



UNIVERSITIES  
SOUTH AFRICA

# R&I Dialogue 2016

## Recommendations/Actions

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# *Objectives*

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‘..agree on a set of actions and commitments to be implemented collectively and separately by Government, Universities (through USAf) and other agencies with a view to realising research and development priorities; and to enable USAf to take positions on key issues facing Universities in relation to research and innovation’

# *Recommendations*

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- RISG to develop communication strategy – raising awareness into the challenges we face with R&I and how it should be addressed in the short term – public dialogue. Engage with industries and others and raise awareness
- Grand challenges - strengthen multi-, inter- and trans disciplinary research - address barriers
- 17 Development goals: Suggestion - identify which affects SA and Africa to focus limited resources.

# *Recommendations*

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- NACI Foresight exercise to identify key trends, strengths and weaknesses of NSI– new instruments are available - consider rapid foresight exercises
- Need to align NSI and STI activities with the NDP and Vision 2030
- Implementation of Ministerial review of STI in 2012. We need to take a view as sector in terms of the recommendations and in terms of a single research funding body, a single conductor of NSI,..
- Communication and engagement critical

# *Thematic areas - R&I Funding*

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## **Current situation**

- Current tight budgetary constraints
- Decline in business investment in R&D
- Are our funding instruments effective and efficient?

## *Recommendations - R&I Funding*

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- USAf should institutionalise advocacy activities within the organisation and provide evidence of the value of universities for innovation, the economy and society – this should be disseminated to relevant stakeholders. What is social rate of return for research in SA?
- Range of possible funding models - Triple-helix programmes, sector specific innovation funds, using levies and small special taxes – USAf and funding agencies to discuss with DST and Treasury
- Partnerships with private sector

# Recommended Policy/Strategies for Enhanced Research Funding

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- Effective and efficient application of existing funding against backdrop of fiscal constraints
- Growth-enhancing policies (should be developed across government)
- Leverage 'key focus area' funding across Ministries in a co-ordinated manner (eg energy, water, health...)
- Need to grow international partnerships - - recommendation to develop a national policy/strategy for international funding.
- Change the way we incentivise research output - collaboration
- Stimulate SME – sector

# Recommendations - Cyber infrastructure

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- HC development programme needed - technical training within Universities - address e-skills shortage
- Best practices – should be shared amongst universities
- Recommendation - TENET to conduct an analysis to identify constraints. System does not have capacity financially for the uptake of national capacity – fix institutional infrastructure and HR challenges.
- USAf level discussion – space must be created to discuss this further



# Recommendations - Research Infrastructure

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- Need funding for technological skills – attention needed at system level
- Recommendation - development of a framework or policy for industry partnership to contribute to the strategic goals of the country in terms of R&D
- GAP- increase funding for mobility to allow researchers and PG students to access research equipment nationally and internationally

# Policy development for internationalisation of universities - recommendations

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- Engagement within universities needed – establish consortium between universities - ‘How do we lift the system’?
- Sharing within SA universities problematic –  
Recommendation to develop policy in terms of incentives for internal collaboration to reward university partnerships
- Subsidy implications
- Participation in international opportunities – pro-active participation

# Transformation and HC Development

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- nGAP – viable mechanism to attract staff
- Ring-fenced funding needed to take the programme to scale
- University development Grant (TDG and RDG)
- DST survey to establish reason for low participation rates (emerging researchers)

# Recommendations: Transformation and HCD

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- Need systems approach in close collaboration with universities
- Diversification within universities – discussion needed – targeted and differentiated growth plan needed within universities
- Focus and prioritization - discussion between USAf and DHET
- Going to scale — target key areas/fields
- Local joint appointments?
- Broader understanding of curriculum
- Internal strategies –progress to PG study – promoting excellence
- Also focus on mid-career researchers

# Recommendations: Transformation and HCD

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- PhD students and Post-docs as junior staff
- Joint appointments with private sector at universities
- Funding - to support local languages (especially in SET)
- Joint planning needed - alignment between different planning mechanisms (HR, enrolment, infrastructure plans)– expanding the system
- Hard choices at all levels

# Measurement of the performance of NSI

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Proposed innovation portal – open-source platform

- Open science policy/statement needed
- Collaboration and centralisation of efforts
- Enabler to do research on policy-related matters and improve evidence-based decision making
- Need capacity in terms of implementation

# Measurement of the performance of NSI

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## Digital Library

- DHET discussions with universities in terms of financial implications
- National access to knowledge resources - NSL significant potential savings and broader access to knowledge resources
- Utilize experience at Treasury regarding international negotiations
- Recommendation - locate in existing statutory body with best management capacity
- Journal choices – disciplinary experts
- NSL – urgent implementation needed

# *Way forward*

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- USAf to finalize recommendations/actions at different levels
- R&I Strategy for universities to be developed