



National
Research
Foundation

NRF STRATEGY

2020 – 2025

Impact



Transformation



Excellence



Sustainability



science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The National Research Foundation (NRF) is at a critical juncture in its history, with 2019 marking twenty years of the organisation's existence and twenty-five years of South Africa's democracy. During the year, the NRF Act and mandate were amended and a new Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (HEST) was established. These milestones, and local and international developments, offer an opportune time to reflect and reimagine the future positioning of the NRF, strategically and operationally. The NRF's *Strategy 2020* also reaches conclusion at the end of the current financial year.

In response, the NRF is developing a ten-year strategic framework. Aligned to this framework, and incorporating clear deliverables, is the *NRF Strategy 2025*, which is an implementation framework for the ten-year vision. These frameworks position the NRF to advance research and knowledge for impact to contribute to national development.

The NRF is situated within global and national contexts that influence the organisation's priorities and activities. As such, the organisation is aware of international developments in the science sector, and embraces the developments regarding research excellence and impact for societal development.

Nationally, the NRF is a vital component of the knowledge enterprise. It has the unique position of being the only public research institution mandated to advance, support and promote research in all areas of science, including indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). Its mandate is complementary to that of other public entities and government departments and, as a result, partnerships and cooperation underpin an effective delivery model. It is thus the principal organisation responsible for promoting the national research enterprise and is the primary public funder of postgraduate students and researchers, as well as the primary provider of research infrastructure in the country.

The *NRF Strategy 2025* is centred on the NRF's desire to contribute to national development through research with impact. The NRF intends to continue investing in scientific research in alignment with Government's priorities as reflected in the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2020 to 2024, and in a number of white papers, policies and strategies that shape the national science and research system. In the international environment, the NRF advances the African Union's (AU) Vision 2063 and its Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024, as well as the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Based on an analysis of the national and international context, the NRF has identified four critical success areas for the knowledge enterprise. These are transformation, impact, excellence and sustainability. They influence the decisions that the NRF makes in its four focus areas for delivery, namely: People, the Research Enterprise, Research Infrastructure, and the Relationship between Science and Society, and its two key enablers: a fit-for-purpose organisation and resourcing (of) the mandate.

The strategic objectives of the NRF over the next decade are to shape, influence and impact the national research system; to establish itself as a thought leader and source of knowledge within the science sector; to create a clear, causal relationship between research and national development; to have a transformative effect on the national research enterprise and the relationship between science and society; and to enable, initiate, facilitate and perform excellent research with direct and indirect impact, whether immediate or long term, that extends the frontiers of knowledge, addresses national challenges and defines a sense of place for South Africa within the global knowledge enterprise.



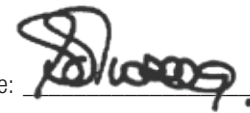
It is hereby certified that this Strategic Plan:

- Was developed by the management of the NRF under the guidance and leadership of the Board, based on the prescribed Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans;
- Outlines the aspirations for a transformed, inclusive and prosperous South Africa that is globally competitive as a result of the performance of its research and innovation system;
- Takes into account relevant national policies, legislation and any other mandates that explicitly or implicitly assign responsibility to the NRF or require NRF contributions; and
- Takes cognisance that scientific research often has a long trajectory, with non-linear societal impact, which requires significant financial, human and intellectual investment.

Dr M Qhobela

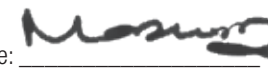
Chief Executive Officer

Signature: _____

**Dr N Obokoh**

Chairperson of the Board

Signature: _____

*Approved by:***Dr BE Nzimande, MP**Minister of Higher Education,
Science and Technology

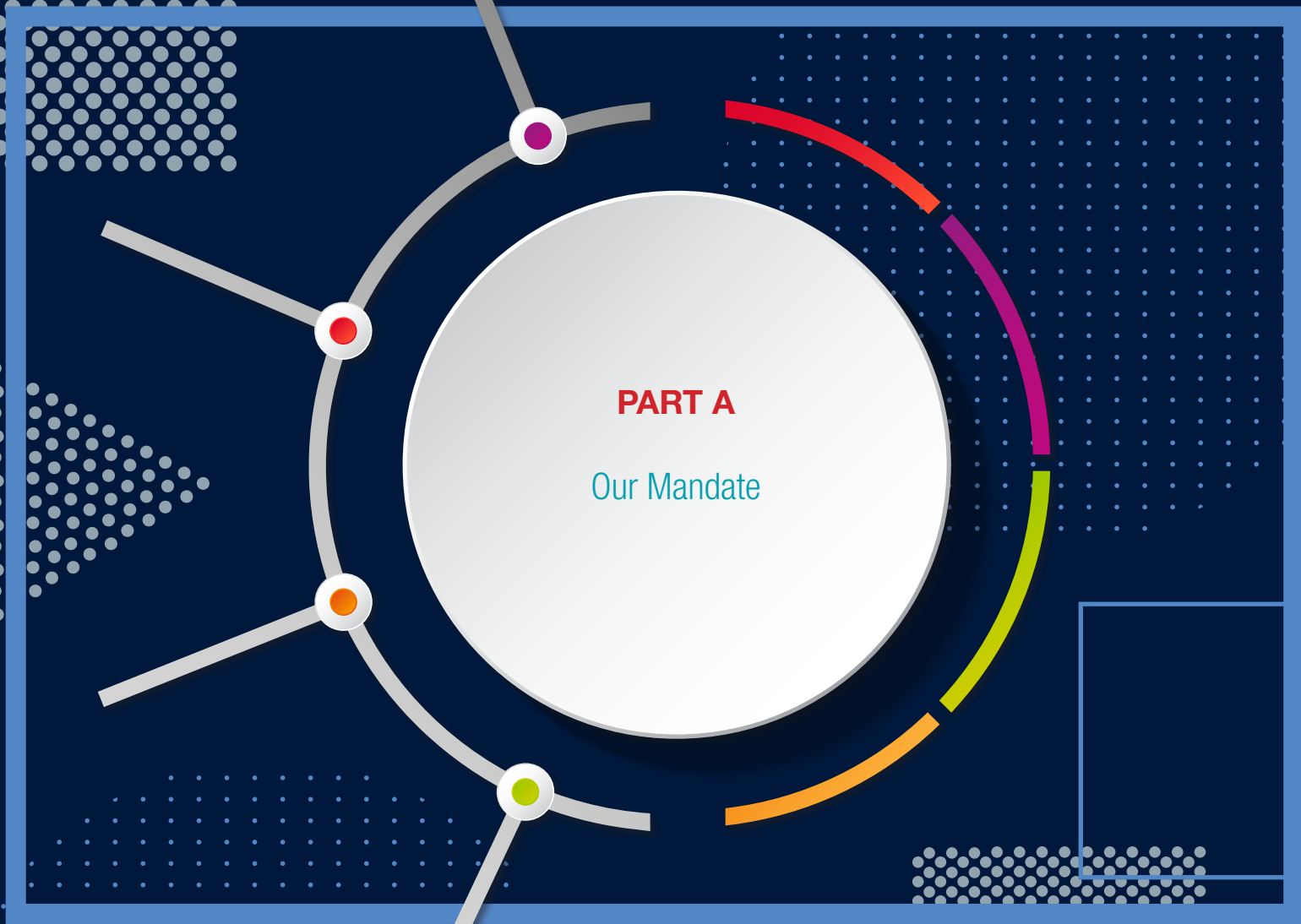
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PART A

Our Mandate



1 Legislative and Policy Mandates

The context within which the National Research Foundation (NRF) functions is informed by various strategic frameworks, legislation, policies and plans of Government. Among these are those that outline developmental priorities for the nation and, in particular, for the higher education sub-sector of the post-school sector, and the science and technology sector in the medium to long term. The objectives and priorities relevant to the NRF's mandate, planning and priorities are discussed below.

National Research Foundation Act, 1998 (Act 23 of 1998 as amended)

This Act established the NRF and provides for the object of the NRF, which is to contribute to national development by:

- a) Supporting, promoting and advancing research and human capacity development (HCD), through funding and the provision of the necessary research infrastructure to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of science and technology, including humanities, social sciences and indigenous knowledge;
- b) Developing, supporting and maintaining National Research Facilities;
- c) Supporting and promoting public awareness of, and engagement with, science; and
- d) Promoting the development and maintenance of the national science system and support of government priorities.

National Development Plan: Vision 2030

The central intention of the National Development Plan (NDP) is the achievement of economic well-being for all South Africans. It aims to reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality by 2030 and identifies the knowledge economy and science, technology and innovation (STI) as among the primary drivers of economic growth, job creation and socio-economic reform. The NDP emphasises investment in education, people and the knowledge economy as key to delivery in complementary areas such as health, environmental sustainability, infrastructure and economic growth, and as a prerequisite for social and economic transformation. The NDP also

underlines the need to improve the relationship between Government, industry and the knowledge enterprise.

White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation, 2019

The White Paper on Science Technology and Innovation (WP STI) places STI at the centre of South Africa's development agenda. It recognises rapid international technological advances and the need for South Africa to position itself to respond to such developments. It advocates for the adoption of the principles of open science as a means of growing the STI outputs and impact. The White Paper acknowledges the country's achievements over the past decades, but notes the need to accelerate transformation of the knowledge enterprise to achieve an inclusive science system that is responsive and innovative. It prioritises the need to increase investment and expand the research system and to promote partnerships among universities, society, industry and Government to ensure a cohesive National System of Innovation (NSI).

White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2013

The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (WP PSET) advances priorities in the post-school education sector, including expansion of the variety and number of post-school opportunities available to youth. Within the university sub-sector, there is a focus on throughput, efficiency, differentiation and research development. The WP PSET sets out strategies to improve the capacity of the sector to meet South Africa's needs and outlines policy directions to contribute to building a developmental state with a vibrant democracy and a flourishing economy. It advances diversity; quality education; expanded access to postgraduate education; and research and researcher advancement.

White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, 1997

White Paper 3 emphasises a holistic approach to transformation and the need to balance the transformation imperative with the need for expansion and development. It advances a higher education and research sector that is responsive to the needs of a democratic society and inclusive economy. In addition, White Paper 3 recognises the importance of countering the isolation of the university sector during the apartheid period through international partnerships and internationalisation.

Policies and Other Mandates

Macro-policies and strategies of Government developed by sector departments focusing on higher education, science and innovation; health; minerals and energy; agriculture; the environment; water; and industrial development, are all crucial to the functioning and work of the NRF. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) have, specifically, developed and implemented a number of strategies and policies to guide the development of our science system. These include:

- The Strategy for Human Capacity Development for Research, Innovation and Scholarships;
- The Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework;
- The Science Engagement Framework;
- The Research Outputs Policy;
- The South African Research Infrastructure Roadmap;
- The Ministerial Guidelines for Improving Equity and the Distribution of DSI/NRF Bursaries and Fellowships; and
- Discipline-specific strategies and plans that include astronomy, marine biology, biotechnology, palaeosciences and nanotechnology.

South Africa is also signatory to a number of international treaties. As such, there are a number of international strategies that inform the work of the NRF.

South Africa, and hence the NRF, has prioritised its contribution to the development of the continent and in this regard the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 is key. It provides the strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent and builds on, and seeks to accelerate, the implementation of initiatives for growth and sustainable development. Most important among these is the aligned Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa, 2024 (STISA-2024) that identifies critical sectors for technology-led development aligned with the priority outcomes of hunger eradication; food security; prevention and control of diseases; communication; and wealth creation. It identifies four pillars for development, namely: building and/or upgrading research infrastructures; enhancing professional and technical competencies; promoting entrepreneurship and innovation; and providing an enabling environment for STI development.

Globally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN) outline internationally recognised areas of priority to advance a better and more sustainable future for all. The SDGs also set targets for 2030 to address multi-disciplinary global challenges such as poverty, inequality, hunger, health, education, equality, environmental concerns, innovation and economic growth. These challenges are considered priority areas in terms of research and innovation investment, aligned with and informed by the strategic priorities of each country.





PART B

Our Strategic Focus



“Research for a better society.”

The National Research Foundation’s (NRF) strategic vision is that knowledge and research are at the epicentre of national development. It is about a knowledge and research enterprise whose products and effects bring about the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge, improve the quality of life for the people of our country, improve competitiveness of strategic sectors and industries of our economy, provide for better protection and preservation of our national natural heritage, and lead to elevation of the technological base of our country. All of these in order to bring about a better society through research.



As per its statutory mandate, the NRF’s *raison d’être* is:

“To enable and facilitate the contribution of knowledge and scientific research to national development.”

Values

The NRF’s shared values reflect the organisation’s core ethics and principles. They are lived values that inspire employees and articulate the NRF’s aspirations regarding workplace behaviour and institutional culture. The NRF’s values reflect its long-term vision and the critical success factors of the knowledge enterprise, namely: transformation, impact, excellence and sustainability. These values are elaborated on below:

People-centred

People are our greatest asset and are thus treasured and nurtured. We invest in current and future researchers to create a transformed, excellent and sustainable research enterprise with impact. We invest in our employees to create a transformed, empowering, inclusive and diverse working environment, and to advance health and wellness in the work environment.



Ethics and Integrity

Integrity forms the basis of our business principles. As an organisation, and individually, we act with honesty and probity. We are consistent, fair and transparent in our actions and decisions.



Accountability

We are accountable for the way in which we utilise public resources in pursuit of national development. We make commitments and are prepared to be judged against them. We are responsible for our actions.



Passion for Excellence

We recognise our obligation to society and to the research enterprise to deliver the highest standards in all areas of our mandate and to seek out and support excellence.



World-class Service

We are concerned about our stakeholders, their needs and their perceptions. We aspire to and are committed to provide exceptional service at all levels.



Respect

We recognise the inherent worth of every human being, embrace diversity, and treat everybody we encounter with dignity and respect. We respect the environment and all living creatures, and promote sustainable development.



1 Situational Analysis

The NRF functions within a national and international science system, with the key objective of developing, advancing and promoting the national research environment in support of national development. National development refers to the various components of development, for example, the political, social, economic and environmental. A central component in South Africa is sustainable development to reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality. The knowledge enterprise contributes to national development through the impact (societal or knowledge impact) of the research it carries out. As outlined above, various pieces of South African legislation and policies have all highlighted the value of science and research to society and the economy. These national developments have arisen from the international context of the notion of a 'knowledge economy'.

The concept of a knowledge economy interprets knowledge as a currency within the modern global world where the social and economic development of a country is enhanced by its ability to create, distribute and utilise knowledge and information. The notion of a knowledge economy has led to an increase in investment in research and development in many developed and developing countries.

In the South African context, the National Development Plan (NDP) indicates that 'science and technology continue to revolutionise the way goods and services are produced and traded. As a middle-income country, South Africa needs to use its knowledge and innovative products to compete'. It explains further that innovation is necessary for a middle-income country to develop. Science and technology can also be leveraged to solve some of the biggest challenges in education and health.

In pursuit of these objectives, it is imperative that the research or knowledge enterprise is supported, promoted and advanced to contribute to national development. Without a well-resourced, sustainable and transformed knowledge enterprise it will not be possible to continue to bring about benefits for society, the economy and the environment. The NRF's Strategic Plan is informed by this key objective, which is central to its mandate.

The NRF considers the knowledge enterprise to consist of four key components. First is the people who undertake and support the research endeavour – postgraduate students, researchers and support professionals. Second is the research undertaken that advances knowledge production and dissemination. Third is research infrastructure – the tools researchers require to conduct their research. The fourth component is the relationship between science and society. These are also the four focus areas of delivery for the NRF.

Currently, the NRF supports approximately four thousand research-productive and internationally recognised researchers. The productivity and quality of the knowledge produced by NRF-funded researchers have been significant over the past five years. In terms of Thomson Reuters Web of Science measures, the growth rates in knowledge production by NRF-funded researchers have surpassed the world growth rate over the past five years. The science system not only produces excellent researchers, but South Africa has also become a 'sought-after' global platform for conducting astronomy, nuclear physics, palaeontology, medicine and social sciences research of international stature. Excellence is among the areas of strength of the South African science system, and the NRF will continue to drive excellence in the future.

The establishment of a Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (HEST) provides an opportunity and increases the scope for a more unified approach to national research development by bringing universities and science councils, including the NRF, under a single ministry.

Transformation of the science system continues to be a national priority. To this end, the NRF has developed a Transformation Framework to guide its contribution to system transformation. The Framework envisions a transformed and transforming NRF that is an inclusive and diverse organisation that supports and promotes the simultaneous eradication of all aspects of unfair discrimination; that recognises and respects diverse cultures and knowledge systems; and that supports a research and higher education sector that gives full expression to opportunities for all. The Transformation Framework identifies the specific need to focus on transformation of the equity profiles of the South African research workforce; of the knowledge enterprise; of the relationship between science and society; and the building of a diverse and fully inclusive learning organisation.

In giving effect to the Framework, the NRF has developed a new Postgraduate Funding Policy and is developing a programme to support early career researchers (ECR) and scholars. Accordingly, postgraduate funding allocations will be underpinned by the principles of equity of opportunity; representivity; prioritisation; and enhanced access, success and throughput. Race, age, gender, disability and nationality will be considered in the allocation of funding, with transformation as the core objective. Financial need is, for the first time, included as a funding criterion. To attract and retain a diverse range of students, bursary values will be increased to cover the full cost of study. With regard to ECRs, the NRF is conceptualising a programme that will be highly competitive, merit-based and offer long-term, customised support to black or women ECRs. The objective is to enable exceptional ECRs and scholars to become leading researchers and scholars internationally.

1.1 External Environment

Based on a national and international situational analysis, the NRF has identified four critical success factors of the knowledge enterprise for this Strategic Plan that will inform the organisation's decisions and priorities over the next five years. First is the **transformation** of the knowledge enterprise; second is the **impact** of the knowledge enterprise on society, the economy, the environment and within the research enterprise; third is the importance of **excellence** and international competitiveness; and last is **sustainability**, both of the knowledge enterprise and of the environment. These success factors are inseparable and interdependent, and serve as lenses to inform the organisation's decisions and priorities over the next five years. Together they form a coherent structure for the *NRF Strategy 2025*, envisaging a mutually beneficial relationship between the knowledge enterprise and society. Each of these are discussed below.

Transformation

Transformation is essentially about fundamental change in form, nature or function. It is about structural or internal change that modifies the nature of a system or being. In the modern South African context, transformation is understood to be a process of transition from the legacies of the apartheid past, with its ideologies and discriminatory practices, into a new democratic era with new or modified practices, institutions, values and beliefs that have societal legitimacy.

Part of transforming the knowledge enterprise is changing the way in which research and knowledge production relate to society and the economy. Knowledge and research can be used to support broad social and economic development, encourage critical discourse and develop responsible and critically engaged citizens. Developing a knowledge economy, where socio-economic development is based on knowledge production, is part of the national transformation agenda. The transformation agenda has been a national priority over the last 25 years, and remains a priority considering the pace of transformation in the sector.

As evidenced by national data, progress has been made in driving the racial and gender representation at postgraduate level, which show that in 2017, 59% of doctoral students were black African (from 47% in 2012) and 45% were women (from 44% in 2012). In terms of doctoral graduates, 54% were black African in 2017 and 43% were women (compared with 43% and 42%, respectively, in 2012).

This serves to demonstrate that significant progress has been made in closing the racial and gender composition gaps. However, more needs to be done considering the demographic representation in the country.

Nationally, regarding research and instructional staff, 42% were black African in 2017 (compared with 32% in 2012) and of these 17% had doctoral qualifications (compared with 13% in 2012). Women accounted for 50% of research and instruction staff in 2017 (from 48% in 2012) and of these, 20% had a doctoral qualification (from 16% in 2012). Despite progress made, the paucity of women and black African research and instructional staff with doctoral qualifications persists. Therefore, there is a need to continue to drive the transformation agenda. This underscores the prioritisation of transformation of the equity profiles of the South African research workforce.

Impact

Impact, in its various dimensions, is about having influence or effect for change. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines impact as 'positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended'.

Within the knowledge enterprise, impact has come to be defined as either 'knowledge or academic impact' or 'research impact'. Knowledge impact, which is a well-established marker for research evaluation, is about the 'demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application'.

Research impact, also called societal impact, which has been added to the evaluation of research more recently, is about the 'demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. Economic and societal impacts embrace all the extremely diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations'. The societal impact of research includes impact in the economic, social and environmental realms. Examples include environmental security, impact on policy development, and technological advancement and innovations. In brief, it is about the impact of research outside of academia and about the direct or indirect causal relationship between knowledge production and improvement in the quality of people's lives.

Through its *Strategy 2025*, the NRF will seek to support research that generates societal impact while maintaining a balanced approach to supporting fundamental and mission-led research. To this end, the organisation will entrench engaged research in the knowledge enterprise through interaction for mutual benefit. In addition, society will participate in knowledge production by identifying societal challenges or policy needs, evaluating impact case studies, or gathering data for research projects.

Excellence

Excellence is generally understood as a comparative judgement of an endeavour, rather than a substantive one. To be excellent means ‘to excel’, in other words to be judged better than others in terms of predefined criteria. In general, excellence can be ascribed to a person, an organisation, a product, or the performance of an activity. In the global knowledge and science system, the judgement of excellence is often done in terms of either a comparative evaluation or rating against benchmarks, process norms, criteria and goals, or a sector-wide ranking.

The concept of research excellence is open to a number of interpretations and context-specific definitions. It is internationally acknowledged that there is no fixed definition for ‘research excellence’, with continued debates around methods and discipline-specific criteria. More recently, the debate has extended beyond methodological quality to include ‘fitness for purpose’. Emerging research excellence conceptual elements and criteria are scientific merit, ethics, originality, relevance, purpose, methodological rigour and impact.

In addition to being a value of the NRF, the pursuit of excellence is a fundamental objective of any scientific organisation. This is particularly important as the NRF is rightly expected to advance scientific excellence in the national science system.

Sustainability

To ensure a sustainable knowledge enterprise, growth must be balanced with available operational and financial resources. For instance, growth in postgraduate enrolment must be balanced with undergraduate enrolment and must take cognisance of available supervisory capacity, and institutional capacity and infrastructure. Similarly, growth in the researcher cohort must be commensurate to the expectations of the country to become a knowledge-led economy.

Sustainable development is also about development that takes into account social, economic and environmental impact, recognising the importance of each and their interrelated nature. The South African NDP and the United Nation’s (UN) sustainable development goals (SDGs) focus on optimising social justice, economic development and environmental sustainability. They identify key challenges relating to the social, economic and environmental context, such as those of poverty, climate change, education and health. These require national or global action. It is thus important to pursue responsible knowledge production aimed at sustainable development for South Africa.



1.2 Internal Environment

To deliver on its mandate, and support the knowledge enterprise in line with the four critical success factors identified in the external analysis, the NRF requires a fit-for-purpose organisation and appropriate resourcing. Both the NRF and the knowledge enterprise cannot function effectively without the provision of resources and the NRF cannot function optimally, or support the knowledge enterprise effectively, if it is not appropriately organised and fit for purpose (Part C, 2 Explanation of Planned Performance over the Five-year Planning Period on page 17 of this document).

Appropriate resourcing

The *NRF Strategy 2025* can only be implemented effectively with the necessary financial resources, both for the NRF and for the knowledge enterprise as a whole. Implicit in this perspective is the notion that sustainable and dependable resources are required for a thriving research enterprise. It is critical that the NRF receives adequate resources, with sufficient predictability, to allow for long-term planning and sufficient flexibility to enable strategic decision making for maximum impact. This is a key challenge for the NRF.

The current reality is that government allocations to the NRF have not increased in real terms, and that the majority of the funding allocated to the organisation from Government is already earmarked (75%), leaving only 25% for the NRF to invest in a balanced portfolio of strategic priorities. This funding model inhibits the NRF from determining where funding would best serve the knowledge enterprise and national development. The NRF requires a revised funding model to ensure greater flexibility and maximum impact from investments. An appropriate allocation of resources, aligned with the intentions of the *NRF Strategy 2025*, is essential. Greater resource flexibility will allow the organisation to invest in areas of maximum impact to increase societal and knowledge impact. To this end, the NRF has initiated a process of developing a strategically orientated funding framework that would enable a greater degree of planning and that would permit the NRF greater efficacy in achieving its mandate and strategy.

The NRF is aware that national resources are limited, and that other sources of funding the science system must be explored. Opportunities lie in enhancing strategic partnerships to strengthen the organisation's resource base and advance its mandate. To leverage additionality and advance its mandate, a strategy for strategic partnerships is under development. The strategy will seek to diversify both

local and international strategic partners with a focus on strengthening existing and creating new partnerships with Government and its entities, industry and civil society. The strategy will also accelerate engagement among African countries to develop expertise, build capacity and contribute to local and continental development agendas. The central characteristic of all partnerships is that they must align with the NRF's strategic objectives and provide mutual benefit.

The organisation will continue to practise good governance and efficiency, report on and show accountability for resource utilisation and demonstrate the societal and knowledge impact of its investment.



SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results) Analysis

To assess the NRF's strengths, and to consider the opportunities it has in the changing national and international context, a SOAR analysis was undertaken. This analysis not only allowed the organisation to consider its current position, but also

its vision for the knowledge enterprise, and how that could be attained. Below is an overview of the NRF's SOAR analysis. This analysis informed the above internal situational analysis and the identification of ambitions for the next decade.

Strengths

- Highly networked within the knowledge system, nationally and internationally.
- Well-developed best-practice research evaluation and support systems.
- Talented and highly knowledgeable, committed and diverse leadership and staff cohort.
- Unique position of influence across the national science system.
- World-class National Research Facilities.
- Good governance and accountability systems in place.

Opportunities

- Restructured administration and synergies (combined Ministry for Higher Education, Technology, Science and Innovation).
- Amended mandate that provides a clearer and expanded scope for the organisation.
- Digital technological advancements.
- Promotion of the benefit of the knowledge enterprise for societal development.
- Make science accessible through a variety of media platforms (including social media).

Aspirations

- To position the NRF to impact, shape and influence all aspects of the knowledge enterprise.
- To maximise the impact of the NRF's investment through strategic decision making that will benefit society.
- To demonstrate the impact of the NRF, and the research it performs and funds, on society, the economy, the environment and on the knowledge enterprise.
- To fundamentally change and strengthen the resourcing of the NRF mandate.
- To create an inclusive and diverse knowledge enterprise.
- To influence the national science agenda and decision making in the science system.
- To be a transformed, coherent, learning organisation that strives for excellence.

Results

- A diverse, inclusive and transformed knowledge enterprise and research workforce.
- Excellent research with impact that contributes to national development.
- A sustainable knowledge enterprise, delivering sustainable solutions to global challenges.
- An NRF that is the nexus of information on the science system, which provides research and analysis for informed decision making.
- An indispensable, agile, responsive and relevant NRF.

Both the aspirations and the results identified through the SOAR analysis by the organisation lay the framework for the derivation of strategic intents. These are reflected as the desired strategic outcomes, which themselves provide a basis for positioning the performance expectations. This is reflected in Part C, 1.2 Measuring Outcomes, on page 16 of the document. The SOAR analysis also provides a natural extension to, and elaboration on the strategic objectives identified in the Foreword of this document.

2 High-level Organisational Structure

The NRF is organised into four Programmes, namely Corporate; Science Engagement; Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (RISA); and National Research Infrastructure Platforms (NRIP). The Programmes work in a matrix fashion to deliver on the organisation's core mandate.

Programme 1 – Corporate

The Corporate Programme provides the organisation with enabling governance structures; strategy and planning capacity; and shared services supported by fit-for-purpose business and information systems, policies and procedures. In addition, the Programme provides strategic analysis and systems intelligence, both within the NRF and for the broader National System of Innovation (NSI), based on system-level data and information analysis. It is envisaged that this capability will be increased in line with the strategic intent to make the NRF a trusted source of information and thought leader for the knowledge enterprise.

Programme 2 – Science Engagement

Science Engagement leads and coordinates the discourse on science with and for society. Programme 2 supports the national imperative of developing a scientifically literate society through a deliberate strategic focus on engaged research; enabling public access to research and science engagement infrastructure; support for the development of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education; building science engagement capacity and capability; and facilitating collaborations through private sector partnerships in science engagement. The amendment of the NRF Act commits the NRF to a science engagement leadership and coordination role across the national science system, and Programme 2 has the responsibility of translating that mandate into operational reality.

Programme 3 – Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (RISA)

RISA is a key contributor to the achievement of the NRF's mandate as the grant-making function of the organisation. The Programme supports and promotes research through the development of human capacity, the generation of knowledge,

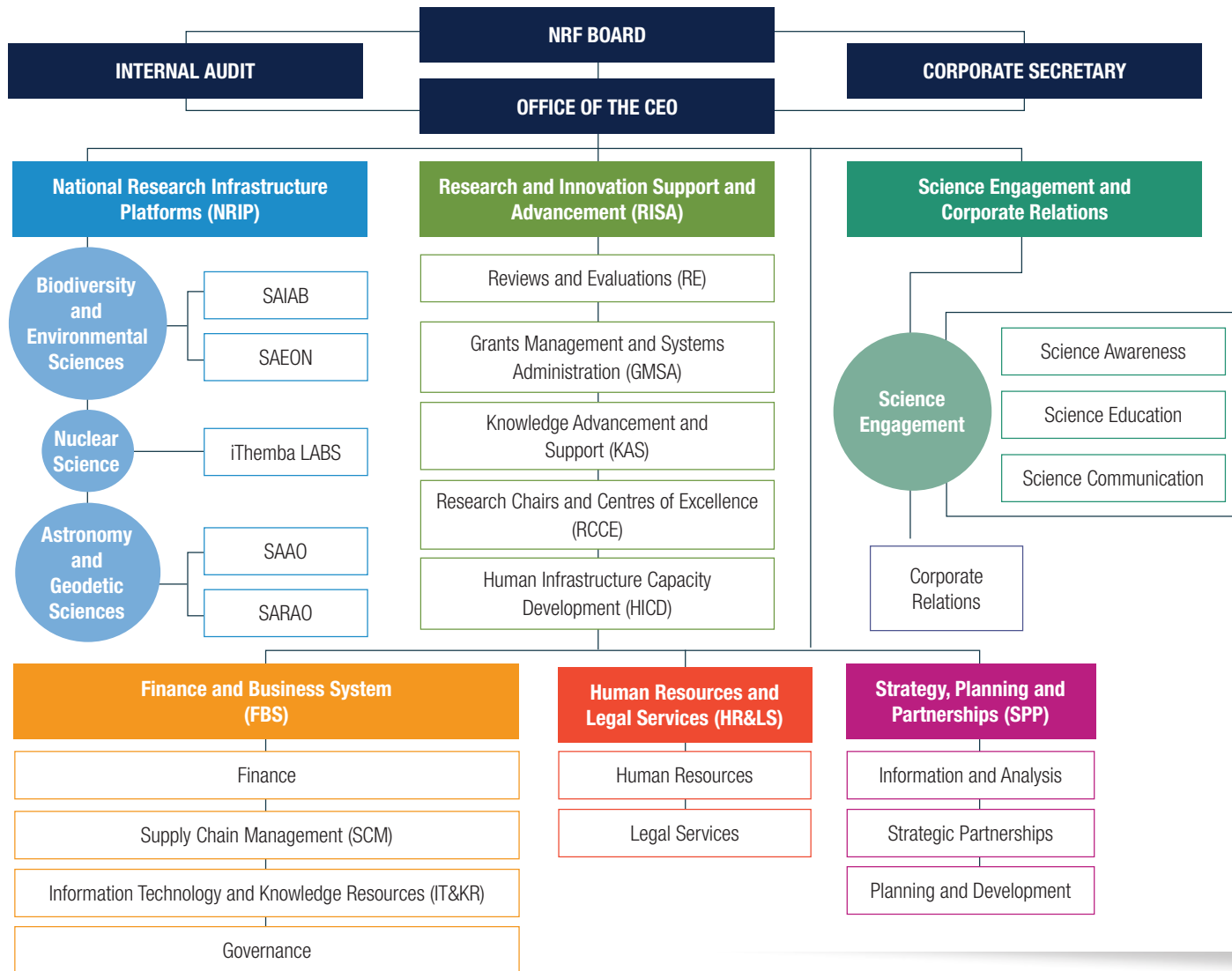
and the provision of, and access to, cutting-edge research infrastructure. Programme 3 is responsible for Reviews and Evaluations; Grants Management and Systems Administration; Knowledge Advancement and Support; Research Chairs and Centres of Excellence; and Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development.

Programme 4 – National Research Infrastructure Platforms (NRIP)

The NRF is mandated to provide leading-edge research infrastructure platforms in support of knowledge generation, innovation and human capacity development (HCD). By adopting a platform approach, Programme 4 creates the framework for the integration and establishment of connectivity between the physical, process, systems, data and intellectual 'capacities' in cognate areas to enable excellence and sustainability of the South African knowledge enterprise. This Programme develops, supports and maintains NRIP domains, including e-infrastructures (e-research and data platforms). It also facilitates researcher mobility to access national and global research infrastructures; leads the NRF's agency role as implementer of the country's participation in intergovernmental and multilateral research infrastructure; promotes and supports research infrastructure networks and dialogues; and develops and maintains frameworks for benchmarking NRIP. Programme 4 incorporates the five National Research Facilities in the thematic areas of nuclear sciences; biodiversity and environmental sciences; astronomy and geodetic sciences and supports other evolving research infrastructure platforms.

Organisational Structure

Below is a representation of the NRF’s organisational structure, which also reflects the leadership and governance structures responsible for the accountability and integrity of the organisation.



The high-level structure of the organisation ensures optimal coordination of functions across specialist operational business units and corporate functions. Corporate-level executives are assigned to exercise oversight over delivery of the

strategic objectives of service delivery programmes and critical functions in the corporate administration programme.

PART C

Measuring our Performance



1 Institutional Performance Information

1.1 Measuring the Impact



National development includes all aspects of the development of a nation, such as political, social, economic and environmental aspects. For South Africa, a central component is sustainable development that reduces poverty, unemployment and inequality. The National Research Foundation (NRF) contributes to national development through human capacity development and the impact (societal or knowledge impact) of the research it supports. The societal impact of research can be in the economic, social or environmental realms, or in a combination of these. Examples of impact include innovations (products, services, processes, etc.), environmental security, and impact on policy development and technological advancements. Central to the NRF's impact statement are its responsiveness to societal needs and challenges, its alignment with the needs of the economy and its engagement with society.

In implementing this Strategic Plan, the NRF will align its work with the following Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) priority areas:

- Priority 1: Capable, Ethical and Developmental State;
- Priority 2: Economic Transformation and Job Creation;
- Priority 3: Education, Skills and Health;
- Priority 4: Consolidating the Social Wage through Reliable and Quality Basic Services;
- Priority 5: Spatial Integration, Human Settlements and Local Government;
- Priority 6: Social Cohesion and Safe Communities; and
- Priority 7: A Better Africa and a Better World.

The three NRF Strategic Plan outcomes, namely (i) a transformed (internationally, competitive and sustainable) research workforce, (ii) enhanced impact of the

research enterprise, and (iii) enhanced impact of science engagement, and its outcome indicators and targets directly commit the organisation to delivery against MTSF outcomes for Priorities 2 and 3. Through its internationalisation and strategic investments, the NRF will make a contribution to the achievement of outcomes for other MTSF priorities, especially Priority 7.

The design and scale of NRF services and interventions will be informed by the Decadal Plan of the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and periodically adapted to improve the significance of its contributions to the MTSF, the White Paper on Science, Technology and innovation (WP STI) and the National Development Plan (NDP), in line with management innovation and available resources.

The outcomes of the NRF over the period of this Strategic Plan will contribute to the core themes identified in the WP STI, and implemented in line with Decadal Plan for STI and DSI Strategic Plan outcomes. Alignment with DSI strategic outcomes is illustrated in the table below.

DSI Strategic Plan outcome	NRF Strategic Plan outcome
Outcome 1: A transformed, inclusive, responsive and coherent National System of Innovation (NSI)	Outcome 1: A transformed (internationally competitive and sustainable) research workforce
Outcome 2: Knowledge utilisation for economic development in revitalising existing industries, and in stimulating industrial development led by research and development	Outcome 2: Enhanced impact of the research enterprise
Outcome 3: Human capabilities and skills for the economy and for development	Outcome 2: Enhanced impact of the research enterprise
Outcome 4: Increased knowledge generation and innovation output	Outcome 3: Enhanced impact of science engagement (SE)
Outcome 5: Knowledge utilisation for inclusive development	Outcome 1: A transformed (internationally competitive and sustainable) research workforce
Outcome 6: Innovation in support of a capable and developmental state	Outcome 1: A transformed (internationally competitive and sustainable) research workforce
	Outcome 2: Enhanced impact of the research enterprise
	Outcome 3: Enhanced impact of SE

1.2 Measuring Outcomes

The WP STI identifies the lack of inclusivity in the higher skills categories of the research workforce and the lower innovation performance of the National System

of Innovation (NSI) as key challenges affecting the contribution that STI makes to national development. By aligning its work with the MTSE, the Decadal Plan for STI and the DSI Strategic Plan, the NRF will design its policies and services to ensure delivery of commitments against all outcomes in this Strategic Plan given in table 1.

Table 1: Outcomes and outcome indicators over the five-year period

Outcome	Outcome indicator	Baseline	Five-year target
A transformed (internationally competitive and sustainable) research workforce	Profile of NRF-funded postgraduate students who have completed their studies	Black 74% Women 54%	Black 80% Women 55%
	Profile of NRF-funded researchers producing research outputs	Black 31% Women 33%	Black 48% Women 42%
Enhanced impact of the research enterprise	Entrenchment of knowledge and societal impacts in excellent research supported by the NRF	Focus on knowledge impact assessment <i>ex-ante</i> only	Portfolio of excellent research supported by the NRF is justified with sound <i>ex-ante</i> and <i>ex-post</i> knowledge and societal impact
	Inclusive support of all domains of science	Instrument-led research support	Research support portfolio informed by a deliberate Research Agenda
	Evidence-based decision making to enhance the impact of the research enterprise	Decision making based on limited internal capacity	Improved organisational and NSI analytics and the use thereof in strategic decision making
Enhanced impact of science engagement (SE)	Engaged science entrenched in the research enterprise	Engaged science not mainstreamed	Mainstreaming of SE in the research enterprise
A transformed organisation that lives its culture and values	Representation of designated groups in leadership, management, supervisory (P1-7) occupational levels	Women 26.7% Black 45.8%	Women 38% Black 55% (Towards mirroring the Employment Equity Plan targets)
	Inclusive, enabling and learning organisation	Baseline employee survey results	Improvement on baseline survey's results
	A co-created culture enhancing high performance and service excellence	Baseline culture survey results	Improvement on baseline survey's results

2 Explanation of Planned Performance over the Five-year Planning Period

Based on the above situational analysis, and the NRF's SOAR analysis, the NRF has determined its key strategic intents for the next five years, set across the areas of the following organising framework: **people, the research enterprise, research infrastructure**, and **the relationship between science and society**. The organising framework includes **two key enablers**, namely a **fit-for-purpose NRF** and **resourcing of the mandate**. The latter was elaborated on in the situational analysis.

People (Outcome 1: A Transformed [Internationally Competitive and Sustainable] Research Workforce)

To transform the equity profiles of the South African research workforce, the NRF aims to facilitate the growth of a cohort of South African researchers and technical expertise that is internationally competitive, intergenerational and reflects equitable representation of designated groups. The organisation will invest its resources strategically across the researcher pipeline and will partner and collaborate with relevant organisations, nationally and internationally, to achieve this intent. Key to the realisation of this intent will be implementation of the new Postgraduate Student Funding Policy, which seeks to improve access, throughput and success across the system, as well as a Programme for Early Career Researchers (ECRs), which will seek to drive, enable and reward excellence through long-term, customised support for exceptional potential. It is a requirement that established researchers supervise postgraduate students and mentor ECRs and scholars.

The Research Enterprise (Outcome 2: Enhanced Impact of the Research Enterprise)

As a part of its intention to enhance its contribution to national development, the NRF will invest sustainably in strategic areas of national relevance, priority or advantage through an NRF Research Agenda that will be informed by the MTSF 2019 – 2024, WP STI and the Decadal Plan for STI. The Research Agenda will be used as a mechanism to steer the research enterprise towards impact by adopting a thematic approach outlining the knowledge areas in which the organisation

invests to maximise impact. Secondly, the organisation will prioritise the realisation of societal impact of research by transitioning to a portfolio of excellent research supported by the NRF that is justified with sound *ex-ante* evaluation of knowledge for societal impact potential, and *ex-post* evaluation to demonstrate the societal impact of research. It is acknowledged that this will require the re-conceptualisation of the evaluative frameworks, systems and processes, including the expectations the NRF concerning research proposals.

The NRF provides access to a range of **research infrastructure** platforms, both locally and internationally, and hosts a number of National Research Facilities. It will advance the adoption of a national lens approach to research infrastructure support and provision beyond individual interests and capabilities. In this regard, it will seek to achieve knowledge domain balance across the portfolio of research infrastructure platforms, with particular focus on the introduction of platforms in the social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, the NRF will seek to advance a platform approach to research infrastructure provision, and move away from provision of individual-level, small-scale research equipment or infrastructure elements. This will entail the development of consensus on the notion of 'well-founded laboratories', infrastructure, i.e., infrastructure meant for undergraduate and postgraduate student teaching and learning, with the intention of excluding it from NRF-funded research infrastructure.

The Relationship between Science and Society (Outcome 3: Enhanced Impact of Science Engagement)

The NRF recognises the importance of a scientifically literate and critically engaged society as an essential requirement of the transition towards a knowledge economy. It aims to transform the relationship between science and society over the next five years by creating a fit-for-purpose organisation that leads the science engagement mandate across the science sector, embedding an engaged research framework across the research enterprise and NRF-supported research.

The NRF aims to embed engaged research within the knowledge enterprise and position itself as a significant player in the international engagement and research impact discourse. In line with its mandate, the NRF will develop an Engaged Research Framework to encourage and embed clear and thoughtful approaches to science and community engagement and involvement across the life cycle of NRF-funded research. This will take into account the emphasis in the WP STI on continuing

progress towards innovation in partnership with a range of relevant stakeholders, with the aim of building a culture of innovation and driving a strong, sustainable economy and a more equitable society.

A Fit-for-purpose Organisation (Outcome 4: A Transformed Organisation that lives its Culture and Values)

In terms of ensuring a fit-for-purpose organisation, the NRF will advance a transformed, coherent and learning organisation that strives for excellence through its lived organisational culture. A supportive and high-performing organisational culture is essential for strategic delivery. Fit-for-purpose structures, business processes and technology systems are required to ensure true strategic delivery and excellent service. In this regard, people and organisational culture are key. Implied in the NRF's values is a high-performance culture. This is achieved through, among others, a participatory work environment in which employees are not only valued but are also well-motivated, engaged and productive. As such, the future of the NRF will be safeguarded through transformative succession planning, ongoing workforce planning and staff development and retention initiatives that will ensure a future cohort of highly capable and committed staff members. This will position the NRF to impact, shape and influence all aspects of the research and knowledge enterprise.



3 Key Risks

In developing the organisational strategic risks, the NRF considered both internal and external factors to understand the interconnectedness of risks and to appreciate potential adverse impacts. The table below presents several risks that were identified as they align with *NRF Strategy 2025* outcomes and will be used to guide appropriate mitigation over the course of strategy execution.

These high-level risks have been mapped to *NRF Strategy 2025* outcomes and include a strategy execution risk description and mitigation for additional clarity, where deemed necessary.

Outcome	Strategic risk	Risk mitigation
[1] A transformed (internationally competitive and sustainable) research workforce	Inadequate rate of system-wide transformation.	
	Inadequately designed funding support to transform the profile of postgraduate students and research-productive researchers.	Undertake periodic reviews of and continuous improvements to funding policies, and ensure heightened institutional influence and accountability to increase throughputs for students and researchers.
[2] Enhanced impact of the research enterprise	Quality and impact of research.	
	Lack of flexibility concerning the resource allocation model to enable re-prioritisation of funds in line with new impact-orientated Research Agenda.	Build flexibility into the resourcing of the research enterprise to enable management to take accountability for achieving national development outcomes.
	Inadequately designed Research Agenda because of a lack of robust information and analytics.	Develop capacity and capability to provide organisational and National System of Innovation (NSI) analytics to support strategic decisions.
	Failure to deliver Infrastructure/large projects.	
	Failure to secure research infrastructure portfolio management capabilities because of talent and funding constraints.	Establish or acquire research infrastructure portfolio management capability to amplify knowledge and societal impacts.
[3] Enhanced impact of science engagement	Loss of support from critical stakeholders.	
	Failure to secure required funds in support of the Science Engagement Strategy.	Ensure scalable programmes that can be adapted to the amount of secured funds.
	Limited success and stakeholder acceptance of the required transition from the current capability and operating model.	Ensure fair inclusion of change management and stakeholder engagement components in the design and establishment of the required capability and new operating model for science engagement.
[4] A transformed organisation that lives its values and organisational culture.	Market challenges to attract and retain research and a technical workforce.	Undertake continuous remuneration reviews to ensure market competitiveness and succession and retention interventions.
	Inadequate rate of organisational transformation.	Implement the Organisational Transformation Framework.
	Pervasive skills mismatch and/or unavailability.	Undertake succession planning and retention interventions.
	Absence of articulated employee value proposition and Human Capacity Development (HCD) support that meet the needs of staff from designated groups.	Establish HCD support for the production of technical skills linked to the requirements of the research infrastructure, and implement a suite of incentives tailored to attract and retain the critical skills required for the sustainability of the organisation.
Resourcing (affects all outcomes)	Strategy execution risk/failure to deliver on mandate.	
	Lack of financial sustainability.	
	Threat of cybersecurity breach.	



PART D

Technical Indicator Descriptions
(TID)

1 A Transformed (Internationally Competitive and Sustainable) Research Workforce

Indicator title	Profile of NRF-funded postgraduate students who have completed their studies
Definition	<p>The indicator measures the proportion of blacks and women in the profile of all NRF-funded postgraduate students who have completed their honours, master's and doctoral degrees.</p> <p>For the purpose of this indicator, only South African citizens and permanent residents are regarded as black (African, Coloured and Indian) and relevant women, and such profile information will be taken as voluntarily disclosed by a student.</p>
Source of data	<p>NRF Grant Management System – minimum details must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntarily disclosed student profile information; and • Evidence of funding of the individual students.
Method of calculation/assessment	<p>Divide the count of NRF-funded either black or women postgraduate students, as applicable, who have completed their studies, by the overall count of all NRF-funded postgraduate students who have completed their studies and present the answer as a percentage (%).</p> <p>NB: For the aggregate count, each student/candidate must be counted once per level of qualification completed, regardless of the number of grants or years of funding received. Completions in the calendar year will be reported in the reporting year (e.g. 2020-calendar-year performance to be reported in the 2020/21 reporting year).</p>
Assumptions	Availability of sufficient funds, capacity and stability within the higher education sector and adequate time to enable students to study and complete their degrees.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	The profile of students to be reported includes proportions for all groups that constitute the full profile of all NRF-funded postgraduate students expressed as a percentage (%).
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Progress made at the end of the five-year cycle.
Desired performance	Actual performance in line with targeted performance.
Indicator responsibility	Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) – Programme 3.

Indicator title	Profile of NRF-funded researchers producing research outputs
Definition	The indicator measures the proportion of blacks and women in the profile of all NRF-funded researchers who have published in the Web of Science (WoS). For the purpose of this indicator, only South African citizens and permanent residents are regarded as black (African, Coloured and Indian) and relevant women, and such information will be taken as voluntarily disclosed by the researcher.
Source of data	WoS and profile information that were voluntarily disclosed on the NRF Grant Management System.
Method of calculation/assessment	<p>Divide the count of NRF-funded black or women researchers who are South African citizens or permanent residents and who are identified as authors of any type of research outputs published in the WoS by the overall count of all NRF-funded researchers identified as authors of research outputs published in the WoS and expressed as a percentage (%).</p> <p>NB: For the aggregate count, each NRF-funded author must be counted once, regardless of the number of WoS outputs. NRF-funded authors who published in the publication year will be reported in the reporting year (e.g. 2020-publication-year performance to be reported in the 2020/21 reporting year).</p>
Assumptions	Availability of sufficient funds and growth in the number of black and women researchers aligned with the NRF Research Agenda.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	The profile of researchers to be reported includes proportions for all groups that constitute the full profile of all NRF-funded researchers expressed as a percentage (%).
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	NA
Reporting cycle	Progress made at the end of the five-year cycle.
Desired performance	Actual performance that is higher than targeted performance is desirable.
Indicator responsibility	DCEO – Programme 3.

2 Enhanced Impact of the Research Enterprise

Indicator title	Knowledge and societal impact entrenched in excellent research supported by the NRF
Definition	The indicator measures the extent to which knowledge and societal impact are taken into account at the inception and approval stage of investments in research, as well as at the post-execution evaluation and reinvestment approval stages.
Source of data	Records of portfolio of investments in research enterprise; <i>ex-ante</i> evaluation frameworks and process outcomes; and <i>ex-poste</i> evaluation frameworks and process outcomes.
Method of calculation/assessment	Reviews of portfolios of research support and the evaluation rubrics, case studies and surveys utilised for decision making.
Assumptions	Excellent records management for business processes relating to investment in research enterprise proposals, approval, monitoring and evaluations/assessments.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	NA
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	NA
Reporting cycle	Mid and end term of the Strategic Plan assessments reports.
Desired performance	Actual performance that is higher than targeted performance is desirable.
Indicator responsibility	DCEO – Programme 3.



Indicator title	Inclusive support of all domains of science
Definition	The indicator measures the extent to which the NRF supports all domains of science across the research enterprise in accordance with the Research Agenda Framework.
Source of data	Up-to-date information on all domains of science in South Africa and the level and form of support that the NRF provides through its investments for each listed domain.
Method of calculation/assessment	Review information on NRF support by knowledge domain and assess the level and form of investment, and compare the results with an appropriately selected group of countries.
Assumptions	Availability of resources and access to national and international information.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Progress made at the end of the five-year cycle.
Desired performance	Actual performance that is in line with targeted performance is desirable.
Indicator responsibility	DCEO – Programme 3.

Indicator title	Evidence-based decision making to enhance the impact of the research enterprise
Definition	The indicator measures the extent to which decisions to support research are informed by system-level data.
Source of data	Records of investment decision-making processes and programme frameworks, and portfolio of case studies describing impact.
Method of calculation/assessment	End-of-term review of the portfolios of NRF research support.
Assumptions	Appropriate records and data management.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting Cycle	Annual informal progress, while formal assessment prescribed in this TID will coincide with mid-term and end-term assessments of this Strategic Plan.
Desired performance	Assessments to demonstrate progress in the available analytics, including case studies and their use across research investments.
Indicator responsibility	Group Executive – Strategy, Planning and Partnerships.

3 Enhanced Impact of Science Engagement

Indicator title	Engaged science entrenched in the research enterprise
Definition	The indicator measures the extent to which engaged science principles and designs are adopted in the research enterprise activities across the National System of Innovation (NSI) and the NRF.
Source of data	Research support programme records; science engagement records and reports; stakeholder management reports; and business reports on system-level leadership for Science Engagement (SE).
Method of calculation/assessment	Assessment of relevant records and reports.
Assumptions	Excellent records management for businesses processes of research enterprise investments, initiatives and programmes that covers evidence of use, support and promotion of engaged science.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	Promotion and education events must be informed by well-considered spatial development priorities and coverage.
Reporting cycle	Annual informal progress update and formal mid-term and end-term assessment in the five years of the Strategic Plan.
Desired performance	Actual performance that is in line with targeted performance is desirable.
Indicator responsibility	Group Executive – Programme 2.

4 A transformed organisation that lives its culture and values

Indicator title	Representation of designated groups in leadership and management supervisory (P1-7) occupational levels
Definition	<p>The indicator measures the demographic representation of NRF employees from designated groups at occupational levels considered critical to transformation of the organisation.</p> <p>Designated group means South African citizens including permanent residents that are designated as black (African, Coloured, and Indian) and relevant women.</p>
Source of data	NRF Human Resources Information Management System – minimum details must be: full names of all employees, evidence used for classification to a designated group, job title, and occupational category and level.
Method of calculation/assessment	<p>Divide the count of employees from designated groups occupying positions that fall in the prescribed occupational levels by the overall count of all employees at the same levels and present the answer as a percentage (%).</p> <p>NB: For the count disaggregated by both occupational level and subgroups of designated groups, an employee may be counted more than once. The count is cumulative over the five years covered by this Strategic Plan.</p>
Assumptions	Availability of sufficient funds.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	<p>Designated groups of employees to be reported from four perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women % • Black %
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress against the five-year target.
Desired performance	Actual performance that is in line with targeted performance is desirable.
Indicator responsibility	Group Executive – Human Resources and Legal Services.

Indicator title	Inclusive, enabling and learning organisation
Definition	The indicator measures progress made towards organisational attributes of inclusiveness, agility to adapt to change and foster development of its employees.
Source of data	Records of the change programmes and employee empowerment barometer results.
Method of calculation/assessment	Assessment of records and results of surveys to determine the extent to which inclusivity is lived and felt in the organisation by employees.
Assumptions	Reliable records management for change programmes and results of surveys.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress based on annual review of change programmes. Formal assessment of organisational culture programme prescribed in this TID will coincide with mid-term and end-term assessments of this Strategic Plan.
Desired performance	Actual performance that is in line with targeted performance is desirable.
Indicator responsibility	Group Executive – Human Resources and Legal Services.



Indicator title	A co-created culture enhancing high performance and service excellence
Definition	The indicator measures the culture of the organisation against the key attribute and value of high performance and service excellence necessary for achieving its mandate and vision.
Source of data	Records of organisational culture programmes and results of culture surveys.
Method of calculation/assessment	Assessment of records and results of surveys to determine the extent to which high performance and service excellence are co-created and realised in the organisation.
Assumptions	Reliable records management for organisational culture programmes.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	N/A
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress based on culture surveys. Formal assessment of organisational culture programmes prescribed in this TID will coincide with mid-term and end-term assessments of this Strategic Plan.
Desired performance	Actual performance that is in line with targeted performance is desirable.
Indicator responsibility	Group Executive – Human Resources and Legal Services.

1 List of Acronyms

AU	African Union
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
DST	Department of Science and Technology
ECR	Early Career Researchers
HCD	Human Capacity Development
HEST	Higher Education, Science and Technology
IKS	Indigenous knowledge systems
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NDP	National Development Plan, Vision 2030
NRF	National Research Foundation
NRIP	National Research Infrastructure Platforms
NSI	National System of Innovation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SE	Science Engagement
SOAR	Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
STISA	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa, 2024
TID	Technical Indicator Description
UN	United Nations
WP	White Paper

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