

**DST-NRF CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN FOOD SECURITY**  
**REPLY TO MID-TERM REPORT**  
**Factual errors and misunderstandings**

## **1 Overall Comment**

Although there is an opportunity for a management response to the final mid-term Review Report, some observations are needed to introduce this response concerning the factual errors and misunderstandings in the draft report. Some of these issues arise from the omission of evidence that has been provided in the Centre of Excellence's (CoE-FS) Annual Reports, Business Plans and Self-Assessment Report, and some from the very short interview time allocated to the core research team of the Centre.

We note that the following was well received by the reviewers

- (i) The CoE-FS has laid down the foundation for food security issues in South Africa to be dealt with in a more coherent manner
- (ii) UWC and UP complement each other in their research and this was a good approach
- (iii) Some programmes are doing well in terms of research and addressing the FS issue
- (iv) The CoE-FS has made progress in laying the foundation for transdisciplinary projects
- (v) The CoE-FS is training citizens from the rest of Africa
- (vi) The favourable gender composition of researchers and students

There are many useful suggestions in the report that will be considered. For example, the suggestion on page 41 that funds be set aside for an annual conference will be immediately accommodated in the 2019 Business Plan. We agree that there is a need for joint publications, indeed there are already plans for UP and UWC researchers to work on a publication on perception of the SMART food project. We note the issue of joint supervision: Prof Ludidi and Prof Emmambux are already due to co-supervise a student working on marama bean in 2019. The student may work on the biotechnology aspect at UWC, then work on the physicochemical quality of the tuber and grain at UP. UP is also already co-supervising students at the University of Fort Hare. The suggestion that climate change be given more attention is noted: discussions have recently been renewed with the Centres of Excellence working in this field following a workshop organised by the Director in his capacity as the Chair of the ASSAf Committee on Science for the Reduction of Poverty and Inequality. This also applies to the comments concerning land reform and we intend increasing our work in this area. We note the suggestion of fewer projects, and we have already begun a process of consolidation. Finally, we have taken note about the quantity of publications, that some do not acknowledge the support of the CoE-FS, and that the Impact Factor of journals may provide an indicator of quality in some fields of study. The

identification of Projects that have low publication rates is also noted, and we will investigate the reasons for this.

It would be helpful if the Panel could provide further suggestions as to how the Host universities could better collaborate, by listing and clearly identifying some of the issues that arose from the interviews and documentation. Some of the issues mentioned in the report will inevitably arise given the different approaches, processes and systems of two institutions seeking to collaborate. The CoE-FS cannot alter these, and as a result, arrangements have to be negotiated.

Advice on ways to improve the translational and implementation aspects of the research mentioned on page 15 would also be welcomed as we have identified this as an issue to be addressed in the 2019 Business Plan. Finally guidance would be welcomed on managing the inherent tensions and trade-offs between excellence defined as scientific output, excellence as defined as transformation and excellence as defined by societal impact.

Any review must deal with the limited time available for the review panel to familiarise itself with the extensive documentation that is available. This CoE is a complex structure dealing with a complex and contested subject, and the problems of partnering mentioned by the report are indeed an on-going concern.

The comments below have been prepared by the CoE-FS Management Committee and commented on by the Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Research and Innovation). They are intended to correct errors that have inevitably emerged from the process, and especially from the very brief interviews that were conducted with the stakeholders, some of which were plagued by technical communication problems. The overuse of Skype resulted in many stakeholders reporting that they were unable to hear the questions or the responses of other on the Skype call. Many of the student interviews and some stakeholder interviews were cancelled to accommodate the delays arising from communication problems.

All of the comments provided below can be substantiated by careful reading of the four Business Plans and four Annual Reports that have been submitted, as well as the Self-Assessment Report, Organisation Strategy, Communication and Engagement Strategy, Committee Charters and the additional material that was requested during the review. All documents and correspondence mentioned can be provided on request.

## **2 Structure of the CoE-FS**

The structure of the CoE-FS appears to still be unclear to the Panel and this is a source of error throughout the report. This is important since each CoE has a different and unique structure and there is no prescribed arrangement that the CoE-FS is obliged to comply with. For clarity, the structure of the CoE-FS is restated.

The funding structure of the NRF grant means that research activities in the CoE-FS are largely undertaken by post-graduate students, most of whom are registered in single discipline departments. Their supervisors are designated as the Project Leaders of the CoE-FS to whom Awards are given, and with whom Project Agreements are entered. Project Leaders are responsible for ensuring that

students graduate within the required time frame, that their work contributes towards the research questions being interrogated by the CoE-FS, and that the results of their work are published. Project Leaders must submit Annual Reports on progress and expenditure. Smaller sub-projects may be established as Work Packages. These follow the same procedures no matter the size of the grant.

Programme Principal Investigators (PPIs) fully participate in the setting of the trans-disciplinary research agenda and the management of the CoE-FS. They identify research projects that when synthesised, will address the research questions of the CoE-FS as set out in the Research Plan prepared in 2014. Following the initial open call for proposals issued in 2014, and the advice of the SteerCom in the November 2014 meeting, PPIs seek out potential researchers and students to form a team who can be brought into the CoE-FS with viable projects. Each year, the PPIs motivate for these new projects as funds become available. These are reviewed by all members of the PPI group, and by existing Project Leaders who are invited to the annual planning Lekgotla. When consensus is reached, existing and new projects are compiled into an annual Business Plan.

The selection of the PPIs is done by the DVCs with the agreement of the Director and Co-Director. The criteria used are demonstrated disciplinary expertise, an extensive track record of grant management, equity between the host and co-host and transformation. The PPIs form the Management Committee (MANCO) of the CoE-FS and meetings are currently held every second month at which each PPI presents a summary of progress. The support staff and the Centre Manager also present reports.

The Business Plan is submitted by the Directors to the CoE-FS's Steering Committee (SteerCom) for recommendation to the NRF. The SteerCom is made up by the Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs) of the host universities, the NRF, representatives of DST, and at least four independent members. All final decisions relating to grant allocations, procedures and progress are approved by the NRF following their recommendation by the SteerCom. A sub-Committee of this SteerCom has been established specifically to deal with matters of compliance. Charters for both the Steering Committee and the sub-Committee have been prepared and approved by the NRF. The SteerCom receives two lengthy reports each year with supporting documentation: a Business Plan in November and an Annual Report in March. This Committee, not the Directors or PPIs, recommends approval of projects to the NRF who make the final decision. The minutes of the SteerCom (available on request) show that this Committee has referred proposals back for further work.

The processes and procedures described above and reiterated below follow the criteria, guidelines and conditions as set out in the Framework for the Establishment of DST – NRF Centres of Excellence and the accompanying Operations Handbook, both versions published in 2014.

Day-to-day management is undertaken by the Director and co-Director, with the support of a Centre Manager, a Finance Officer and an administrator. The Centre Manager is an academic appointment whose primary role is to ensure compliance with the Project Agreements, NRF rules regarding students, and university rules

regarding scholarships. Procedural decisions regarding students are dealt with by the Centre Manager unless the matter needs to be referred to the Director, and ultimately to the SteerCom. The Finance Officer, in consultation with the university administrator concerned with NRF grants, deals with procurements, grant transfers, adherence to NRF and university rules, and the annual internal and external audit of the grant. All processes and procedures are documented in the Organisational Guidelines, a detailed document that is updated each year and submitted to the SteerCom for approval. This document is made available to all grant-holders. This important document that ensures that the allocation and use of resources is transparent and coherent only briefly mentioned by the Review Report as a 'rulebook' on page 16. It is correct that some Project Leaders have not adhered properly to the Organisational Guidelines, and action has been taken to deal with this, in one instance elevating to the issue to the level of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the university concerned. In three instances, funds have had to be returned, and reassigned. In all instances, unspent funds are returned, and reassigned if this is permitted by the NRF rules.

A biannual Lekgotla is held in May and September of each year that is attended by the PPIs, and since 2016, Project Leaders have been invited to attend these meetings and to participate in the debates. The DVCs usually attend at least part of these meetings. The first meeting is used to discuss findings and their contribution towards the six research questions that guide the CoE-FS, and their synthesis. The second is used to review proposals for the forthcoming year and to agree on a selection of new projects and the budget allocation. The debates are robust with the key issues relating to adherence to the field of study and the research questions of the CoE-FS, value for money, contribution to transformation, and contribution to excellence. We do not make use of a scorecard, and have opted instead for a process of debate, rebuttal, revision and consensus. It is acknowledged that not all PPIs are comfortable with this approach, and these planning meetings are seen by some as being hostile. We may review this approach from 2019.

Since 2014, seven meetings have been held and since 2017, we have made use of an external facilitator to assist the process. Minutes of these meetings (available on request) show that about one third of proposals that have been reviewed at these meetings have been rejected, mostly because they were out-of-scope or due to budgetary constraints.

All records of the CoE-FS are placed into a comprehensive digital filing system in addition to the conventional paper file. All Directors, PPIs, Project Leaders, members of the SteerCom and research managers at the host institution have access to the digital system if they request. All meetings are recorded and archived, all meetings are minuted, all funds at UWC are externally audited according to statutory regulations for public entities, and a selection of projects at the host universities are also externally audited. Annual Reports are placed on the CoE-FS Website.

### 3 Coherence of Projects

The mid-term review reaches the conclusion that programmes have arisen in a haphazard fashion, that there is a lack of transparency and a risk of selection bias and thus the promotion of individual agendas. No evidence is offered to support this claim and it is unclear how the Panel reached this conclusion. Confusingly, later in the Review Report (page 21-23), a clear and accurate summary of the theoretical framing of the CoE-FS is provided. Perhaps this statement arises from the concerns of specific dissatisfied applicants or former members of the CoE-FS. This is to be expected in any grant-making programme but this perspective is not accurate and needs to be corrected. Indeed, since the SteerCom submits all recommended programmes to the NRF for final approval and funding, a statement of this nature questions both the integrity of the custodians of the CoE overall as well as that of the publicly-funded implementing agency, the NRF.

On page 9, the Review Report usefully and correctly summarises the differences between the approaches of the original proposals submitted to the NRF by UP and UWC, but later suggests that these differences undermine the operation of the CoE-FS. Differences between the disciplines represented in the CoE-FS do indeed present challenges, as do differences in the ontological framing of the problem, and it is acknowledged that there are important operational matters that require attention. However the differences in epistemology and approach are overstated.

From the outset, both research groups recognised the importance of all four dimensions of the conventional definition of food security, while perhaps placing differential emphasis on these. In line with the literature, a more appropriate characterisation of the UWC approach may be the emphasis placed on Agency and the power relations that perpetuate marginalisation and powerlessness within the food system rather than a humanitarian focus. UP does not simply emphasize food production (this aspect in fact has always been led by a UWC PPI), and rather emphasizes processing opportunities and food safety hazards along food value chains. Other units at UP concerned with food security, but not included in the CoE-FS, place emphasis on different components.

We confirm that the summary of the CoE-FS's approach that is contained in the Review Report on pages 21-23 is correct, and this is used to guide our activities and decisions. A working paper prepared by the Director (CoE Working Paper 2) provides a more detailed and theory based analysis, proposing food security as an impure public good problem arising from a complex socio-ecological system (SES). This arose from the debates of our annual meetings and a request from our Steering Committee and it explains and motivates the philosophical framework adopted by the CoE. The Working Paper was presented as a plenary paper in the GFS conference where it was well received, and a reduced version is currently under review for publication. The attention of the Panel was drawn to this Working Paper although is not referred to in the Review Report.

The Research Plan, this Working Paper, the Organisational Guidelines and the processes described are comprehensive and detailed, as are the descriptions of the Projects in the Business Plan and Annual Reports. Their selection is the

result of frequent meetings between the PPIs and careful interrogation by the SteerCom.

#### 4 Selection of Projects

The statement that there has been no open call for proposals on page 15 is incorrect, and this is recognised by the Review Report in its next sentence.

In 2014, following the well-publicised launch of the CoE-FS and a public call, a database of interested researchers was established (2015 Business Plan, pages 4-5; 2014 Annual Report, page 18). Researchers that were registered in the database were invited to submit concept notes that addressed the seven research questions of the CoE-FS. The eight PPIs nominated by UWC and UP to serve on the Centre's Management Committee (MANCO), and the Director and co-Director evaluated these following the first CoE-FS Lekgotla in June, 2014. A scoring system was used for this purpose and the proposals were debated at the August and September 2014 MANCO meeting and via email conversations. Forty concept notes were submitted, and eventually 28 projects were selected (2015 Business Plan, page 5). The final selection was agreed to in the October 2014 Management Committee meeting before being submitted for approval as the 2015 Business Plan to the CoE-FS SteerCom in November, 2014.

The majority of these projects were implemented from 2015 until 2017 and contain students registered for 2-3 years. They account for almost 80% of the funds that have been allocated by the CoE-FS from its NRF funds since the launch. This means that the majority of projects funded by the CoE-FS were awarded following an open call and systematic peer review.

A similar open call has not yet been re-issued and the SteerCom advised that the PPIs should be more active in the selection and management of projects. As a result, as projects end and funds are released, additional projects have been identified by the PPIs, debated in the Annual Lekgotla as described above, proposed to the SteerCom, and recommended by SteerCom to the NRF. To be considered these projects must address the research questions and values of the CoE-FS.

The Research Plan was prepared in April 2014, and approved by the NRF lists the four themes and eight original programmes of the CoE-FS: **Food Creation** (comprising Production and Processing & preservation); **Food Distribution** (comprising Markets & Livelihoods and Value Chains); **Food Consumption** (comprising Health & Nutrition and Consumer Choice & Behaviour) and **Food Governance** (comprising Food Safety and Policy & Rights). Following the recommendation of the first SteerCom meeting, these eight were reduce to six. **Innovation** which still focuses on production and processing; **Pathways to the plate**, which deals with consumer choice and behaviour; **Systems**, which deals with markets, livelihoods and value chains; **Safety** and **Policy**. Given the specific concerns relating to child malnutrition, a Programme on **Children** was developed. External funding has supported the addition of further programmes in social protection and the humanities. This structure does not replicate those used by the

UN: this is a deliberate choice given the critique of these approaches that is well developed in the literature.

The suggestion that there has been a change in the focus since the resignation of Prof. Hendriks is incorrect, as is the suggestion on page 14 that the themes have been revised and expanded as new collaborators have joined. The research questions are unchanged since the formation of the CoE-FS. The approval of the Research Plan and the current Programmes were selected while Prof. Hendriks was still co-Director, and the majority of the current Projects were commissioned prior to 2016. The Programmes were revised in 2015 on the recommendation of the SteerCom, and following an intensive theory-driven three-day Lekgotla facilitated by Prof. Hendriks in June 2015. These revisions were then approved by the SteerCom in 2016. The decision to move away from open-calls to greater direction and management by the PPIs was taken following a recommendation by the SteerCom in November 2014. This was done with the approval of the NRF and DST, noting there is no requirement from the NRF for open calls, and that there is precedent of similar approaches being adopted by other CoEs.

The two expansions, Social Protection and Humanities, were deliberately selected as important themes to be included, and research proposals were prepared that specifically targeted these themes for funding. In both instances, engagement with the PPI and SARChI chair holder commenced before the award of the grant.

#### **Allocation of funds**

The statement that funds were initially evenly split over five programmes (page 15) is incorrect. The funds have always been allocated on the basis of demonstrated relevance, although we have striven to give equal priority to all Programmes and equity between the host universities. The statement that child nutrition receives a larger allocation than others is also incorrect. The actual allocation can be derived from the Business Plans and is as follows. The SARChI and Mellon funded projects have been excluded as these have their own predetermined sources of funding.

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Funds allocated since 2014 (Rand)</b>	<b>% share</b>
Children	6 060 000	11,5
Innovation	17 627 410	33,4
Plates	5 705 556	10,8
Policy	5 912 284	11,2
Safety	9 833 000	18,7
Systems	7 584 500	14,4

The largest programme has been Innovation that comprises two components, production and processing. Laboratory related research has received a larger share of the funding of the CoE-FS, accounting for more than half of the CoE-FS grant.

## 5 Research Output

The Review Report raises the concern that the research output of the CoE-FS is low relative to the monetary investment without providing a benchmark for this comparison. It goes on to note that some Projects have published only one paper, and that research output is well below target. While publication rates can always be improved, and it is the prerogative of the Review Panel to recommend further development, this is factually incorrect.

The targets of any CoE funded by the NRF are set by the Service Level Agreement (SLA) that is agreed to between the CoE, the SteerCOM and the NRF. This SLA is tailored to each Stage/Gate through which the CoE passes. The Review Report makes no mention of either the SLA or the Stage/Gate process: an important omission in a review of an NRF funded CoE.

The COE-FS has consistently exceeded or met its SLA target for publications in each stage.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Target for accredited journal articles/ chapters/books</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
Stage 1 Forming	$\geq 2$	31
Stage 2 Storming	$\geq 25$	24
Stage 3 Norming	$\geq 20$	57
Stage 4 Performing	$\geq 160$	n/a

In discussing output, the Review Report makes use of the number of Projects as the denominator. This is not an especially meaningful approach since Projects vary considerably in size, purpose and student composition. One option might be to look at the number of publications achieved by each Programme or PPI. In that case, assuming that only Projects funded from 2014-2016 would have had the opportunity to start and complete their research, and thus be in a position to publish, the output amounts to 90 accredited journal papers, or 3.75 per PPI per year.

Another meaningful comparison would be against the number of journal articles published by the CoE-FS's peers during their Forming to Norming stages. According the NRF's 2018 CoE Profiles publication, eight CoE's were established between 2004 and 2006, which produced 765 peer reviewed articles: an average of 95.6 publications per CoE, marginally higher than the CoE-FS. The same calculation can be performed for the number of post-graduate students that have been supported. The average for the first eight CoE's between 2004 and 2006 was 175. The CoE-FS has supported 158 between 2014 and 2017.

Assessing the direct results of the investment in the CoE-FS is methodologically challenging without a counterfactual. As the Review Report notes, it is difficult to assess what would have happened in the absence of the investment. This applies to any of the investments undertaken by the NRF, and indeed any government, and is not specific to the CoE-FS. However, in an attempt to clarify the return on



investment, the following estimate is provided that has made use of the Department of Higher Education’s budget grants for Teaching Outputs, Research Outputs and Teaching Inputs. This calculation can be provided on request and takes account of the grants received for registrations, graduations and publications.

<b>Source of income</b>	<b>Total (Rand)</b>
Publications	8 270 588
Honours students	1 984 562
Masters students	14 162 535
PhD students	18 011 832
Direct funding incl. university contributions	38 761 401
<b>Total</b>	<b>81 190 918</b>

Given that the investment by the NRF into the CoE-FS has been R66 805 329, and treating all additional direct funding as further inputs rather than a benefit that has resulted from the CoE-FS, this yields an internal rate of return that is greater than had the host universities banked the full value of the NRF grant at the current repo rate. This excludes the indirect benefits of the investment, including the human capital of the students and researchers, the research findings and any policy or behaviour change that might have occurred as a result of the Centre’s activities.

## **6 Impact**

The report selectively mentions contributions of individuals to national planning activities, and concludes that there is been little impact on policy. While impact of policy is difficult to determine in any context, the CoE-FS Directors and Programme it is incorrect that there has not been engagement in key national policies concerning food security. The Directors and PPIs have extensively engaged with different levels and areas of policy formation. This information is contained in the Annual Reports and the Self-Assessment Report, and we offer the following examples as evidence:

Prof. Devereux, the CoE’s SARChI was a co-opted member of the Department of Social Development’s Food and Nutrition Security Technical Working Group in the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (NFNSP) process in 2016/17. He also chaired a Commission at government’s National Food and Nutrition Security Indaba in January 2017 that reviewed the operationalisation of strategic objective 3 in the NFNS Policy (‘Expand targeted social protection measures and sustainable livelihood programmes’). This also speaks to the Report’s recommendation (page 48) that the CoE-FS should focus on ‘Food Security and Social Protection’. The SARChI explicitly does this already.

The Director, former co-Director and PPIs were integrally involved in the development of the Western Cape Food and Nutrition Strategy which is intended to implement the NFNS, feeding research findings and expert advice into the

process. The Policy Programme Principal Investigator and the SARChI continue to be involved in the implementation process along with several Project Leaders. This can be confirmed by Mr. Tristan Görgens, the Acting Director for Human Development, Policy and Strategy Unit in the Office of the Premier.

The Director chaired the Statistics Council sub-Committee on social statistics from 2014 to 2018. This is the committee to which the General Household Survey reports. The inclusion of food security indicators in the GHS that are mentioned in the Review Report, as well as in the Community Survey of 2017, the Living Conditions Survey of 2015 and the Demographic and Health Survey (SA-DHS) of 2016 that are not mentioned, were all discussed and approved in this committee. The Director also directly communicated with the project leader of the SA-DHS at the MRC proposing a list of food security indicators. The former Chair of the Statistics Council, Mr. Ben Maphela can confirm this, as can the former Statistician General, Mr Pali Lehohla, and the SA-DHS project leader, Dr. Deborah Bradshaw.

The Director and a post-doctoral fellow submitted a research report to the World Bank's South African Poverty Assessment on non-monetary indicators of poverty. This report focused on food security indicators including child malnutrition. The input of this report is acknowledged in the Poverty Assessment and presentations were given to the National Planning Commission on food insecurity. The country representative of the World Bank, Ms. Precious Zikhali, can confirm this.

In 2015, the Plates Programme completed a study funded by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) concerning mandatory fortification evaluation. The findings from this study have contributed towards legislation that is being formulated concerning the addition of cake flour to the products being fortified.

Also in 2015, the Food Systems Programme made a submission to the terms of the Competition Commission's inquiry into concentration in the grocery retail sector. It also participated in subsequent hearings in 2017. The inquiry is still in process and the Commission's final report and recommendations have not yet been made public. Submissions were also made in 2017 to the Plant Improvement Bill (B8B-2015) and the Plant Breeder's Rights Bill (B11-2015) with a view to ensuring that they were not framed in ways that would disadvantage small-scale farmers and informal seed markets.

The Food Systems Programme and the Policy Programme were also instrumental in convening multi-stakeholder groupings that engage with a wide range of local government stakeholders (at the municipal, metro and province levels). This happened in both the Western Cape and Gauteng, not only in the Western Cape as per the Midterm report. This included representatives of departments from all levels of government, civil society and academia to deliberate on key issues of food security governance, resulting in the emergence of a collaborative food policy and governance research agenda informed by the local context, needs and capabilities of the two city-regions. The Policy Programme is now collaborating with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) who are co-funding research activities in 2019.

On page 38, "ongoing communication with the local government in the Western Cape" is correct, but understates the extent of policy engagement and influence.

In 2017, the CoE-FS established a working group on school feeding (that included researchers from UWC and UP) which developed into an informal community of practice (cf. page 42) and resulted in a National Workshop on 'School Feeding in South Africa' which was co-hosted by the CoE-FS and the Western Cape Government. Dr Wanga Zembe presented results of her research in a meeting with policy makers (DSD and City of Cape Town) and civil society on Early Childhood Development held at the Medical Research Council in May 2017.

Prof Vicky Lambert and her research group at UCT provided evidence from her research project on the consumption of sugary drinks in South African children and adults for a parliamentary hearing on the sugar tax. She also participated in a national task force in formulating the South African National Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Obesity: 2015-2020. The analysis on child malnutrition and food insecurity were included into the 2017 South African Early Childhood Review, a publication that provides a statistical overview of the situation of young children in South Africa.

Details of these and other interventions including the Competition Commission, the Agricultural Research Council, addressing a parliamentary session on 3 February 2016 on food security regarding the status of Food Safety in South Africa, presenting to the annual strategy meeting of the Department of Trade and Industry, and involvement in the Department of Social Development's Technical Working Group on Food and Nutrition Security can be found on pages 35-38 of the self-assessment report. Most recently, and as mentioned to the Panel in the interviews, the Woolard Panel on Recommendations on Zero Ratings in the Value-Added Tax System cites a research report produced by the Child Programme in the evidence put forward to zero rate flour and not to zero rate baby formula.

The CoE-FS does not confine itself to service rendering only to government, nor do we believe that we should uncritically engage with policy since these policies may be contribute towards food insecurity. As such, we will not always be a "trusted partner" of government, this will depend on what the government's policy and approach is. The situation of CAPRISA during the Mbeki era of AIDs denialism is an example.

Inputs have also been made to the South African Economic Justice Network, the Philippi Horticultural Area Food & Farming Campaign and the Science for the Reduction of Poverty and Inequality Committee of ASSAf. Dr Rihlat Said Mohamed presented on stunting, nutrition and health in South Africa at the Mandela Initiative - "The Road to Zero Stunting in South Africa: An Action Dialogue" (16th-19th June 2017) and Prof. May and Dr. Jonah made a written submission. Many more examples can be found in the sections of the Annual Reports dealing with KPA 4 and KPA 5.

Finally the CoE conducted research, and provided input concerning the minimum cost of a nutritious food basket to the NRF to assist in the revision of the bursaries paid to all NRF supported students. This specific intervention has not been included in the Annual Report.

## 7 Special Projects

It is apparent that there is confusion over the “Special Projects” component of the Business Plans, budget and expenditure that conflates three different issues. As a result, the suggestion that the Special Projects did not pass through any process of review, and that the allocation was not transparent, is incorrect.

This confusion perhaps arises from the use of a mid-term data-base that was provided to the Panel on 13 August 2018 following a request for additional information. This database was prepared by the Centre Manager for her internal use for project monitoring and to assist with the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report. The coding of the information in the database has not passed through the same review process as the Annual Reports, Business Plans and Self-Assessment Report and may contain errors. It was intended to supplement these documents and not to be used as the principal source of data.

In the first case, Special Projects are crosscutting activities intended to bring together the themes and to promote the trans-disciplinary goals of the CoE-FS, and thus do not fall into a specific programme. Support for conferences is an example of such activities. During the period April 2014 to March 2018, the funds allocated to such Special Projects amounted to R1 657 499 of the R62 350 441 budget provided to all CoE-FS projects. These funds were assigned to the following projects.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Collaborating institution</b>	<b>Year allocated</b>	<b>Amount (Rand)</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> World Public Health Nutrition Conference	UWC	2016	250 000
SAAFost Conference	UP	2017	50 000
Meeting of the African Academies of Science	ASSAF	2016	250 000
UWC International Food Fair	UWC	2016	57 499
3 <sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Global Food Security	UP	2017	250 000
2 <sup>nd</sup> Food Safety and Security Conference	UP	2018	250 000
Africa Day Celebration	UWC	2017	50 000
Support for Postgraduate resource centre	UWC	2017	50 000
STATA Lab Assistants	UWC	2017	20 000
Neighbourhood Farm: School Project	UWC	2017	80 000
Neighbourhood Farm: Media support	Neighbourhood Farms	2017	50 000
Agricultural Transformation in Africa Project	Cornell University	2017	300 000
<b>Total</b>			<b>1 657 499</b>

These allocations include funds received from the NRF for the CoE-FS and for the SARCHI in Social Protection for Food Security, the funds received from the Mellon Foundation for the Humanities for Food Security, the direct contributions made by

the collaborating universities, and a small number of grants made to the CoE-FS that are administered by the CoE-FS's finance manager. Direct funding raised by the PIs of the CoE-FS, such as those from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and GAIN are not included in this figure.

Of the total, R1 050 000 was allocated to support five important conferences that established the CoE-FS's name in the national and international food security community. Each of these conferences was motivated for, and budgeted in the relevant Business Plan, reviewed by the Steering Committee and approved by the NRF before any expenditure occurred.

In the case of four of these conferences the funds were used to provide bursaries to students to ensure their participation. In each case, the collaborating universities were asked to submit the names and details of students to the CoE-FS, and invitations were placed on the Website and social media sites. A scoring process was followed in which financially needy students from the designated groups were given priority. Lists of the students who applied and who were awarded can be provided. In each case, a PPI or the Co-Director took responsibility for the activity, an Award Letter was issued, a Project Agreement was entered into with that person, and an Annual Report including a financial report was submitted.

In the case of the biannual Meeting of Academies of Science of Africa (MASSAF), the grant was used to cover the costs of a special session on food security. The Award was made in the name of the ASSAf Chief Executive Officer who provided the Annual Report and financial information. This was part of the CoE-FS's strategy to broaden our Africa networking.

Of the remaining funds, R370 000 are a leverage grant received from Cornell University to advance agricultural transformation in Africa. R300 000 has been transferred to UP to facilitate the work of Prof. Swanepoel, and R70 000 has been allocated to support the work of the UNESCO Chair in African Food Systems. At the time of the self-assessment report, these funds had not been expended.

The remaining R300 000 has been allocated to small projects and support activities at UWC, of which R220 000 were paid from funds provided by the 10% direct funding provided by UWC to the CoE-FS. All such projects, irrespective of size, are provided with Award Letters, Project Agreements and must submit Annual Reports on the expenditure and the deliverables.

The second confusion concerns the roll forward of unspent funds (referred to as carryover in the review). The review states that these were paid into a 'Director's Fund', once again perhaps a misunderstanding arising from the constraints of the short interviews. This is incorrect.

Roll forward funds are released by the NRF into the allocated grant entity and not a 'Director's Fund'. The roll forward amount forms part of the audited balance of the ensuing year. To do otherwise would be counter to the NRF's policies and guidelines concerning the roll forward process and the internal audit requirements of UWC, and this would have been identified during the audits of the CoE-FS that have annually taken place since 2015.

The large carry forward mentioned in the Review arose and was dealt with as follows. As the CoE-FS was established in April 2014, the first Lekgotla was held in June, 2014, and the first call for projects was completed in August, 2014, there was a significant under-expenditure of R9 870 000 in this year. A request was submitted to the SteerCom in November, 2014 to support a request to the NRF to roll forward this amount in the 2015 Business Plan (page 1). This meant that expenditure on the projects budgeted and approved by the SteerCom in November 2014 could still be implemented in 2015. This is also the process that has been followed each November since the establishment of the CoE-FS. There is no Director's Fund, none of the four audits of the expenditure at UWC have identified such a fund and there is no mention of such a fund in the Annual Reports.

It is possible that this misunderstanding refers to the limited funds that are not taken up by researchers or students each year and which cannot be included in the carry forward. This occurs when a project with student bursaries is budgeted for in the Business Plan, but the researcher decides not to proceed following the receipt of the Award Letter. This may be due to capacity constraints, or that alternative funds are raised or a student is budgeted for but does not register. In these cases, and following discussion with the Finance Manager and PPIs, the Director has reassigned the funds to the existing approved projects in order to provide additional student bursaries. In each case, a supplementary Award Letter is issued, the Project Agreement is amended, and the expenditure and outcomes are reported in the Annual Report. This process is fully transparent, follows the Ministerial Guidelines for the award of bursaries and has never been questioned by the SteerCom, NRF or the internal or external auditors.

Finally, it is possible that the Review panel understood the 10% direct contribution that has been paid by UWC since the start of the CoE-FS to be a fund that is spent at the Director's discretion. This is not so. The Director submits a detailed annual budget to the DVC-Research and Innovation at UWC for consideration. The UWC Executive Committee then approves this and expenditure against this cost centre must be reported on and may be audited. This budget is reflected in the Business Plan that is submitted to the SteerCom. A similar procedure is being established at UP.

The Mid-term Review raises a specific concern about the funds provided to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) for the analysis of the South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (SANHANES) stating that it is an example of a project that was funded without broad consultation with the CoE-FS management committee. This is a misunderstanding perhaps arising from the brief nature of the conversation during the review period, and it is incorrect.

The use of SANHANES as a source of data was first mooted in the 2014 Business Plan (page 15). The 2015 Business Plan (page 25, and 31-32) provides a detail discussion of the intended analysis of these data, as well as of the Prospective Urban and Rural Epidemiological (PURE) study. The SANHANES work package is described in the 2016 Business Plan (page 41) and the HSRC is identified as the collaborating partner as is the intention to fund an intern at the HRSC under the supervision of a senior researcher, Dr. Jaya Josie (page 42). The budget, and the

leverage contribution of the HSRC is noted on page 43 and in the Budget submitted to the NRF. In each case, these Business Plans were reviewed by the operational sub-committee of the CoE-FS's SteerCom, and reported on to the full SteerCom. This Committee recommended each of these Business Plans to the NRF for approval. The intended use of SANHANES is also mentioned in the 2015 and 2017 Annual Reports. It has also been discussed at each Lekgotla (recordings can be provided on request).

That many researchers believe that the SANHANES data should be in the public domain is not a matter that the CoE-FS can deal with. The inclusion of a black South African intern who has received mentorship both by the HSRC and a post-doctoral fellow in the CoE-FS is in line with the CoE-FS's objectives and values. In addition to the waiver of indirect costs, the HSRC supported a post-doctoral fellow in the CoE-FS and two students to attend the BRICS & African Development Conference's session on Health Services in mid 2018. The CoE-FS considers the HSRC to be an important part of the South African research infrastructure, and along with the other research councils, an essential collaborating partner. As such it must be emphasised that although we were informed that the HSRC could not make the SANHANES micro-data available to us at this stage, the HSRC did not require payment for the use of the data. The inclusion of such a statement reflects negatively on the HSRC and should be removed.

## **8 Communication**

This view of the panel that "the communications strategy does not capitalize on opportunities for media exposure" (p45) is inaccurate. It also omits submission made regarding how human capacity and budget affect how/where resources and focus are allocated to "capitalize" on media exposure.

The CoE-FS has a highly "proactive communication" function under the mandate of its Communication Manager. We make use of the strategy functions well to capitalise on opportunities for exposure. This includes proactively disseminating info related to research presentations, seminars, conferences and outputs

The Communications and Engagement Strategy includes "obvious branding" (p47) for various types of CoE-FS outputs including: working papers, annual reports, brochures & other marketing collateral, website and online media platforms. Over the last two years, most researchers now acknowledge the CoE-FS in journal publications. It must be noted that the latter often times includes acknowledgement of other funders that supported the research. In this sense, the branding or acknowledgment of the CoE-FS is "obvious" but also "shared" alongside other funders.

The Strategy outlines innovative ideas for communicating food security related messages. This includes effective use of social media platforms, not only to promote research outcomes and various CoE-FS projects, but also to showcase events and activities at the CoE-FS. There have been notable improvements to the Centre's online presence since its launch in 2014. In 2015 emphasis was placed on auditing and consolidating existing platforms to inform the strategic focus of

online communications platforms. 2016 saw the development of branded platforms and marketing tools to profile the CoE-FS. Many of these projects experienced substantial delays due largely to capacity and (human) resource constraints following the protracted student protests. Nevertheless, dissemination of research outputs was achieved through issuing press releases, newsletters and also uploading content to the website and on official social networks.

By 2017, additional online avenues i.e. YouTube & Sound Cloud were added to the suite of CoE-FS online communication platforms. These platforms, together with existing platforms, are aimed at achieving even wider communication of research to society. The Centre’s communication outputs have increased year-on-year since the communication strategy as drafted in 2015, and implemented in 2016. For example, the CoE-FS has achieved more than 200 media mentions stemming largely from proactive communication/engagement, has over 3000 social network followers on official Facebook and Twitter platforms; more than dozen videos and podcasts showcasing research programmes and events, as well as a growing mailing list through which stakeholders receive information about research and events taking place at the CoE-FS or involving CoE-FS affiliates.

<b>Media</b>	<b>Hits/Mentions 2014+2015</b>	<b>Hits/Mentions 2016</b>	<b>Hits/Mentions 2017</b>
Press releases	12	9	52
Broadcast, print, online	55	45	129
Website views	N/A	4218	5332
Facebook Group	190	258	317
Facebook Page	240	469	936
Twitter Page	245	640	1134
YouTube views	N/A	N/A	430

The CoE-FS website is continuously updated and project highlights are uploaded and updated as and when information is received from researchers and students. This is an ongoing project that has resulted in increasing page views annually.

## **9 Global and African connections**

On page 15 and again on page 20, the Report states that the CoE-FS has limited global connections, and limited connections in Africa. With no benchmark stated, the accuracy of this opinion is difficult to assess but it may be that the Panel missed the extensive lists provided in the Annual Reports.

As indicated in the Self-Assessment Report, the CoE-FS bid for, and then hosted the World Public Nutrition Conference in 2016 and the Global Food Security Conference in 2017. Neither conference is mentioned by the Review Report. We have formal collaborating agreements in place with the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the Centre for Development Research



(ZEF) at the University of Bonn, the Centre for Development Research (IIE) from the Ruhr University Bochum (RUB), Ghent University, the University of Missouri and Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia. Through these agreements and our networks, we have two internationally known scholars seconded to the CoE-FS, Dr. Bruno Losch from CIRAD and Dr. Stephen Devereux from IDS, we have hosted post-doctoral fellows from Ghent, RUB, University of Copenhagen and Missouri, and held seminars presented by scholars from many institutions including ISD, CIRAD, the City University of New York (CUNY), the Australian National University (ANU), the University College of London, the World Bank as well as by Dr. Sanjaya Rajaram, the 2014 World Food Prize Laureate.

Researchers and students from IDS have visited South Africa and contributed to the CoE-FS's SARCHI research programme, and researchers and students from UWC affiliated to the CoE-FS have visited IDS, where they delivered seminars and participated in training workshops.

The Centre is a collaborating partner in two externally funded projects in which the other partners include the University of Ghana, Makerere University, Uganda and the University of the Cape Coast in Ghana. Projects funded by the CoE-FS include research partners at ANU, the University of Sydney and CUNY in the USA.

The work of the Food Systems programme succeeded in enabling the participation in the work of the CoE-FS of the IDRC funded Hungry Cities Initiative, hosted in South Africa by the African Centre for Cities. This brings together research and policy engagement on the politics of food insecurity and urban planning rapidly urbanising centres in Africa, South America and Asia. The Plates programme received funding from the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) soon after the establishment of the CoE-FS, and in 2017, was awarded a large grant from the IDRC on Researching the Obesogenic Food Environment, which is being conducted in Ghana and South Africa.

Research reports prepared by the Directors and Principal Investigators have been submitted to the World Bank and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). We have just learnt that on the 15 October, 2018, a document based on the latter report was launched at an event of the Committee on Food Security in Rome, the highest international authority in the field.

The co-Director has formal links with the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) and US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Director represents ASSAf on International Academic Partnership (IAP): Science for Poverty Eradication Committee Conference. Other active international collaborations include the Whistler Carbohydrate Centre (USA), University of Manitoba (Canada), Research Institute Sweden (RISE). Since 2014, the Directors and Programme Principal Investigators have initiated contact with numerous international partners with the view to explore international collaborations including the Universities of Paris (Sorbonne), Peking, the Chinese Academy of Science, the African Academy of Science, Humboldt University, the University of Javaskla (Finland), and the Institute for Social Studies (Den Haag).

Through the UNESCO Chair, the CoE-FS has begun collaborations with the UNESCO Chair in the Global Food System. Both UWC and UP are members of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM),

and the Director represents the Vice Chancellor of UWC on this Forum. Joint research proposals have been submitted with research partners including from Ethiopia, Zambia, Uganda, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Tunisia, Japan, Germany, Finland, France, the UK and the USA. Currently, research projects directly or indirectly supported by the CoE-FS have been undertaken or are underway in Burundi, Ghana, Uganda, Mozambique, Tunisia, Libya and Zimbabwe.

The SteerCom currently includes the Chair of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on global food security, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Global Alliance on Nutrition, who is also the most recent laureate of the World Food Prize.

Details of all of these connections can be found in Annual Reports dealing with KPA 4 and KPA 5.

## **10 Networks and Community Outreach**

On page 41 and on page 42, the report states that networks between the CoE-FS and NGOs are not clear and that co-design methods are useful in building stronger networks. In addition on p 42 it is suggested that there are opportunities for the CoE-FS to be involved in Communities of Practice. The Panel appear to have missed that numerous activities within the CoE-FS involve NGOs and CSOs that are mentioned in the Annual Reports.

For example, the Food Systems Programme and the Policy Programme have convened regular stakeholder meetings which include groups such as: Philippi Horticultural Association; Isandla Institute; Umthunzi Farming Community; Food Basket Africa; Peninsula School Feeding Programme; Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading; Food forward South Africa. The Systems, Plates and Safety programmes have been actively collaborating with the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation (SLF), and one staff member of the SLF has been given leave of absence to complete a Masters degree at UWC. In the Humanities programme, collaboration has been established with the MACProject, a community project that has hosted the creative writing students supported by the CoE-FS from the Mellon Foundation grant. The CoE-FS also has a MOU in place with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) who has acted as an intermediary to private sector food companies. The Director served on the Board of Trustees of the Strategies for Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) from 2014-2017, a period in which SPII prepared submissions to government on the "Living Wage".

Furthermore, these stakeholder meetings have evolved into a Community of Practice in the Western Cape which the CoE-FS is not only involved in, but is instrumental in steering. Another Community of Practice is in the process of forming in Gauteng. The Community of Practice in the Western Cape has become a critical knowledge-brokering platform through which networks with the community (as well as government officials, practitioners and other academics) are nurtured and stakeholders involved into the co-design of Participatory Action Research.

The national working group on school feeding that we established in 2017 was a network that included several NGOs, including the Peninsula School Feeding Association, JAM South Africa and Tiger Brands Foundation, all of whom made

presentations at the National School Feeding Workshop convened by the CoE-FS in November 2017.

## **11 Minor Comments**

Page 5: the correct acronym is ASSAf.

Page 13, para 2: There has never been a requirement that Projects or Programmes be co-led by researchers from UP and UWC, and no such requirement has ever been requested by the NRF or the SteerCom. The Organisational Guidelines provide all operational requirements that have been agreed to.

Page 14, para 2: The Panel have misunderstood the mandate given to the CoE-FS with respect to student's bursaries. While the position of this student is regrettable and we share the concerns of the Panel regarding flexibility, our understanding is that the NRF rules are clear and our approach is in line with NRF policy. The student should have made contact via her supervisor who is the Project Leader, and should have contacted the Centre Manager, a procedure that is made clear in her Award Letter. We have looked into the matter and we do not believe that we can motivate this as a special case to the NRF. The student is not financially in need, does not meet the ministerial guidelines and her supervisor was not willing to submit a motivation. We have now learnt that she has changed supervisors, and is thus no longer associated with a CoE-FS Project Leader. It should be noted that we have many students who have far more significant life events.

Page 14, para 2: the salary contribution to the co-Director was initially R200 000 and this is increased by 5% each year in line with the annual budget increase. The CoE-FS does not have information concerning the proportion of the salary that is funded.

Page 15, para 3: This is incorrect, initially the CoE-FS funding was split over eight programmes and this was reduced to six in 2015. Two additional programmes were introduced in 2015, each with their own source of funds. In addition, the majority of Projects are split over several universities. For contractual purposes, Work Packages are located at a single university.

Page 16, para 2: This recognises only the contributions from the sciences. Cutting edge approaches have also been applied in other Programmes. These include the creation of the first synthetic panel data set in South Africa, and the first use of data pooling techniques to bring together the large sample surveys conducted by Statistics South Africa, activities undertaken in the Plates and Child Programmes We have also been breaking new ground in the Policy Programme with the use of knowledge co-production methods, and visual participatory analysis. GIS mapping of food environments is already in progress in the project funded by the IDRC on obesogenic environments, and in the work of Dr. Lief Petersen, a former Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Systems Programme. The linking of the methodologies of the Humanities (theatre, symposia and creative writing) to the findings of research in the other disciplines is later described by the Review Report as innovative.

Page 16, para 3: This may be a mistake made in the interview. PPIs are expected to devote most of their available research time to CoE-FS activities. Most South African universities expect that this amount to up to 40% of the total working hours of academics.

Page 20, para 1: This sentence is unclear, and perhaps there is a word missing. However it is not correct that the CoE-FS sees UP as providing collaborating partners. Both universities are expected to perform this role, and both have contributed. This is apparent from the appendices provided in the Annual Reports.

Page 20, para 4: The Reports states that the CoE-FS needs the highest level of commitment from the collaborator. This is true, and the CoE-FS has received this commitment. The DVC's chair the biannual SteerCom meetings, and have regular meetings with the Director and co-Director. Senior academics have been assigned by the universities to serve as PPI's, giving up a considerable portion of the time to play this role. Two of these PPIs are Deputy Deans, the CoE-FS Director previously led one of UWC's flagship research centres, and a PPI currently leads the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at UWC and the former co-director led one of UP's flagship centres. Significant office space has been provided, and special concessions have been made in key areas such as the management of the website and the assignment of legal, HR and financial support staff to expedite CoE activities.

Page 23, para 3: It is not correct that climate change is not included as a research focus in the CoE-FS. All of the work in the Production component of the Innovation focuses on the adaptation of crops and livestock to climate change. This is also picked up in the Processing component that focuses on improving the contribution of crops with climate resilience attributes to food security. In addition, work in the Policy programme working on food futures seeks to improve municipal planning for climate related change. Some of the work on Safety also concerns the emergence of new hazards arising from climate change.

Page 25, para 3: The CoE-FS has not produced any 'white papers'. "Other significant conference outputs" is a term required by the NRF for reporting. It refers to oral and poster presentations.

Page 26, para 5: the report remarks that CoE-FS Working Papers are "fully funded by the Centre", without commenting on their content or relevance. All 4 Working Papers published to date focus directly on food security. The Working Papers cost nothing to produce beyond the indirect costs of the time of SARChI Chair who is the Series Editor, the reviewers and the Communications Officer.

Page 27, para 1: The report observes a "lack of joint publications between researchers at UP and UWC" [page 27]. CoE-FS Working Paper #4 (on school feeding in South Africa, Lesotho and Namibia) has co-authors from UP and UWC. As discipline specific projects end, we expect this to increase during the synthesising process.

Page 28, para 2 & 3: The CoE-FS does award bursaries according to the prescripts of the NRF, to do otherwise would be in breach of our MOU with the NRF. The Panel appear to have misunderstood a comment made in the interview, the NRF, not the CoE-FS, is considering introducing a means test for all of its

bursaries. If this is done, the CoE-FS will have to comply. Bursaries in the CoE-FS cover the following: 1 year of study for Honours, 2 years of study for Masters, 3 years of study for PhD, and two years for post-doctoral Fellows. This is in accordance with NRF policy and there are firm rules that govern the number of years which bursary holders can expect funding. No students at any university have had their bursaries revoked or suspended. All bursaries are registered on the NRF system and this would be picked up by the NRF administrative procedures. There have been delays in payments to partner universities that may have resulted in delays in disbursements to students. In most cases these arose from the protracted contractual processes, and in two cases, from industrial disputes at the partner universities.

Page 29, para 3: Statement regarding the “Graduands” file: The NRF requested that only a list of “recent” graduates be provided to them, and not all graduands, which was done on 27 July 2018. The Self-Assessment Report submitted to the NRF contained information on CoE-FS students in receipt of bursaries from all sources of funding.

Page 31, para 2: the CoE-FS is not phasing out Honours bursaries as we see this as vital to ensuring that there is a pipeline to the Masters and PhD students. The experience of the host universities is that these bursaries are critical for the retention of poorly resourced students who would otherwise end their studies.

Page 32, para 1: the Fellow’s PhD was funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). It should be noted that the NRF places restrictions on the number of non-South African students who may receive bursaries from the CoE-FS, and had indicated that these restrictions must be more rigidly adhered to.

Page 33, para 1: the post-graduate library at UWC did not have to make way for the CoE-FS offices, which took over space from a now defunct research unit. The library was converted to a work space to accommodate the increased number of PhD students, most of whom are funded by the CoE-FS.

Page 35, para 2: Although this contribution of the Panel is interesting, in the absence of the rubric used for this categorisation, it is not possible to check the accuracy of these statements. Certainly, any categorisation of what constitutes food security is open to challenge. This is especially so since this analysis appears to have only considered titles and has not looked at the abstracts of the theses. It cannot therefore be considered as being systematic. We can provide the abstracts of the completed theses should the Review Panel wish to revise this section. In the case of the students funded by the Mellon grant, there is no requirement for their thesis to be aligned with food security as they undertake a number of creative projects during their degree. In the case of students in the natural sciences, topics may be focused on their disciplinary specialisation, but will feed into a broader topic concerning food security. We request that the rubric be provided so that we can take this contribution further. It may also be helpful to identify food security related projects underway in the host universities that are funded by the CoE-FS.

Page 36, para 3 and elsewhere: the Panel interviewed a small non-random group of stakeholders. The information that is presented is thus the perceptions of

those interviewed rather than that of the organisation that they represent. Statements such as that relating to the DoH should make this clear.

Page 40, para 2: The National Development Agency (NDA) is specifically mentioned as a part of government with whom the CoE-FS has not interfaced. This is incorrect. The Director of the CoE-FS met the NDA concerning the CoE-FS on 11 October, 2017. This meeting included Mr Thami Ngwenya, the Senior Manager for Research, and Mr Ardiel Soeker from their Western Cape office. The NDA subsequently attended the GFS conference in December 2017 and at the request of the CoE-FS, sponsored a stand at the conference. We are also informed that Mr. Ngwenya has prepared a report on the CoE-FS and submitted this to the NDA executive. We have not had any follow up from the NDA in 2018 as yet. This correspondence, include emails received from Mr Ngwenya following the review can be made available.

Page 41, para 1: The Human Rights Commission (HRC) is also identified in the review report on page 41 and it is mentioned that the CoE-FS first made contact with the HRC in 2017. This is incorrect. Both the Director and former co-Director have engaged with the HRC, several times. The Director first presented at an HRC Roundtable on the Gendered Impact of the Food System in 2015, which was acknowledged by the then Deputy Chairperson, Ms. Pregs Govender.

Page 52, bullet 4: The conclusion and recommendations seem at odds with the data. The CoE-FS has had 260 media mentions since the launch, more than one mention per week. In 2017, the CoE-FS issued the 10 Food Security Newsletters in 2017, with each edition featuring three to five articles (nuggets) showcasing research findings at the CoE-FS, and distributed 52 press releases. In 2017, a total of 18 press releases were issued during the Global Food Security Conference. This is the highest number of releases distributed within a short period by the CoE-FS. In return, 30 articles/mentions were received.

Page 61, bullet 1: neither PURE nor SANHANES were special projects.