

Reference: PRO: NACI/02/07

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS - UTILISATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Thank you for responding to our Call for Proposals regarding the above.

Attached for your information is the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the project.

Please supply this office with a submission in which you address the main elements of the ToR in detail. More specifically we would like information on the following aspects:

- Details of your research design
- A project management schedule and an indication of time frame for the project
- A detailed project budget
- An overview of the research profile of your institution and the proposed project leader and senior team members, indicating experience and previous successes in undertaking complex research projects.

The submission should not exceed 10 A4 single-spaced pages and should reach this office on or before 29 **March 2002**.

Thank You,

Deena Naidoo

NACI Secretariat

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INNOVATION

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

UTILISATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS: SCOPE, IMPACT, ETC.

1. Conceptual and policy background

The issue of utilisation of research findings often generates heated debates. The current terms of reference consequently presents a conceptual and functional motivation for the need of – indeed an imperative for – an evaluation of the extent to which research findings are being implemented and utilised in South Africa.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2001) argues that innovation has been the key to the rapid economic growth of countries such as the United States, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, and New Zealand. The OECD (2001) also asserts that there is a strong correlation between “Successful innovation...[and] sustained investment on R&D.” Many South Africans support the OECD’s stance and believe strongly that innovation, and R&D in particular, has a positive impact on the lives of all South Africans. The White Paper on Science & Technology (1996) and the Fedderke Report (2001) echo these sentiments.

In addition to these sentiments, there has been an intense debate surrounding the utilisation or implementation of research findings in countries such as Britain and the United States since the beginning of the 1980s (Prinsloo, Prinsloo and Marais, 1996). However the research community continues to be divided on the issue. Some researchers view the utilisation of research findings as a researcher-practitioner problem. Zuzovsky (1995) argues that the problems in utilisation stem from the difference between the “realist research tradition” and the “pragmatic research traditions.” She maintains that pragmatic oriented researchers are more likely to yield researcher findings that have a potentially “high level of utilization” compared to realistic oriented researchers. Beyer (1997:17-23), on the other hand, asserted that researchers have a responsibility for maximising the implementation of their research findings. She said, the “majority of the research findings currently being published in our best journals” are not “attractive and credible to managers” because of the methods that researchers use to generate the knowledge.

Whilst this controversy continues to cast doubt on the nation’s ability to implement research findings, governments and other interested parties continue to invest relatively large amounts on R&D and increasingly want to know what the outcomes – not outputs! – of the research has been. According to Mouton and Boshoff (2000), for example, the South African Government’s investment on R&D performers during the 1997/98 financial year stood at: “HES (R850million), Science Councils (R1,1billion), National Facilities (R60million) Government departments (R450million) and state Corporation (R350million). The 2001/2002 Science vote allocation for the Department of Art, Culture, Science, and Technology amount to R1, 509 billion.

Asking, “what has been achieved with funds expended on research” (Prinsloo et al, 1996:178-198) is not only the public’s right but also a duty and responsibility of the National Advisory Council on Innovation. In addition, there is very little understanding of the dynamics involved in the process of utilising research findings.

In the seventies and eighties the SAC-HSRC investigation into the Implementation of Research Findings found that implementation was more viable when it was regarded as an essential part of any research project and it was considered in the planning and design stages. However, very little research has been conducted in South Africa on the extent to which decision-makers and stakeholders utilise research findings to improve economic growth and the social well being of all South Africans. An understanding of these dimensions of the implementation process will facilitate the development of the model and strategy for optimising the implementation of the research findings.

The South African government’s, White Paper proposed changes that included the “creation of a system of output measurements for the institutions”. The White Paper’s aim is “to try to create the conditions that will support both creativity and innovativeness throughout our society”(White Paper). The Government views innovation as an “encompassing notion that is based on the production of new knowledge **and its creative application** in a number of spheres” leading to the promotion .of research which is crucial to innovation. One of NACI’s functions is to develop “strategies for the promotion of

technology innovation, development, acquisition, transfer and implementation in all sectors” (RSA, 1997:3-10). Determining the extent to which research findings are actually utilised and mapping the dynamics of the process of utilisation are conditions for the formulation of strategies on the optimisation of the outcomes of the national R&D effort.

2. Purpose

- The investigation has the following three purposes:
- To ascertain the extent to which SA research findings are utilised/implemented;
- To map the dynamics of the process of implementation; and
- To develop a model of and strategy for the optimisation of the implementation of research findings.

3. Expected Outcomes

- National commitment to the promotion of the utilisation of research findings
- To formulate policy for the promotion of the utilisation of the research findings and to identify structures to be commissioned in this regard

4. Scope

- Survey of all major R&D institutions across science cultures
- A sample of projects conducted by a sample of major institutions across science cultures.
- Projects completed by R&D institutions in 1997- 98.
- Dynamics of the sample of projects

5. Project design

The **first phase** of the study will entail a survey of projects completed during 1997-98 requiring the establishment of:

- A data base of institutions and projects
- A questionnaire operationalising the range of forms of implementation and utilisation
- Administration of the questionnaire to a sample of institutions to ascertain to what extent the project findings have been utilised and in what ways

The **second phase** of the study will require a sample of successful cases of implementation and utilisation. The descriptions of the implementation processes followed in the case of those projects will be analysed by means of a framework based on current models of implementation.

The **third phase** will consist of the development of a strategy that would optimise the probability of implementation of research findings in future. In this phase use will be made of an expert panel.

6. Project management

The project will be managed by the following structures and persons:

6.1 Reference Group

The reference group consists of the following NACI subcommittee and will act as audit principal

- Dr. J Stewart (Convenor)
- Dr. R Marcus
- Dr. P.Amoils
- Mr T.M. Setiloane
- Plus members that may be co-opted if and where necessary

The functions of the reference group will be to

- Approve the terms of reference
- Appoint the consultant
- Approve the project plan, budget and contract with the consultant
- Receive and process the reports

6.2 Project manager

A project manager seconded from the NACI secretariat will assist the reference group. The functions of the project manager will include the following:

- Serve as secretariat for the reference group
- Administer the project budget
- Serve as bridge between the reference group and the consultant
- Monitor progress against mileposts

6.3 Service provider

The service provider is an expert contracted by the reference group to undertake the empirical part of the project, namely

- The drafting of the questionnaire(s)
- Administration of the questionnaires
- Analysis of the completed questionnaires
- Development of implementation strategy
- Drafting of the reports

7. Time schedule

Activities	Schedule
1. Appointment of the contract manager.	March 2002
2. Operationalisation of survey, briefings, etc.	April 2002
3. Data capturing, analyses and report on first phase	May 2002
4. Workshop on findings of first phase and development of analytic framework for second phase; also drawing of sample for second phase	June 2002
5. Data collection for second phase, data capturing and analysis	July 2002
6. Report on second phase and workshop on findings and implications	August 2002
7. Development of implementation strategy	September 2002
8. Workshop on strategy and final report submitted to NACI	End September 2002
9. NACI considers report and finalises it for release	October 2002

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DACST – Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.
HES - Higher Education Sector
HSRC - Human Sciences Research Council
NACI- National Advisory Council on Innovation
SAC - Science Advisory Council