



## **Report back on the National Research Foundation (NRF) Evaluation of the CoE in Palaeosciences**

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## Executive summary

A panel of 4 Palaeoscientists met at the University of the Witwatersrand from 10-12 July 2018 to carry out a mid-term, 5-year review of the NRF Centre of Excellence in Palaeoscience (CoE-PAL). The panel interviewed in person and by Skype a wide range of CoE-PAL stakeholders, including students, post-docs, researchers, support staff as well as the director and manager. Written statements were submitted by those who were not available for interviews. The panel was impressed by the impact of the CoE-PAL, both in terms of research output and in the creation of new opportunities for students, many of whom would have otherwise never pursued a career in the palaeosciences. Outreach efforts were also impressive, with the concepts of palaeoscience presented to a large audience of mostly school learners. The panel identified several major challenges that need to be addressed in order to make the next 5-year period a success and enhance the future sustainability of palaeosciences in South Africa.

Top among these challenges is the transformation of the palaeosciences to be more representative of all South Africans. Transformation has been slow historically and, although the CoE-PAL has made progress, a more proactive approach is needed to attract and retain black South African palaeoscientists. Altering the composition of the executive committee, mentorship and support of black scientists from undergraduate to post graduate stages and a push for long-term employment opportunities are a few of the suggested tactics to promote transformation. The management of the COE-PAL has been competent, with rapid response to queries and turn-around on proposals. However, the administering of the funds needs to be more transparent, with more overseas reviewers to avoid bias or conflict of interests and feedback to those not funded. Collaboration has been good overall, but could be improved among some institutions and international collaboration could be used to leverage CoE funding to further student support and exposure. The largest, and most difficult challenge going forward is promoting the establishment of permanent employment opportunities in the palaeosciences. The trend of diminishing research and fewer curatorial positions at partner museums is of major concern and needs to be tackled by CoE-PAL in collaboration with the NRF and DST and the public in general.

## 1. Background to the evaluation

The evaluation took place at WITS Evolutionary Studies Institute (ESI) where we were very well looked after and made to feel at home. The panel met initially via a Skype session prior to the meeting and was well informed about the procedures and how to access documents via the NRF website. There were a total of two and half days of interviews with the major stakeholders and participants in CoE-PAL. The interviews took place in person, by Skype and by written statements. The panel was also given a tour of the ESI and the key facilities. The final half day was for follow-up questions to the Director and Manager of CoE-PAL, which was highly useful to the panel. The panel then met in closed discussion. A visit to the Origins Centre museum was kindly arranged at the end of the meeting for those who wanted to see it.

The arrangements for the meeting and the coordination of the interviews were all well done by the NRF staff. The NRF requested the panel's recommendations on the evaluation process since ours was the first of many CoE panels to come. We recommend that there be a speakerphone alternative to Skype, as on several occasions the Skype connection was cut repeatedly or was too difficult to hear. There needs to be a clear and respected independence of the panel, separate from the NRF support team. We stayed at the same hotel and ate meals together, which was fine, but it didn't allow for the panel to discuss proceedings independent of the views and opinions of the NRF support personnel. Perhaps this could be addressed by the NRF support team encouraging the panel to meet on their own once they understand what the NRF requires from them. If the NRF has questions it would like to ask during interviews it should do this directly and not by feeding the questions through the panel members. It would have also been useful to have a specific time slot at the beginning to allow the panel to discuss the major questions to pose to the interviewees. We managed to do this the evening before hand, but many were tired from travels and it would be better to do this on the first morning before interviews start. Finally, three days in a single room with a long line up of interviews was exhausting and it is recommended that the panel be given breaks to walk around and get some fresh air. For example, a lunch outdoors or at a different venue would have been nice rather than taking all teas and lunches in the same room as the interviews.

## 2. Evaluation questions addressed

- i. Did the CoE carry out the research proposed?
- ii. Did the CoE achieve its proposed education and training? Did it broaden and deepen the research community, particularly in terms of gender and racial diversity?
- iii. Does the CoE make its results and databases available? (Information brokerage)
- iv. Does the CoE facilitate national and international collaboration and networking?
- v. Does the CoE provide service rendering to the public and government?
- vi. Is the CoE well managed in terms of leadership, staffing, transformation and plans for the future?

## 3. Key findings

### 3.1. Did the CoE carry out the research proposed?

The CoE was highly productive in the first five years as reflected in the many publications and conference presentations. These testify to the creation of new knowledge and techniques. The CoE contributed many new and exciting results. Most researchers found that the awards granted were not always sufficient to cover their operational costs to do the proposed research (around 30% of the CoE budget goes to the funding of operational costs), but that the funds received were essential to supplement their existing funded projects or to attract additional funding and that in most cases the research could be completed. Most researchers expressed their indebtedness and gratitude to the CoE in making their programmes possible.

The Karoo fossil record is one of the key geographic advantages meant to be supported by CoE-PAL. Research output has exceeded proposed goals and several recent publications have garnered international acclaim (e.g., Gess et al. 2018). Despite the inevitable lag time, there has been notable progress in getting researchers NRF ratings since the inception of the CoE. In addition, research collaborations are extensive and demonstrate the international standing of the CoE.

The CoE has adopted as one of its key objectives recruiting the next generation of excellent researchers in palaeosciences through various mentorship programs and workshops on grant writing, research presentation, academic ethics, and Pan African Knowledge Exchange. It has succeeded to some degree in this regard even though South African black students are still lacking in the area of paleoanthropological research, a fact that is inconsistent with South Africa's rich paleoanthropological resources. The demographics of the CoE remain dominated by white South Africans and foreign postdocs/researchers.

While research output at WITS and UCT were strong, output was relatively poor at the partner museums. In large part this reflects the low numbers of researchers, '*Iziko Museum now has only 7 active researchers when before they had 27*' [Prof B Rubidge]. Low publication rates from museums are also a consequence of under-funded curators not being able to attract students, while some curators are not motivated by research goals. This has also been ascribed to the increasing burden of additional administration and bureaucracy. "*It is important to support young scientists and minimise the amount of bureaucracy involved in order to assist them to begin establishing themselves in their research*" [Dr H Robertson]. In addition, the difficulties in accessing recent research materials are a disincentive, as, for example, museums cut back on subscriptions to academic journals. This also undermines the confidence of researchers. '*Some researchers at museums don't produce research outputs and some do not even apply for funding*' [Prof B Rubidge].

### 3.2. Did the CoE achieve its proposed education and training?

Did it broaden and deepen the research community, particularly in terms of gender and racial diversity?

The CoE invested around 40% of its budget into the sponsorship of MSc and PhD bursaries, as well as post-doctoral positions. It also offered workshops on writing research proposals and

research papers that were much appreciated by the students. Many of the students interviewed claimed that they would not have pursued a research career in palaeosciences without the support from the CoE. CoE-PAL provided mentorship and Honours, Masters, and Doctoral bursaries to a number of students and showed a positive trend in increasing the number of South African black students in palaeosciences, especially females. The support of women students was generally very good and, although the number of black students supported increased over the 5-year period of the CoE, more effort is required to attract black South African students to the palaeosciences. The funding process requires reapplication each year with no guarantees of future funding and this was a source of anxiety to at least some students.

CoE funding has targeted student bursaries and secondarily provided seed funding for research operations, which the committee viewed as an appropriate balance of resources. The review process for evaluating proposals was discussed and the committee found it to be well considered and appropriate. The committee heard arguments made in favour of both expanding the number of participating institutions and not spreading itself too thin. If expansion is to take place, this should be done strategically and in reference to the recommendations made below.

Funding 3-year postdocs at CoE-affiliated natural history museums was an early initiative that was worthwhile, but cannot be sustained without appropriate museum research supervisors (i.e., curators). The majority of remaining postdocs have been based at the ESI, partly as the result of the competitive proposal process, but in the future a more even distribution of postdocs across CoE institutions should be a goal.

South African palaeontologists are recognized as leaders in Devonian, Permian-Triassic, and Triassic-Jurassic fossil research. More time is needed to see if current students and postdocs will develop into next generation of SA scientists, but the students we met were enthusiastic and looked forward to research careers in South Africa.

South African black students are cognisant of the challenges of getting jobs after graduating with MSc or PhD in Palaeosciences. Museums that are partners of the CoE do not seem to have the necessary infrastructure or open positions to absorb new graduates. This discourages a lot of South African black students from pursuing their education in palaeosciences.

### 3.3. Does the CoE make its results and databases available? (Information brokerage)

Published papers in specialised research journals are the main mechanism for making the results of the CoE available. They have also revamped their website and social media links to convey their findings to the world at large, as most people will have trouble accessing (paywalls) and understanding the specialised journal papers. They also present their results at international and national meetings. These are excellent at showcasing their results among themselves at national meetings and to the overseas community at international meetings.

The committee discussed fossil curation with Bernhard Zipfel and Sifelani Jirah. The museums affiliated with the CoE (i.e., ESI, Iziko South African Museum, National Museum, Ditsong Museum). The fossil holdings of most of these museums have generally well

developed electronic databases. In particular, Karoo fossil collections are accessible and meta-analyses of data spanning multiple collections are possible. Thus, in terms of data accessibility, museums in South Africa are comparable to those in the United States and Europe. Within each museum, certain collections have received less effort towards cataloguing and digitization (e.g., non-hominids from the Cradle of Humankind) and these will require special attention moving forward. CoE funding was discussed and would be appropriate for such projects.

One area in which museums in South Africa are lagging behind is in online (i.e., web-based) data accessibility. The electronic databases, where they do exist are not always available online from outside potential users. It is not currently possible, for example, for a researcher to query the ESI database online to find out how many fossils of a certain species are housed in that collection. Similarly, representative images of fossils are not currently available online. A new NRF initiative, the National Science Collections Facility (NSCF), will support moving museum-specific databases to a common platform (SPECIFY) and will address this shortcoming within the next year.

#### 3.4. Does the CoE facilitate national and international collaboration and networking?

The CoE does provide a network and greater sense of cohesion and identity among palaeoscientists in South Africa. In some cases the networking among partners was far better than within institutions, particularly at UCT, where few of the CoE supported researchers appear to collaborate with one another. The CoE is also active in networking and collaboration with other African countries, particularly in East Africa, which makes sense as this is the location of many key fossil sites.

Paleo-Anthropological Scientific Trust (PAST) has been an extremely useful partnering organization, with many goals that align with those of the CoE. The committee heard nothing but praise for PAST.

The committee interviewed two staff members at the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) in terms of the agency's interactions with CoE researchers and facilitation of research permits. Based on personal experience and informal discussions with CoE personnel, there is widespread dissatisfaction with SAHRA: permit requests take a long time to process, routine requests lack timely response, and the underlying legislation hinders research. In general, SAHRA staff members did not acknowledge these deficiencies, noting only their policy of a 60-day response time. On the bright side, the recent policy update of a Formation-level excavation permit is a step in the right direction.

#### 3.5. Does the CoE provide service rendering to the public and government?

The CoE is a source of new and exciting findings about South Africa's deep past. These findings impact not just South Africans but everyone in terms of understanding their origins, both in the context of the deeper tree of life and the more immediate origin of our species. The CoE has funded a number of outreach programmes and these have been very successful in reaching mostly school learners, with upwards of 400,000 learners a year. The website and social media and news outlets are the other way in which the CoE provides a service to the

public, by informing them of the latest scientific findings and what these mean in terms of our understanding of our origins.

### 3.6. Is the CoE well managed in terms of leadership, staffing, transformation and plans for the future?

The CoE is well managed. Participants were highly impressed with the personal attention they received and the speed at which funding decision were made and funds made available. The online application is straightforward and although the amount of paperwork required to submit for applications can be cumbersome it was manageable. Some researchers were concerned about the review of proposals by such a small research community and would have preferred more outside consultation of proposal reviews. Others wanted more transparency on the funding decisions made, specifically feedback on why some proposals were not funded.

The CoE has made specific efforts to sustain and support research personnel at the national museums. Museum partners of CoE-PAL include Iziko Museums (Cape Town), the National Museum (Bloemfontein), Ditsong Museum (Pretoria) and the Albany Museum (Grahamstown). It must be noted that Palaeontology Departments within the first three institutions are all managed by the Dept. Of Arts and Culture (DAC) while the Albany Museum is administered by the Dept. of Sport, Recreation Arts and Culture (DSRAC) of the Eastern Cape Government. There were many concerns about the museums expressed during the interviews. One major concern was that current museum directors have little understanding of research and of the scientific disciplines they manage. *“The key problem is the downplaying of research in Museums which is no longer a priority”* [Prof R Smith]. A knock-on consequence is that inappropriate museum boards, with no scientific background, have been appointed. In addition, inappropriate appointments are being made to key research posts: appointees lack the requisite qualifications to pursue research.

There has also been an ever- increasing burden of additional administration and bureaucracy imposed on researchers which detracts from their capacity to deliver research outputs. Cost cutting within museums with palaeontology collections has also resulted in formerly well-established research libraries terminating important journal subscriptions, which places an additional financial burden on researchers trying to access research materials. In addition, museum researchers are struggling to spend their grant moneys as museums now have a procurement problem that has been created by the new museum boards. There is a chorus of protest from recipients of grants that the unbending rules of “Supply Chain Management” are hampering their spending. In some cases, grants are not being spent at all because of rigorous bureaucracy. This problem is marginally less prevalent for those institutions that are not so rule bound. Purchasing of specialist equipment poses a unique predicament: such equipment is often only available from one supplier, making it impossible to obtain the required number of quotations.

Inadequate funding for palaeontology has resulted in poor maintenance of collections. Non-competitive salaries have resulted in a further depletion of research culture at SA museums. *“It would be good to have more postdocs that can focus on the collections”* [Prof R Smith]. It is clear from conversations and interviews with researchers, post docs and post graduate students working in the palaeosciences, that there is a deep underlying concern that, although top quality graduates are undoubtedly being trained in the field, there are no real job prospects

for them in the longer term. Tenured palaeontology positions have traditionally been available in museums and to a lesser extent at universities. Over the past 25 years there has been a marked attrition rate in posts being made available in museums. Some posts have been “frozen” or eliminated entirely. There was some consolation in the fact that other technical skills acquired during research tenure could be “re-tooled” and used in other job-related fields.

*“The real problem is the lack of desirable jobs for graduates ... There is no point in training graduates who cannot find employment... this detracts from the attractiveness of a professional qualification in the field” [Prof J Sealy]*

*“I would like to carry on in SA but there are no positions in the museums. For the young academics they need positions to be available for them. I would like a museum research position as there are so many opportunities through their collections. [Dr B Cohen]*

## 4. Recommendations

*Did the CoE carry out the research proposed?*

Most definitely, but the panel felt more effort was needed at conveying the exciting results of the CoE. A special research symposium could be convened to showcase the key research of the CoE and to synthesise the science achieved to date with a special session on developing a research focus for the next 5-year period. The outcomes of the symposium could be conveyed via social media and the new CoE website to make the results and direction of the CoE available to the public.

It is recommended that operational costs of research projects remain close to what they have been and that researchers be encouraged to use these funds as seed money to attract funding from other sources (NRF calls, such as AoP and PAST, but also international collaborative grants through the NSF in USA or European Union). It was felt that more could be made of the unique South African record in attracting funds from overseas groups. A good example is the collaboration with Prof C Henshilwood and the Norwegian funding agencies. Every effort should be made to develop similar collaborative programmes, particularly in light of the fact that palaeoscience does not typically have strong ties to industry (outside of application of biostratigraphy to the oil industry).

Considering the amount of funding WITS receives from the CoE it was felt that the university could make a more substantial contribution beyond the funding it already provides for ESI (R9M). Discretionary funds, support of advancing the qualifications of fossil preparators and technical field assistants, and a permanent position for the key technical position associated with the CT scanner are some examples of how WITS can further help to strengthen the CoE.

Procedures surrounding the disbursement of CoE funds need to be made more transparent to the grant applicants. Perhaps successful awards could be announced on the website and those that do not receive funding could be informed—at least briefly—as to why the application was not successful. It would also help unsuccessful applicants to be given access to the reviews anonymously so that they can improve their applications for resubmission. The reviewer pool is small and tends to overlap making for potential conflicts of interest among

competing applicants, so it is recommended that more international reviewers are used (this is also a good way to advertise the CoE to a broader, international audience and may facilitate international collaboration).

#### Museums

- Address the problem of museums being managed entirely by Departments of Arts and Culture. It is recommended that a transition strategy is embarked upon as a matter of urgency. One possibility is to reward researchers for publications and another is to move Natural History Museums out of Arts and Culture into the domain of the Department of Science & Technology.
- Increase scientific and technical capacity at Natural History Museums and pay them a market salary.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan for increasing the funding base for Natural History museums.

*Did the CoE achieve its proposed education and training? Did it broaden and deepen the research community, particularly in terms of gender and racial diversity?*

The CoE has several new initiatives in place or planned to attract more black South African students, as they recognise that more needs to be done. However, the panel felt that more could be done and that the CoE needs to take on a more *proactive* role in attracting black students and supporting them to become among the new generation of palaeoscientists.

The CoE executive committee needs to be transformed, for starters. There are palaeoscientists of colour (Prof A Chinsamy-Turan and Dr D Stynder both at UCT, for example) and there are palaeoscientists that have a strong track record of producing strong black graduates that could be approached to serve (Prof R Ackermann, to give just one example, I am sure there are others familiar to the executive committee members). The CoE does intend to make several replacements, but these were not felt to be sufficient nor necessarily geared to address the needs of transformation. They could appoint a special member on the executive whose sole focus is to promote and encourage transformation in the palaeosciences, a field which has historically struggled to achieve racial diversity.

CoE-PAL needs to be cognisant that not all potential mentors really understand the culture and background of South African black students. It should make sure that mentors are ready and willing to go the extra mile to encourage, direct, and make South African black students successful in their career.

CoE-PAL should give the transformation process more serious consideration particularly in getting black South African students trained in palaeoanthropology. It is ironic that a country with enormous paleoanthropological potential, an area of national pride, does not have many black South African researchers in palaeoanthropology.

The ESI support of the curator Mr Sifelani Jirah towards his PhD is a good example of what is possible and such effort to increase the qualifications of highly skilled preparators and technical field assistants (predominantly black) needs to be pushed.

The CoE clearly places merit ahead of transformation in the funding of grant and bursary proposals, which is fine, but in that case they need to step up to the challenge of ensuring that black students are mentored and encouraged to pursue graduate studies and to submit well written and fundable proposals. Some researchers are doing this already, the accelerator programme of Dr J Choniere is a good example, but a lot more needs to be done by other researchers to ensure transformation occurs. The establishment with PAST of the R80,000 Honours bursary for black applicants is a step in the right direction.

The anxiety felt by students including post-docs about their funding in subsequent years could be alleviated by giving feedback to them after they have submitted their progress reports. Update bursary and postdoc proposals and annual reports to better assure continued funding for high-performing students. To decrease perception of ESI bias, encourage applications for postdocs from a wider range of CoE partner organizations going forward.

*Does the CoE make its results and databases available? (Information brokerage)*

More effort needs to be placed in making the exciting results of the CoE available to the general public. The creation of a Scientific Communications Officer is a major step in the right direction and this will hopefully lead to more content on the website and social media outlets. The group at WITS has a close link to the Media Department, but not clear that other partner institutions have this facility or make use of it.

Excellent progress has been made on outreach to the general public, which fosters an appreciation for shared South African heritage. In future, consider the outreach officer (Ms. Tommy) developing [The Brain Scoop](#) -type videos highlighting different researchers and students.

*Does the CoE facilitate national and international collaboration and networking?*

A greater effort needs to be made to increase collaboration within the partner institutions and it would be advantageous to increase collaboration with international partners as suggested earlier in point #1, particularly to leverage more funding to support research and students. Europe and North America both have large programmes in palaeosciences and these could be tapped more by the CoE to attract researchers to South Africa's unique and important fossil localities. The bulk of the funding goes to WITS, which is not surprising given the size of its palaeoscience community, but more effort could be made to reach out to other universities in South Africa that have fledgling programmes, such as what they are initiating with the recently established Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley.

CoE-PAL appears to have different levels of communication, or lack thereof, with its partners, especially the museums. It should consider having members in its executive committee and steering committee from all of its partners. There is a need to enhance communications within the UCT palaeosciences group. Some UCT researchers felt poorly informed about CoE strategic directions and planning. There is only one UCT person (Prof. Judith Sealy) on the executive and steering committees, which is not enough.

*Does the CoE provide service rendering to the public and government?*

Annual reports need to be posted on the website. The outreach efforts have been very successful in terms of exposing the general public to the concepts and findings within the palaeosciences. What is less clear and difficult to measure, is the impact of this exposure. Has it enlightened people to their origins and enriched their lives? Does it create anxiety around their religious beliefs? Does it attract more learners to the palaeosciences? The revamped website can be used to monitor the feedback from the community that has access to the internet and to this end Google and other search engine analytics can be useful in determining what approaches and web pages are most successful in reaching their targets.

Museums are well placed to conduct outreach and public programmes relating to the palaeosciences. These activities are aimed largely at school learners, and it is important that such activities are kept in balance with research programmes. Some 'star' researchers have been able to attract good media attention, but these are rare instances.

#### Museum curation and collections management

- Curate uncatalogued fossil collections and begin process of digitizing non-databased fossil collections.
- Transition legacy databases to SPECIFY, in collaboration with National Museum initiative, and make collections data available online.
- Lobby SAHRA to update policies regarding museum research permits, developing MOUs that shift day-to-day burden to relevant museum professionals.

*Is the CoE well managed in terms of leadership, staffing, transformation and plans for the future?*

While management of the distribution of funds is well done, it was felt that more could be done in terms of leadership and a vision of the way forward for palaeosciences in South Africa. This could be achieved by a more clearly stated or visible vision statement for the CoE and a concrete plan to deal with the future of the palaeosciences.

Key areas of concern are transformation (already discussed) and the lack of permanent positions in the field. Why train all of these students if there are few prospects of long-term employment for them in the palaeosciences? This problem goes beyond the CoE, but the CoE has made a big difference for some museums and can continue to help the museums re-establish their research personnel. However, the CoE doesn't have enough funding to turn about the rapid and worrisome decline in the museums and its leadership needs to advocate to government for more support and specifically the creation of museum research positions.

The CoE, in collaboration with DST and NRF, should attempt to bolster the capacities of partner museums and other higher education institutions, by either supporting museums to open new positions or encouraging universities and colleges to open programs in palaeosciences including palaeo-tourism. Such programs could absorb a number of newly minted MScs and PhDs as lecturers and researchers.

There is a clear need to develop a long-term sustainable strategy for palaeosciences in order to move towards a National Institute of Palaeosciences. One possibility is to explore

development of CONICET or CNRS-model national institute, with paleoscientists hired by government but housed at relevant institutions, particularly museums.

## 5. Conclusions

In its first 5 years, the CoE-PAL has had a big, positive impact on the palaeosciences in South Africa. The programmes at WITS and UCT, already strong, have been made stronger and although difficult to quantify the impacts because of the lag time involved with publications, promotions, rating of researchers and graduating of students, it would appear that all of these aspects have improved markedly with the additional funding made possible by the CoE. The panel in its deliberations heard many positive outcomes and opportunities that simply would not have been possible without the CoE-PAL. It is, therefore, the recommendation of the panel that the CoE-PAL continues in its second 5-year term. The panel has made a number of recommendations based on the feedback it received from the various stakeholders in CoE-PAL on ways to enhance and improve the outcomes for the second term and, in particular, for setting the stage for a viable and productive palaeoscience community going forward beyond the CoE-PAL.

First and foremost, CoE-PAL needs to proactively address the needs of transformation within the palaeosciences. Progress has been made in the first 5-year term, but more needs to be done to ensure a greater representation of black South Africans in the palaeosciences, particularly in paleoanthropology. The administration of the CoE-PAL has been well done, but needs greater transparency to how funds are allocated and why some proposals are not funded. Collaboration among South Africans is generally good, but lacking at some institutions and international collaboration could be heightened, particularly in using CoE seed funding and South Africa's unique fossil record to leverage funds from wealthier overseas nations. Outreach has been excellent and should continue, but more emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that outreach is effective. The new website and social media outreach efforts hold much promise in achieving these goals, as the science that is being done by the CoE-PAL is exciting and the public has a right and a need to understand these new results. Finally, one of the biggest issues concerns the future of palaeoscience in South Africa, namely the availability of career positions. The South African palaeoscience community has always tended to be small, but highly productive. Recent trends, most evident at the national museums of a dwindling research effort, compounded by administrative hassles, does not bode well for palaeoscience in the country. The CoE-PAL along with the NRF and DST must work toward reversing this downward spiral and this is perhaps the greatest challenge facing the CoE-PAL, but one that must be tackled head-on to ensure the future of the palaeosciences in South Africa.

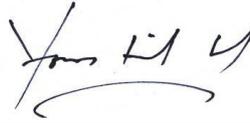
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Prof John Compton, Chairperson:\_\_\_

Date: ...11 Sept. 2018.

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Prof Yohannes Haile-Selassie Ambaye: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 14 Sept., 2018

Signature



Prof Christian Sidor:

Date: 16 Sept. 2018

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Dr William de Klerk:

Date: 13/09/2018

Signature

## Annexure A: Evaluation Program



### NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION (NRF) EVALUATION OF CoE IN PALAEOSCIENCES

10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018

#### PROGRAMME

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Day 1</b>  | <b>Evaluation</b>   |
| <b>Date</b>   | <b>Tuesday, 10 July 2018</b>  |
| <b>Venue</b>  | <b>Seminar Room: 1st Floor Evolutionary Studies Institute<br/>Palaeosciences Building, University of the Witwatersrand,<br/>Johannesburg</b>  |
| <b>Time</b>   | <b>Activity</b>   |
| 8h00 - 8h25   | Evaluators to proceed to the CoE venue  |
| 8h30 - 8h40   | Welcome - Host institution management: Prof Zeblon Vilakazi   |
| 8h40 - 8h55   | Panel Chair - introduction of the evaluation process: Panel Chair   |
| 9h00 - 9h40   | Presentation CoE PI to the panel followed by discussions: <i>Prof Bruce Rubidge &amp; Prof Ebrahim Momoniat</i>   |
| 9h45 - 10h10  | Conversation with DVC and Research host: <i>Prof Zeblon Vilakazi &amp; Dr Robin Drennan</i>   |
| 10h15 - 10h45 | Conversation with Palaeo Centre Management: <i>Prof Bruce Rubidge &amp; Dr Christine Steininger</i>   |
| 10h45 - 11h00 | <b>Tea/Coffee</b>   |
| 11h00 - 11h40 | Conversation with DST Senior Manager: <i>Ms Rose Msiza</i>  |
| 11h45 - 13h30 | <b>Facility Tour (1)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karoo Collections – <i>Prof Bruce Rubidge, Mr Sifelani Jirah</i></li> <li>• Fossil Preparation – <i>Prof Bruce Rubidge, Mr Charlton Dube</i></li> <li>• Dinosaur Collections – <i>Prof Jonah Choiniere</i></li> </ul> |

| <b>Time</b>          | <b>Activity</b>   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>13h30 - 14h00</b> | <b>Lunch</b>  |
| 14h00 – 15h00        | <b>Facility Tour (2)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hominin Vault – <i>Prof Bruce Rubidge, Ms Kimberleigh Tommy</i></li> <li>• Scanning Facilities – <i>Mr Kidakwashe Jakata</i></li> </ul> |
|                      | <b>1. International Research Partner</b>  |
| 15h15 – 15h45        | Prof Christopher Henshilwood (SARChI/ SapienCE – Norway)<br><b>SKYPE: Christopher.Henshilwood@uib.no</b>  |
|                      | <b>2. NGO</b>   |
| 15h45 – 16h15        | <b>PAST:</b> Prof Robert Blumenschine   |
| <b>16h15 - 16h30</b> | <b>Tea/Coffee</b>   |
|                      | <b>3. Permit-awarding Agency</b>  |

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| <b>Day 2</b>                | <b>Evaluation</b>  |
| <b>Date</b>                 | <b>Wednesday, 11 July 2018</b>   |
| <b>Time</b>                 | <b>Activity</b>  |
| 08h00 – 08h30               | Arrival  |
|                             | <b>4. Post Graduate Students</b>   |
| 08h30 – 09h00<br><b>2:1</b> | <b>Masters Students</b> (x 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>UCT</b> = Ms T’Nielle Haupt <b>SKYPE: (with Muir in next session?)</b></li> <li>• <b>WITS</b> Ms Cebisa Mdekazi, Mr Viktor Rademacher, Ms Recognise Sambo and Ms Kuni Mosweu</li> </ul>  |
| 09h05 – 09h35<br><b>2:2</b> | <b>Doctoral Students</b> (x 7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>UCT</b> = Ms Miengah Abrahams, Mr Robert Muir, Ms Mhari Reid <b>SKYPE: 329c1a896e363cd2</b></li> <li>• <b>AM/RU</b> = Ms Aviwe Matiwane <b>SKYPE: lovely.avie</b></li> <li>• <b>WITS</b> = Ms Kimberley Chapelle</li> </ul>   |
| 09h40 – 10h15<br><b>2:3</b> | <i>Postdoctoral Fellowships</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>WITS</b> = Dr Amelie Beaudet, Dr May Murungi, Dr Paloma de la Pena <b>SKYPE: paloma.delalasca</b></li> <li>• <b>UJ/ex-UCT</b> = Dr Sciscio</li> <li>• <b>IZIKO</b> = Dr Brigette Cohen <b>SKYPE: jet-cohen</b></li> <li>• <b>NASMUS</b> = Dr Jacqui Codron (<i>report to be tabled</i>)</li> </ul> |
|                             | <b>5. Community Outreach (Origins Centre)</b>  |
| 10h15 – 10h45               | Dr Tamaryn Reynard (Curator: Origins Centre)<br>Prof Francis Thackeray (retired Director = <i>report to be tabled</i> )  |
| 10h45 - 11h0                | <b>Tea/Coffee</b>  |
|                             | <b>6. Conversation with Researchers</b>  |
| 11h00 – 11h25               | Prof Rebecca Ackerman (UCT)<br><b>SKYPE: beckyrogersackermann</b>  |
| 11h30 – 11h55<br><b>2:4</b> | Dr Riashna Sithaldeen<br><b>SKYPE: riashna</b>   |
| 12h00 – 12h25<br><b>2:5</b> | Prof Sara Wurz (WITS)  |
| 12h30 – 12h55               | Dr Jonah Choniere (WITS)<br>Dr Julien Benoit ( <i>report to be tabled</i> )  |
| 13h00 – 13h25               | Dr Shaw Badenhost & Dr Jerome Reynard (WITS)   |
| 13h30 – 14h00               | <b>Lunch</b>   |
| 14h00 - 14h25<br><b>2:6</b> | Prof Marion Bamford (WITS)<br><b>SKYPE: Bamfordmarion</b>  |
| 14h30 -14h55<br><b>2:7</b>  | Dr Emese Bordy<br><b>SKYPE: bordy.emese</b><br>Dr Jayne Wilkins ( <i>report to be tabled</i> )   |

| <b>Time</b>                 | <b>Activity</b>   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 15h00 – 15h25<br><b>2:8</b> | Dr Jennifer Fitchett (WITS)<br><b>SKYPE: jen.fitchett</b>   |
| 15h30 – 15h55               | Prof Lyn Wadley (WITS)  |
| <b>15h55 – 16h05</b>        | <b>Tea/Coffee</b>   |
| 16h05 – 16h30<br><b>2:9</b> | Dr Nichola McLoughlin<br><b>SKYPE: dr.nicola.mcloughlin</b>   |
| 16h35 – 17h00               | Dr Dominic Stratford (WITS)<br>Dr Zubair Jinnah (WITS) & Dr Deano Stynder UCT) ( <b>report to be tabled</b> ) |
| 17h00 - 17h30               | <b><i>Closed Panel Discussion</i></b>   |

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| <b>Day 3</b>                | <b>Evaluation</b>  |
| <b>Date</b>                 | <b>Thursday, 12 July 2018</b>  |
| <b>Time</b>                 | <b>Activity</b>  |
| 08h00 – 08h30               | Arrival  |
|                             | <b>7. Analytical &amp; Technical Support providers</b>   |
| 08h30 - 08h55               | Prof Stephan Woodborne (AMS chronology/dating techniques – iThemba Labs)   |
| 09h00 – 09h25<br><b>3:1</b> | Prof Judy Sealy (Stable Light Isotope analysis)<br><b>SKYPE: Judith.Sealy</b>  |
| 09h30 - 09h55               | Mr Kidakwashe Jakata (CT Scanner - Wits)   |
|                             | <b>8. Museums</b>  |
| 10h00 -10h25<br><b>3:2</b>  | <b>Albany Museum, Grahamstown</b><br>Dr Robert Gess<br><b>SKYPE: robg_159 / robg@imagnet.co.za</b><br>Dr Rose Prevec (report to be tabled)                   |
| 10h30- 10h55<br><b>3:3</b>  | <b>National Museum, Bloemfontein</b><br>Dr Lloyd Rossouw<br><b>SKYPE: Lloyd.rossouw1</b><br>Dr Jennifer Botha-Brink & Dr Daryl Codron (reports to be tabled) |
| 11h00 – 11h15               | <b>Tea/Coffee</b>  |
| 11h15 - 11h40               | <b>Ditsong Museum , Pretoria</b> (to be confirmed)<br>Dr Mirriam Tawane<br><b>SKYPE: tawaneem_1</b>  |
| 11h45 – 12h15<br><b>3:4</b> | <b>Iziko Museum</b><br>Dr Roger Smith<br><b>SKYPE: roger.smith413</b><br>Dr Thalassa Matthews, Dr Romala Govender & Dr Wendy Black (reports to be tabled)    |
| 12h20 – 12h45<br><b>3:5</b> | Dr Hamish Patterson (*Ex Director of Iziko Museums)<br><b>SKYPE: hamish.g.robertson</b>  |
|                             | <b>9. Curators</b>   |
| 12h50 - 12h30               | Dr Bernard Zipfel & Mr Sifelani Jirah  |
|                             | <b>10. Science Engagement/Communicators</b>  |
| 12h30 – 13h00               | Dr Ian McKay & Ms Kimberleigh Tommy  |
| 13h00 - 13h30               | <b>Lunch</b>   |
| 13h30 - 15h00               | <b>Closed Panel Discussion</b>   |
| 15h00 – 15h15               | <b>Tea/Coffee</b>  |
| 15h15 – 16h55               | <b>Closed Panel Discussion</b>   |

| Time          | Activity   |
|---------------|------------|
| 16h55 - 17h00 | Conclusion |