



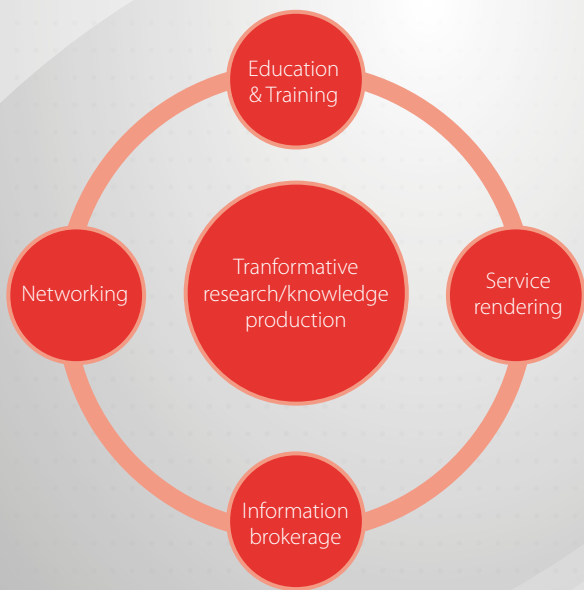
science
& technology
Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



National
Research
Foundation

Handbook to Assist with the Operation of a DST-NRF Centre of Excellence

Managed by the Research Chairs
and Centres of Excellence



The Key Performance Areas of the DST-NRF Centres of Excellence

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The purpose of this handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to guide users so that they make the most of their long-term funding as a DST-NRF Centre of Excellence (CoE). This document should be read in conjunction with the Framework for Funding CoEs which describes the CoE concept, the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) and the individual Service Level Agreement (SLA) of each centre.

1. Definition

Centres of Excellence (CoEs) are physical or virtual Centres of research which concentrate existing capacity and resources to enable researchers to collaborate across disciplines on long-term projects that are locally relevant and internationally competitive in order to enhance the pursuit of research excellence and high-level capacity development.

2. The Aims of Individual CoE

The aims of a CoE are to:

- Promote knowledge and human capital in areas of strategic importance to South Africa;
- Promote collaborative research;
- Promote and develop interdisciplinary research;
- Systematically develop a creative research training environment that is internationally competitive;
- Strive for the highest standards of quality, international competitiveness and esteem of their science; and
- Diffuse knowledge to where it is needed.

3. Contracting, Naming & Branding

The name given to each of the CoEs is to follow the same basic form, i.e. The DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in/for ...

Centres funded by other government departments or quasi-government/ parastatals in collaboration with DST and NRF will be reflected by the addition of their logo to the signage.

4. Management, Governance, Ethics & Gender

As the DST - NRF CoEs are funded through public money it is vital that they adhere to the highest standards of effective and transparent management and governance.

4.1. Management

The day to day operations of the CoE are to be managed by the Director of the Centre. In the case where the CoE is co-hosted, the Node Head will assist the Director in the day to day operations of the CoE at the co-host institution.

The employment and financial policies that guide the operational activities of the CoE must fall within current South African legislation and the policies of the host and/or co-host institution and should be overseen by the CoE Steering Committee.

The management of the activities of the CoE will be overseen by the CoE management committee, assisted by the preparation of an annual business or activity plan. This plan will be approved by the CoE Steering Committee and should include an annual cash flow projection and an annual budget.

4.2. Governance

The activities of the CoE will also be guided by a CoE Steering Committee that will give strategic direction and be responsible for high level control of the CoE.

This Steering Committee will be constituted by at least the:

- Director and Node Head of the CoE;
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or equivalent of the Host and Co-host institutions (to be nominated by the senior management team of the Host and Co-host institutions respectively);
- Representative of the DST (to be nominated by the Deputy Director-General responsible for the CoEs)
- Representative of the NRF (to be nominated by the Executive Director responsible for management of the CoE Funding Instrument);
- At least two (2) members who can add scientific and technical in-puts;
- Any other members that are deemed, to be able to make a scientific, technical and valuable contribution to the CoE; and
- Members of collaborating institutions;

Specifically, the functions of the Steering Committee will be to:

- Advise on objectives for the CoE;
- Advise on the Strategic Plan for the CoE;
- Discuss and resolve matters of policy that relate to the CoE;
- Approve the annual Business Plans including the budgets and performance targets (within the constraints set by the NRF);

- Approve Annual Progress Reports prior to submission to the NRF;
- Make recommendations to the NRF concerning the progress through developmental gates;
- Monitor, evaluate and comment on performance of the CoE;
- Assist in the promotion of, and lobbying for support for the CoE to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the CoE;
- Advise CoE on the resource requirements, including the financing;
- Create such sub-committees as may be necessary and define their roles and responsibilities; and
- Assist the Parties in fulfilling their respective fiduciary responsibilities in ensuring the effective and efficient use of the grant funds.

4.3. Research Integrity/Ethics

It is imperative that the highest standard of research integrity/ethics acceptable to the host and/or co-host institution(s), the NRF and the DST and all other stakeholders are met at all times during the performance of the mandate of the DST - NRF CoE.

4.4. Gender Issues

It is imperative that all activities of the CoE, including administration and research, be performed in such a manner that is sensitive to gender. It is important to report on the performance of the CoE with respect to its gender-relevant research.

5. The Stage/Gate Process

The lifespan of each CoE will be controlled and guided by the stage/gate process (Figure 1). This will consist of five stages of development, each focusing on different deliverables appropriate for that stage of development, separated by four gates.

The deliverables will be defined in the current SLA. The SLA will be updated for each developmental stage. The gates are decision making processes that involve reviews of progress and plans for further development.

Stages		Gates
1. Forming	Establish CoE Steering Committee Hire required staff Recruit students Fine tune long-term strategy Establish management system Determine short-term goals Establish spirit	Setting the scene
Gate 1: 12 months		
2. Storming	Produce early outputs Demonstrate good management Demonstrate synergies Confirm long-term strategy Cash flow Demonstrate growing team spirit	Bedding down
Gate 2: 6 months		
3. Norming	Research outputs Networking examples Knowledge transfer Service delivery Stakeholder surveys Capacity development Growing team spirit	Growth & Rol
Gate 3: 6 months		
4. Performing	Research and other outputs Cash cow Re-imagine Re-engineer	Production & Rol
Gate 4: 24 months		
5. Exiting	Future strategy Funding (other sources) Forming	Winding up & impact assessment

Figure 1: Stage/Gate Process

6. Annual Time Line

The various administrative deliverables described in the MoA, e.g. submission of Annual Business Plan, are summarised in the time line shown in Figure 2. This time line is based on the assumption that the financial years of the host institution and the NRF run from January to December and from April to March of every year.

The Statement of Compliance (SoC) is to be submitted annually as a formal declaration of adherence to all provisions in the MoA and the SLA.

Outputs

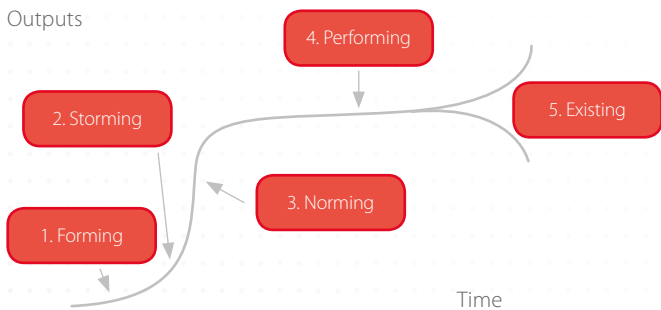


Figure 2: Relationship between outputs and time

7. Conclusion

The DST-NRF CoE initiative is expected to provide multiple positive benefits to the science community and the National System of Innovation as a whole. It is hoped that this handbook will assist in maximising these benefits.

8. NRF contact persons

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