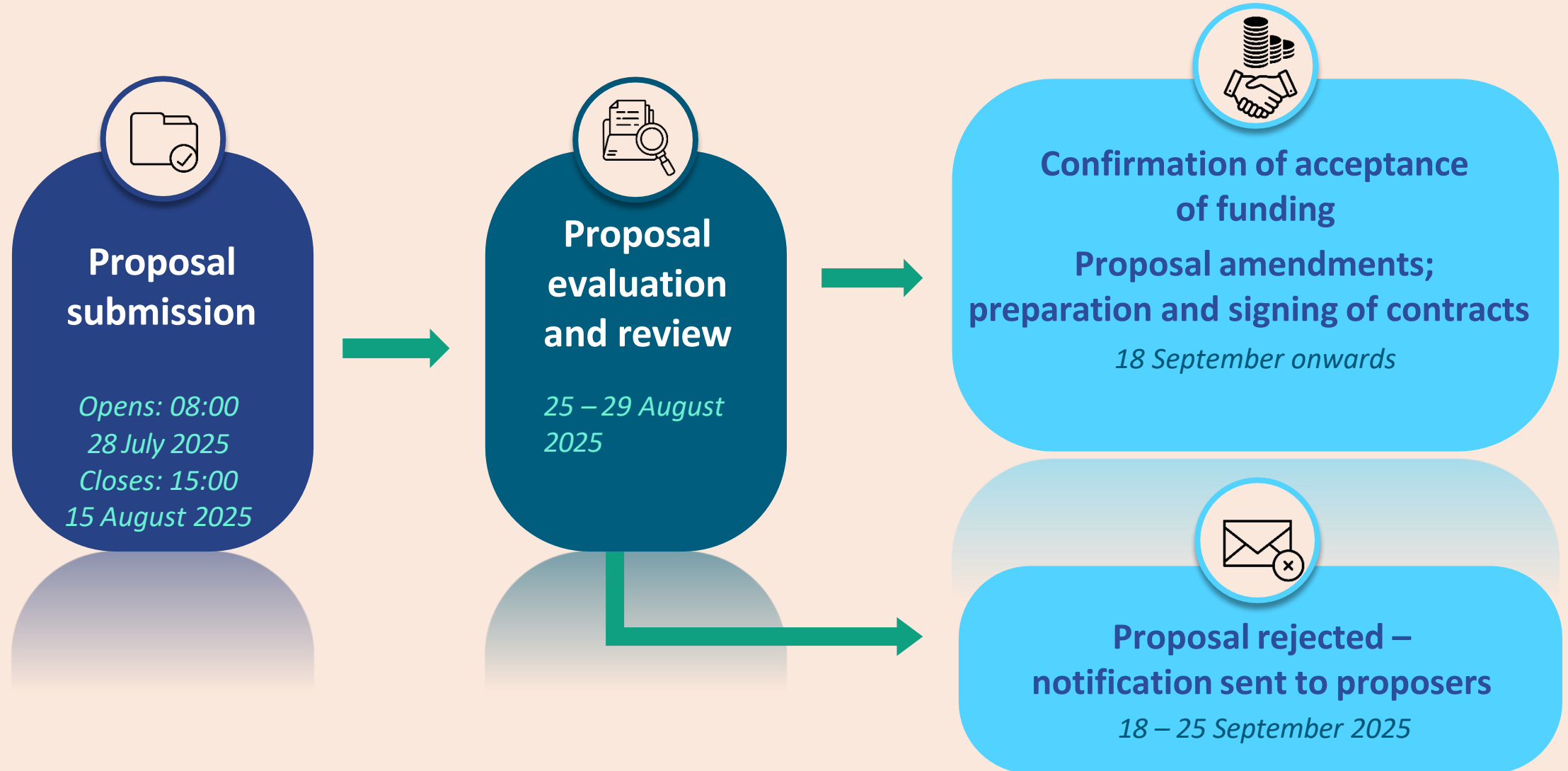


Concept note and proposal submission process

Stages in the concept note submission process



Stages in the proposal submission process



THANK YOU

All completed WRC funded
project reports and associated
publications @ www.wrc.org.za

