SARIMA

SOUTHERN AFRICAN RESEARCH & INNOVATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

SGCI THEME 1 Newsletter

June 2016

The Science Granting Councils Initiative

The Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI) is an initiative funded jointly by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF) that aims to strengthen the capacities of 15 science granting councils in Sub-Saharan Africa in order to support research and evidence-based policies that will contribute to economic and social development.

SARIMA is a is a stakeholder organisation that operates at an institutional, national and international level, as well as across the value chain, from research through to successful innovation (commercialization). It provides a platform for the promotion and facilitation of best practice in research and innovation management and aims to strengthen the research and innovation system to ensure the social and economic development of the Southern African region and the African continent at large.

SARIMA, together with its partners and in collaboration with the other CTAs, commenced with the implementation of Theme 1 of the SGCI just over a year ago. This newsletter serves to share some of the highlights with our stakeholders.

SARIMAs partners in Theme 1

SGCI Themes and Leading Collaborating Technical Agencies (CTAs)

1 Strengthen research management practices (Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association - SARIMA)

2 Designing and monitoring research programmes based on the use of robust STI indicators (New Partnership for Africa's Development, Planning and Coordination Agency - NEPAD-NPCA)

3 Strengthen the ability to support knowledge exchange with the private sector (African Centre for Technology Studies - ACTS)

4 Strengthen partnerships among Science Granting Councils (African Technology Policy Studies Network - ATPS)

Participating Science Granting Councils

Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST)
Ethiopia

National Research Fund (NRF)
Kenya

National Commission of Science and Technology (NCST)
Rwanda

Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH)
Tanzania

Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST)
Uganda

Le fonds National pour la Recherche et de l'Innovation pour le Developpement (FONRID)
Burkina Faso

Programme d'Appui Strategique a la Recherche Scientifique (PASRES)
Côte d'Ivoir

Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) *Ghana*

Le Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MESRI) *Senegal*

National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST)
Malawi

Fundo Nacional de Investigacao (FNI)
Mozambique

National Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST) *Namibia*

National Science and Technology Council (NSTC)
Zambia

Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ)
Zimbabwe

Understanding the capacity and capacity development needs of the participating SGCs

Planning and Consulting
Meeting 17-18 October 2016

n June 2016, Theme 1 commenced with a first phase focussing on identifying the training and capacity-building needs of SGC staff through a survey. The rational was that the SGCs vary in size, maturity, mandate and resources and that information gathered during Phase 1 would inform the design of a needs-based intervention plan that would be implemented during Phase 2.

The needs assessment questionnaire was designed and managed by the Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology (CREST) at the Stellenbosch University. The design process has been iterative involving the SGCs as well as the project and funding partners. The survey was made available in French, Portuguese and English.

The information supplied by each SGC has provided a detailed view of their current competencies, knowledge areas in need of capacity building and training, and a view of the types of training and delivery modes most in demand. SGCs had the opportunity to validate their data before participating in a planning and consultation meeting on 17 and 18 October 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The meeting programme was designed to allow the participants to discuss the preliminary results of the training and capacity-building needs assessment as well as the proposed intervention framework for Phase 2. As such the second day of the meeting was dedicated to group discussions and feedback on the proposed intervention framework to ensure that it is co-designed with the SGCs.

The key elements of the intervention framework include:

· Onsite training
· Regional events
· Shared learning and exchange
· Professional development

The training and capacity-building needs assessment survey report is available on the SGCI website. In addition a knowledge product on the survey and the resulting intervention plan are being developed and will be shared on the website once published.

Strengthening sustainable research management capacity through professional development and training

Training workshops

Between July 2016 and May 2017, four training workshops were conducted under Theme 1. For onsite training (delivered for a specific SGC) the overall focus of the 5-day event was on research and grants management. However, the details of the topics to be covered under this theme was co-developed with the relevant SGC and aligned with needs as identified in the needs and capacity assessment. Each onsite workshop commenced with a briefing session between the facilitators and the SGCI Senior Coordinator to further ensure that the content and discussions are context specific. Facilitators are sourced from the SARIMA network and are highly experienced research managers. Discussions during the 5-day onsite workshop culminated in specific actions points identified by the SGC in the area of research and grants management. Other project initiatives aim to support the SGC to address these action points.

Online training

Starting from 2018, six fully online university accredited short courses will be offered to SGC staff under Theme 1. The principles of quality, accessibility, relevance and sustainability are guiding the development and delivery of the courses.

The course topics are aligned with the knowledge areas identified in the needs and capacity assessment and will include the following:

· Fundamentals of Research Management

· Research Grants and Contracts Management

· Programme Evaluation

· Research Ethics and Integrity

· Intellectual Property, Technology Transfer and Commercialisation

· Gender in Science, Technology and Innovation

The content will be designed to provide a balance between theoretical inputs and practical application. Practical application will specifically be supported through case studies, work-based assignments and facilitated online discussions.

Training event	Topic and participants
Joint training workshop 25-26 August 2016 *Kigali, Rwanda* *held alongside the Annual Regional SGCI Meeting	Fundamentals of Research Management: The Role of the Research Manager in a SGC Environment **34 delegates including** **22** Representatives from thirteen of the participating SGCs **1** Representative from another STI stakeholder (Rwanda Development Board) 2 representatives from other CTAs (NEPAD –NPCA & ACTS) **3** Representatives from funding partners (NRF & IDRC) **6** Representatives from project partners (SARIMA, CARIMA, EARIMA)
Onsite training workshop 13-17 March 2017 *Accra, Ghana* *held jointly with NEPAD-NPCA	PART I: R&D/Innovation Data Collection for the Production of Related Core Indicators PART II: Research Management and Grants Management **25 delegates including** **9** MESTI staff members **5** Representatives from public research institutes/organisations in Ghana 6 representatives from higher education institutions in Ghana **4** Representatives from NEPAD-NPCA **1** Representatives from the project partners (WARIMA)
Onsite training workshop 3-7 April 2017 *Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*	Research Management and Grants Management **20 delegates including** **6** MoST staff members **3** Representatives from public research institutes/organisations in Ethiopia 10 representatives from higher education institutions in Ethiopia **1** Representatives from the project partners (SARIMA)
Joint training workshop 22 May 2017 *Windhoek, Namibia* *held in partnership with the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAF), the American Association of the Advance- ment of Science (AAAS) and the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS)	Science Diplomacy in Africa **45 delegates including** **26** Representatives from the participating SGCs **16** Representatives from the NEPAD delegation including representatives from NEPAD- NPCA, SANBIO, AOSTI, AUC, UNU-MERIT **3** SARIMA representatives

Strengthening sustainable research management capacity through collaborative platforms

Conferences

The SARIMA Conference themed "Developing the Research and Innovation Value Chain" in Windhoek, Namibia in May 2017 was attended by more than 300 delegates from across Southern Africa, Africa and beyond. The research management track of the conference programme had a wealth of interesting topics which demonstrated the diversity of research management in the African context as well as the growing research competence within Africa.

The conference offered an ideal opportunity for SGCs to engage with the research management community and to share practices and experiences through keynote addresses, conference presentations or contributing to session discussions.

SARIMA designed a track in the conference programme specifically for SGC staff as these sessions were aligned with the other work related to research management under Theme 1. The SGC track started off with a workshop on Science Diplomacy in Africa.

The conference sessions attended by the SGC's focused on the following topics:

- Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024
- Solving Africa's challenges through Research and Collaboration
- The Evolution and Role of the Research Manager in the Innovation Value Chain
- The Role of Research Management in Data Driven Analytics
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship challenges and solutions: perspectives from the Southern African region
- Successful case studies of Industry and Research Partnerships
- Excellence in research and innovation through Gender Equality and Diversity

"Developing the Research and Innovation Value Chain"

Science Granting Councils Policy Dialogue

ESSENCE on Health Research is a global research funders initiative hosted at the Special Programme for Research and Training on Tropical Diseases (TDR) of the World Health Organisation (WHO). This initiative allows donors/funders to identify synergies, bring about coherence and increase the value of resources and actions for health research.

SARIMA partnered with ESSENCE on Health Research to host a discussion bringing together members of the SGCs participating in the SGCI, international funders and other key stakeholders.

The panellists provided their organisational perspectives of and approach to the discussion topics. This was followed by a robust discussion with comments from the session participants. The session was chaired by Dr Garry Aslanyan, Partnerships and Governance Manager at TDR (WHO) and Dr Karin Dyason, Special Projects Manager at SARIMA.

The panellists addressed the following topics:

- **Ms Claire Cunliffe,** *Wellcome Trust, United Kingdom*
  - Why is research management and partnerships important to international funders

- **Dr Ellie Osir**, *IDRC, Kenya*
  - Strategies for international funders and SGCs in partnering and leveraging funds

- **Dr Jemimah Onsare**, *CEO, NRF Kenya*
  - Experiences of NRF Kenya around Organisational Risk Management

- **Dr Heidi Van Rooyen**, *Executive Director, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa*
  - Why should research funding agencies consider Gender

- **Ms Adelaide Asante**, *Acting Director Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), Ghana*
  - Ghana's STI system and Gender including plans by MESTI

Focus Group on Gender Approaches in African Research Management and Science Granting Councils

This focus group discussion was hosted by SARIMA in partnership with the Michigan State University in the United States. The aim was to get an understanding of the perspectives and practices of the participating SGCs and their countries more broadly on a number of key topics including:

· The importance of gender considerations in the national context
· Challenges related to the implementation of gender policies or initiatives
· The role of SGCs in supporting the implementation of gender aspects
· Collecting and using data on gender

It is expected that a knowledge product, to be published in a journal, will emanate from this session.

Learning visits

Starting in September 2017 SGC staff will have the opportunity to participate in learning visits to other SGCs (not only those participating in the SGCI). The learning visits should effectively build onto aspects that were covered during the on-site training -making them more practical. The learning visit opportunities and format will be determined in close collaboration with each SGC seeing that the outcomes of the visits should be aligned with the actions points that were identified by a particular SGC during the onsite training.

Technical assistance visits

The overall objective of the technical assistance visits is to support the SGCs to address one or more of the action points that were identified during the on-site training workshop through technical assistance. While the other interventions also support the SGCs to address specific action points some may be best supported through a technical assistance visit that will provide the SGC with the opportunity to host a technical expert who will work with the SGC to develop/improve/review systems/processes/procedures/infrastructure/capacity that will result in the strengthening of the council's research and grants management practices. The technical assistance visits will be implemented during 2018.

Online benchmarking

Under the leadership of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), Theme 1 is conducting annual online benchmarking exercises with the SGCs.

The purpose of these exercises is to:

· Provide a mechanism for the SGCs to assess their performance and progress
· Provide a platform for the SGCs to consider their own performance in relation to their peers
· Provide a platform for the SGCs to consider what areas of data collection could be harmonised with other SGCs and how.

Every year, the SGCs will be invited to complete the survey. Over the course of the project changes in specific areas could be measured over time. The first annual benchmarking exercise will be completed by the end of 2017.

Project Management Board Meetings

*Project Inception Meeting
21-22 July 2016*

The Project Management Board (PMB) is represented by the project partners and is responsible for the oversight of Theme 1, its activities and delivery of results. The PMB had a project inception meeting in July 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa and a second meeting in May 2017 in Windhoek, Namibia.

SARIMA Core Project Team

Dr Jose Jackson-Malete
SARIMA Project Team leader

Dr Karin Dyason
SARIMA Special Projects Manager

Katlego Kekae
SARIMA Project Administrator

Dipalesa Mpye
SARIMA Project Specialist