



SARIMA

SOUTHERN AFRICAN RESEARCH & INNOVATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

SGCI THEME 1 Newsletter

March 2020



The Science Granting Councils Initiative

The Science Granting Council Initiative (SGCI) is an initiative which is jointly funded 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) and 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 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). SARIMA provides a platform for promoting and facilitating 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, finalised Theme 1 of the SGCI and the objectives are:

The objectives are:

- To understand the current capacity and capacity development needs of the participating SGCs
- To strengthen sustainable research management capacity of SGCs through professional development and training
- To strengthen sustainable research management capacity of participating SGCs through collaborative platforms
- To support benchmarking of participating SGCs through an online benchmarking tool

This newsletter serves to share some of the highlights on our activities with stakeholders from January 2019-March 2020.

Strengthening sustainable research management capacity through professional development and training

Professionalisation in Research Management

The International Professional Recognition Council (IPRC) is a body that awards professional recognition for experienced research managers in Africa and provides continuous education points for training and other relevant events related to professional recognition. SARIMA initiated a consultative project to design a Professional Competency Framework (PCF) for research managers and administrators in southern Africa. The overarching role of the IPRC is to benchmark research management using the PCF by ensuring the quality and standards for individual professional recognition of research managers is the same in all countries in Africa.



International Professional Recognition Committee (IPRC) conducted a pre-pilot phase for two to three IPRC members which was initiated in March 2018. This allowed feedback to refine the Professional Recognition(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. Two applications met the requirements to be reviewed by the IPRC with one applicant receiving a provisional Research Management Professional (RMP) status. The IPRC will

grant the status upon receipt of the recommended submissions and / or amendments for second submission.

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. Additionally, promotional and educational 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 webinar links are as follows:

English version <http://meeting.uct.ac.za/plpo5s8cjr8/>

French version <http://meeting.uct.ac.za/pbhio7kj3chw/>

The first applicant from the SGC's in the open call is currently in the review process, if the applicant becomes certified, she will be among the first certified Research Management Professionals on the continent, a substantial accomplishment as the applicant who will be a pioneer in professionalising Research Managers in Africa. The review outcomes will be released by 31 March 2020.

Online Short Courses

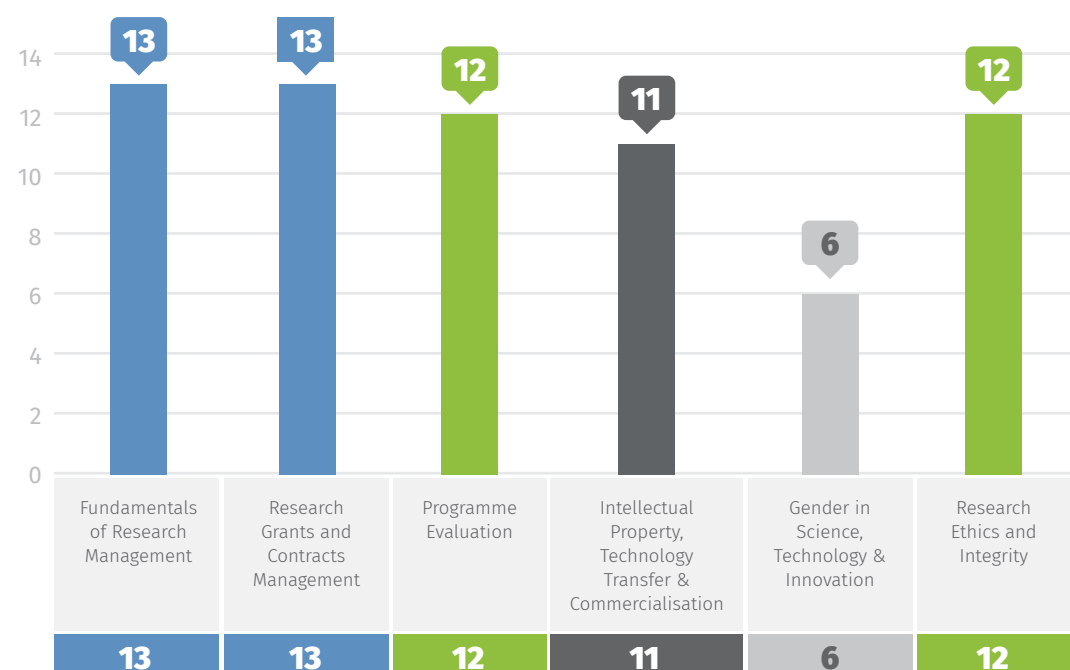
13 countries participated

SARIMA has chosen to partner with The University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and Digital Campus to bring this set of online short courses to the Research Management (RM) profession to provide a flexible learning solution that ensures improvement in the general level of skill in RM practitioners and cements the professional standards required.

The six courses have been developed as fully online learning experiences. Each course can be taken in isolation or as part of a Competence Development Programme in Research Management.

SARIMA concluded the cohort of learners from the various SGCs. The learners who passed the courses received their certificates showcasing their competence in the respective areas of focus. Supplementary exams were rolled out in order to ensure that those who narrowly missed the pass mark receive another chance to successfully complete the courses. The above graph highlights the willingness of the SGC's to improve the level of knowledge of their employees in regards with Research Management.

Number of Passes



The above graph highlights the willingness of the SGC's to improve the level of knowledge of their employees in regards with Research Management-13 SGCI participating countries participated with a total number of **67** passes across the **6** courses.

Below is positive feedback from the SGCs:



"This course has given me very beneficial insights on spear heading the implementation of different types of research and working with researchers at different stages of their careers. The real-life examples (such as in the assignment) were really helpful in understanding how to handle certain situations that may arise in my line of duty."

Uganda
Fundamentals of Research Management



"It has helped a lot in that I wanted to learn and share experiences with colleagues on what issues surround gender in science, how can they be tackled and who should be part of the solution. The discussions allowed for that and more with experiences or situations in different countries."

Botswana
Gender in Science, Technology and Innovation

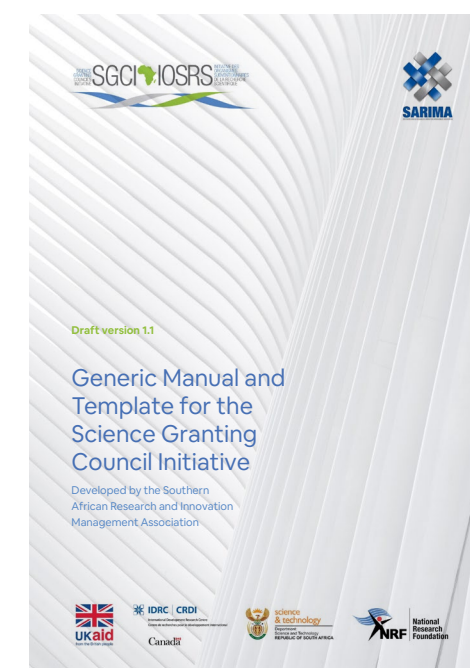


Development of a generic SGC manual template

The initiating question for the development of the manual was: If a science granting council had a generic Grants Management manual that included all the councils' policies and procedures what would it look like? SARIMA interacted with the countries participating in the SGCI to obtain their views from conceptualisation and development of the document. The inputs have been crafted into a draft document that was circulated to various Research Management and Innovation stakeholders.

During the close-out workshop held on 13 February 2020 in Dakar, Senegal facilitated by Dr Yolanda Davids, SARIMA used the opportunity to gather final review inputs from the SGCs to finalise the draft manual. Participating SGCs included: Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. SARIMA is in the final stages of revising the manual according to the inputs received by the SGCs. The final Generic manual will be uploaded onto the SGCI Virtual Hub where the SGC's will have access to it.

The Generic Operations manual will act as a template that the SGC's can use and adapt to their needs, providing the SGC's with foundation that they can build upon.



Technical Assistance Visits

Over 2019, SARIMA carried out various Technical Assistance Visits to the SGC's where experts in the relevant fields provided assistance where the SGC's requested aid.

COUNTRY	SGC	DATE	FOCUS AREA
Botswana	Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology	02-06 December 2019	Development of the national RSTI M&E Framework
Burkina Faso	Fonds National de la Recherche et de l'Innovation pour le Développement	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
Cote d'Ivoire	Programme d'Appui Stratégique à la Recherche Scientifique	28-30 October 2019	Program evaluation Review of Grants Management Processes and document and guidance on the migration from manual to online system.
Ethiopia	Ministry of Science and Technology	13-15 January 2020	Assessment of the research and grant management landscape in Ethiopia and laying the foundation for an online grant management system.
Ghana	Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation	28-30 November 2019	Virtual Support: Review of National Research Fund Bill, 2019. The Bill will inform the Grants Management Processes
Kenya	National Research Fund	01-04 October 2019	Development of M&E framework and tools: integrate M&E with OGMS and assessment of Software program to be written
Malawi	National Commission for Science and Technology	22-24 January 2020	Induction on Scientometrics and how to apply to Grants Management Processes
Mozambique	Fundo Nacional de Investigação	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

COUNTRY	SGC	DATE	FOCUS AREA
Namibia	National Commission on Research Science and Technology	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
Rwanda	National Council for Science and Technology	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
Senegal	Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	20-22 November 2019	Grants Management Process and document review
Tanzania	Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology	16-18 April 2019	Review of Online Grants Management System (virtual by IT expert) Review of Grants Management Manuals and Procedures Development M&E framework Research Competition support: Feedback on the Review of 2017 Call for Competitive Research Grant
Uganda	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology	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.
Zambia	National Science and Technology Council	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 Research Competition Support: Update on feedback from the South Africa – Mozambique – Zambia Joint Call for Research Proposals

The highlight of the Technical Assistance Visits is that the SGC's received assistance from experts in the respective field where they requested assistance. The expert assistance will enable the SGC's to excel in these areas even beyond the SGCI Phase 1.

Strengthening sustainable research management capacity through collaborative platforms

IT specific Learning Visit to the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology



SARIMA and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) co-hosted the IT specific Learning in October 2019 visit. Eight countries were represented within SGCs staff members from Namibia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Zambia, Malawi, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Mozambique. The IT specific learning visit created a platform for SGCs to engage, learn from each other and to share best practices and expertise in Research Management specifically Online Grants Management systems.

The learning visit programme was developed in close consultation with the SGCs to ensure the visit meets the participants' expectations. During the visit presentations, each country presented their current situation and analysed their needs with Online Grants Management System in order to provide an understanding of similar and differing needs. UNCST with a more advanced system shared their best practices by showcasing their online grants management system and explored the possibility of

extending their system to be used as generic online grants management system for other SGCs. These discussions allowed for gaps to be identified between the various SGCs. The participants then reflected on their respective processes and they can incorporate new/learned information into their different environments. The visit strengthened the stage for increased cohesion between the SGCs where the various SGCs can learn from each other.

“

The different councils came together and shared experiences and we are so grateful for SARIMA for providing support and technical input.

”

The presentations by the various SGCs can be viewed on the Virtual Hub. **Insert hyperlink to the Virtual Hub.*

SARIMA Participation at the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Systems Workshop: June 2019 Annual Regional Forum- Addis Ababa

A two-day training workshop was organized by the Association of African Universities (AAU) under Theme 3 was designed to focus on the development of organisation wide M&E systems and how they can enable more effective management of research activities, specifically collaborative research efforts.

This workshop had synergies with Themes 1 (research management) and Theme 2 (STI indicators) and has been organised in consultation with SARIMA and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) implementing themes 1 and 2, respectively.

SARIMA shared the needs assessment data from countries that requested M&E support. The data assisted the AAU to identify target countries for their intervention and workshop. During the workshop SARIMA shared the experiences in implementing Theme 1 interventions with a focus in M&E and coordinated FNI to share their story to highlight the impact of SARIMA's intervention.

The interactions from the workshop created future coordinating activities of the AAU M&E Framework and SARIMA visit for countries requesting support in M&E.

The Benchmarking Exercise (led by the Association of Commonwealth Universities)

SGCs submitted their data for the 2019 (the third) annual benchmarking exercise. The participating SGCs and the funders can log-into the online benchmarking platform to run their own, detailed benchmarking reports, based on the survey data.

In 2019, the benchmarking exercise was supplemented by two activities

- The SGCs participated in a discussion session (held at the MEL workshop, in Addis Ababa, in June), specifically for the benchmarking exercise. The session was very informative – it highlighted useful information, notably in the area of collating gender and other diversity data. Key points captured from the session are being used to inform the recommendations outlined in the final (open access) benchmarking report.
- Phone and online meetings around the Technical Assistance Visits (TAVs) were held – they helped situate the benchmarking exercise in the context of the wider Theme 1 objectives.

Communication following the TAVs identified changes in behaviour with 2 SGCs, as a direct result of participating in the benchmarking exercises. One SGC reported

“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

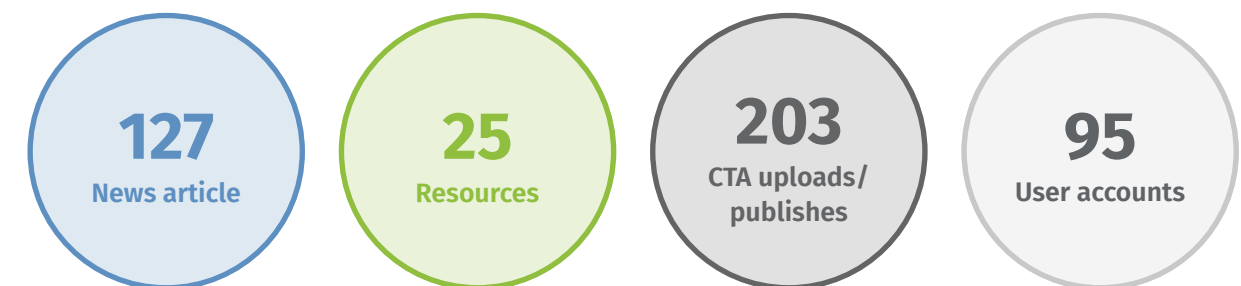
(NCST, Rwanda).



Overall, the benchmarking data captured between 2017 and 2019 evidences changes and/ or improvements in SGCs' competencies (i.e., more SGCs rate their competencies as satisfactory and/ or above in more areas) since the implementation of the SGCi.

The Virtual Hub

Over the course of SGCi Phase 1, SARIMA dissemination a substantial number of news articles, resources, and CTA upload/publishing. There are currently 95 active user accounts for the SGCi Virtual Hub.



Welcome to the SGCi Africa Virtual hub!

The hub is a secure collaborative space for online dissemination of CTA knowledge outputs, announcements and various other content generated as part of the implementation of the SGCi.

[Click on the image to visit the SGCi Virtual Hub](#)



The Association
of Commonwealth
Universities

SARIMAs partners in Theme 1



EARIMA
Eastern Africa Research and
Innovation Management Association



CARIMA



SGCI Theme 1: Core Project Team



Yogi Naik
Project Team Leader



Zimasa Sobuza
Project Manager



Armand Barnard
Digital Communications
Officer



Katlego Kekae
Project Administrator

Phone: +27 (0)12 841 3329

Fax: +27 (0)866 303 336

SARIMA Secretariat, Building 33,
Room S101, CSIR Campus, Meiring Naude road,
Brummeria,
Pretoria,
0001

www.sarima.co.za