# THEME 1 FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

;

;

Building Sustainable Research Management Capacity in Science Granting Councils in Sub-Saharan Africa (SRMinSGC)

**FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT**

**IDRC GRANT NO. 108319-001**

**NRF GRANT REF: SGCI**

Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA)

Building 33, Room S101, CSIR Campus, Meiring Naude Rd, Brummeria, Pretoria, 0002
Dr. Therina Theron (president@sarima.co.za)

**March 2020**

**Table of Contents**

**Table of Figures**

## 1. Executive Summary

This section should be clear enough so that readers can understand the project's goal, its key findings and impacts

The Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) in partnership with the Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology (CREST) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), brought their networks and expertise together to implement sustainable research management capacity initiatives in the participating Science Granting Councils (SGCs) in sub-Saharan Africa. These networks expanded through the participation of associate partners – in Africa, including Central African Research and Innovation Management Association (CARIMA), West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA) and East African Research and Innovation Management Association (EARIMA). The role of SARIMA on the SGCI project was to create a broader and deeper awareness of research management of Science Granting Councils in 15 different sub-Saharan countries. Where capacity already existed, the role was to enhance and strengthen skills as well as capacity.

The project was implemented in two phases. The first phase involved a capacity building needs assessment to collect extensive data on the capacity and needs of the participating SGCs. During the second phase a technical intervention plan was developed based on the outcomes of phase 1. Overall, the project addressed five strategic areas:
- Needs and capacity assessment
- Sustainable research management capacity strengthening of SGCs – Professional development and training
- Sustainable research management capacity strengthening of SGCs – Support of a Collaborative Platform
- Benchmarking of participating SGCs through an online benchmarking tool
- Knowledge management and dissemination

SARIMA and collaborating partners engaged in the creation of knowledge through facilitating benchmarking visits to an established SGC, the NRF-South Africa, peer learning visits and development of a High Research Quality Competition guidelines and generic 'Grants Management Manual'. These activities were welcomed by staff of all SGCs.

Six Wits certified online courses on topics related to the basics of research management were also developed and offered to SGC personnel. These courses were taken by the majority of SGCs with satisfactory pass rates. Since research management, as a profession, is still in its infancy a facility was developed where staff of SGCs could request recognition as RM professionals. There were extremely few applicants. The reason for this is likely to be lack of confidence in the SGC staffers. However, after participating in the SGCI, it is very likely that more applicants will be received by ASRIMA seeking professional status.

An online benchmarking exercise was also undertaken. The expectation was that the SGCs would provide relevant information and do a self-assessment over time. By sharing the information, the SGCs would have identified their weakness and made appropriate interventions for improvement. While some SGCs did provide information, most were not willing to share with other SGCs.

SGCs were also trained to run 'High Quality Research Competitions'. The training of staff at individual SGCs involved the entire grants management cycle form developing a call to monitoring and evaluation as well as close out.  While visiting the NRF, SGC staffers were also shown an online system. Those SGCs that had a functional office were keen to adopt many of the lessons learnt and adapt the procedures for their own SGC. As a result of the various visits and interactions some SGCs were able to develop small networks and shared information. A number of documents were developed and/or shared and shared with SGCs.

A few SGCs were found wanting in the provision of staff and funds for a sustained activity.
The SGCs benefit from the Virtual Hub that was developed, maintained, continuously updated and made available at no cost to the SGCs and CTAs to promote dissemination of all SGCI knowledge outputs and resources.

In general, the SGCI was beneficial to the majority of the SGCs that participated.  The benefits were 'activity specific' i.e. some benefited more form the online courses while others would have benefitted more from the training and interventions related to grants management.

Detailed lessons learned and recommendations are listed on sections 9 and 11.

## 2. Project Background and Justification

This section should be brief

The UN Millennium Project Report (2009) points out that Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) underpins each of the Millennium Development Goals and, therefore, becomes a prerequisite for sustainable development. The African Union's Agenda 2063 and the related Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) underscore STI development as a prerequisite for achieving Africa's vision to be a prosperous innovation lead, knowledge-based economy. The African continent is lagging substantially behind the rest of the world with regards to STI with most sub-Saharan countries spending less than 0.5% of their gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD).

Science Granting Councils (SGC), being one of many role players in the STI system, are crucial "intermediaries" in the flow of financial and non -financial support to R&D performing institutions in a country. The recognition of their importance for STI development in sub-Saharan Africa is evident by the increase in the establishment of SGCs or policies advocating for the development of SGCs, over the past decade. However, in sub-Saharan Africa the SGCs are at different stages of development of which only a few are considered as well established. The Mouton et al., 2013 study has shown the variation in capacity, expertise and experience in science management amongst the SGC's in Africa. Mouton's report highlights many challenges and recommendations that addresses the area of capacity development and technical support of staff at SGCs to strengthen their current capacity and expertise. According to the findings this would best be achieved through the establishment of fora that will allow the SGCs to share information and learning on a regular basis; the development of mechanisms to strengthen linkages between SGCs; the development and implementation of a dedicated and systematic capacity building programme.

Effective research management is an essential enabler of excellent research. The management of research (and innovation) has emerged as a specialised area not only at higher education and other research institutions but also in government and funding agencies (Olsson & Meek, 2013).

Olsson & Meek, 2013 argues that growth, both for countries and their institutions, depends on three constants namely adequate policies (including governance and management); sufficient resources and investment; and highly trained human capital. The challenge for development is to build the skills and expertise of the research and innovation managers in developing countries to help them ensure that the scarce research resources available to them are effectively deployed and managed.

SARIMA and collaborating partners-Theme 1 supported sustainable development of research management capacity in the participating SGCs. Supporting the development and strengthening of capacity of SGCs in sub-Saharan Africa have a direct impact on improved STI systems in these countries and hence the socio- economic development of the region.

**3. Goal and Key Objectives:**

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen research management of Science Granting Councils in 15 African countries by developing and delivering targeted needs-driven training, technical interventions and learning opportunities as well as building communities through collaborative partnership networks. Specifically, the goal was realised through 5 or the 6 strategic areas listed below:

**Specific objective 1: To understand the current capacity and capacity development needs of the participating SGCs**
Findings of the assessment of the needs and capacity of the individual SGCs will be validated directly with the SGCs. In addition, the training and capacity development priorities and appropriate interventions will be confirmed, prioritised and agreed during this process. The findings of the needs and capacity assessment will furthermore serve as baseline data for monitoring and evaluation of project activities. The capacity and needs assessment survey, preceding the face-to-face meeting, will in addition to many other aspects also consider the SGCs IT infrastructure and interest to develop online grants administration infrastructure and capacity.

**Specific objective 2: To strengthen sustainable research management capacity of SGCs through professional development and training**
A technical intervention programme focusing on skills and capacity development in research management will be co-created with the SGCs based on the outcome of the needs and capacity assessment. The project partners proposed different models for skills training and capacity development considering aspects such as different preferences of learning, sustainability and flexibility. The models include the offering of onsite training, 6 university accredited online short courses and a route for professional recognition of SGC staff that have been in the SGC environment for at least 3 years.

**Specific objective 3: To strengthen sustainable research management capacity of participating SGCs through collaborative platforms.**
The project will create a platform for SGCs to engage, learn and share on national, regional and international level. The following components are envisaged:

- Six learning visits (2 per year) to be hosted by the NRF.
- An exchange and mentorship programme to support SGC to SGC learning.
- International learning visits linked to major international research management meetings.

Adjustments:

- The number of learning visits to be hosted by NRF: 2 in 2017 and 1 in 2018.

- International learning visits linked to major international research management meetings were removed from the implementation plan due to limited budget and was replace by a regional learning held in Uganda.

**Specific objective 4: Coordinating the development of online call administration capabilities**
In close collaboration with the NRF and in particular the IT expertise at the NRF, the activities related to this strategic area will aim to provide baseline data that will inform the roll-out of the NRF online system integration (for interested SGCs) and further support for on-line grants administration at the participating SGCs. Information on the current grants management systems, processes and related infrastructure will be collected during the in-country needs and capacity assessment exercise. A training module on on-line grants administration will be developed using the wealth of information and know-how accumulated by the NRF during the development and implementation of their online grants management system and will be offered as part of the technical intervention programme (Strategic Area 2) linked to learning visits to the NRF.

Changes: The original proposal has 6 objectives and 5 objectives were implemented. This objective was removed due to limited budget as the NRF online system integration (for interested SGCs) and training module on on-line grants administration proved to require financial resources. However, the interest in support for online grants management administration from SGC proved to be high and this support was provided through the collaborative platforms under objective 3.

**Specific objective 5 To support benchmarking of participating SGCs through an online benchmarking tool**
Online benchmarking will be done during the project using the ACU Measures Tool. The benchmarking exercises will run once every year. Every year, the SGCs will submit their data; the ACU will prepare a brief summary report (for that year) and the SGCs will also log-in to ACU Measures to run their own reports.

Changes: The budget did not support annual meetings (for the theme 1 project) as planned at proposal stage. Thus, opportunities to discuss the benchmarking exercise with the SGCs were restricted. In addition, much of 2016 was spent revising the overall SGCI framework (with funders and partners) and contracts were not available until 2017. As a result, the benchmarking exercises started in 2017 (instead of 2016), and the number of outputs from the benchmarking exercise were revised. Instead of preparing a summary report every year, a summary report was prepared in the first year and a report summarising the entire exercise was prepared in the final year. Benchmarking reports specific to each SGC (for each year) are available from the benchmarking platform.

**Specific objective 6: Knowledge management and dissemination**
Knowledge management and dissemination is a key and overarching aspect of the project. A dedicated and interactive website and repository will be developed by the NRF. The project partner will contribute resources and information and will support the translation of the project website and of key resources and materials related to the project into French and Portuguese. A

communication and dissemination strategy will be developed early in the project.

Changes: A key addition to the SARIMA implementation has been SARIMA's leading of the CTA online dissemination through the development and administration of the SGCI virtual hub. Although the objectives of the project have not changed, a proposal was submitted and approved by NRF on 16 April 2017. The new budget and implementation plan was included in the project's overall addendum to the initial agreement

### 4.    Project Methodology/ Approach:

There is no need to repeat what is in the original proposal but highlight any major changes/ adjustments made during the implementation phase and explain why these were necessary. Explain how the project has collaborated with other CTAs to implement the project (in the context of a "joined up" approach).

The project was implemented in a phased approach to make provision for the SARIMA's project collaborating partners to co- design the technical intervention programme with the SGCs. The first phase involved a comprehensive needs and capacity assessment of which the findings informed the development of the technical intervention programme during phase 2 of the project. The overall project structure is summarised in Figure 1:

*Figure 1: Project Structure*
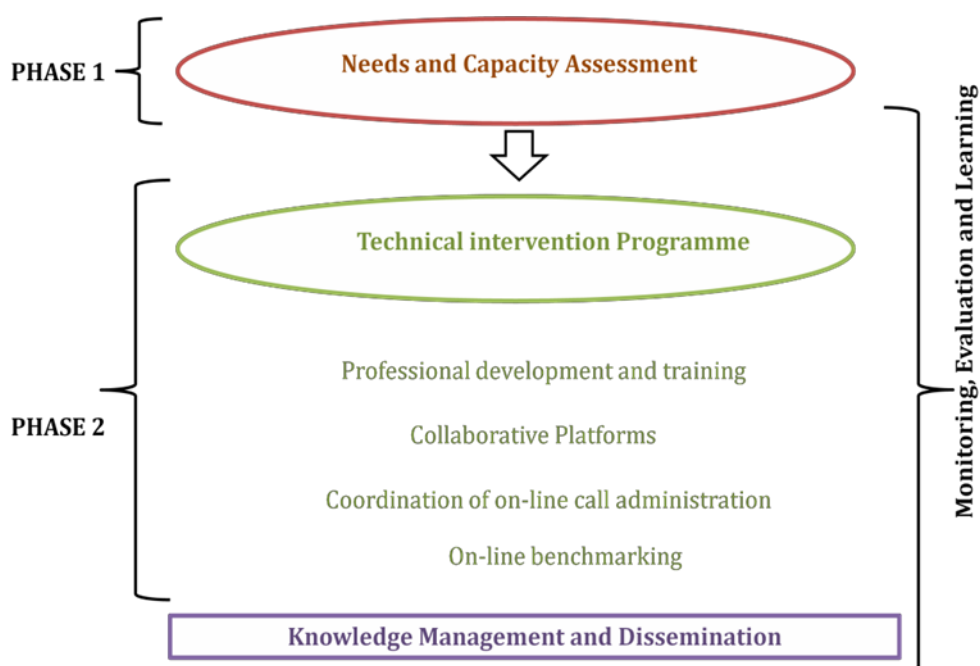


Overall, the project addressed five strategic areas in addition to cross-cutting areas as outlined below:

**Strategic area 1: Needs and capacity assessment**

The first draft of the Needs Assessment Survey was circulated to implementing partners at the beginning of August, ahead of the SGC meeting in Kigali in mid-August. A CREST representative was present at the 2016 Kigali meeting. At the Kigali event there was consultation with the SGCs in two short plenary sessions and the SGC delegates had the opportunity to study the questionnaire overnight.

**Change/adjustment:** As a result of SGC input in the second plenary session the modus operandi for collecting the data was altered from individual responses to the questionnaire administered online by CREST, to an organizational response administered internally within each SGC. It was deemed that aggregated data per SGC would be sufficiently detailed to provide for analysis, by SGC and across the SGCs. The SGCs also requested that the questionnaire should be translated into French and Portuguese.

**Strategic area 2: Sustainable research management capacity strengthening of SGCs – Professional development and training**

1. **Online Courses:** The overall capacity development strategy and technical intervention programme has informed by the outcomes of the needs and capacity assessment (Strategic Area 1). In the original proposal a Certificate in Research Management, accredited by the Stellenbosch University and delivered through blended learning, was envisioned. SARIMA intended to develop four modules, co-develop one module with CARIMA, EARIMA and WARIMA and CREST would develop four modules from their existing offerings. Blended learning would involve online learning combined with practical sessions that would be delivered during 2 study blocks of one week each in Stellenbosch.

   The project partners have proposed different models for skills training and capacity development considering aspects such as different preferences of learning, sustainability and flexibility. The models include the offering of onsite training, 6 university accredited online short courses and a route for professional recognition of SGC staff that have been in the SGC environment for at least 3 years. SARIMA partnered with Wits, through their partnership with the LRMG Performance Agency that offers a world class online delivery platform called Digital Campus.

   **Changes/Adjustments**: During roll-out of the courses, amongst others, the following were amended:

   a. It was observed in the first two courses that non-English speaking learners were struggling with the exams in English. A concerted effort was made to translate all materials- course guides, assignments and exams into Portuguese and French to enable learners to fully grasp the concepts.

   b. As initially there was no dedicated lecturers for the courses there was limited time for the lecturer to participate in the discussion forums and to mark exam scripts in Portuguese and French. SARIMA has now received support to facilitate marking of exams from the course facilitators.

   c. Additional supplementary exams had to be scheduled for Fundamentals of Research Management and Administration (an additional two exams); Research Grants and Contracts Management; Programme Evaluation and the Introduction to Intellectual Property, Technology Transfer and Commercialisation. This was due to poor completion rates by learners.

2. **Professional development and recognition:** SARIMA conducted a pilot professional recognition process specifically for the SGCI call on 29 September 2018- 20 November 2019. Out of the eight applications received, two applications met the requirements to be reviewed by the International Professional Recognition Council (IPRC).

   **Change/adjustment:** Reflecting on lessons learned, during the next call SARIMA re-allocated budget support in the application process through for telephonic follow ups, providing guidance and motivation of interested applicants to improve the quality of applications received.

**Strategic area 3: Sustainable research management capacity strengthening of SGCs – Support of a collaborative platform**

**CTA Coordination during Onsite Trainings and Technical Visits:** SARIMA collaborated with other CTAs in the following ways:

a.    Botswana onsite training was undertaken in joined approach with NEPAD and ACTS

b.    The Ghana workshop was a joint training programme between SARIMA and NEPAD, and included sessions on Research and Grants Management and the R&D and Innovation Data Collection for STI Indicators (NEPAD/ASTII-SGCI).

c.    Invited different CTAs to be participate in training and share their lessons learned: SARIMA used a diverse set of presenters: based in the East Africa region, NRF (SA) as well as ACTS and ATPS to present case studies during the Kenya onsite training

d.    SARIMA invited Association of African Universities (AAU) to co-ordinate Technical Assistance Visits for countries that indicated a need in M&E. Countries that participated in this joined up approach during the TAV visits where in Botswana, Cote d Ivoire and Kenya.

e.    AAU was also invited to the Uganda IT specific visit to share their best practices on the MEL digitisation which served also as a continuation of a session previously held

f.    SARIMA shared raw data collected of M&E of the needs communicated by the SGCs. AAU used the data to develop a framework for the workshop held at the MEL Systems Support Peer Learning Workshop, 2019 ARM-Ethiopia. The data was also used to design strategies to target countries and focus areas for countries that require M&E support.

**Strategic area 5: Knowledge Management and dissemination**

An abundance of information, documentation, reports and materials and other resources has been generated during the project. It was essential that these be sufficiently managed. The activities under this strategic area will aim to capture, develop, disseminate and utilize the knowledge and learning resulting from project implementation. This will amongst other things, be done through a dedicated interactive project website (to be developed by the NRF) that will serve as a portal and a repository. The project website as well as key project documents and materials will be made available in English, French and Portuguese.

Change/adjustment: The following additional changes not mentioned in the proposal were made to improve SGCI Website-Virtual Hub platform:

a. CTA Exchange page: The page allows for easy content sharing between the CTA's, aiming for improved cohesion.
b. Office 365 migration: The new platform will allow for access to more features that can be used for dissemination.

**Strategic area 6: Benchmarking**

"An on-site benchmarking linked to the needs assessment study (Strategic Area 1) will be done during in- country visits. In addition, online benchmarking exercises will be conducted every year over the three project years – the purpose of these exercises would be to explore the various 'operational systems' employed by the SCGs and identify good practice models."

**Cross-cutting areas:**

There are a number of strategic areas that are considered as cross cutting and have integrated throughout the project. These are:

a. Relationship building in different contexts: During the phase 1 of the project the partners focused on strengthening relationships with the participating SGCs. It is believed that local ownership and commitment is one of the critical success factors of the project and the SGC Initiative in general. On another level the project activities aimed to empower SGCs to strengthen the relationships with their key stakeholders including government and the organizations they aim to support through their programmes.
b. The political economy within which each of the SGCs operates: The political economy analysis (case studies) were included in the experts' induction pack to ensure promote regional context on the expert that can be passed onto the SGC.
c. Gender and diversity was integrated at project level, for example by including implicit gender bias in the design of the needs analysis and benchmarking exercises, collecting and reporting data, where possible, to reflect gender and incorporating the assistance and advice of a gender expert in the development of the technical intervention plan.

5.      **Project Findings and Outputs:**

Findings: List at least 5 most important findings (results) from the project and how they have been useful or innovative

a. **Needs and capacity assessment:** One of the key findings from the assessment is that there is clear evidence of the demand for general research management capacity building that will improve individual and organizational performance across all SGCs-refer to report Annexure B: page 55-58

for a detailed list and statistics of all the findings. The survey process has also confirmed the preliminary assessment made by the CREST team earlier in 2016, and in a prior study conducted in 2014, that the SGCs vary in size, maturity, mandate and resources (Moutoun, 2016).

b. **Onsite Trainings:** Over 200 participants- an average of 20 SGC staff members per workshop were trained. Onsite trainings laid out a Research Management foundation which was key in ensuring background information for other Theme 1 interventions. Action points from these training was the point of departure to ensure that the mentoring support drills down to the knowledge gaps identified. This process greatly contributed to the customization of support provided to SGC. Most importantly, this foundation will also be beneficial even after SGCI Phase 1.

c. **Development of Guidelines and Manual:** A need for guidelines on developing processes and templates was responded through the development of the High-Quality Research Competition Guideline and the Research Grants Management Manual. The Guideline was used during the onsite trainings and technical assistance visits and proved to be beneficial to the SGCs in improving their processes for reach high quality research competitions.
Refer to Section 8: Meeting the SGCI 2020 Logical Framework Targets for examples on how Research Competition support was provided with the use of the manual.

d. **Professional development and training:** The development and promotion of the Professional Competency Framework (PCF) has been a significant contributor to the increased awareness to the recognition of Research Management as a profession. Charmaine et al (2018) documented this finding in one of the Theme 1 knowledge outputs stating that PCF is an endorsement of the view that it is through genuine and comprehensive engagements that a profession may reinforce its unique identity and steer its progress. The PCF is both an impetus and an inspiration for such a journey.

e. **Online Courses:** 6 courses Wits certified courses were developed. Online delivery of training was preferred by most SGCs and this enabled a enabled a large number of SGC staff to be trained, total of 67 learners across 13 countries. One of the success factors of rolling our individual interventions depends on the involvement of the SGCI coordinator and the internal organizational resource capacity issues. The nominated SGCI coordinator role in individual targeted interventions is crucial as the information needs to be packaged well to create interest, create an enabling environment for the competition of the activity (e.g online courses) and create mechanism for application and transferring of skills internally and to the rest of the STI ecosystem.

f. **Technical Assistance Visits:** mentoring support was provided to 14 countries reflected the following capacity development needs in the following 3 broad areas:
- **Online Grant Management Systems**- support was provided to 8 countries to create awareness, needs assessment for development of new systems, review of existing systems, drafting of implementation plans with budget estimation for new or expansion of systems.

This support was mostly appreciated by the SGC IT staff members as the visit and documents developed solidified their requests of previously submitted to management.

- **Review and/or Development strategic, grants processes and high research quality research competition documents:** support provided 5 countries through a practical review and of existing or drafting of new call, grant agreement, M&E, etc. SGC found the support to be very beneficial as the sessions entails actually working through the Council's documents as opposed to presentations theoretical concepts. Within this category, M&E was the leading focus area in demand.
- **Scientometrics:** 1 country requested this support as they believed the application of scientometrics knowledge within the realm of research management transcends across the SGC infrastructure to the SGC stakeholders.

It was interesting to observe that some SGCs invited their stakeholders to the technical assistance visits even though the session entailed the review of internal processes. They had view that involving stakeholders at initial stages assist them to understand the internal constraints and contribute to seamless processes.

**ii) Knowledge/ learning outputs:**

Provide a list of knowledge/ learning outputs from the project. Is this list similar or different from the list of expected outputs in the approved proposal (please refer to the original approved proposal). Outputs may include journal articles; research papers; books; policy briefs, SOPS, manuals, templates etc. Indicate the outputs that were published on an open access basis. Please note that we need the actual materials (as attachments) or links that lead directly to them.

List of knowledge output listed below is similar to the list indicated in the proposal with two additions of the book chapter and Grants Management Manual.

| Knowledge/ learning outputs | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Output** | **Author** | **Title** | **Publisher** | **Annexure reference/link** |
| Articles in referee-based scientific journal | 1. Charmaine Williamson, Karin Dyason, Jose Jackson | 1. Scaling up Professionalization of Research Management in Southern Africa | 1. Journal of Research Administration. <br><br> *Article updated version has re-submitted in response to reviewers' comments in February 2020.* | Annexure I: updated version of the article. |
| | 2.Jose Jackson, Jane Payumo, Amy Jamison, Michael Conteh, Petronella Chirawu | 2. Gender in science, technology, and innovation: A Review Africa's Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) | 2. Journal of Science and public policy <br><br> *Authors are currently working on reviewers' comments to be submitted by 28 February 2020.* | Annexure I: updated version of the article. |

| Books chapter | 1. J Jackson Malete; K Dyson, D Mpye, Z Sobuza and Y S Naik | 1. Building Sustainable Research Management Capacity in Sub-Saharan African Science Granting Councils | 1. Book chapter has been upgraded from an article. the publishing is coordinated by ACTS-KE | Annexure I: draft book chapter |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reports | Patrice Ajai-Ajagbe | ACU measures benchmarking reports | The reports can be accessed from the benchmarking platform. Benchmarking reports are available to the SGCs and the Funding organisations. | Annexure F: Final report translated into Portuguese and French |
| | Johann Mouton

Diana Coates | Capacity Building Needs Assessment Survey Report | Published on the SGCI website and disseminated during SGCI meetings and events. | Annexure B: Report in English, French and Portugese |
| Training manuals (print/ online) Offered as certificate courses from WITS University-ZA | Ninette Mouton and Henry Tumwijyuke | Course guides for the following courses.

Research Grants and Contracts Management | WITS: Course guides only shared with enrolled learners on the courses | Course guides only shared with enrolled learners on the courses |

|  | Jane Payumo | Programme Evaluation |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Ayanda Noma | Intellectual Property, Technology Transfer and Commercialization |  |  |
|  | Prof Veronique |  |  |  |
|  | Penlap Beng |  |  |  |
|  | Dr Michael Conteh |  |  |  |
|  | Elzarie Swanepoel | Gender in Science, Technology and Innovation |  |  |
|  | Prem Govender and Eme Owoaje | Research Ethics and Integrity |  |  |
| Guidelines/Manuals | Jose Jackson-Malete | Good Practice Guideline on the Quality Of Research Competitions | Published on the SGCI website and disseminated during SGCI meetings and events. | Annexure I : Guideline in English, French and Portugese |
|  | Karin Dyason |  |  |  |
|  | Dipalesa Mpye |  |  |  |

|  | Yolanda Davids | Generic Grants Management Manual for SGCs | Draft Published on the SGCI website and disseminated during SGCI meetings and events. | Annexure I : Manual to be translated to French and Portugese |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Videos | n/a | Uganda Learning Visit: Online Grants Management System | n/a : Video undergoing final édits process. | Videos will be uploaded on Virtual Hub by 30 March 2020 |
|  | n/a | Malawi TAV: Scientomentrics | n/a :  Video undergoing final édits process. | Videos will be uploaded on Virtual Hub by 30 March 2020 |

**iii) Explain how the outputs have been disseminated or communicated and how have they been used.**

What (if any) is unique about the outputs? Dissemination can be through participation in workshops and conferences, formal and informal meetings with policy and decision makers, or the project website. Illustrate with specific examples.

**Book chapter: Building Sustainable Research Management Capacity in Sub-Saharan African Science Granting Councils:** The book chapter was disseminated through presentation delivered at the SGCI Phase 1 Final Workshop held in Senegal 10-12 February 2020. The book will be disseminated by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) upon completion of the book editing.

**Report: ACU measures benchmarking reports:** Benchmarking reports are uploaded to the Virtual Hub in English, French, and Portuguese. Link: https://sgciafrica.org/en-za/virtualhub/sarima. All of the participating SGC's have access to ACU benchmarking portal to view reports. Results of the survey have been disseminated during the 2019 Annual Learning Forum. The technical assistance visits have also been used to communicate the importance of the tool and offer sessions on how to use portal upon request. SGCs having been using the data to benchmark their councils against their peers and monitor internal processes. "The benchmarking exercise has helped us a lot in streamlining some of our existing processes and has also helped us to include some activities in our plan" (NCST, Rwanda).

**Report: Capacity Building Needs Assessment Survey Report:** The Capacity Building Needs Assessment Survey Report has been uploaded to the Virtual Hub in English, French, and Portuguese. Link: https://sgciafrica.org/en-za/virtualhub/sarima. Printed versions have handed out at the 2019 Annual Forum, Tanzania and at 2020 SGCI Phase 1 Final Workshop, Senegal. The findings of the report have been used to inform the process of customizing Theme 1 interventions as per focus areas confirmed by each country. These findings have also been extended to other CTA to plan their interventions. During the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Systems Workshop: June 2019 Annual Regional Forum- Addis Ababa, SARIMA shared needs assessment data from countries that requested M&E support. This data assisted AAU to identify target countries for their intervention and workshop.

**Online Courses Lessons Learned:** Certificates were sent to all learners who passed their respective courses. Learners can use the certificates in the professionalization application process.
Lessons were communicated during the 2019 Annual SARIMA conference (3-6 September) to disseminate the participation and success of the SGC cohort partaking in the online short courses to showcase the success stories of the various SGC's.

**Guidelines/Manuals: Good Practice Guideline on the Quality of Research Competitions:** The guideline was widely disseminated during SGCI workshops, technical visits through reference of the document, sharing printed copies and uploaded onto the Virtual Hub in English, French, and Portuguese. Link: https://sgciafrica.org/en-za/virtualhub/sarima

Examples of the SGC events and guideline are listed below:

- Presentation of the guideline at the OR Tambo Chairs meeting held in Mozambique, January 2019.
- SARIMA shared the high-quality research competitions guideline with ACTS team to increase the cohesion between the CTA's.
- Printed versions handed out at the 2019 Annual Forum, Tanzania and at 2020 SGCI Phase 1 Final Workshop, Senegal.
- Use of guidelines as a central point in some of the onsite trainings namely the Mozambique, Uganda, Namibia, and Rwanda onsite trainings. Refer to the section 8: *Meeting the SGCI 2020 Logical Framework Targets*
- Guideline included in the experts' induction pack for the technical assistance visits.

**Professional recognition related outputs:  the following dissemination activities were undertaken:**

- Professionalisation was one of the presentation points during the SARIMA annual conferences during the project period.  For an example, a pre-meeting workshop was hosted by SARIMA at the July 2018 Annual Regional Meeting which covered: the relevance of the PCF for SGCs. The SARIMA team shared the history of professionalisation globally including the development of the PCF which was co-created with Research Managers at various levels in organisations, mostly in Southern Africa but with some participation from East, West and Central Africa. During the 2019 SARIMA Conference, lessons learned on the SGCI closed pilot call where shared.
- A session on Professionalisation and the professional competency framework was facilitated in a preconference workshop at the WARIMA conference in December 2019 to further discuss issues of professionalisation in the West African context. The workshop was held at Ibadan University in Nigeria and was attended by 35 participants.
- Two webinars (English and French) were held where the SCG's were invited in addition to the SARIMA database for further reaching dissemination. The webinars focused on clarifying the application process and where support will be provided by SARIMA and the IPRC.
    - English version of the Webinar hosted by Takatso Semenya; http://meeting.uct.ac.za/plpo5s8cjrk8/

    - French version of the webinar hosted by Josepha Foba http://meeting.uct.ac.za/pbhio7kj3chw/

**6.       Meeting of Project Objectives:**

Assess the extent to which the project has met its objectives (as stated in the original approved proposal) using a scale of 1 (not met) to 4 (fully met). Explain each rating with clear examples

*Table 1: Key for rating scale*

| Rating | Completeness: critera used to determine extent to of project meeting its objective |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Not started |
| 2 | Started but not completed |
| 3 | In progress to be completed by 30 March 2020 |
| 4 | Completed |
| N/a | Not Applicable |

**Specific objective 1: To understand the current capacity and capacity development needs of the participating SGCs**

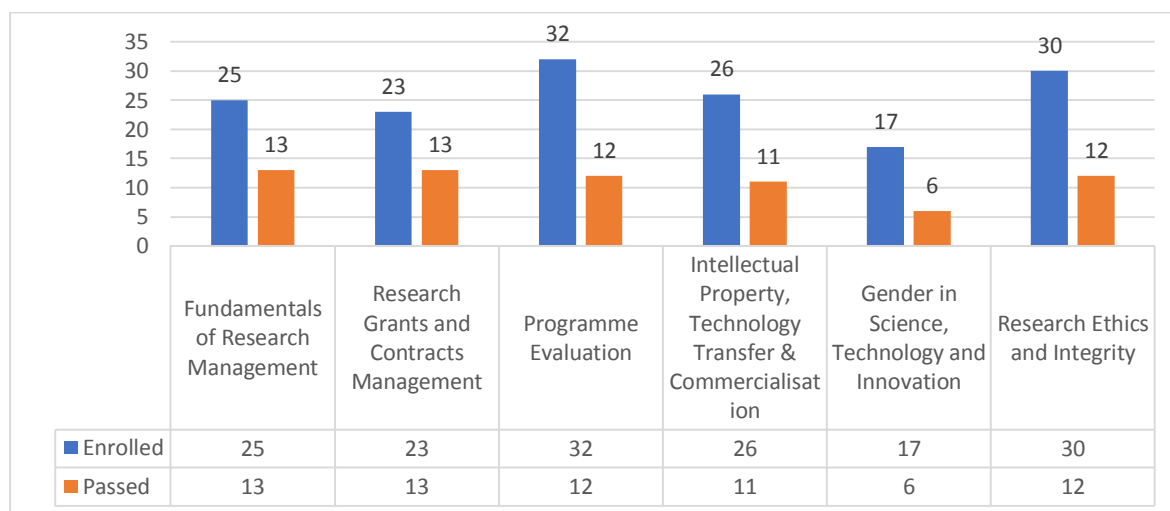| Outputs stated in the original proposal | Scale | Comment |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| ✓ Needs and capacity assessment tool<br>✓ Draft outline of the technical intervention plan.<br>✓ Report on needs and capacity assessment (translated to French and Portuguese)<br>✓ Validation and planning meeting with SGCs | 4 | Needs Assessment Survey was conducted in the period July to December 2016 and an English report translated to French and Portuguese has been written *refer to Annexure B* |

**Overall comment:**

*Refer to section 4: Strategic area 1: Needs and capacity assessment*

**Specific objective 2: To strengthen sustainable research management capacity of SGCs through professional development and training**

| Outputs stated in the original proposal | Scale | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| ✓ A university accredited Certificate in Research Management delivered through blended learning.<br>✓ Delivery of online modules, practical workshops and webinars.<br>✓ A mechanism for professional recognition and continuous professional development in research management of staff at SGCs.<br>✓ Competency Map for research managers at SGCs | 4 | 6 Wits accredited online courses offered; English and French professionalization webinars available; 2 professional recognition calls launched and Professional Competency Framework shared with SGCs-*refer to Annexure C* |

SARIMA partnered with Wits, through their partnership with the LRMG Performance Agency that offers a world class online delivery platform called Digital Campus offering the following courses 6 courses: Fundamentals of Research Management and Administration; Grants and Contracts Management; Programme Evaluation; Introduction to Intellectual Property, Technology Transfer and Commercialisation and; Gender in Science and Technology with a total enrolment and passes of 153 and 67 respectively. Challenges of the roll out of the courses are outlined in the April 2019-September 2019 narrative report-Annexure A and Detailed information is available on the Digital Campus Report-Annexure C

The graph below reflects that enrolment and pass rates of the participating learners.



| | Fundamentals of Research Management | Research Grants and Contracts Management | Programme Evaluation | Intellectual Property, Technology Transfer & Commercialisation | Gender in Science, Technology and Innovation | Research Ethics and Integrity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrolled | 25 | 23 | 32 | 26 | 17 | 30 |
| Passed | 13 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 6 | 12 |

In 2015/16 SARIMA developed a Professional Competency Framework (PCF) for research managers in Southern Africa, which was finalised in mid-2017. This was developed after benchmarking with several international research management organisations on how they have implemented professional

recognition. SARIMA did include Research Managers from CARIMA, WARIMA and EARIMA to get their inputs into the final PCF. The PCF formed the basis for the development of the Professional Recognition process for research managers, which is overseen by an International Professional Recognition Committee (IPRC) that includes members from Africa and globally. The PCF for research managers was used to recognise RMs based at the SGCs.

The IPRC conducted a pre-pilot phase for two to three IPRC members which was initiated in March 2018. This allowed feedback to further refine the PR process before moving into the pilot phase. After reflecting on lessons learnt, SARIMA conducted a pilot professional recognition process specifically for the SGCI call on 29 September 2018- 20 November 2019. Out of the eight applications received, two applications met the requirements to be reviewed by the IPRC. The outcomes of the reviews were as follows:

- Uganda: Mr Ronald J. Jagwe " Research Management Professional (RMP) *status provisionally recommended pending resubmission / amendments".* The IPRC will grant the status upon receipt of the recommended submissions and / or amendments for second submission. IPRC still awaits for submission of additional documents.
- Namibia: Mrs Luiza Mazarire *"RMP status not recommended"* SARIMA will include the applicant with all the SGCs in their database in order to receive information on future calls.

On 15 August 2019, IPRC launched an open call for applications on professional recognition in research management. SARIMA accommodated the SGCI applicants by offering a closed call offering additional support in the application process and translation of call documents. This call was promoted at the 2019 SARIMA Conference, Cape Town through distribution of the professionalisation pamphlets and presentation of the SGCI Pilot call lessons during the Research Management PCF Session.  Additionally, promotional webinars were hosted on the on 10 September 2019 with two separate English and French sessions to build an understanding of the PCF and PR process. The total attendance of was 13 participants and 5 participants for the English and French session respectively.  The webinar links are as follows:

English version of the webinar hosted by Takatso Semenya http://meeting.uct.ac.za/plpo5s8cjrk8/

French version of the webinar hosted by Josepha Foba http://meeting.uct.ac.za/pbhio7kj3chw/

Four applications are currently under review including 1 SGC applicant: Malawi Gift A. Kadzamira. The outcomes will be communicated by 31 March 2020.

**Specific objective 3: To strengthen sustainable research management capacity of participating SGCs through collaborative platforms**

| Outputs stated in the original proposal | Scale | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| ✓ Reports on learning visits of SGCs to NRF | 4 | 2017 learning visit summaries; refer to previous narrative reports-*refer to Annexure A;* 2018 Learning Visit at NRF summary-*Refer to Annexure D* |
| ✓ Reports on exchange visits between SGCs staff or mentorship visits to SGC's | 4 | 13 Technical Assistance Visits Reports on all SGCs countries except Ghana and Zimbabwe-*Refer to Annexure E* |
| ✓ Reports on international learning visits for SGCs in sub-Saharan Africa | 4 | 2019 Uganda Learning Visit Report. Regional learning visit was held in Uganda-*Refer to Annexure D* |

**Overall comment**

Three learning annual visit has been coordinated and hosted as follows:
1. NRF SA-2017
2. RAW-2017
3. NRF-SA-2018
4. One regional learning visit in Uganda.

During the period January 2019-January 2020, 13 onsite mentoring visits and 1 virtual support (Ghana)was provided to the SGCs. Ghana-the feedback provided during virtual support and not a report. The table below provides a summary of the date and topics covered during the visit. Details of the visit can be viewed in the relative country reports-Annexure E.

| | Country | Date | Topic |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Botswana | 02-06 December 2019 | Development of the national RSTI M&E Framework |
| 2. | Burkina Faso | 16-20 December 2019 | Improve their capacity in project monitoring and evaluation developing a project monitoring platform consideration of gender in FONRID activities and funding |
| 3. | Cote d'Ivoire | 28-30 October 2019 | Program evaluation Review of Grants Management Processes and |

| | | | document and guidance on the migration from manual to online system. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | Ethiopia | 13-15 January 2020 | Assessment of the research and grant management landscape in Ethiopia and laying the foundation for an online grant management system. |
| 5. | Ghana | 28-30 November 2019 | Virtual Support: Review of National Research Fund Bill, 2019. The Bill will inform the Grants Management Processes |
| 6. | Kenya | 01-04 October 2019 | Development of M&E framework and tools: integrate M& E with OGMS and assessment of Software program to be written |
| 7. | Malawi | 22-24 January 2020 | Induction on Scientometrics and how to apply to Grants Management Processes |
| 8. | Mozambique | 20-22 March 2019 | Overview of the strategy development process, provide feedback on current strategic documents, Manuals of Norms and Procedures, Expert advice on an efficient Grant Management Systems, current status of the Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender Mainstreaming *Only report attached on Annexure E. For additional documents-refer to Oct 18-Mar 19; Annexure F* |
| 9. | Namibia | 13-15 May 2019 | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System Grant Management Rules and Procedures Review Online Grants Management System: Review of current system Research Competition support: Review of current call documents *Only report attached on Annexure E. For additional documents-refer to Apr 19-Sept 19; Annexure F-Namibia.* |
| 10. | Rwanda | 22-26 July 2019 | Training of Researchers Research Competitions Assistance with the development of the agreement for the selected projects to be submitted to the Council Revision of the current M&E framework template and adaptation to the SGC's processes *Only report attached on Annexure E. For additional documents-refer to Apr 19-Sept 19; Annexure G-Rwanda.* |
| 11. | Senegal | 20-22 November 2019 | Grants Management Process and document review |

| 12. | Tanzania | 16-18 April 2019 | Review of Online Grants Management System (virtual by IT expert)<br>Review of Grants Management Manuals and Procedures<br>Development M&E framework<br>Research Competition support: Feedback on the Review of 2017 Call for Competitive Research Grant<br>*Only report attached on Annexure E. For additional documents-refer to Apr 19-Sept 19; Annexure F-Namibia.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13. | Uganda | 03-04 September 2019 | Online Grants Management Review: expert technical opinion on the usability, value proposition, effectiveness and efficiency of the System and to propose modification and/or improvements (if any) and the change management processes that might facilitate effective adoption of the system.<br>*Only report attached on Annexure E. For additional documents-refer to Apr 19-Sept 19; Annexure J-Uganda* |
| 14. | Zambia | 16-18 April 2019 | Implementation plan entailing: Mapping of the Online Grant Management System, Identification for the Online Grant Management needs specific to the SGC, Costing and Resource Mobilization<br>Research Competition Support: Update on feedback from the South Africa – Mozambique – Zambia Joint Call for Research Proposals<br>*Only report attached on Annexure E. For additional documents-refer to Apr 19-Sept 19; Annexure F-Namibia.* |
| 15. | Zimbabwe | Council kindly requested not to participate in the TAV. | |

Specific objective 4: To support benchmarking of participating SGCs

| Outputs stated in the original proposal | Scale | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| ✓ **Onsite Benchmarking:** A report on current grant management practices, the current and envisaged future funding priorities of each SGC and the existing IT infrastructure. A section dealing with the relevant aspects will be included in the country reports resulting from the needs and capacity assessment as well as online benchmarking reports. | n/a | No budget allocated to activity. |
| ✓ A training module on online grants administration | n/a | No budget allocated to activity. |
| ✓ Benchmarking reports | 3 | This task was revised. Reports specific to each SGC, for each year are available from the ACU measures platform at https://measures.acu.ac.uk/<br><br>Refer to Annexure F |
| ✓ Online Benchmarking: Consolidated benchmarking report for the project. | 4 | |

**Overall comment**

A training module on online grants administration: This objective was removed due to limited budget as the NRF online system integration (for interested SGCs) and training module on on-line grants administration proved to require financial resources. However, the interest in support for online grants management administration from SGC proved to be high and this support was provided through the collaborative platforms under objective 3.

Benchmarking reports have been changed to Online Benchmarking: Annual summaries on the benchmarking data. The SGC responsiveness was a challenge in gathering all the annual reports for all 15 participating countries. The budget did not support annual meetings (for the theme 1 project) as planned at proposal stage.  Thus, opportunities to discuss the benchmarking exercise with the SGCs were limited.

**Specific objective 5: To support IMT, CTA and SGC online dissemination through the SGCI website and Virtual Hub**

| Outputs stated in the original proposal | Scale | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| ✓ Project documents, resources and information posted on the virtual hub. | 4 | All uploaded project documents are available on the Virtual Hub: https://sgciafrica.org/en-za/virtualhub/ |
| ✓ Annual project newsletter. | 4 | 3 Annual project newsletters produced for 2016-17, 2018, and 2019-2020 produced- *refer to Annexure H* |
| ✓ Project communication and dissemination strategy. | 4 | This was document for internal implementation reference- *refer to Annexure H* |
| ✓ Dissemination of project results through conference papers, journals and briefs. | 4 | Refer to section 5 ii of this report. |

**Overall comments**

The Virtual Hub hosts a range of resources, namely, training material, newsletters, reports, knowledge outputs, as well as other documents. In order to facilitate cohesion between the SGCs, SARIMA implemented the CTA Exchange page, where the current and future CTA's can share documents, reports, and events between each other. Over the course of SGCI Phase 1, SARIMA ensured the dissemination of 127 news articles, 25 resources, 203 CTA uploads/publishes and 95 user accounts created *(information extracted from the Virtual Hub on March 2020).* Project resources, documents, and information posted on the website and virtual hub on a regular basis and as requested. All Theme 1 key resources are available in English, French, and Portuguese.

The SGCI website and Virtual is in the process of being migrated to the Office 365 platform, where it will be hosted on the newest Microsoft SharePoint version. The reason for the migration is that the current platform is aging and does not allow for flexibility in terms of adding features. The updated platform will allow for a host of new features including the ability to livestream from the website, detailed usage reporting and auditing, updated look-and-feel, better in-browser document and gallery viewers, and much more. In fact, the updated platform will provide access to a library of thousands of plugins to use, holstering the ability to greatly customise the site. The process should see immediate improvements, but the complete realisation of the value added will be evident during the next phases of the SGCI when a host of additional customisation and functionality will be available. The migration process is expected to be completed by end of March.

**7.     Project Outcomes:**

<table>
<tr><td>i)</td><td>Explain how the project has contributed to positive change/ field of study/ research area</td></tr>
</table>

The SGCs interacted with SARIMA to varying degrees. Thus the outcomes were also varied among SGCs. The project has contributed in the following ways to the development of SGCs:

a.  Knowledge creation on training and capacity-building needs that of key staff at the SGCs in African countries. Capacity Building Needs Assessment report entails a detailed view of the needs across the SGC sector.

b.  Increased awareness on professionalision of Research Management through the development and promotion of Professional Competency Framework (PCF) and professional recognition of Research Management within the participating SGCs and the rest of the RM community in Sub Saharan Africa.

c.  SARIMA has shared their best practices in Research Management through the reference to its large repository of training materials on a variety of research and innovation management topics during the online course development phase.

d.  There is an increased number from SGCs of RM professionals with competency certificates from an internationally recognized university that offers an introduction to the broad field of research management and explores the broad scope of the multi-faceted role of research managers.

e.  Theme 1 has created a baseline/foundation through all its interventions on which participating SGCs and their invited stakeholder can further be built on even after SGCI Phase 1.

f.  Established and/or strengthened (directly and indirectly) national, regional and international networks and a culture of sharing best practices through learning visits, joint country onsite country visits, RIMA conference, matching of SGC with expert for mentoring, benchmarking exercise, etc. Specifically, through the annual benchmarking exercises there has been an increased awareness of the demand for data and the importance of collecting and sharing data, in formats that are meaningful to others.

g.  Established and expanded culture of sharing of lessons learnt by individual SGC.

h.  Dissemination tools that include a dedicated and interactive project website, training workshops; learning fora and the papers/practical tools associated with the fora, reports; partner conferences and other partner events; partner networks; project newsletter; partner websites; project meetings; and publications.

| Expected Outcomes | Actual Outcome |
|---|---|
| Better understanding of the needs and priorities of each SGC. | **Actual exceeded the expected outcome**: The understanding of the needs and priorities have gone beyond the needs assessment report as it was carried through the different interventions up to the last one, technical assistance visit (TAV). TAV reports illustrates the needs that have remained the same or evolved through the project. |
| Consensus achieved on plan of action for each SGC | **Actual outcome met expected outcome:** Several consultations between SARIMA and SGCs took place before any intervention was implemented. Surveys will be completed by SGCs and other participants to allow an opportunity for feedback and identification of improvement areas in the next intervention. Language barriers in the Francophone countries posed a threat to a consensus action being achieved as SARIMA and Council would sometime have a different understanding of the desired intervention outcome. This was resolved through involvement of French and bi-lingual speaking experts and making time for face to face meeting during the Annual Forums. |
| Establishment of sustainable pathways for training, professional recognition and professional development of SGC staff. | **Actual outcome met expected outcome:** The PCF and Professional Recognition brochures was developed and widely presented and marketed in SGCs events and platforms. <br> **Actual outcome is lower than expected outcome:** The number of SGC staff professional recognition that were reviewed is way below than the expected number as there was an assumption that there are staff members that could get the RM status through their experience gained. Experience has shown that the online courses has created confidence and increased opportunity for professional recognition. |
| Many of the activities in this project will provide a baseline/foundation on which can be built after the | **Actual met the expected outcome** <br> Exposure to established SGCs (NRF) as well as enrollment on courses will ensure SGC staff have acquired the necessary skills to ensure that the SGC is sustainable |

| | |
|---|---|
| life time of the project. | |
| The national, regional and international networks that will be established or strengthened through this project will support benchmarking, learning and collaboration. | **Actual outcome met expected outcome**<br>Various workshops and learning events have exposed SGC staff to numerous networking opportunities. e.g. The SGCs that have established joint calls are likely to extend their co-operation after the duration of SGCI (1). |
| A substantial part of the project is geared towards learning and sharing of best practices. Implementation of these learning and best practices will have significant value for the enhancement of sustainable development of SGCs. | **Actual outcome met expected outcome**<br>'Graduates' of the online courses will be available for 'in-house' training of SGCs. The Grants Management Manual will provide a ready reference for new staff. |
| A culture of sharing of lessons learnt by individual SGC will be established and expanded | **Actual outcome is lower than expected outcome:**<br>Limited responses from SGCs in provision of data and information makes it difficult to assess if the SGCs will *share* lessons.  The unwillingness of SGCs to complete the online surveys as well as share survey data with others suggests that such a culture needs to be encouraged |
| A culture of sharing data and metrics for the purpose of comparisons/ benchmarking between SGCs will be established and expanded | **Actual outcome is lower than the expected outcome:**<br>SGCs were tasked with completing several different surveys.  In the absence of support for in-person meetings, SGCs did not understand the context of the benchmarking survey.  The benchmarking survey was a longitudinal survey (the same questions were asked each year).  In some cases, SGCs reported wildly fluctuating and even contradictory data each year – possibly a result of staff turnover and lack of continuity with the benchmarking exercise. |

SARIMA and their networks has accumulated a wealth of information and know-how during the development and implementation of the online courses. Listed below are the unintended outcomes which have led to improved capacity in the Research Management area.

- 9 research managers who were contracted as Subject Matter Experts were upskilled in online course development
- 6 SARIMA members furthered their experience as external reviewers of the online short courses
- SARIMA Research Management project specialist upskilled in online course development processes

## 8. Meeting the SGCI 2020 Logical Framework Targets:

Please refer to the relevant parts in the attached output targets set for March 2020

| Output indicator 1.1 | Milestones | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| Number of high-quality research competitions<br><br>(SARIMA) | At least 5 participating SGCs conduct high quality research competitions.<br><br>**(at least 2 new SGCs required by March 2020)** | 1. Mozambique-<br>2. Namibia<br>3. Kenya<br>4. Uganda<br>5. Rwanda<br>6. Tanzania |

The High-Quality Research Guideline was developed to offer guidance on the criteria that can be used to ensure that research competitions are of high quality, the guideline is available in English, French and Portuguese. Continuous support was provided to all SGCs within research competitions through continued dissemination and use of the Guideline.

Mozambique, Namibia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania had been identified as targeted countries for in- depth support on quality competitions in line with output indicator 1.1. During 2019, the opportunity of the technical assistance visits was used to conduct follow ups and/or provide support on high quality research competition through the review of manual and call documents.

Documentation of the application of support provided has been a challenge due the low response rate of SGCs to meeting requests for follow up meetings or support. It is important to note that the High-Quality Research Competition guideline has been included in the expert induction pack as the key reference and guiding document for preparation of the TAV and review of the shared documents. Therefore, all 14 countries that participated in TAVs received direct or indirect support to conduct high quality research competitions. Additional countries identified over and above the targeted countries are: Botswana, Ethiopia and Senegal.

**Mozambique:** Continuous support was given to Mozambique on their calls and SARIMA gave feedback of the review of the Trilateral call with South Africa and Zambia. SARIMA reviewed the call documents submitted by Mozambique and Dr Robin Drennan gave feedback to Mozambique during the meeting of the Joint Technical Committee meeting held 29 February 2019 - 1 March 2019, Bela Vista Mozambique. The Joint Technical Committee meeting was held to oversee the FNI-NRF-NSTC Trilateral competitive research funding programme. Amongst others, the purpose of the meeting was related the SGCI programme and focused on the review (retrospective and current) of Grant Management Systems and applying the Good Practice Guideline on the Quality of Research Competitions to the FNI-NRF-NSTC Trilateral Joint Call. The expert reviewed shared call documents and provided and steered the discussion mainly in the following areas of (i) the founding documents necessary to properly define a funding programme, (ii) peer review necessary for the success of any such competitive funding programme and (iii) monitoring and evaluation of the programme success-refer to Oct 18-Mar 19 report; Annexure E.

During a brief follow up virtual mentoring session, the following updates were communicated by FNI.

| Action items from TAV visit | Progress and Update |
|---|---|
| 1. Call for applications: Amend application form to include alignment, rationale and translation components. | This application form has been amended. |
| 2. Review and Assessment: Increase peer reviewer pool through strategic partnerships with other Portuguese speaking countries. | English has been introduced to the call. FNI has called upon Portugal and South Africa to help adjudicate the proposals in their main funded programme – agriculture, health, energy tourism. Also, French embassy also funding a programme. |
| 3. Review and Assessment: FNI should chair peer review panel meetings. | This is currently happening and working well. FNI has chaired 2 meeting, French and Special Projects. |
| 4. Award: Consider including a site visit before award is made to check that the proposed project is feasible. | There have implemented. Have already excluded one application because the conditions are necessary for success. This is reflected in the pre-assessment tool. |

*No response challenge: SARIMA has attempted several times to obtain the amended application to reflect alignment, rationale and translation components; and amended pre-assessment tool that reflect need for site visit feasibility and Award letter that reflects conditional approval as evidence of the changes effected due to the High- Quality Research Competition provided.*

**Namibia:** SARIMA attended the joint Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST and NRF) meeting on 25 January 2019 at the NRF-SA offices aimed at discussing their joint research call. This opportunity was also used to follow up on the support provided by SARIMA in relation to Research Competitions and technical assistance needs. A face to face meeting was held with Luiza Ndapewa Mazarire and she confirmed that all current calls are currently on hold due to funding. SARIMA will give support on the calls to ensure that they have been reviewed and are ready to be launched when the funding is released. During the technical assistance visit held in 13-15 May 2019,

High quality research competition was provided as the Council made decisions to change the following documents/processes:

- Develop a proposal for online granting management system and funding
- Insert on application form an option to list academic reviewers in order to increase a database of reviewers
- Develop a process for change management system (incl. processes and documents)
- Develop appeal process
- Develop templates for reviewers (conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement)
- Review contract and conditions of grants (ethics, deliverables, measurable indicators)
- Develop reviewer guidelines

NCRST is hoping to have 2 calls in 2020 (depending on the outcome of the applications and negotiations.) and looks forward to implementing these changes in the new call document and processes to be released. One key highlight on Research Competition support provided edited current Grants Management Manual to incorporate the appeal process: refer to Oct 18-Mar 19 report; Annexure E.

*Challenge: No opportunity to test the knowledge gained due to call being put on hold because of funding constraints.*

**Kenya:** NRF-Kenya shared the following improvements on their processes due to the Research Competition support provided by SARIMA and partners. It has been observed that Research Competitions have been adopted. Calls have been done as expected and with reliance on High Quality Research Competition Guidelines as provided by SARIMA: refer to TAV report: Annexure E6. Kenya

- Call Documents have been produced to provide specifics of what is expected for each call. 'Research Funding Guidelines and Criteria Manual' has been produced. This has been produced with the National Research Foundation of South Africa as a benchmark. It should be noted that this document is a work in progress. It is still not at a perfect state but the National Research Fund continues to work on the document especially applying the lessons learned from the Technical Assistance Visit held on 01-04 October 2019.
- Institutional 'Research Offices' are being used to screen applications prior to them being submitted to the National Research Fund for internal screening and review. This is critical in making sure that applications received by the National Research Fund are of good quality before they are submitted. The Intuitional 'Research Offices' assumes some responsibility in

ensuring high-quality of applications. Engagements have been held with the Institutions and the plan is to make this a regular and more inclusive forum with all the necessary stakeholders involved. We must also note that this assist the National Research Fund to circumvent the constraints of lack of staff

- Enhanced Review Processes: The reviewer database has grown and the National Research Fund plans to engage other SGCs to share the reviewer data and also to start using foreign reviews for the benefit of their expertise to the National Research Fund. At this point, reviewers from Tanzania have already been used. The plan is to engage the National Research Fund of South Africa to see how data can be shared.
- Gender Inclusive Calls and Gender Parity; Calls have been created to focus specifically on 'Females'. It goes without saying that 'Females' have been disenfranchised in many spheres of society which also includes the research space. This is a world-wide problem and the National Research Fund is making a concerted effort to address this disparity. It has also been established that for each call, no funds will be awarded to one gender where more than two-thirds of one gender gets funding. It is also important to note that this does not mean there is any sacrifice on the quality of proposals. Quality is maintained but there is fairness and lack of bias in the process of awarding grants. The National Research Fund is also making a concerted effort to provide some knowledge to research in enhanced proposal writing. This is important to ensure that the majority of the proposal received have better chances of being worthy of funding. The aim is to produce proposal which are competitive both within the continent and ultimately globally.
- Big 4 National Priorities of Government; The calls have also been aligned to the National Priorities of the Kenyan government. Calls clearly articulate how the research needs to respond to the Agenda 2063 as per government request.

*Challenge: Internal staff constraint as there are only 3 three staff members on NRF-Kenya*

**Rwanda:** The National Council of Science and Technology (NCST) was provided support with the Research Excellence call as their first call. This support provided a learning foundation for future calls. Technical support was provided through the review of the Research Excellence documents using the Good Practice Guideline on the Quality of Research Competitions. The following documents were reviewed and comments from expert were submitted to the SGC:

- Reviewed Concept note with comments for suggestion on areas for improvement
- Call for Proposals for Research Grant with comments for suggestion on areas for improvement
- Review spreadsheet to guide the SGC on how to apply the Good Practice Guideline on the Quality of Research Competitions to the Research Excellence call. Considering the current phase of the call, detailed comments were provided on the Call for Application Section entailing: Priority Setting and Strategic Alignment, Applicant Eligibility and Clarity of the Call April 2019-September 2019: Annexure E

Follow up has been made to the SGC to provide and receive verbal feedback on the review provided. The SGC confirmed that they currently satisfied with the written feedback provided. During the

previous period, virtual support was provided to the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST) on their Research Competition documentation April 2019-September 2019: Annexure G Below is a summary on the feedback provided during the TAV.

- Quality of inputs: "The majority of inputs are going to benefit the next call and not the current call because the latter was intended for research grant applications that had previously served elsewhere." NCST
- Systems and Processes: NCST shared that they had attended an IT specific visit to the National Research Foundation of South Africa. The NRF system is currently under modification. NCST further underwent a benchmarking exercise with Kenya and EASTACO. It is anticipated that at the end of the 2019 an online system for the management of research calls and awards will be launched.

  Time frames for calls for funding: It was agreed that future calls will be open for longer that 4(as advised by expert) weeks as was with the Research Excellence call.

*Challenge: No response: SARIMA has attempted several times to obtain an update on activities since the TAV.*

**Tanzania:** Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) planned research competition documents were not ready for review during the Technical Assistance Visit held on 16 – 18 April 2019. The Online Research Management, M&E framework, Grants Manual and 2017 Concept Note for the call were reviewed for the purposes of reviewing and improving current research competition processes in place. Lessons learned would then be applied to planned and future Research Competitions. Areas of insufficiencies/contradictions were pointed out and discussed- refer to April 2019-September 2019: Annexure E. During a follow up meeting after the visit, the following updates were provided by COSTECH:

- The online system is operational, and applicants for research clearance are using the system. COSTECH expects to use the system for calling and reviewing research grants. Also, COSTECH wants to improve the system to cover other components of science, technology and innovation, including registration of research infrastructures, facilities and tools.
- COSTECH M&E Framework document revision based on comments from TAV is in process, and the draft document will be shared with SARIMA in the first week of December for comments and inputs.
- COSTECH Grants Manual has been finalised and endorsed by the Commission of the COSTECH for implementation.
- Call for proposals for research grants may be released before 30th December 2019. COSTECH is preparing a calendar and the call and will them with SARIMA for comments and inputs.

*Challenge: No response challenge: SARIMA has attempted several times to obtain an update on activities since the TAV.*

**Uganda:** Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) reported the following improvements from support previously provided in Research Competition:

- Calls for Proposals now clearly set out budget guidelines including the permissible and non-permissible expenditure
- Proposals received by deadline date were given a unique identifier code
- Screening Process is done at two levels:
- Level One: Plagiarism Check
- Level Two: Eligibility Check
- Customized feedback to all applicants both successful and the unsuccessful was given

Refer to April 2019-September 2019: Annexure J

The priority area for the council is in the Theme 1 area during 2019 was the improvement of the online Grants Management System. They confirmed that this is directly linked as they this is directly linked to Hight Quality Research Competitions and the improved system will be used to release the new call. Refer to Annexure E.13 Uganda

*Challenge: 2019 Call documents, Grants Manual and other relevant Grants Management documents were not shared to provide further detailed review and feedback on the grants management process that affect the research competitions.*

During the October 2019-March 2020 reporting period, the following Research Competition support was provided to Botswana, Ethiopia and Senegal.

**Botswana:** The following documents were reviewed and defined for Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology:

- Call document template was defined that aligns relevant and key stakeholders of the Council Refer to Output Document 1-Annexure E1. Botswana
- Conditions of Grant template was defined that aligns to the three different SGCs present including university delegates. Refer to Output Document 2- Annexure E1. Botswana
- Conflict of Interest Agreement for the peer review process was defined that aligns to the three different SGCs present including university delegates. Refer to Output Document 3- Annexure E1. Botswana
- Confidentiality Agreement for the peer review process was defined that aligns to the three different SGCs present including university delegates. Refer to Output Document 4- Annexure E1. Botswana

*Challenge: No opportunity to test the knowledge gained due to not having a granting function.*

**Ethiopia**: Ministry of Science and Technology requested a review of the manual grants management system for the purpose of improving their Research Competitions. The following recommendations/comments were provided during the January 2020 TAV-the Call Document Analysis session:

- The statement that says Principal Investigators can submit proposals through 'proxies' was interrogated.

- The current manual system requires that CO-Principal-Investigator CV must be provided. This can be circumvented in an automated system.
- Institutional Approval: The system should include functionality to cater for this extra step of screening and the relevant university staff members should be registered on the system and given the relevant rights to do screening.
- Call Publishing: An agreement between MInT and expert was reached to making sure the open calls are also available on the MInT website (www.mint.gove.et) and that a link to the Online Grant Management System must be available to redirect the users to the system to capture their proposals.
- IT Infrastructure and Staffing: IT infrastructure also needs to be audited to ascertain if it is fit for purpose when the implementation of the Online Grants Management System takes place. It was recommended that the Council complete the questionnaire developed by expert for them to provide all the IT Infrastructure and IT staffing information needed.

*Challenge: Poor response: SARIMA has attempted several times to schedule a visit earlier in 2019 to allow time for follow up meetings. Visit was only held in January 2020 close to the close-out period of SGCI Phase 1.*

**Senegal:** Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation (MISTRI)'s documents were reviewed and revised during the TAV-November 2019. The following documents were reviewed, discussed and revised and ready for use for the next call: FIRST Call for proposals, FIRST Manual of Procedures, Template for the call and Reporting Form- refer to Annexure E11. Senegal Recommendations from the expert entailed the following:

- Develop a formal Research Agenda or a Strategic Plan.
- Have more visibility on the amount of resources available for funding research. This can help in improving the call for proposal and the communication with potential research candidates.
- A funding instrument to fund young researchers who find it difficult to mobilize resources.
- Build the capacity of the SGC personnel in monitoring and evaluation.
- Emphasize the importance of innovation in research projects.
- Improve the online announcement of the call. If necessary, use social media to reach a broader audience.
- Develop an online system to manage more effectively and more efficiently the operations of the grant management cycle.
- Include a FAQs in the future platform of the SGC
- Define more clearly the eligibility criteria of researchers and the eligibility criteria of research projects.
- Improve the budget and logical framework parts of the template.
- Add a funding plan to the budget to take into account resources provided by other donors
- Provide ethical clearance for all projects if necessary
- Improve the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues and especially equity and redress

- Be more open to applicants and if necessary, take into account their views regarding the selection of reviewers. However, this does not imply suggesting the reviewers themselves.
- Encourage all applicants to seek reviewers' comments.
- A guide for reviewers of research projects to define more clearly their roles and responsibilities (issues of conflicts of interest and ethics)
- Communicate the review outcomes in time and as planned
- Provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.
- Improve the call for proposals
- Announce the outcomes also on the SGC website
- Have a first disbursement of 40% instead of 50%. Involve more the director of the research institution in the signature of the contract award.
- Improve the management of the disbursements (disburse funds as planned
- Develop a M&E system and provide the staff with resources to conduct the M&E activities.
- Improve the dissemination strategy of research outputs.

*Challenge: Sourcing of French speaking expert.*

## 9. Key Lessons/ Observations from the Project

List the key lessons that the team has learnt during the implementing of this project. What would you have done differently and why? Are there any recommendations for IDRC?

SARIMA has captured the following as part of its ongoing reflection to the project implementation:

a. **Planning customised interventions:** Conducting a needs assessment survey to identify priority areas in the different countries. SARIMA conducted a survey in 2016, it is important to note that an implementor needs to continuously adapt on its integration of activities to the needs of the SGCs with the realisation that SGCs are dynamic and not static entities. Reliance can't be placed solely on a 2016 document. This will require a degree of flexibility in the implementation plan and budget.

b. It has also been observed that customed interventions have a direct relation with the level on which the SGCs are available and able to articulate their needs and priority areas for support. In the absence of in-depth discussions prior intervention, completion of an online survey to get a sense of who the target audience would be, their position, level of expertise (e.g. early career researcher, mid-career or management), knowledge of the disciplinary spread in expertise of attendees would greatly assist with the customisation of the offering.

c. **Online Grants Management support approach:** support should ideally include both Grants Management expert and IT expert to bridge the usual mistrust/misunderstanding between business process management and IT.

d. **Applying regional context:** Greater involvement of the Africa based RIMAs as project partners assisted in ensuring that all regions of the continent are well resourced in terms of on-ground interventions with the SGCs.

e. **Log frame targets**: these needs to be set with greater clarity to ensure feasibility of attainment. Where there is a need for revision of targets then a degree of flexibility must be allowed as it is common that in capacity development projects there is ongoing discoveries as the interventions unfold.

f. **CTA Harmonisation:** CTAs needs constant engagement regardless of a possible reality that the CTAs might have different contract periods. Ideally it would have been most beneficial if all the CTAs developed an implementation strategy together from the beginning as this would have assisted with the alignment of the diffract activities. When harmonising interventions, it will be important for CTAs to ensure one point of contact with the SGC to ensure that communication is streamlined between the CTAs and SGC. This point of contact must be the SGCI coordinator. Harmonisation with the CTAs should now move beyond offering their individual content during training workshops to carefully considering the mix of SGC representatives targeted by each CTA.

g. **Use of data collected during course of the project:** The ACU benchmarking survey, CTAs interventions' survey and MEL consultant interviews are useful data that is available for us. This data has not been collated, shared and fully utilised in the planning and development of content of the SGCs interventions. All CTAs need to make a concerted effort to utilise each other's available data to enhance the capacity development initiatives with the SGCs.

h. **Use of the Virtual Hub**: This platform had been underutilised by CTAs and SGCs. The IMT could encourage sharing coordination of CTAs data and knowledge output by requesting that the CTA includes the link of the uploaded documents under "Appendices" section of the narrative report.

i. **CTA resource planning**: It is important for the CTA to carefully evaluate its internal resource capacity to implement a project of this kind. Redundancy should have been created considering the large amount of project administration and ahigh volumes of finances.

**10. Gender/ inclusivity and Ethical considerations:**

Describe (with examples) how the project has promoted gender and inclusivity based on the *SGCI Gender Mainstreaming Framework and Action Plan*. Did any ethical issues arise during the implementation of this project? If so, how were these managed/ addressed? -

Theme 1 has promoted gender in the following ways:

a. Needs assessment exercise: Gender related questions have been included in the needs and capacity assessment and the benchmarking questionnaire to ensure the needs of both male and female employees at the SGCs are considered. This questionnaire was distributed the NRF and IDRC and the project partners for feedback.

b. Benchmarking:

- The benchmarking survey includes questions to ascertain the gender ratios of staff at the SGCs and the gender ratios of awards the SGC awarded in their last financial year. By benchmarking against these questions, the SGCs are encouraged to consider their provision and practice in this area.

- The ACU presented on the benchmarking data (from 2017 and 2018) at the Gender session at the Regional meeting in Addis Ababa.  Key points on gender and inclusivity (discussed during this session) are incorporated in the ACU's Report on the SGCI Benchmarking Exercise

c. Onsite Trainings: Gender considerations have been addressed as a component of onsite training programmes. SARIMA has made a concerted effort to ensure that females are included in the delegate list, and also that gender is considered in the selection of trainers for on-site training. Gender analysis has been incorporated into onsite training participant pre- and post-training self-feedback.

d. Conferences and Workshops

    - Two sessions at the 2017 SARIMA Conference included gender topics:
    o SGCs Policy Dialogue - The panel discussion held on May 24th 2017 included the topic on Gender and Diversity, and
    o Plenary Session on May 25th 2017 was on Excellence in research and innovation through Gender Equality and Diversity presented by Dr Heidi van Rooyen, Exec Director HSRC.

- A focus group to discuss gender was held with SARIMA, Michigan State University (MSU) and SGCs at the SARIMA conference in May 2017

- Workshop on Research Excellence, Gender and Leadership scheduled for October 2018 at the RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Nairobi

e. Knowledge output was developed into an article: Gender in science, technology, and innovation: A Review Africa's Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI)

f.  Online Courses: One of the online delivered focused specifically on gender in STI. 4 of 9 the experts developed the online short courses were female. The gender and STI course received significant interest with 17 participants enrolling in the course.

g.  Technical Assistance Visits: SARIMA encourages that females are included in the participant list, and that gender is considered in the selection of experts for technical assistance support programmes. For the 14 countries that received support, 7 countries had female experts; 7 countries had 7 males.
    Opportunities were used to raise gender imbalances issues specific to the country. In Rwanda and Ethiopia for an example, there was a glaring observation of participants being overwhelmingly male. This observation sparked an open discussion that there should be more efforts to achieve gender balance.


## 11. Overall Assessment and Recommendations:

What challenges (if any) did the research team encounter and how were these addressed? Did these challenges lead to any changes in the project's implementation? Were there any unanticipated risks that affected the project's implementation?

| Challenges | Mitigation |
|---|---|
| a. SGC responsiveness: SARIMA had experienced challenges with non-responsiveness of some SGCs. This has been particularly when engaging them for the technical visits despite several follow ups via email and phone. <br><br> Non or delayed response of the SGCs to provide documents to assist with proved challenging to gather institutional background especially if the institution does not have a website with information. This preparation is key to contextualise support to be provided. | Reminders were sent to the Head of Research Councils (HORC) to request them to assist and to continue with follow up via other channels such as phone. <br><br> SARIMA also took advantage of SGCI engagements to hold face to face meetings for the purposes of following up with the SGCs. |
| b. Language barriers for French speaking countries for communication purposes of arranging the technical assistance visit. | Specific written questions were sent to the SGC prior the meeting for the purposes of prior preparation. Once the meeting was complete/or communication barrier did not allow the meeting to continue, the SGC was encouraged to complete the list of question shared. |

| | | Translators/French/bi-lingual speaking experts were considered for the technical assistance visit. |
|---|---|---|
| c. | Poor CTA collaboration and coordination leading to the SGCs complain about being bombarded by many different requests. | Engaged with SGCs to share their planned activities with the different CTAs |
| d. | The sustainability of the programme depends to some extent on continuity of staff within the SGC's. Too high turnover of staff at the SGC's (with subsequent loss of continuous participation and learning) may invalidate some programme impacts. | Extended the invitation of the technical assistance visits to different staff members of the SGC to represent various departments.<br><br>Attached reports when engaging with a new employee. |
| e. | Internet connectivity: Poor and intermittent internet connectivity in the environments that the SGCs work continues to pose a risk to the delivery of online training interventions and virtual pre-planning meetings. | Provision was made for the use of an online learning platform developed by Wits and Digital Campus that caters for low resource settings and downloadable content for offline use. |
| f. | Exchange Rate Fluctuations: A weakening Rand continues to pose a risk to the project budget and implementation. | SARIMA continued to seek the assistance of SGCs in sourcing affordable venues and rates for onsite training and continue with prudent budget management. |
| g. | SGC commitment:<br>SGC delegates cancelling attendance or "no shows" once travel arrangements have been made.<br>h. SGC staff not committing to participating and completing the Online Short Courses in which they are enrolled as part of the funded cohort | SARIMA requested for IDRC and NRF to reinforce the message that SGC staff commitment is crucial to the success of the implementation.<br><br>Communication with the HORCs on ensuring that their staff commit to the process once they are enrolled. |

**12.    References:**

Mouton, J., Gaillard, J., and van Lill, M. Chapter 8: Functions of Science Granting Councils in sub-Saharan Africa. African Higher Education Dynamics Series, Volume 1. Knowledge Production and Contradictory Functions in African Higher Education, 2015 (ISBN 978-1-920677-85-5).

Mouton, J., and Coates D. (2016): Building Sustainable Research Management in Science Granting Councils in Sub-Saharan Africa- Capacity Building Needs Assessment Survey

Olsson, Å and Meek, L (eds.) (2013), Effectiveness of Research and Innovation Management at Policy and Institutional Levels in Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, OECD, Paris.

United Nations. Available at: http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

Williamson C., Dyason K., Jackson J. (2018): Scaling up Professionalization of Research Management in Southern Africa. *Article submitted for publication*

**13.  Appendices**

**1. Current period annexures**: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gqrTFF-kWYs2Q47B6RrYtHiH8HgVGOr

| 2.Previous Reporting Period mentioned in the report | Google Drive/Dropbox link |
|---|---|
| 1 April 2018-September 2018 | https://drive.google.com/open?id=1uFXLmirwGPjXGJQQ-5NieUTf9K3-1PhH |
| 1 October 2018-31 March 2019 | https://drive.google.com/open?id=1avDYqQwNd946SL2YwKAAFy3R6m0j5sRh |
| 1 April 2019-September 2019 | https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xg6bzrqi5gfjcw6/AABHjfOyQ5U1JOjoptH6KNx7a?dl=0 https://drive.google.com/open?id=1QFCkmIEunHuoWLa3Cx746hkcl9ttVVbO |