8th Annual NRF Research Administrators Workshop
Date: 9-11 October 2017
Venue: Somerset West, Western Cape
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 MEMBERS OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 PRE-WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDER SURVEY</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ATTENDANCE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 WORKSHOP SPONSOR &amp; ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 RAW 2017 PROGRAMME</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 PLENARY SESSION Day 1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Opening Summary</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Regional Initiatives: Advantages, Disadvantages and Impact</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Reviews and Evaluations</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Finance &amp; Auditing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 PLENARY SESSION Day 2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 National Target, Transformation within Research Systems</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Student Affairs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Standard Procedures &amp; Requirements</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Communication &amp; the Role of the DA</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 General Discussions, Questions &amp; Answers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 Summary of issues raised at the Plenary and Breakaway sessions</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 APPENDIX</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate of the National Research Foundation (NRF) hosted its annual Research Administrators Workshop (RAW) from 9 to 11 October 2017 in the Western Cape. This annual Workshop aims to bring together key stakeholders from universities, research institutions, and science councils across South Africa, as well as some international delegates, to share experiences and best practices in the area of effective research administration and management.

The Workshop supports the advancement of the Communities of Practice for research administrators, Designated Authorities (DAs) (as defined by the NRF) and Financial Officers (FOs) based at the various academic and research institutions. This opportunity is motivated by the NRF mandate to support world-class grant management systems. The core objectives of RAW included, among others, to:

- Increase the knowledge of funding opportunities offered by the NRF;
- Familiarise participants with the NRF business processes;
- Share expectations on financial reporting by institutions;
- Provide a platform for research administrators to share their experiences and learn from best practice;
- Create space for international/continental researchers and managers to share their research granting policies and procedures; and
- Provide a platform for strategic networks among professionals in the sector.

The interest and attendance of the RAW 2017 was considered to be extremely good. There were 202 delegates from Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), Science Councils, National Research Facilities, research institutions, the NRF and a number of international delegates.

The primary aim of RAW 2017 was to facilitate discussions among institutions and provide networking. The Workshop’s structure provided breakaway and panel opportunities on matters of mutual importance through presentations which allowed delegate participation.

The majority of the programme items emanated from an online survey that was conducted to gain a better insight into the interests and expectations of the delegates. Additional items were included to provide information on systems development and improvements, business practices within the NRF, as well as best practice from stakeholders. The following topics, each with a set of sub-topics, were identified for discussion in an open forum:

1. Regional Initiatives: Advantages, Disadvantages and Impact;
2. Reviews and Evaluations;
3. Finances and Auditing;
4. National Transformation within Research Systems;
5. Student Affairs;
6. Standard Procedures;
7. Communication and the Role of the DA;
8. General Discussions.

Feedback from the Workshop was positive – delegates greatly enjoyed the chance to interact amongst themselves, the opportunity to network and to learn from one another. The Workshop maintained the idea of an ‘open forum’ where broader platforms were provided for all stakeholders to engage in meaningful discussions for an improved way forward in research management. The aforementioned topics were mostly addressed in parallel breakaway sessions with plenary sessions for the chairpersons to report back to the larger audience. The breakaway sessions were led by the DAs with the assistance of panellists that consisted of NRF representatives and key stakeholders based on their experience of the topics to be discussed. Awards were presented at the Gala Dinner to Research Administrators, FOs and NRF staff for outstanding performance during the past year.

RAW 2017 can be best summarised by the following feedback points from the delegates:

- Interesting and relevant topics
- Valuable inputs that will help improve processes at the institutions
- The structure of the programme and inclusiveness of the presenters from institutions, National Facilities and science councils was encouraging and appreciated
- Information sharing and presentations were very informative
- Great networking platform amongst delegates
- Excellent venue; and
- The Workshop was well organised and planned.

A vibrant atmosphere was maintained throughout the Workshop as delegates had meaningful engagements over the three days. Institutional knowledge and experiences were shared among delegates, while other communication channels were also encouraged.

Dr Ndanduleni Nthambeleni,
Executive Director: GMSA
October 2017
RAW 2017 was organised by members of the Steering Committee as indicated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name &amp; Surname</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Dr Gansen Pillay</td>
<td>Deputy CEO: RISA</td>
<td>Project Sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dr Ndanduleni B Nthambeleni</td>
<td>Executive Director: GMSA</td>
<td>Project Sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ms Antoinette Pratsi</td>
<td>Director: GMSA</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ms Siphahle Matsela</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Project Coordinator and Programme Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ms Ntisane Motsele</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Programme Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ms Wenshi Moosa</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ms Budo Paitu</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ms Shamandile Shabala</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ms Cindy van Schalkwyk</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ms Anthipi Pouris</td>
<td>Director: GMSA</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Ms Tshegofatso Makete</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Project Coordinator and Programme Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Ms Mpai Motsei</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Programme Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Ms Vireshni Moonsamy</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Ms Becky Panzu</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Ms Sibulele Sibulali</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Ms Bettie de Beer</td>
<td>Support Desk</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following sub-committee was established to assist with the general proceedings, record-keeping, reporting, material and taking of minutes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name &amp; Surname</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ms Marjorie Julies</td>
<td>Executive Assistant</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ms Virginia Mashini</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ms Malebo Mohlala</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ms Jane Sibisi</td>
<td>Liaison Officer</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mr Mokhele Thabo</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ms Pinky Matjeka</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: Support Desk</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ms Lynn Enamusia</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ms Palesa Teshane</td>
<td>Professional Officer: SP</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ms Edwilda Maeso</td>
<td>Professional Officer: RE</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ms Teko Langa</td>
<td>Financial Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Ms Thelma Gamede</td>
<td>Financial Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Ms Georgiet Hammond</td>
<td>Graphic and Web Designer</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organising committee created an online survey to gain better insight into the interests and expectations of the delegates who would be attending the RAW 2017. This was also well aligned to the overall theme of this year’s event: “Working Together, Creating Efficiency”. To facilitate easy reference of issues raised at RAW 2017, comments and suggestions emanating from the Q&A sessions, breakaway sessions, and the survey questionnaires have been consolidated below:

1: MEMBERS OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

RAW 2017 – EXPECTATIONS

The respondents requested that the RAW 2017 topics should be relevant, current and informative with examples of actual issues, concerns and institution-specific matters. The following are expectations from the Workshop:

1. In-depth understanding of:
   - NRF Funding Instruments and communication lines
   - NRF Grants Management, auditing and compliance
   - the NRF structural changes and the effect on operational efficiency
   - Communication, notification and delays (Calls, systems, nominations, funding, feedback, etc.)
   - NRF systems, Online-Submission Systems and processes

2. Ensure that there is:
   - Institutional collaboration in Research Administration and Management
   - Networking

3. To address challenges, queries, problems and discuss solutions

RAW 2017 – THEMES AND FORMAT

The main theme that permeated throughout the answers was: “Working Together, Creating Efficiency.” The respondents preferred the interactive breakaways to the plenary sessions, although in some cases the attendance of all relevant participants would be preferable for some topics. It was further proposed that the NRF should consider having annual workshops for interested parties on matters such as the NRF-Online System, etc.

2: PRE-WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

The respondents preferred the interactive breakaways to the plenary sessions, although in some cases the attendance of all relevant participants would be preferable for some topics. It was further proposed that the NRF should consider having annual workshops for interested parties on matters such as the NRF-Online System, etc.
3: ATTENDANCE

A total of 202 delegates registered for the RAW 2017. The delegates comprised of NRF staff and external stakeholders. The external stakeholders’ representation was composed from 35 institutions which included the following:

- Higher Education Institutions
- Science Councils
- National Museums
- National Research Facilities
- Research institutions
- The Department of Science and Technology
- The Office of the Auditor General, and
- Foreign institutions, namely - Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

The NRF representation included the:

- Deputy CEO of NRF
- GMSA Executive Director
- Directors from across all directorates (GMSA, RE, HICD & SPP)
- Professional Officers and Liaison Officers from all GMSA units, and
- Financial Officers and Administrative Assistants.

Figure 1 Breakdown of number of delegates per institution:
(166 Delegates from 35 Institutions)

4: WORKSHOP SPONSOR & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The NRF would like to thank SABINET for providing sponsorship for RAW 2017. SABINET’s generosity provided a platform for delegates to network during the Cocktail and Gala Dinner events. In return, RAW provided a platform where they presented their services and mandate before the delegates which was highly appreciated.

Furthermore, the NRF would like to acknowledge and thank the DST for its continuous support as the NRF’s line Department. The NRF also would like to appreciate all delegates that were present at RAW 2017 representing their respective institutions and the RAW 2017 Committee for their dedicated work for the coordination of the Workshop.

5: RAW 2017 PROGRAMME

The programme aimed at enhancing the knowledge of stakeholders about granting policies and processes related to funding opportunities.

The Workshop content emanated from the online survey and feedback obtained from previous workshops. Presenters from the various institutions were made aware of relevant issues, questions and concerns that were raised at the RAW 2016 for consideration during their respective presentations. Each presentation was followed by a 20-minute Q&A session to ensure interaction and clarity on relevant issues.

The following determined the contents of the programme:

- Changes in the operations at the NRF;
- Reporting on issues raised for attention at RAW 2016;
- Topics suggested by stakeholders and NRF staff; and
- Practical issues pertaining to the effective administration of grants.
The above statistics might lead one to deduce that South Africa needs to increase support towards Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities as few publications are being produced in those areas. However, if South Africa is compared to the world the rankings are as follows from 1996 to 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Rank in the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Humanities</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences and Biomedicine</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to other countries, South Africa is ranked 18th in the Social Sciences and 18th in the Arts and Humanities production of publications, which can be considered a good performance overall. Prof Pouris indicated that such indicators should be consulted and interpreted before any re-direction of important activities, whether in shift of objectives or funding.

The speaker used China as a country that performed below South Africa in the 1960s in terms of publications. However, China overtook South Africa in 1970s due to the government’s decision to develop Science and Technology performance in the country, by re-directing resources from other areas such as housing. This change in strategy placed China ranking first in technology publications.

Nationally, the various HEIs lead in their contributions towards the different disciplines.

Prof Pouris explained the importance of targeted policy instruments towards specific objectives. He highlighted how in South Africa there are a few policy instruments, trying to target various objectives. These include the following:

- DHET also started incentivising each publication at R100,000.
- THRIP
- SARCHI
- Incentive Funding
- Centres of Excellence
- Sector Specific Innovation Funds (DHET)

In South Africa, there are less than 50 such instruments, much lower than that of international counterparts. They are also smaller in size (financial support) and therefore not as effective.

The Need for Change in the NRF was summarised as follows:

- Unwavering commitment to Excellence; Transformation; Service Culture; Good Governance and Sustainability
- The NRF strives to be transparent, fair, equitable and fiscally prudent to the community that it serves.

The presentation aimed to share the NRF RISA Realignment and Renewal Strategy and highlight some of the changes that the NRF has embarked on. Dr Nthambeleni emphasised NRF’s positioning statement as follows: An NRF that has influence and impact, which is productive, efficient and effective as a research support, performing and engaged organisation to transform and enhance a globally competitive and contextually relevant NSI for societal benefit.

This statement emanated from the organisational values below:

- Make greater use of technology to improve efficiencies such as turn-around-times.
- Following international standards;
- Streamlining the Application content and alleviate unnecessary requested information;
- Simplify the Application templates for the NRF stakeholders; and
- Reduce the number of types of Applications by grouping them in categories.

The objective of the RISA BPM was to provide a baseline on which to improve efficiencies and effectiveness within RISA.

In 2016 RISA embarked on mapping process of its granting activities to improve its efficiency.

Rationalisation of Applications, Progress Reports and Calls

- Minimise business reliance on IT through the development of a Call Provisioning Tool;
- Streamline the review processes for cost effectiveness and efficiency by NRF; and
- Focus on Core Activities

Role of the DA sessions – Mr Nugent Lewis (SU) provided an insightful view of the different services a research office provides and the demands of the differing deadlines to be effective. Ms

Mr Simon Lotz (NRF)

The 7th Workshop was held at the Legend Golf and Safari Resort, in Limpopo. The theme for the Workshop was “Partners in Excellence” and consisted of 100 delegates from various institutions, science councils, museums, national facilities, government departments and the NRF and the Auditor General’s Office. The participants were from 46 national and 8 international institutions.

A pre-assessment survey was conducted to source information on topics of interest from delegates at institutions. A summary of the survey feedback is as follows:
Points of discussion included foreign student enrolment, institutional visits and funding. The following initiatives:

1. THRP funding for 2017/18 and 2018/19
2. CSUR and CPR – uptake of fundable applications not funded in 2017
3. Incentive Funding – possible changes
4. ORCID ID Implementation
5. Communication between NRF and Institutions
6. The Role of the DA
7. Rationalisation of applications and reports
8. Expectations from the DAs
9. Compliance
   - ID Numbers
   - Master Funding Administration Agreement (MFAAs)
   - Document standardisation
10. System Enhancements
11. General issues

In order to address queries from institutions the NRF rolled out the following initiatives:

- Create a Client Service Centre to service all the queries from our clients which will be implemented in 2018.
- An online support functionality – ‘live chat function’. This will assist stakeholders by responding to queries quicker as well as track queries that will lead to frequently asked question (FAQ) component.

### 6.2 REGIONAL INITIATIVES: ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES AND IMPACT

**Chairperson’s opening note**

**Dr Therina Theron (SU)**

Regional initiatives for Research Administration were started in order to:

- Encourage joint and collaborative grant applications amongst participating institutions;
- Eliminate duplication when applying for specifically large research equipment; and
- Encourage interaction and collaboration between research managers within the different institutions.

Due to decreasing funding that institutions receive towards research, and owing to the weak South African currency, such initiatives therefore assist in the acquisition of high-end equipment for the region. Although it may seem like local researchers are only competing locally for grants, science research is global and therefore such initiatives allow for collaborations locally and internationally.

The value of such collaborations is noted as it tries to improve:

- Impact within science research;
- Capacity development; and
- Collaborations within institutions.

### Regional Initiatives – DA Forum

**Mr Abu Adams (UCT)**

The Forum is specifically focused on DAs in the Western Cape. However, it is actually broader and includes support staff from the various participating institutions inclusive of research support staff, financial support staff and general administration staff.

### History of the Forum – Participants initially met when attending other fora such as RAW and SARIMA. This led to a group concluding to meet as a region. The purpose of the Forum is to have a platform where sharing of information, learning from each other and ensuring the improvement of NRF and own processes and lessen confusion amongst the members.

Forum members share challenges experienced within their varying institutions, issues on how to manage NRF resources, sharing solutions to the various challenges being experienced.

### Challenges –

- Finding suitable working dates amongst participants to hold the Forum;
- Finding suitable venues to hold the forum since the start of recent campus disturbances in the region; and
- Ensuring minutes or notes from each meeting are distributed timeously.

### Matters for the NRF –

The following are matters which the Forum would like to raise with the NRF:

- Communication by the NRF to institutions on changes and implementation timelines to be timely;
- The NRF to make prospective changes and not retrospective in future;
- NRF to consult with stakeholders on changes to be implemented;
- Grants – Flexibility on the adjustment of budget items;
- Resolution of delayed payments to institutions by the NRF; and
- Audit Guidelines timelines to institutions.

### Achievements –

The Forum has achieved the following since its inception:

- Having a support network for sharing collective approach to research administration;
- Reduced isolation, working in silos within participating institutions;
- Increased better intra-institutional working relations; and
- Improved understanding and efficiency amongst participating institutions in NRF processes, and better interaction with the NRF.
Way Forward
The Western Cape Forum will continue to meet, as it has been a worthwhile platform for those involved. Its members are willing to assist various regions to start their own fora.

Tips to other Regions
For those regions wishing to start similar ventures – there should be a common goal among institutions of why the regional forum is formed.

Regional Expensive Equipment Committee (REEP)
Ms Malene Fouche (SU)

REEP is a committee setup to review the NRF’s Equipment Programme’s applications, which are long applications with large amounts of funds allocated to them when successful. REEP functions under the auspice of the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) and is represented by the following institutions:

- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT);
- Stellenbosch University (SU);
- University of Cape Town (UCT);
- University of the Western Cape (UWC); and
- iThemba Labs.

Each institution has a three- (3) member representation inclusive of the Deputy Vice Chancellors (DVCs), Senior Research Directors and Researchers or Academics responsible for their institution’s Equipment Committee.

The objective of the Committee is to increase cooperation among the institutions in the region, demonstrate regional collaboration to funding agencies when applying for expensive research equipment, and to better utilise existing equipment. The Committee schedules meetings in response to the NRF’s information on the equipment available for use.

The NRF Perspective:
The NRF’s perspective of the regional initiative is that of a ‘sharing and learning’ platform outside of RAW and more recently the regional workshops held by the GMSA team. Therefore, fewer queries are directed to the NRF, due to the networking groups sharing challenges, discussing possible solutions, and to better these platforms make communication easier.

Moreover, the DA Forum (Regional Initiative) formed in the Western Cape was considered a good example. Following that, a request was put forth that a Gauteng DA Forum should be formed. The Committee also assist smaller universities. Dr Nthambeleni supported the initiative and also encouraged other regions to start similar fora. Institutions were thus grouped according to their regions as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Institution(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>North West, Malemo, Wits, USI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>DIT, SfP, UNISA, LPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Gauteng</td>
<td>Veld, LEI, LUP, LIFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Gauteng</td>
<td>NMPA, NAB, TMS, UMPA, UP, UJ, Wits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State Natale</td>
<td>WITS, WCU, WCN, WJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>CSIR, NISSC, UWC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disadvantages:
Approaching national equipment applications in this manner creates additional administrative work for those handling the applications. It also leads to shortened timelines for applicants to submit their applications to ensure internal closing dates are met.

Impact:
From the NRF’s equipment database which has records from 2005, Gauteng has received the most NEP/NNEP grants at 193/382 as a region with the most institutions. The Western Cape is second with high number of grants 106/382 grants. However, proportionally to the number of institutions, the Western Cape has performed better.

The large number of equipment (382) funded by the NRF in 11 years is highly commendable in the research community.

The Committee would like to ensure that the research community knows and has access to the equipment at their institutions and have therefore shared pamphlets with information on the equipment available for use.

Advantages of the committee include the following:
- Increasing the submissions of compliant applications to the NRF;
- Increasing cooperation between participating institutions; and
- Achieving optimal value for the limited funding available nationally.

Promoting better utilisation of existing equipment amongst participating institutions as well as other institutions.

Museums, Science Councils, etc. have not been included in the above list, due to their presence in all the regions of the country. It is thought perhaps these institutions may choose for themselves where they would want to fit in.

It was urged that an institution within the groups will need to take the lead to initiate the process and ongoing interactions. The NRF offered itself for assistance, wherever they would be requested to do so. However, this should be an initiative driven within the regional groups. The NRF may also be invited to the various regions to clarify issues, note challenges and suggestions to be taken back to the NRF, in this way.

Research Infrastructure Platforms – Ms Sive Stofile (NRF)

The Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development Directorate is in charge of the research infrastructure platforms, Access to Global Infrastructure (AGI) and Equipment Database.

The Infrastructure Platforms initiatives are divided in the following categories which were agreed upon by the DST and the NRF:

- Scientific Equipment – This is inclusive of the NEP and National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme (NNEP) funding instruments;
- High-End Infrastructure – A funding instrument which involves scaling up of equipment and managed by the DST;
- Specialised Infrastructure – Bigger Equipment under the Road Map and Managed by DST;
- Global Infrastructure – Provides access to infrastructure such as CERN, JINR, SALT, SKA and Synchrotron facilities, managed by the NRF;
- Natural History Collection Museums – An instrument to support Natural Collections in national museums, managed by NRF; and
- Cyber Infrastructure – infrastructure located at the CSIR and DST.

The infrastructure funding instruments support the knowledge economy. Their objectives are to:
- Improve the quality of research;
- Expand capacity, research and training; and
- Promote national collaboration in line with national research priorities.

NOTE: Details of each of the funding instruments could be found in the Funding Frameworks available on the NRF Website (www.nrf.ac.za).

Research Equipment Database Ms Sive Stofile (NRF)
The database is aimed at informing decisions on the acquisition and placement of new research equipment. It allows researchers to search for equipment that is available at their institutions as well as elsewhere in the country. This is achieved through the requirement for information for all publicly funded infrastructure investments through NRF to be uploaded on the database.

Since 2005 to date both the National Equipment Programme Funding Instrument and National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme have invested in the following equipment types and values:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment Type</th>
<th>NRF Investment (R)</th>
<th>No. Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzers</td>
<td>40,547,258</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculators</td>
<td>10,167,008</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Sorters</td>
<td>23,618,217</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chromatographs</td>
<td>32,144,618</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclotrons</td>
<td>26,757,188</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse Reflectance</td>
<td>34,479,085</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microscopes</td>
<td>120,144,744</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCR Systems</td>
<td>22,982,312</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencers</td>
<td>41,752,678</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectrometers</td>
<td>278,287,082</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>533,103,252</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>978,784,065</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investment by Region has been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Investment (R)</th>
<th>No. Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>86,402,080</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>18,317,008</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>411,213,471</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZN</td>
<td>67,547,598</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>22,207,522</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>54,194,498</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>326,932,115</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3 Reviews and Evaluations (Breakaway Session 1)

Format: Parallel Breakaway Session
Panelists: Prof Bongani Bantwini (NWU), Dr Santosh Ramchuran (Biotech Solutions), Dr James Meiring & Ms Noisisa Dube (NRF)

Date: 11 October 2017
Time: 13:00-14:00

NRF highlighted the recent developments within the Reviews and Evaluations (RE) business unit. RE (P) has incorporated the Projects Office as part of their function and currently the directorate is called Reviews, Evaluation and Projects. RE is responsible for all peer-based reviews and evaluations conducted by RSA, while the P, incorporated as part of REP, is responsible for project management and coordination and oversees the execution of projects within RSA.

Reviews ensure that the selected fundable applications are of high-quality standard. Virtual Reviews were implemented as a response to the NRF’s strategic objective 6, which is to provide best-practice systems in support of grant-making, reviews and evaluations. Reviewers are encouraged to review applications at any time that is convenient to them as it does not require them to be physically present at the NRF.

There are two types of the review processes which is the “2-phase” and “single phase reviews”. In the 2-phase process both remote and panel reviews take place for identification of fundable applications. A single-phase process applies mainly for student as well as research infrastructure funding. RE does not make funding decisions but facilitates this process.

It was mentioned that the NRF is facing challenges on some instruments that are new (NRF-FRF Sabbatical grants) that the NRF have received a low number of applications and thus the review process and awards have been held back. DAs were encouraged to assist applicants to put together their proposals in order to increase the number of applications sent to the NRF.

The remote review process runs for eight weeks in the first phase which includes sourcing subject matter experts globally. The NRF expects reports ideally three reports of good quality reviews for consideration.

When reports are collected, a panel of discipline experts will evaluate the proposals and review the objectivity of the review reports and ensure that the objectives of the funding instruments are met.

Virtual reviews were introduced in 2015 as a response to management of high volumes of applications following the change of the eligibility criteria of 60% aggregate for submission by institutions. The numbers increased as this was motivated by the notion of transformation and inclusion, but capacity remained the same.

Virtual reviews are performed by a panel of local experts. The utilisation of virtual reviews improved the reviewer response rate, turnaround time and the quality of feedback, and reduced the operational costs for the NRF. The timing of virtual reviews is one of the disadvantages that still needs to be considered. The process is currently not automated, and thus labour intensive and is currently under review.

There are five pillars of quality peer review that the NRF adheres to as follows:
- Governance structure – role players
- Quality assurance (Internal auditing, external auditing)
- Core principles (Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality Agreement Fairness, Impartiality, Excellence)
- Integrity (Internal auditing, external auditing)
- Methodology (Briefing the panel about on the review process)

It was highlighted that since 2005 the review and evaluation process has been improved. There is more consistency, transparency.

Major issues & challenges in panels can be summarised as follows:
- Assessors and Chairpersons should be independent for consistent and accurate evaluations;
- Scientific and technical merit of proposals (aims, objectives and problem statement) are linked and should be aligned. The only additional supporting documentation is a clear and coherent literature review;
- The most difficult applications to review are from rated researchers mainly because there is no literature review or scientific basis to support a problem statement. The assumption is that because the researchers have been rated they know what they’re talking about and sometimes write without citations;
- Applicants invariably do not heed to the Call guidelines for eligibility criteria and scorecards.
- Applicants do not update their profiles with factual data;
- Applicants should consider that publication data should be verifiable and not include publications in predatory journals;
- Data plans are usually not in place thus lacking data management plans; and
- Plagiarism is a problem in applications.

Some tips for proposals are as follows:

Applicants should:
- Read the Call Guides before writing their proposal and align it to the requirements;
- Be diligent and ensure that the applications are complete;
- Refrain from cutting and pasting; and
- Ensure they understand the score-card on which their applications are going to be scored.

DAs should:
- Trace plagiarism and apply intuitional software to assist them in the process;
- Use a process of pre-reviewing of applications before send it off to the NRF for submission; and
- Encourage black female candidates to send applications especially those from Previously Disadvantaged Institutions (PDI's).
6.4 FINANCE & AUDITING (BREAKAWAY SESSION 2)

**Format:** Breakaway Session 2

**Chairperson:** Ms Beverly Manus (WITS)

**Panelists:** Ms Rentia Hamilton, Ms Thembli Ramotebele & Ms Vuyokazi Mkwaqa (NRF)

**Date:** 09 October 2017

Institutional Processes: Finance and Auditing at Wits University

Ms Beverly Manus

Wits is an intensive research-driven institution. It provides research support and at the same time the research funding received enables to develop and capacitate the institution.

Wits is decentralised and research spending takes place in five facilities. The research office is not involved from the sourcing funding but only later on. However, the challenge is overcome by consistent communication with the facilities.

Wits requests that the NRF communicates with financial officers (FO) and DAs per programme to avoid confusion between Institution/NRF time lags of processing claims.

**Note:** A summary of all concerns and responses are found at the end of the document.

NRF Internal Audit: Grant Management & Institutional Visits

Ms Vuyokazi Mkwaqa (NRF)

(See presentation for detail)

The definition of NRF Internal Audit and its mandate are as follows: “Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation to improve its performance, efficiently allocate and utilise its resources, and to ensure that it complies with applicable laws and regulations.”

External assurance providers – internal and external audit

The combined assurance above is also incorporated in order to avoid duplications. Combined assurance also assists senior management and boards in discharging their responsibilities and oversees the efficient utilisation of resources.

Annual internal audit scope – Grant Management

Grant management is CORE BUSINESS; hence the area is subject to an ANNUAL REVIEW as a result of its perceived INHERENT RISK to be EXTREME.

A list of the general focus areas (processes & key controls) can be found in the presentation.

Institutional visits / “Dipstick” audits

- 12 “Dipstick” – audits done to date

Timing of reviews

- External Audits (conducted by the Auditor-General)
  - Interim audit (Q4)
  - Final audit (Q1 & Q2 of new year)
- Internal Audits
  - Institutional visits (Q1)
  - RISA grant management process (Q2)
  - Performance Information (Q4)

**7: PLENARY SESSION – DAY 2**

7.1 NATIONAL TARGETS, TRANSFORMATION WITHIN RESEARCH SYSTEMS

**Format:** Plenary Presentation/Panel Discussion

**Chairperson:** Dorothy Ngila (NRF)

**Panelists:** Mr Bheki Hadebe (DST), Mr Gerhard Moolman, Ms Queen Mohohoma & Ms Anthipi Pouris (NRF)

**Date:** 10 October 2017

**Time:** 08:00 - 10:00

The purpose of the session was to unpack the policy environment with focuses on the ministerial guidelines and targets, looking at national priorities, the National Development Plan and imperatives within the National System of Innovation (NSI), science and research management, the roles of the and the NRF, and how the Ministerial and other policy guidelines relate to NRF’s key performance indicators and reporting requirements. The session concluded with a focus on the Alumni Database and Student Completions.

Ministerial Guidelines & Targets:

Mr Bheki Hadebe (DST)

(See presentation for detail)

The imperatives of the National Development Plan (NDP) are to sharpen innovation in South Africa, while continuously contributing to global scientific and technological advancement in the quest of socio-economic development. The DST as a role player to socio-economic development in Government contributes to outcome 5 (NDP), a skilled and capable workforce that supports an inclusive growth. The DST also is a contributor of outcome 6 (NDP), improvement of technological and innovation capacity-infrastructure. DST is currently finalising a new white paper on Science, Technology and Innovation to be followed by a Decadal Plan to put some of the policy prescripts.

The NRF is a grant-making and research performing institute and serves as an umbrella body for the National Facilities under it. The DST exercises its powers through a number of its entities which are established by the different Acts of parliament. The Ministerial Guidelines, Declaration of Research Institutions and the NRF Act are policy instruments used to achieve equity with the focus on the following areas:

- Equity in the distribution of bursaries.
- Declaration of institutions fundable by the NRF as public research institutions. Private institutions cannot be funded by the NRF.
- NRF to include science engagement.
- Effective and efficient utilisation of resources that impacts the society.

The following are targets set for the NRF:

- 80% of the awarded bursaries should be to black students and 50% to women, by 2016/17.
- 4% of the awarded bursaries should be for people with disabilities.
- At least 67% of the bursaries should be awarded to South African citizens, up to 9% for students from African countries (5% for SADC as informed by the SADC protocol and 4% for outside SADC); and 4% for students from elsewhere in the world.
- Prioritise students based on joint income per family in order to give opportunities to those that cannot afford.

The bursaries should be allocated on the following principles:

- Students that show excellence in their studies should be considered favourably for funding for the following years as well as the next level of study.
- DST-NRF interns should be prioritised for funding to continue postgraduate studies.
- 10% of the funding should be earmarked for supporting students in the sandwich programmes, especially Doctoral candidates, in order to provide them with international experience.
- Bursaries should be awarded at full-cost and to match the entry level salaries in the workplace.
- Priority should be given to full-time students and limited resources for part-time studies.
- Funding to be limited to duration 2+1 for Masters and 3+1 for Doctoral candidates.
- The benchmark is set at 70-80% for S&T disciplines.

It was recommended that:

- The NRF should incorporate race, gender and disability in funding Calls in order to assist in achieving set targets.
- Communicate to and engage with the research community in order to understand the specific needs of each institution and thus develop relevant strategies.
- The NRF should identify the financially needy.
NRF Key Performance Indicators:
Mr Gerhard Woolman (NRF)
(See presentation for detail)

- The NRF does not operate in a vacuum, but adheres to objectives and rules of the DST, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation, and the National Treasury as part of statutory obligation.
- Adherence to King III Report.
- NRF is redefining its mandate in the NRF Act, and key to this is the representativity of the human capacity development.
- As a public institution, utilising public funds, it is important for the NRF to report and account for the value of its operations and adherence to its mandate to benefit society.
- The NRF addresses 10 of the Medium-Term Strategic Priorities (MTSF) priorities through its various funding instruments. Outcome 5 of the NDP is paramount amongst others which is to develop a skilled and capable workforce by supporting students and researchers.
- It is important to note that the NRF targets are based within the year of awards ie. grants within the grant year.
- Universities have an important role to play in assisting the NRF to achieve its KPIs.

The performance of the NRF in the Financial Year 2016/17, can be summarised as follows:
- NRF exceeded some of its targets but missed some.
- The NRF target on Masters students being supported was not met, and this could have easily been achieved if the administration systems were more efficient.
- There is growth in terms of the number of researchers being supported, but demographics targets are not met.
- Research administrators have a role to play in ensuring that the NRF gets the right people in the system to be supported.
- Attention and priority is given to increase the pool of researchers and staff with Masters and Doctoral degrees as they are student supervisors of the future.
- There has been an increase in the number of rated researchers and rating continues to be used as a quality measure of research staff.
- In terms of KPI performance the NRF is doing well.
- Ministerial targets have been reached against student support and there is progress support to female students/researchers needs to be improved.

NRF Equipment Programme (NEP) & National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme (NNEP) APR Requirements:
Ms Queen Mohohoma (NRF)

As stated in the Conditions of Grants all grantholders are required to submit an annual progress report from the year of award and up to five (5) years post the commission of the equipment. This means that if the equipment is not installed or commissioned during the first reporting year an extra year will be added on. The grantholder will thus report for six (6) years.

- In order to show return on investments, grantholders have to report on the research outputs as listed on the NRF system as well as of other users of the funded piece of equipment. Other users must be recorded in the user spreadsheet that the NRF has provided. If there are any postgraduate students/users of the equipment that have produced any research output/s by utilising the equipment these should be reported;
- Publications refer to articles in journals, books, chapters in books, and technical reports;
- A training workshop was scheduled for 9 November 2017 focusing on the NEP and NNEP APR’s. All DAs working with the Infrastructure Funding Instrument and grantholders were encouraged to attend in order to clarify any questions and concerns.

The findings from the Auditor General are as follows:
- Reported users could not be traced to the supporting documents for users;
- Reporting of invalid users where the grantholder would report on the use of equipment that has not even commissioned;
- Users reported more than once in the APR; and
- Lack of submission of the APR.

To ensure compliance, the NRF requests that the following are adhered to:
- DAs should ensure that the grantholder complies with the Conditions of Grant and that the necessary/required documents are submitted to the NRF;
- Ensure that a copy of the log-book is kept and is updated regularly;
- Ensure that a copy of the log-book is kept and is updated regularly;
- Summarise the log-book on the spreadsheet provided, and submit to the NRF when required;
- Non-compliance might result in the researchers being prohibited from receiving funding for a minimum period of three years.

Alumni Database & Student Completions:
Ms Anthiipi Pouris (NRF)

The conception of the Alumni Database was motivated by the following reasons:
- To determine the socio-economic impact of the DST investments in postgraduate training, and the ways in which the Department could improve efficiencies of such investments; and
- The NRF has been increasingly funding students over the years and it is important to assess the impact of that funding. In order for the NRF to follow up on the social investment of the funding given the employment status and relevant sectors of the students should be identified.

Universities are encouraged to update the Database for Student Completion Rates
- DHET provides the NRF with Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) data but as it is audited it lags for a year. The NRF is therefore requesting the institutions to assist in providing the data directly to the NRF at the same time that they send to HEMIS to make sure that the data is received earlier;
- The NRF has been running a pilot project with University of Pretoria (UP) to see if the request can work and if it does this will be rolled over to other institutions;
- It is an audit requirement for the NRF to keep track of the students that are funded;
- DAs are expected to complete the database as this information will also assist the NRF with the Alumni statistics, as it forms part of the Master Funding Administration Agreement (MFAA) signed between the Institution and the NRF; and
- Reporting is a requirement for the targets to be achieved.
The Chairperson put into context the Student Affairs session and highlighted some of the challenges that institutions face in the National System of Innovation (NSI) and the throughput rate that is expected by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). These targets and expectations are in sync with those set by DST. She stated that postgraduate student support at universities under the Research Development Grant is funded by DHET and the funding is more than that of the DST. A lot of the work that TUT does under postgraduate support is funded under the DHET, and therefore TUT takes DHET as the main funder in terms of enrolments.

Universities across the NSI are expected to comply with the following requirements and targets set by DHET:

- **Masters degree**
  - Throughput rate should be increased for Africans (Black South Africans).
  - DHET expects an increase of the throughput rate from 41.3% of Africans to 60% by 2025. This applies also to coursework candidates of which a throughput rate of 65% should be met by 2025.
  - The Masters dropout rate for Africans should be decreased from 48% to 20% by 2025 and Masters coursework from 47% to 20%.
  - Doctoral degree
  - The throughput rate should increase from 38% to 60% and the dropout rate should decrease from 36% to 20%.
  - Universities are furthermore expected to produce 80% of Doctoral and 80.2% of Masters degrees from African students by 2030 as expressed in National Development Plan (NDP).
  - Developing institutions are expected to have permanent instructional research staff holding Doctoral degrees to be 75% by 2030. The current rate is 43% as a system.

**Enhancing Human Capacity Development (HCD) for Student Support Efficiency and Impact – Dr Mbulelo Ncango (NRF)**

The presentation included some of the elements that were presented in the National Target, Transformation within Research Systems plenary session. The presentation made particular reference to the Ministerial Guidelines & Targets and the NRF Key Performance Indicators presentations.

It focused on efficiency and impact in terms of the NRF enhancements of support to students, equity of access especially encouraging black students, females, financially needy students, and students living with disabilities. Furthermore, the presentation made reference to efficiencies and SET disciplines. Information regarding 2016/2017 student performance was shared with delegates. In terms of the Ministerial Guidelines and NRF’s targets, the following points were highlighted:

- **Ministerial Guidelines**
  - Were set on improving equity in the distribution of Bursaries and Fellowships made through the NRF and funded by the DST.
  - The Guidelines are intended to assist the NRF in improving representativity of the supported students and the absorption of the skills produced by the South African science system, and to assist the DST in directing and coordinating the development of high-level skills in the system.
  - The Ministerial Guidelines states that in general, across all bursary and scholarship programmes, the awards should be made as follows:
    - 87% to South Africans (including permanent residents).
    - 5% to students from the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
    - 4% to students from the rest of Africa.
    - 4% to students from non-African countries.
  - They aimed at:
    - Enhancing the HCD support effectiveness, efficiency and impact, and increased public accountability;
    - Improving the alignment of the Department’s policy with that of government;
    - Facilitate equitable access to postgraduate studies.
  - The fundamental principles underpinning these Guidelines are as follows:
    - Representativity;
    - Improved efficiencies; and
    - Prioritisation of SET-related disciplines.

The NRF indicated that it has targets on part-time support. In taking this discussion forward delegates assumed that the NRF is supporting a high number of non-South African students. In response it was found not to be true as the NRF is able to control this under the freestanding. It was further mentioned that the NRF is not expected to report on undergraduate students and as a result, the NRF report reflects itself at the undergraduate level.

**NRF Set Targets**

- The NRF did not meet its set targets on Black students at Masters and Doctoral level;
- Targets were met at Honours level only;
- The 55% target of females at Doctoral was not met.

It was reported that the 4% disability targets remain a challenge for the NRF to achieve. Less than 1% of applicants indicated that they are disabled. This is a result of disabled students not willing to disclose their disabilities. It was advised that universities should engage students living with disability to ensure that they are supported.

**Financial Needy Students**

Definitive criteria have been set for:

- Students who were financially funded by NSFAS, and
- Masters and Doctoral candidates. (see presentation for details)

Delegates stated that limited funding makes it impossible for full cost funding, while 80% target for SET disciplines causes a challenge since most students in Social Science and Humanities not to have adequate funding.

**Block Grants Nominations**

Block grant nominations of students:

- Tend to be inconsistent with the requirements expressed in the Call documents; and
- Should be aligned to the Ministerial Guidelines.

**Grant Expenditure**

Regarding the rate of grant expenditures:

- NRF will follow up with institutions regarding claims; whilst
- The institutions should minimise the turnaround time between the Research and Finance offices.

**Requirements**

- Documents such as the proof of registration should be standardised across the institutions, as requested by the auditor general;
- Masters students will only be allowed to travel locally as of 2016;
- All PR deadlines should be adhered to, November to 15 February;
- PRs to be accepted without proofs of registration. However, these documents are required for funding to be released.

**Establishing Institutional Values of Students Support**

Ms Bongiwe Ndame (UCT)

**University of Cape Town (UCT) Perspective**

The University of Cape Town has maximum limit for funding per level as this is due to limited resources and thus does not fund full scholarships. However, students are allowed to hold as many scholarships as possible for Doctoral degrees, up to the institutional limit. The Institution allows needy students to hold both NRF and UCT scholarships at the same time.

UCT has main areas of support where funding is sourced from. This includes the University general operating budget where the funding comes from Council, donated funds and investments. This assists UCT to advertise Calls for Applications internal funding for students. The funding is based on merit and/or need.

**Merit based:**

- All UCT scholarships are supplementary. Students who apply must have the means to fund their studies.
- Students cannot hold NRF and UCT Merit Scholarship concurrently at Honours and Masters Level.

**2017 Needs-Based Analysis Pilot (currently applies for Honours students)**

- Not full cost funding
- Depends on need
- Cost of tuition fees
- Where the student is from
- UCT Budget
- Students can hold NRF and UCT Needs-Based Scholarship concurrently at Honours and Masters Level.

**External Funding**

University of Cape Town (UCT) Perspective

This is due to limited resources and thus does not fund full scholarships. However, students are allowed to hold as many scholarships as possible for Doctoral degrees, up to the institutional limit. The Institution allows needy students to hold both NRF and UCT scholarships at the same time.

**Merit based:**

- All UCT scholarships are supplementary. Students who apply must have the means to fund their studies.
- Students cannot hold NRF and UCT Merit Scholarship concurrently at Honours and Masters Level.

**2017 Needs-Based Analysis Pilot (currently applies for Honours students)**

- Not full cost funding
- Depends on need
- Cost of tuition fees
- Where the student is from
- UCT Budget
- Students can hold NRF and UCT Needs-Based Scholarship concurrently at Honours and Masters Level.

**External Funding**

This is due to limited resources and thus does not fund full scholarships. However, students are allowed to hold as many scholarships as possible for Doctoral degrees, up to the institutional limit. The Institution allows needy students to hold both NRF and UCT scholarships at the same time.
UCT has established the following Funding Categories:
- Conference Travel Grants
- December and Senior Scholarships
- Departmental Scholarships
- International Travel Scholarships
- Prestigious Fellowships and Scholarships
- Research Awards
- Scholarships based on academic merit
- Scholarships based on financial need
- Global Partnerships
- PhD Package
- UCT Staff Masters and Doctoral Bursaries

Faculty and External Funding
- Industry Funding
- Research Funding
- NRF Grant Link
- Commonwealth
- CSR
- DAAD
- Eskom
- Mandela Rhodes
- Margaret McNamara
- Meat Industry
- Medical Fellows (Netcare/Discovery)
- NFR
- Oil seeds
- OWSO
- Various
- SET

Challenges Faced by Institutions Related to Student Support
Mr Karan Naidoo (Consultant)

The following are comments/suggestions that are reflective of challenges encountered by all degree awarding institutions:
- Constant communication between NRF and the beneficiary institutions is very important when introducing new systems.
- Who should be following up on registration of the funded students for Master and Doctoral? It does not necessarily mean that when students indicate they will do Masters they end up registering.
- NRF must reconsider the final 4th year for funding.
- Students are struggling with support from their supervisors when writing applications for funding.
- Call for Masters and Doctoral should be open towards end of year.
- Masters should be a block grant administered by institutions like the Honours Call for applications.
- NRF should not allow students to apply for funding without loading the relevant documents (reference was made to SAGA documents from international students).
- The Extension Call should not be made early in the year. This was also discussed at RAW 2016.
- The NRF should be sympathetic when events like ‘fees must fall’ take place at institutions. This was not the case last year.
- Institutional top-ups should be allowed for travel grants. These should be made twice a month. NRF should discuss this with SARS, beyond 12-hours a week employment for NRF bursars.
- Number of Postdoctoral Fellows are reducing on an annual basis. NRF should investigate this.
- There are still institutions that are treated differently by the NRF. Some DAs from other institutions tend to know about future changes at the NRF before others.

Challenges faced by the NRF related to Student Support
Ms Thashni Pillay (NRF)

Below are some of the main challenges faced by NRF in awarding student bursaries.
- The advertised Call schedule should be consulted by DAs for planning.
- DAs do not consult the documents that are advertised with the Calls for Proposals.
- NRF struggles to get reports on completions and progress from the universities.
- Data is incomplete, sometimes inconsistent with what in the application/nomination form.
- Nominations should be compliant with the advertised rules and deadlines.
- 10 000 applications are received across the funding instruments.
- Turnaround time for grant expenditures should be improved.
- Institutions are not claiming their awarded funds in good time.
- The NRF has committed to 24-hour turnaround time in terms of responding to queries.
- DAs are not checking applications for the eligibility criteria as advertised and that delays the processing of applications by the NRF.
- DA Tools on the NRF Online System should be used – currently DAs are not aware of these tools.
- DAs still submit reports for students who do not qualify for renewal.
- Travel grants applications are submitted with documents missing, some are incomplete and some are submitted without the supervisor’s recommendations.
- Challenges (see details in the presentation): lack of institutional understanding of NRF processes and funding requirements.
The following topics were under discussion:

- Conditions of Grants and Master Funding Agreement
- Change of Leadership
- Change of Institutional / Grantholder Change Processes
- Workplace Relations
- Intellectual Property Management
- Dispute resolution
- Persuasion vs strict enforcement
- Change of Leadership
- Conditions of Grants

**Conditions of Grants**
The MFAA is the overriding agreements that is entered by the NRF and institutions, while each individual grant that the NRF awards to an institution/grantholder is concluded with the signed Conditions of Grant (CoG). The CoG cannot be isolated from the MFAA. The bulk of the responsibility sits with the institution, although it does not do the actual management of the grant. The grants are managed by the grantholder who is linked to the institution and explains how the relationship is structured.

The standardised CoGs outline the general conditions for the awarded grant as well as make special provisions according to the objectives of the various funding instruments.

**Relationship Management and Consequences**
- Contract binding on parties
- Rational for Agreement;
- Manage expectations;
- Managing risks;
- Providing certainty.
- Persuasion vs strict enforcement
- If all else fails…. Strict enforcement (e.g. Withholding of fund)

**Change of Institutional / Grantholder Change Processes**

* Lynn Erasmus (NRF)*

In the event of a grantholder leaving the institution where the NRF grant was awarded (to take up employment at a non-NRF recognised research institution or emigrate), the NRF must be informed of alternate arrangements for the continuation of the project and alternate leadership.

The NRF is currently writing up a policy for the cancellation of no funding.

The NRF facilitated a workshop in institutions located in the Western Cape to discuss the new workflow in relation to Electronic Dissertations and Theses (current and completed research projects). Once research proposals are registered they need to be submitted on the NRF system in order to avoid duplication. Furthermore, other requirements should be considered and these mainly includes the South African Data Archive.

**MFAA**

The MFAA provides a platform of open partnership, consultation and reviewing contracts, interpretations and enforcement. It also highlights the NRF and institutions as institutions vary in operations. The NRF and institutions, while each individual grant that the NRF awards to an institution/grantholder is concluded with the signed Conditions of Grant (CoG). The CoG cannot be isolated from the MFAA. The bulk of the responsibility sits with the institution, although it does not do the actual management of the grant. The grants are managed by the grantholder who is linked to the institution and explains how the relationship is structured.

The standardised CoGs outline the general conditions for the awarded grant as well as make special provisions according to the objectives of the various funding instruments.

**Change of Leadership**

- In the event of a grantholder leaving the institution where the NRF grant was awarded (to take up employment at a non-NRF recognised research institution or emigrate), the NRF must be informed of alternate arrangements for the continuation of the project and alternate leadership.
- The NRF must be informed by the current Institution (Research Office) of the grantholder’s intended transfer prior to departure, so that appropriate instructions may be issued from the relevant NRF Funding Domain regarding the procedure to be followed.
- Once the expenditure claims are finalised at the current institution, the grant is transferred.
- The receiving institution informs the NRF that the grantholder has taken up employment and provide the new contact details.
- Revised Award letter and CoG, indicating the relevant changes, will have to be accepted and signed by the grantholder and new institution.
- The grantholder is expected to update their CV on https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za
- Once the CoG is signed and uploaded by the research office on the NRFOnline system, the grant is released to the new institution.
- The transfer of the grant after August in a year, is not applicable
- If the above requirements are not satisfied this will result in no funding.
- The NRF is currently writing up a policy for the cancellation of grants according to audit and funding requirements.
- The NRF Knowledge Management division is responsible for tracking all the research outputs that are funded by the NRF publications, journal articles, datasets, conference papers, book chapters and books.

For a systems point of view, the NRF is planning to have all the required documents submitted online once the new grant system is in place. The revised system will assist to track which documents have been submitted and which were not submitted. The NRF will appreciate if institutions would give input in terms of what areas should be improved on the system.

**Background and Context to MFAA**
The Master Funding Administration Agreement (MFAA) was established in order to provide structure between the NRF and institutions for regulation and contractual agreements at the highest level and assist in maintaining relationships between the NRF and institutions as institutions vary in operations. The MFAA provides a platform of open partnership, consultation and negotiation before finalisation.

Thus far only 50% of institutions have signed their respective agreements. This is not advisable as the Auditor General will be looking in this area.

Some Key Provisions within the MFAA are:
- Consolidation of various types of grant conditions
- Initial period and extension of grants
- Awarding of grants at the sole discretion of the NRF
- Institutional obligations:
  - Management of expenditure of a grant within the ambit of its own financial policies, subject to the PFMA (if applicable)
  - Provision an annual audit reports;
  - Establishment of processes to manage audit findings;
  - Detailed provisions on management of Grant Deposit (GD);
  - Breach and consequences;
  - Dispute resolution; and
  - Intellectual property.

**Conditions of Grants**
The MFAA is the overriding agreements that is entered by the NRF and institutions, while each individual grant that the NRF awards to an institution/grantholder is concluded with the signed Conditions of Grant (CoG). The CoG cannot be isolated from the MFAA. The bulk of the responsibility sits with the institution, although it does not do the actual management of the grant. The grants are managed by the grantholder who is linked to the institution and explains how the relationship is structured.

The standardised CoGs outline the general conditions for the awarded grant as well as make special provisions according to the objectives of the various funding instruments.

**Relationship Management and Consequences**
- Contract binding on parties
- Rational for Agreement;
- Manage expectations;
- Managing risks;
- Providing certainty.
- Persuasion vs strict enforcement
- If all else fails…. Strict enforcement (e.g. Withholding of fund)

**Change of Leadership**

- In the event of a grantholder leaving the institution where the NRF grant was awarded (to take up employment at a non-NRF recognised research institution or emigrate), the NRF must be informed of alternate arrangements for the continuation of the project and alternate leadership.
- The NRF must be informed by the current Institution (Research Office) of the grantholder’s intended transfer prior to departure, so that appropriate instructions may be issued from the relevant NRF Funding Domain regarding the procedure to be followed.
- Once the expenditure claims are finalised at the current institution, the grant is transferred.
- The receiving institution informs the NRF that the grantholder has taken up employment and provide the new contact details.
- Revised Award letter and CoG, indicating the relevant changes, will have to be accepted and signed by the grantholder and new institution.
- The grantholder is expected to update their CV on https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za
- Once the CoG is signed and uploaded by the research office on the NRFOnline system, the grant is released to the new institution.
- The transfer of the grant after August in a year, is not applicable
- If the above requirements are not satisfied this will result in no funding.
- The NRF is currently writing up a policy for the cancellation of grants according to audit and funding requirements.
- The NRF Knowledge Management division is responsible for tracking all the research outputs that are funded by the NRF publications, journal articles, datasets, conference papers, book chapters and books.

The NRF is currently writing up a policy for the cancellation of grants according to audit and funding requirements.

**Requirements: Ids, Proof of Registration, APRs and Audit**

* Ms Anthiphi Pours (NRF)*

- Master Funding Administration Agreements
  - The NRF urged DAs to take responsibility that the MFAA are signed
- Awarding Grants (important documents):
  - Copies of valid Ids to be uploaded
  - Student agreements
  - Proof of registration – students
  - Transcripts – students

The NRF sometimes receives incomplete applications and the application process is delayed from being included in other processes e.g. the review stage and outcomes. In an effort to cut down on the back and forth DAs were advised to check the requirements for each Funding Instrument before submitting applications to the NRF. There are specific timeframes that documents should be submitted and the quicker these documents are submitted the quicker that funds will be released.

From a systems point of view, the NRF is planning to have all the required documents submitted online once the new grant system is in place. The revised system will assist to track which documents have been submitted and which were not submitted. The NRF will appreciate if institutions would give input in terms of what areas should be improved on the system.

**NRF’s Research Data Management Infrastructure – Open Data Transition Roadmap**

* Mr Lazarus Matizirofa (NRF)*

NRF's Research Data Management Infrastructure – Open Data Transition Roadmap

The NRF Knowledge Management division is responsible for tracking all the research outputs that are funded by the NRF publications, journal articles, datasets, conference papers, book chapters and books.

The NRF facilitated a workshop in institutions located in the Western Cape to discuss the new workflow in relation to Electronic Dissertations and Theses (current and completed research projects). Once research proposals are registered they need to be submitted on the NRF system in order to avoid duplication. Furthermore, other requirements should be considered and this mainly includes the South African Data Archive.
The NRF is a key role player in data management and engages as follows:

- NRF plays a leading role in the development of Research Data Infrastructure for publicly funded research in South Africa.
- The NRF needs to establish a set of architectures in a distributed environment, preferably utilising NICIS infrastructure but not limited to it.
- This task has significant overlap with work being funded by DST and executed via the National Integrated Cyber Infrastructure Systems (NICIS) agencies – the South African national Research Network (SANReN), Data Initiative of South Africa (DIRISA), Centre for High Performance Computing (CHPC) - but it is not the same.

The role of knowledge management in the NRF is a cross-cutting compliance function aimed at developing, supporting and maintaining a knowledge-based organisation by facilitating access to and utilisation of data management and information systems. The NRF:

- Continues to drive compliance through the roll-out of the Open Access mandate;
- Supports the digital curation of research outputs according to international standards and guidelines;
- Provides support for various repository databases and national information portals or platforms.

NRF and DIRISA will serve as agents and responsible authorities of the Research Data Management Infrastructure (RDMI) Roadmap in South Africa. DIRISA is funded to provide largely hard infrastructure for research data, but also participates in systems and software development, as well as a proposed involvement in research management and capacity building.

NRF’s Open Access Mandate: Compliance

NRF, in pursuit of its Open Access Mandate (Open Science and Open Data), will be requiring new grant recipients to:

- Provide Data Management Plans (DMPs) for all grant applications, and
- On completion of NRF funded research, provide Proof of Deposit (POD) for Datasets.

7.4 COMMUNICATION & THE ROLE OF THE DA

Format: Plenary Session
Chairperson: Dr Bloodless (DUT)
Panellists: Ms Anthipi Pouris, Mr Simon Lotz, Ms Eleanor Van Der Westhuizen (NRF) & Ms Daniela Viljoen (UFS)
Date: 10 October 2017
Time: 14:30 – 16:30

The Role of the DA – Anthipi Pouris and Simon Lotz (NRF)

RAW 2016 created an opportunity for DAs and the NRF to discuss the role of the DA as there were differences in the understanding of the role. The NRF saw it fit to document tasks, activities and responsibilities through a consultative process with stakeholders. Regional workshops thereafter took place in different institutions in order to gain a common understanding of the responsibilities of the DA. A pamphlet has thus been compiled and distributed to DAs.

RAW 2016 paved an “open forum” between the NRF and stakeholders in terms of developing communication lines. It provided stakeholders with a platform to engage in meaningful discussions for an improved way forward which created clarity between the DAs and FO roles. There is an interdependence and interrelationship between the DA, Research Office, FOs and the NRF in which they are primary role players in research management and administration. There are different mandates and strategies within their own institutions, but all working towards a common goal that encompasses awards, releases, funding adjustments and carry forwards. The following questions are in principle what guide these operations:

- What is the quality of our service? (This speaks to our reputation);
- Does what we are trying to achieve have an impact on a student who is trying to study?
- What is the perception of our funders? (Openness);
- How effective is NRF in achieving its mandate?

NRF highlighted that was experiencing some challenges in which it needs help with the releases versus claims. It is crucial to mention that the NRF and institutions depend on each other for this processes to be done effectively. The above-mentioned challenges also include the following:

- Turnaround times;
- Research Offices not getting information required from the NRF;
- FOs excluded from a lot of information;
- NRF uptake of funds.

Sources of Communication between the NRF and stakeholders were highlighted as follows:

- Award letters and Conditions of grants (CoGs);
- Grant statements and Annual Progress Reports (APRs);
- Institutional visits as well as fora such as workshops and RAW; and
- Facebook and Twitter.

Grant Payment Process

- The NRF and institutions depend on one another for the success of this process;
- Awards – NRF’s commitment to pay the grant subject to a number of conditions;
- Releases – Funds released upon the submission of relevant documents;
- Expense reporting – Financial Officers’ response on finances; and
- The DAs to remind researchers and the NRF to send reminders to conclude this process.

The Role of Intra Institutional Processes: Challenges, Bottlenecks from a DA Perspective

Ms Eleanor van der Westhuizen (UFS)

All institutions should have their own intra-institutional processes regarding pre-awards and post-awards in which they refine their own systems and processes annually. This encompasses effective communication and relationship building. It is so easy to miscommunicate and we must try by all means to avoid it. Face to face communication is preferable and other sources of communication like emails, telephone calls for records keeping.

UFS have such institutional processes. Mondays are scheduled for a start off meeting which will assist to reflect what happened in the previous week and also for planning for the next week with colleagues. Other regular sessions include meetings with the Research Office, Finance, the Postgrad School and the Deans Office for any developments. DAs and FOs get invited to Faculty Research Committee meetings in which messages can be conveyed and inputs provided if their grants/programmes are open.
UFS Workshops and Session Meetings that took place in 2017:
- The institution had a Rating Workshop in February 2017;
- Postdoctoral fellows (138) had workshops on speed reading, CV writing and editing; and
- There were coffee morning sessions for presentations and mentoring workshops for supervisors as well as external committees.

New Initiatives
- The HoDs meet with newly appointed researchers individually to ensure they understand the processes of funding as well as policies;
- The newly appointed researchers meet the support staff so that they know whom to contact when they need assistance;
- A benchmarking and learning exercise was conducted in August 2017 in which UZ would like to implement it in 2018. This includes new pool of reviewers, once a grantholder’s starts with their application they can select someone from that pool who will guide them until they submit their final application;
- Partnerships across the institution and external stakeholders have been built – NRF, Sol Plaatjes, UCT, SU, CUT, UP and international institutions.

Challenges
- Multitasking
- Pre-awards versus post-awards
- Receiving call from NRF – Dissemination of call, internal closing date (applicants not adhering to internal closing dates), Summarise call
- Miscommunication. Lack of face to face contact. Telecom and Email (different campuses) to keep researchers updated of any new developments around institution.
- Incentive funding communicate from the NRF
- Distribution list – some DAs not receiving correspondence from the NRF
- Closing dates – internal, bilateral calls
- Too many Calls opened in a short period of time
- Researchers contacting the NRF directly instead of liaising with the Research Office (NRF urged not to entertain this)
- Department of finance - Funding not paid in time
- Predatory Conferences

Postgraduate School
- Late feedback from the NRF with regards to (FISS) Hons, Masters and Doctoral
- Students unsure if they were going to receive funding or not and supervising complaining that are unable to keep students without funding.

The Importance of Data
- Credibility of data is dependent on the quality of the data
- Data should be accessible physically and should be understood
- Data should be relevant.

Intra Institutional Processes. Challenges, bottle necks from a FO perspective
Ms Daniela Viljoen (UZ)
The DA and FO are the link between the NRF and the grantholder. The role of the FO includes:
- Provide suitable financial mechanisms to ensure effective operations of NRF funded research
- Monitor compliance with the MFAA
- Monitor compliance to the funding programme
- Enforce and disseminate financial controls to grantholders
- Ensure that all assets purchased with NRF grant funding are registered into the institution’s asset register
- Provide an annual audit report prepared by independent auditors
- Ensure that funds are claimed timeously on the NRF Online
- Commit the required portion of co-funding as per the relevant NRF funded programme
- Advise grantholders on the processes of funding adjustments within the funding programme
- Encourage grantholders to spend funds
- Review and evaluate correctness of carry forward requests of unspent funds
- Do everything reasonably expected to achieve the goals and objectives of the NRF.

Inter-institutional Process: Challenges and Bottlenecks
- Distribution list – some FOs requesting extension for Calls they missed
- Funds not released timeously
- Funds claimed on a regular basis but not paid by the NRF
- Bursaries/ Block grants not paid on time and students getting frustrated. This was addressed at RAW 2016
- Late payment of Grantholder-linked bursaries for students not in same institution as grantholder. This is time consuming and NRF should look at possibility of paying students at their own institutions
- Lack of notification from the NRF in respect of released funds and adjustments
- Students not adhering to bursary conditions and sign up for multiple bursaries (double dipping)
- Students working more than the 12 hour per week prescribed rule
- Pressure from researchers who need to have funds before the Conditions of Grants was signed
- Grantholders not understanding the delays in the release of funds
- Challenges in running of grants that are released but not yet paid by the NRF
- Lack of understanding of certain programmes like SARCHi

Measurements put in place at UZ
- Students are informed of the importance of adhering to the Conditions of Grant when signing
- Intertwined communication lines between the NRF scholarship grants administrator and student accounts to prevent multiple bursaries
- Monitoring mechanism between the NRF scholarship grants administrator and Human Resource
- Management to develop a plan/policy around SARCHi to enable better understanding and commitment in future signing
- Management developed a plan for the use of the interest earned on the Grant Deposit to promote and enhance research (additional person to be employed specifically to deal with NRF matters, research project funding, and bursaries and for the installation of equipment).

General Remarks
- Not easy being an NRF DA/FO
- Researchers and Students do not adhere to institutional closing dates
- Measures were put in place at UZ to ensure that this process runs smoothly
- UZ setting policy for a new document that will guide the next DVC with their problems.
7.5 GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

Ms Elinor Heathfield (NRF)

The NRF has come up with new generic templates, in line with NRF’s KPI reporting, which are going to be a baseline for all Progress Reports for the cycle. The reports will use information from the application and from the grant (e.g. Financials section).

Reporting on outputs and students will be as in the past. Research outputs will be linked to grantholders CV and the relevant outputs maybe drawn from the updated CV accordingly.

Student Reporting – split into three.

Financially supported through NRF grants
Not financially supported through the NRF grants and
Students which are part of the project but not supervised by the grantholder

Financials – All line items will be drawn from the grant and the grantholders will be in a position to view what was originally awarded, amount released and funds brought forward and expense funds. The financials reporting will now be merged with the Carry Forward process. This will provide grantholders the opportunity to motivate against each line item what they have been utilised.

New Progress Reports

Ms Mpai Motsei (NRF)

New sections added to the progress reports include:

Science Engagements activities,
Leveraged funds (this may include other sources of funding for the projects),
Infrastructure Research Platforms utilised during the reporting period, whether data, equipment and/or both. Grantholders will also be required to report on the level of usage including additional funds which may have been utilised.

Service survey, was include on the reports for grantholders to provide feedback on the services received from the NRF.

It was clarified during the Question and Answer time that reporting and the Carry Forward process have been merged to ensure NRF’s reporting on KPIs are met and all expected progress reports are received.

Clarity was provided on both the Finance officers and designated authorities signing off on the carry forward process, where financial officers are required to verify on the financials and the DAs are required to sign off on the motivational aspects per funding instruments.

Student Support Reports –

Dr Nthambeleni indicated that in the past the NRF had under reporting due to receipt of Progress reports after NRF’s reporting period to the DST. This not only led to under-reporting but is also considered a qualified audit according to the office of the Auditor General. In order for the NRF to align it’s reporting to government requirements, new timelines needed to be set.

New timeline for reporting of Progress Reports were indicated as follows:

Opening of Request Reports will be 15th December
Closing of Progress Reports for Grantholders – 15th February and
Closing for Designated Authorities – 28th February.

7.6 SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED AT THE PLENARY AND BREAKAWAY SESSIONS

Quality of applications

There is no intensive reviewing of applications before they are submitted to the NRF. This leads to a high rejection rate by the NRF. This challenge may be alleviated through learning from more established institutions which have found solutions to overcoming such challenges.

When applications are being reviewed at institutional level, consideration should be taken to analyse the various scores given to the various categories (as mentioned in the scorecard in the Call documents). Emphasis should be given to those categories with the highest score respectively within the applications.

Review Feedback

The NRF should provide comprehensive and timeous feedback. This has been a point raised in the previousRAW meetings which should be prioritised by the NRF.

A possible solution could be the revision of the Call schedule, and earlier opening of Calls which is being initiated from 2018. This could lead to earlier review and earlier outcomes for all applications and therefore timeous feedback.

Student issues

Ministerial Guidelines – Gender and Race

Both the institutions and the NRF need to report consideration on to the system.

Upload of Spreadsheets onto the NRF Online System –

Submission with electronic signatures – the NRF will consider integration on to the system.

Institutional Requirements need to be worked by the NRF in order to understand what DAs and FOs require from both the Granting and Financial Systems. That is inclusion of required functionalities and reporting functions. Consideration should also be taken regarding what grantholders would also require from the system.

Presentation of Financial Categories on application forms – Should these be expanded or not? The NRF is to decide on how financial categories are to be presented.

Finances

Audit Guidelines – guidelines were sent out late by the NRF to institutions and GMSA Finance will therefore, have to review the timelines for sending out guidelines to institutions.

Late funding and late announcements of student awards – these should be process before the end of the year particularly for students so that they may know whether they are funded or not before the next year of study or immediately in the New Year.

Late Releases of Funds and Payments – Institutions are inconvenienced by late releases from the NRF. This will however, be rectified with GMSA ensuring they release funds timeously.

Thresholds for Carry Forward are announced late within the year and although thresholds are given in the award letters the NRF will have to streamline the announcements of thresholds within the year.

Systems improvements

Submission of Conditions of Grant on the Online Submission with electronic signatures – the NRF will consider integration on to the system.

Uploading of Spreadsheets onto the NRF Online System –

Both the institutions and the NRF need to report

Thresholds for Carry Forward are announced late within the year and although thresholds are given in the award letters the NRF will have to streamline the announcements of thresholds within the year.
on application forms. These categories should then be aligned to Progress Reports templates and NRF’s reporting requirements.

Communication
- NRF staff communicating directly to grant holders and applicants without through the designated authority should be limited
- Regular reminders to grant holders regarding expenditure rates
- Master Funding Agreements are to be signed off by all institutions. It was recommended that all Research and Finance Offices be sent copies of signed agreements.

General
- Support for Social Science Studies
- The Role of the DA document to be expanded to include the Role of the FO
- Location for RAW 2018 - Abu Adams suggested that RAW 2018 to be held in Gauteng province within proximity of NRF to enable all NRF Domain Directors the opportunity to attend and institutional DAs and FOs to interact with them.

CONCLUSION

The success of the RAW 2017 was based upon the positive responses, constructive suggestions for improvement, interaction and positive attitude of delegates. The theme and primary purpose of RAW 2017 was to actively engage and network with all stakeholders, Stakeholders and the NRF staff interacted openly and shared experiences and challenges during the breakaway sessions. The programme was aimed at addressing, as far as possible, the interests and challenges of the delegates. The programme was aimed at addressing, as far as possible, the interests and challenges of the delegates.

8: EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were distributed to stakeholders focusing on various issues of the workshop in order to identify if issues has been successfully dealt with from the previous workshop. Questions on suggestions and new topics that need to be discussed and facilitated in the next workshop or throughout the year were requested.

APPENDIX

CHALLENGES AND COMMENTS FROM RAW 2017

**Financial Issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audit Guidelines</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design of the Audit Guidelines</td>
<td>Organised by GMSA but now an internal Audit function with the support of management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Some auditors (i.e. UCT) said they did not have revised Audit Guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Simplification of Audit Guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Revising Audit guidelines in November is late</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Suggestions for a consultative process on major change of audit guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines would be finalized by the end of October 2017 including a meeting with institutional external auditors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NRF will engage with the institutions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depth of audit differs across various institutions
- The NRF when meeting with external auditors of institutions will highlight:
  - The audit objectives set
  - DA instructions

NRF approval of payments not always according to expenditure Guidelines (e.g. demography of students which are pointed out by the auditors)
- The NRF will try to write the procedures as clear as possible and the objectives that the auditors must focus for approval.

**Claimed and Unclaimed Funds**

- Late release of carry forward funds
- NRF to look into it

**Grant Deposit**

- Non-payment by NRF impacts on the University’s cash flow and interest received
- Currently it is a cash-flow issue and it is believed that it will be resolved soon.
- Whatever it was paid over to institutions is from the NRF reserves.
- The reality of the NRF-RISA budget is that a very small portion of the income received is discretionary and it’s paid to RISA in terms of quarterly income.
- The contract for the 2017/2018 FY is worth R812 million (eight hundred and twelve million Rand).
- A fairly substantial portion of that income is earmarked for research development contracts from the DST and comes from a particular contract.
- The contract for the 2017/2018 FY is worth R812 million (eight hundred and twelve million Rand).

**Grants received in small institutions (in terms of NRF grants)**
- The “rolling money” that increases the grant deposit and decreases it again if not spent is of concern for small institutions not able to claim the amount awarded and then increase the grant deposit as part of the grand deposit as the grand deposit.
- NRF has to adjust the grand deposit levels according to the regulations and gives no discretion for whole grant deposit to be paid back.

Calculating the grand deposit in future
- The basis for the calculation for the grand deposit remains the same and no increases are foreseen.

Non-payment by NRF impacts on the University's cash flow and interest received
- The NRF can now move money up to 20% from one contract to another which could not be done before without consultation with DST and caused delays in delivery. This assists the NRF with cash-flow issues and the payments thereof.

The NRF can now move money up to 20% from one contract to another which could not be done before without consultation with DST and caused delays in delivery. This assists the NRF with cash-flow issues and the payments thereof.

**Institute’s financial processes might change due to expenses not yet been processed and the Financial officer has been instructed to not make it a burden.**

**Calculating the grant deposit in future**

- NRF to look into it.
The NRF communicates with the DVCs, but the information hardly ever filters through to the research offices. The Department does acknowledge the role of the social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research and Development Council (SSHRDC) has a grant-holding scheme to support social science and humanities research. The NRF is providing considerable assistance in the social sciences and humanities as shown by the Application is that indicates whether it is under internal review, external review, successful or in breach of contract and therefore the NRF can immediately stop the grant. 

The carry forward process from the NRF is usually done around March and then in April funds are released. Even if a department is not ready to receive funds in March, they can be held until they are made available. The NRF advises that an Application is that indicates whether it is under internal review, external review, successful or in breach of contract and therefore the NRF can immediately stop the grant. 

The carry forward process from the NRF is usually done around March and then in April funds are released. Even if a department is not ready to receive funds in March, they can be held until they are made available. The NRF advises that an Application is that indicates whether it is under internal review, external review, successful or in breach of contract and therefore the NRF can immediately stop the grant.
Compliance

International Agreements

The NRF hopes that every contract that is concluded is clear to both parties and articulates the responsibilities of the contracting parties. The NRF hopes that every contract that is concluded is clear to both parties and articulates the responsibilities of the contracting parties.

Who is the electronic signature on the electronic signature?

The electronic signature is a legal instrument that should be verified, secured, and protected. However, it should not be used in electronic signatures as defined in the Communications Act. Furthermore, the electronic signature is expensive and is required for specific documents e.g. "Deed of Transfer".

The CoG, template (standard document) has been circulated to the institutions together with the NRF.

As it is a legal and binding document, it is advisable that before one signs it they should read it first. The CoG is responsible for interacting with institutions in which such agreements should be communicated with the legal principle is that the NRF does not determine institutional internal rules. If the DVC delegated his/her authority, it is not for the NRF to question who has signed the official documents. Whoever has signed should legally be authorized to sign and if the authorization has not happened that should be dealt as an internal institutional matter.

Conditions of Grant

After audit findings noted that, particularly the SARChI CoGs were signed by the DAs and not the DVCs. The electronic signature is IT related and should be verifiable, secured, and protected. However, if it is a legal and binding document, it is advisable that before one signs it they should read it first. If there are gaps in a contract, these should be communicated to the NRF for advice.

When a grantholder retires and is no longer officially associated with an institution does it change matters e.g. honorary capacity?

When a grantholder retires in most instances he/she might have a contract with an institution that is not permanent. The grant may still be transferred and the grant may continue. This is subject to the individual institution's rules. After audit findings noted that, particularly the SARChI CoGs were signed by the DAs and not the DVCs. The electronic signature is IT related and should be verifiable, secured, and protected. However, if it is a legal and binding document, it is advisable that before one signs it they should read it first. The legal principle is that the NRF does not determine institutional internal rules. If the DVC delegated his/her authority, it is not for the NRF to question who has signed the official documents. Whoever has signed should legally be authorized to sign and if the authorization has not happened that should be dealt as an internal institutional matter.

Progress Reports

As the APRs are submitted to the NRF the NRF should read and scrutinize the APRs by the Funding Domain colleagues and not by GMSA. Some APRs that are for multi-year grants go to the FE division in which an independent panel may review them. With the new progress reports it will be a little bit easier when reporting as they will consume less time to review.

MFAAs

The CoG template (standard document) has been circulated to the institutions together with the NRF. All the MFAAs were sent to the DVCs or the equivalent (CEOs/DCEOs/Directors of Research). The NRF will send new MFAAs to all DVCs/DCEOs/Senior DA. The NRF thus requested that delegates should advise who should receive the MFAAs as the document cannot be sent to everyone. Institutions that have not sent their signed MFAAs are urged to sign and submit them to the NRF.

What is the NRF’s legal capacity regarding the change in Incentive Funding Instrument?

The NRF is an agency of government and not all expenses or expenditure in direct and indirect expenditure in the management of the enterprise and the NRF. The NRF due to relationship management is able to negotiate contractually certain areas in the MFAAs. This is done through consultation as their implications involve and reference must be made to the MFAAs and CoG.

Management of Funds

The PFMA does not apply to universities. There is a requirement that the NRF will not allow an institutional partner to approve business rules based on an example.

The NRF relies on institutional arrangements. Institutions have rules and regulations that should be referred to and when receiving a grant such rules should be applied. However, if a researcher justifies that they cannot fly 16 hours abroad via the economy class for health reasons then that should be a decision that the institution should take in order to pay for it. If that can be allowed using institutional funding, that should also be applied when using NRF/General funding as a matter of principle.