

### ● Professionalisation of Research Management in Africa

Implementing its vision to contribute to the professionalisation of research management in Africa, the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) developed a Professional Competency Framework, identifying key competency areas for research managers and administrators, and then facilitated the establishment of the International Professional Recognition Council (IPRC) through leveraging strategic partnerships and funding opportunities. The inaugural IPRC was established five years ago as an independent body to lead the development of a framework for a professional recognition programme for research managers and administrators in Africa. In 2020, IPRC members were elected through an open nomination process and appointed in various categories to ensure representation of relevant expertise and key stakeholders in the African region and from the global research management community.

### Programme Layout:

**Moderator:** John Kirkland, Chairperson of the IPRC Advocacy Committee

#### **Insights and views on the strategic role of the IPRC, its progress and what lies ahead**

**Jose Jackson-Malete**, founding member of the IPRC and Co-director of the Alliance for African Partnerships, Michigan State University

**Garry Aslanyan**, IPRC member and Manager of Partnerships and Governance at the World Health Organization's Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR)

**Dembo Kanteh**, IPRC member, Head of Strategic Partnerships at the Medical Research Council (MRC) Unit at the Gambia at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and President of the West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA)

#### **Professional recognition and career advancement**

**Mandla Tirivavi**, Research and Programs Manager, Africa University, Zimbabwe

**Lessing Labuschagne**, Executive Director of Research, Innovation & Commercialisation, University of South Africa, South Africa

#### **Open discussion**

#### **Closing comments**

**Pamisha Pillay**, Head of the IPRC Secretariat hosted by SARIMA

### Presenters:

- Dr John Kirkland, Order of the British Empire (United Kingdom)  
Dr John Kirkland, Officer of the Order of the British Empire has 33 years experience of higher education management. His career in research management includes positions at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) in the UK: as Senior Advisor (2021-2022), Chief Operating Officer (2018–2020) and Company Secretary (1994–1999). He initiated the research management programme at the Association of Commonwealth Universities, where he worked for eighteen years, including ten years as Deputy Secretary General. John served for six years as Head of the Research Services Office at Brunel University in the UK, where he also obtained his doctorate.

- Dr José Jackson-Malete, Michigan State University (United States)

Dr José Jackson-Malete is the Co-Director of the Alliance for African Partnerships (AAP) at Michigan State University (MSU). This is an initiative established by the university in 2016 that builds on its 60-year history of partnerships in Africa to develop new, innovative ways of partnering with African institutions and to co-create solutions to global challenges. Her responsibilities include establishing a robust network of innovative partnerships among the MSU, African universities, and other international partners; ensuring that the AAP has a governance structure that reflects and promotes the model of co-creation; strengthening capacity among partner institutions; promoting programmes for women in science, as well as attracting a diversity of resources necessary to achieve the AAP's vision of impact. Jose is a former President of the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) and led SARIMA's efforts in the professionalisation of research management. She is a food scientist, and has over 20 years of experience in research, teaching and working in industry in Africa, the Caribbean and the USA, particularly within the agricultural sector. She maintains an active research programme that focuses on processing and adding value to indigenous fruit and vegetable products, ensuring quality and safety, and contributing to food and nutrition security, while improving the livelihoods of communities.
- Dr Garry Aslanyan, TDR | World Health Organisation (Switzerland)

Dr Garry Aslanyan is the Manager of Partnerships and Governance at the World Health Organization's Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR). He is responsible for managing a range of partnerships and engagement with global health stakeholders, and he runs the governing bodies of the TDR. TDR has a unique relationship with co-sponsors: UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP and WHO. This includes applying research evidence in global health programming of the co-sponsors and collaborating with six regional WHO offices which is overseen by Garry, including the highly successful impact grants tackling public health challenges in those regions. Furthermore, Garry coordinates the ESSENCE on Health Research, an initiative of research funders. In the past 20 years, Garry has taken on various roles that allowed him to lead various organisational and technical innovations and is a recognised leader in public health both in Canada and globally. Garry is the Editor-in-Chief of the NewSpecial Magazine, a publication of the United Nations staff in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Editorial Advisor for the WHO Bulletin. He served on the WHO Guidelines Review Committee and is an external reviewer of various global health research programmes. Garry is also the host of the highly popular Global Health Matters podcast. Garry is an Adjunct Professor at the universities of Toronto, British Columbia and Ottawa, and is a former President of the Ontario Public Health Association. He has a background in dentistry, public health, research and innovation management, health policy and systems, as well as global health diplomacy. He is fluent in English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Armenian.
- Mr Dembo Kanteh, Medical Research Council (Gambia)

Dembo Kanteh is the Head of Strategic Partnerships at the Medical Research Council (MRC) Unit at the Gambia at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is responsible for building partnerships with research organisations across West Africa. He is also the President of the West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA). Dembo has over 20 years' experience as a leader in management, developing institutional strategies, operations, and business processes. He has extensive experience as a trainer in research management, providing training at the WARIMA annual meetings, as well as acting as a facilitator for the Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF). Dembo has managed funding and contracts from all major funders of biomedical research and have considerable experience in policy development and risk management in several organisations. He has expertise in setting up monitoring and evaluation frameworks, performance management and reporting at organisational, departmental and programme levels. Dembo is an economist by training and also holds an MBA Degree from the Open University in the UK.
- Mr Mandla Tirivavi, Africa University (Zimbabwe)

Mandla Tirivavi is the Research and Programs Manager at Africa University. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Social Behaviour Studies from University of South Africa. She Coordinated a 5 Year grant that facilitated the setting up of the Research Management and Administration Services at Africa University, and has been assigned to serve in the Office of Research and Innovation offering Pre and Post-Award Research Administration Services to the wider Institution. Currently studying Post Graduate Diploma in Research Management and Administration at Stellenbosch University to enhance her research management skills. Her grant-writing support services resulted in improved research uptake by early career researchers, improved research governance, management and administration of externally funded grants. Spearheaded the development of the Grants Management Manual and the review of the institution's research policy. She is a member of SARIMA and a certified Research Management Professional by IPRC as well as a member of the STARS Program.

- Prof Lessing Labuschagne, UNISA (South Africa).

Prof Lessing Labuschagne has served as the Executive Director: of Research, Innovation & Commercialisation at Unisa since 2011. In 2021 he obtained professional recognition as Senior Research Management Professional (SRMP) from the International Professional Recognition Council (IPRC) for his contribution and achievements over these ten years.

Prof Labuschagne's employment record demonstrates his commitment to the global research and innovation agenda in general and, more specifically, higher education institutions. Since 1998, he has been associated with two universities in South Africa and has progressed through the academic ranks before entering the academic management career stream. In 2009, he joined Unisa as a Full Professor and Director of the School of Computing in the College of Science, Engineering and Technology (CSET). His professional activities extend beyond Unisa as he also serves as a Project Management South Africa (PMSA) Board member. He further serves as an International Academic Advisor for the PMWorld Journal and, in 2019, was invited onto the founding editorial board of the Journal of Research Management and Administration (JoRMA).

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