DRUSSA

Development Research Uptake in Sub-Saharan Africa

DRUSSA Benchmarking Summary

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Executive Summary

The Benchmarking Exercise of Research Uptake Management in Sub-Sahara African universities participating in the DRUSSA programme has provided us with some initial findings on how research and Research Uptake is currently handled at institutional level, as well as identified some of the constraints universities face in getting research findings to end users. As part of the exercise, universities responded to a comprehensive questionnaire covering areas such as institutional priorities, policies for research, staffing for research management and uptake and current research and Research Uptake activities. The responses were summarised and draft Good Practice Statements were identified, and both responses and issues identified were discussed further at a two-day workshop in Johannesburg in June 2012. Below are some of the key findings from the exercise.

Key findings:

Section A: Context

- Most university mission statements acknowledge the strategic importance of contributing to development and poverty reduction through research, science, technology and innovation. A majority of statements have clear community-focused objectives, sometimes perceived in community engagement terms and in other cases in terms of entrepreneurship and innovation. Only a few universities make explicit reference to the Millennium Development Goals.
- A majority of universities noted the great potential for contributing to local societal needs through research; however, many universities noted constraints in realising this potential. The most common factors mentioned were limited government funds, under-prioritisation of research and Research Uptake at institutional level and donor-driven research agendas.
- In the Eastern and Western regions concerns were raised regarding increased student populations at the same time as staffing levels stayed the same. In the Southern and Eastern regions, a point was made regarding utilising students in attempts to get research to end users.

Section B: Research Uptake Management in Sub-Saharan universities

- All but three universities have overall policies for research, and in two universities draft policies exist. A majority of universities make some reference to getting research into use in their policies, most notably in the East African universities.
- The responses and discussions revealed that whilst policies exist, there is sometimes a divide between the conduct of research and policy frameworks that enable research and that there is a need for robust mechanisms to ensure compliance e.g. through

implementation plans, external monitoring and by involving research active staff at the early stages of policy development.

- Universities emphasised the importance of institutional buy-in and ownership of strategies and policies but at the same time there was a discussion regarding the merits of a bottom-up approach, e.g. at one university the research policy was developed with wide external stakeholder input through a series of workshops.
- The Research Management Office and the VC's Office were noted as the offices with the most interest in disseminating research findings and getting research into use. Quite a few universities also noted the importance of the PR Office, however many did not feel that this office had a direct interest in Research Uptake. Also, quite surprisingly there were mixed responses regarding extension offices/functions, with few noting this office as having a great interest in research uptake.
- Many universities noted that they had offices and/or staff with some or full responsibility for Research Uptake activities, typically the Research Management or PVC/VC's Office. In several universities responsibility was shared between central offices e.g. PR, Technology Transfer/IP, and Business/Industry Liaison Offices. It was noted that where responsibilities are shared, there is a need for better communication between units. This notion is supported by some contradicting responses regarding where responsibility lies within universities.
- Some West African and many of the South African universities noted an increase in Research Uptake activities, either by increases in staff, the creation of new offices/units or absorption of duties into existing units. However, there were also concerns in most universities regarding the capacity of staff to take on new responsibilities, especially in the East African region, and there was a general feeling that Research Uptake as a concept needs to be properly defined and understood by staff.
- Most universities noted that Research Uptake needs to be the responsibility of a central office, staffed with people with sufficient authority to ensure compliance with policies, but also to provide guidance to research active staff.
- Universities also discussed the extent to which academic staff should be involved in Research Uptake activities, and whilst views were mixed there was a general feeling that all academic staff should have a basic understanding of Research Uptake. Some structural constraints which impact on academics ability to get involved in research uptake were also noted, e.g. set teaching requirements and pressures to publish in peer-reviewed journals, which is often prioritised over community engagement.
- Many universities mentioned mechanisms to establish development partnerships, e.g. through specific offices with a mandate to develop links with external stakeholders. There was a focus on business and industrial links, e.g. by students placements at

industries, trade fairs and exhibitions etc., that are perhaps different from specific mechanisms to engage communities or ensuring Research Uptake. Incentives for staff to develop such links were also mentioned in all regions, e.g. through recognising links in career progression.

- Whilst few universities (overall) noted communication and marketing strategies with specific focus on getting research into use, there was a general feeling that a lot of research suitable for Research Uptake is taking place in the participating universities, but these need to be better coordinated and supported to ensure research uptake. Universities also gave examples of current Research Uptake activities such as community workshops and education in the areas of public health and agriculture.
- Most universities noted a need to improve mechanisms to evaluate the impact of their research dissemination and uptake and noted difficulties in obtaining information about research activities at their universities.

Section C: Research Uptake Processes in Sub-Saharan universities

- Several institutions noted that they are aware of policies and frameworks in place regarding the management of Intellectual Property, but that the potential of revenue from commercialising IP was not often realised. Further training and the development of robust IP systems were discussed in the regional groupings.
- Some institutions highlighted “donor-driven” research agendas, and iterated the need to have successful research uptake systems where research outputs are – at their core – locally relevant and seen as fully owned by both the universities and the beneficiaries.

Sections D and E: Stakeholder and Public Engagement

- Dissemination of research externally has so far been largely focused towards research partners, research donors, and academic communities with established interest in research activity, though there is strong interest in designing approaches to dissemination that emphasise development impact , wider social benefit, and engagement with governmental policy makers.
- Respondents have indicated a variety of central institutional offices with staff professionally qualified in Public Relations or Marketing. These staff can be spread across a range of offices within the institution, including the Office of the DVC Research Cooperation and Relations with the Business World, Cooperation Division, Corporate Affairs Division and Public and Alumni Relations Office, among others.

Research Uptake Management Priorities

Following the two-day benchmarking exercise, universities were asked to identify their most immediate priorities for research uptake management at their universities. These were the responses across all regions:

- Embedding Research Uptake in the overall Research Policy or Research Management Policy, and ensuring this is well communicated and enforced amongst all faculties and departments.
- Establishing a well-resourced unit, office or centre at the institution with responsibility for extension, outreach and Research Uptake, or consolidate these activities within existing bodies.
- Providing training to staff in Research Uptake, outreach and dissemination.
- Institutional sensitisation to the strategic importance of Research Uptake and building institution-wide consensus.

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Introduction

This Benchmarking Exercise Summary is intended to provide a general overview of the responses we received to the Benchmarking Survey and the regional discussions during the two-day Benchmarking Exercise in Johannesburg on 19-20 June 2012. It will highlight particular areas of interest, commonality and difference and distinction between universities. It will further begin to identify areas of good practice in Research Uptake that have emerged from both the responses and the detailed discussions at the event. At the end of the report you will find a set of revised *Good Practice Statements,* which reflect the three regional discussions. Although the statements have been revised, further comments are welcome, as they are intended to reflect the experiences and aspirations of participating universities. The statements should therefore not be seen as ranking of universities but eventually serve as a checklist of good practice, whether actual or aspirational, taking into account that what will work in the different universities will vary depending on size, geography, resources etc.

For the purposes of this summary, we have kept the sections from the responses received across the survey anonymous, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, and have highlighted some of the commonalities and some of the distinctions between responses, without identifying the respondents directly. We have also summarised the outcomes of the regional discussions, which can be found in the blue boxes within the text. These summaries follow the structure of the discussions of the two-day exercise and include examples from the participating universities to highlight some common views, practices and aspirations. It also includes some diverging views or suggestions for future practice. Finally, examples of how universities intend to take research uptake forward within their universities will be outlined, based on a questionnaire filled in by participants following the Benchmarking Exercise.

The purpose of this summary is to provide participating universities in the DRUSSA programme with a summary of the Benchmarking Exercise in its entirety, with examples of how dissemination and community engagement is managed across a range of universities in Sub-Sahara Africa and examples of good practice, aspirations and suggestions for future activity arising from the regional discussions, which can be taken back to individual universities to promote the development of a coherent approach towards Research Uptake and to advance the cause of Research Uptake on an institutional level.

West African Region

In the West region, seven universities submitted responses to the benchmarking questionnaire and participated in the benchmarking exercise in Johannesburg on 19-20 June 2012;

Obafemi Awolowo University	Nigeria
University of Ibadan	Nigeria
University of Buea	Cameroon
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	Ghana
University of Calabar	Nigeria
University of Ghana	Ghana
University of Yaoundé I	Cameroon

Section A: Context

Mission Statements

All universities responding to the benchmarking questionnaire recognise in their universities' goals of contributing to development through research, creativity, innovation and the advancement of knowledge in their Mission Statements, and there is a clear focus on the practical application of research results and knowledge.

The universities, on balance, also make references to addressing local, national and global needs and problems. Four of the universities make direct references to community service and one university stresses the need to *"enhance the quality of life"* for the local population.

None of the universities have directly incorporated the Millennium Development Goals in their Mission Statements, however they are for the most part implied in the sentiment of most statements, where they make references to *"support [for] socio-economic development",* conducting *"fundamental and applied research to address issues of relevance to local, national and global communities",* and promoting the *"practical application of knowledge to social, cultural, scientific and technological problems"*. Two universities also specifically mention the goal of promoting African culture and traditions.

Two universities also emphasise the role of the institution in contributing to the economy and the *"world of work"* by providing it with highly skilled and qualified graduates and a further two universities mention the importance of forging relationships with industry and supporting industry by providing research to address their needs.

Whilst very few universities have included dissemination of research to end users and the MDGs in their Mission Statements, there is a clear community focus in the universities' statements in that they maintain a commitment to support development of their communities by addressing their needs and problems.

From the discussion – Realising the university mission

During the benchmarking exercise, the group was asked about the link between their institutions' mission statements and strategies for research uptake. The group had a long discussion regarding the need for different levels of strategic approach, with an overarching institutional plan (mission statement/strategy), as well as strategies and implementation plans for individual offices and departments, charged with ownership and implementation.

It was emphasised that the overarching institutional plan is often aspirational and that it needs to be concise, relevant and operational. It is thereafter up to departments and /or offices charged with responsibility for research uptake to develop a strategy, implementation plan and guidelines in line with the overarching institutional plan. The group also discussed the issue of initiating the process of developing a strategy and whether a bottom-up approach would be better than the central administration charging staff/offices to develop such a strategy, and some felt that this may improve the speed of the process, but that they also had to consider current capacity within offices to carry out this task.

Environmental Scans

Most respondents acknowledge their universities ambitions to provide education and research to contribute to the development of their societies and emphasise the high quality of their programmes and academic staff in achieving these goals.

There is however a common concern in all the responding universities regarding the lack of governmental funding, in particular for research activities. Most universities in the group are state owned and dependent on public funds, and two universities cite a shortfall in budgetary allocations in covering current expenditure. Several of the universities refer to government funding and support as *"inadequate"*.

Increasing student populations, heavy teaching loads and lack of institutional focus on research are also cited by three universities as inhibiting the development of an environment conducive to research. A further challenge mentioned by three universities is the deterioration of equipment and infrastructure, in particular for ICT, which one university emphasises is a great handicap for a university that focuses on science and technology. These challenges highlight some of the difficulties in reconciling the aims of the mission statements and the institutional challenges that researchers and those concerned with the management and dissemination of research face.

As we saw above, there is little provision for dissemination of research in the Mission Statements (although one university explicitly includes it), and this is also acknowledged in the environmental scans, where several universities note the need to improve dissemination of research results and the public face of the university in promoting and raising awareness of their research activities.

The scans also reveal a drive towards improving the management and funding of research. Two universities have responded by establishing central offices for the management of research and intellectual property/technology transfer and have developed research and IP policies. At one university, *"Research, Development and Innovation"* and *"Community Service"* have also been incorporated as strategic issues of the institution. One university has also established an Advancement Office to raise funds for research and other activities and invested in training of research administration/management staff.

The universities also recognise opportunities for the future in terms of funding and conduct of research activities. Examples cited by four universities are increased international collaborations and externally funded research projects. These are however simultaneously seen as opportunities to diversify funding and improve international standing and as challenges through increased focus on external research agendas. Two universities also mention distance learning programmes as a means to improve access to higher education as well as raise extra income.

Overall, however, there are concerns that the pressures of insufficient government funding and lack of focus on research will hamper attempts to promote the dissemination of research findings to those who need it most.

Size and numbers

All of the seven universities require their academic staff to undertake a mixture of teaching and research, and only two universities noted that they have staff dedicated to research alone , one of which also maintain staff who do teaching only. This means that a majority of research is undertaken by staff who also have teaching commitments, and as noted above, these obligations are often too heavy for staff to engage in serious research activities.

In five of the six universities that supplied figures for the proportional division of staff in academic fields, more staff are employed in the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences or Health Sciences than in Applied Sciences, despite a pronounced focus on science, technology and innovation in the Mission Statements. This finding also highlights the difficulty in realising research ambitions across the institution, and indeed the environmental scans revealed many institutional challenges facing universities in developing new research directions that are truly reflected in the operations of the university. The occurrence of dissonance between aims and operations could be useful to discuss in terms of how to best align the two.

Section B: Research Uptake Management in West African universities

Research Policies

All but one of the seven universities responding to the questionnaire in the West African region have overall policies for research. Of these, three noted a specific focus on getting research into use; one university's policy states that the university should constantly work towards the dissemination and commercialisation of research outputs, whilst at another university it is expected that the Research Centres within colleges as well as a central office in the university disseminate research, although this is not specifically noted in the research policy.

From the discussion – Research Strategies and University Missions

Participants agreed that their institutions need more concise strategic plans including provisions for research uptake, with as much input as possible in its development, e.g. from faculties, industry, local government and users of research to improve the possibilities of implementation. It was emphasised that offices/departments need both a strategy *and* an implementation plan to operationalise the strategy. It was also agreed that offices charged with the ownership of the strategy need to have sufficient authority to implement it, but highlighted that there also needs to be institutional buy-in e.g., in the form of a high-level committee that has a pure oversight role, which could include the Vice-Chancellor, DVCs and Deans.

The group also agreed that reasonable aspirations to raise funds for research uptake and current availability of resources (in the broadest sense) had to be considered in developing a strategy for research uptake, as this is linked to the possibility of implementing the strategy. One suggestion, from the University of Calabar, was to incorporate "research uptake" into the "community service" definition included in most universities' missions, as a way of attracting core funding for dissemination and uptake activities. University of Ghana felt that research uptake needs core funding in order not to be reliant on grant funding, which may favour forms of dissemination that are not most beneficial to local users of research findings.

Offices with responsibility for uptake

Four of the seven universities indicated that they have offices dedicated to communicating and getting research into use. The extent to which these offices are completely dedicated to disseminating research or where it is part of their remit, differ between universities. One university mentioned the Intellectual Property and Technological Transfer Office, where dissemination activities are focussed on commercialisation of research through patenting, whilst another university indicated the Central Research Directory as having responsibility for this area. The remaining two noted non-centralised offices, but interestingly in one of these universities, the respondents differed in their answers; one indicating no central office with this function whilst two other respondents in the same university named two central offices (Public Documentation Unit and Quality Assurance Unit).

Top offices with interest in dissemination of research/getting research into use
Office of Public Relations or Marketing
Library
Research Management Office

Respondents in five universities also indicated the Vice-Chancellor's Office as having an interest in disseminating and getting research into use. Somewhat surprisingly, only three universities mentioned the Extension or Community Engagement Office, which together with External Advisory Boards and Industrial Liaison/IP/Knowledge Transfer Offices were the offices least universities listed as having an interest in the dissemination of research. It is also interesting to note that whilst many respondents mentioned the PR/Marketing Office, none of the universities appear to have involved staff in these offices in this exercise.

From the discussion – Offices and staff involved in research uptake

University of Buea (UB) told us that they have several central offices responsible for research dissemination and uptake. It was noted that the Library should be put at the centre of research uptake, as they hold a lot of information on research carried the university is engaged in. In addition, the Cameroonian universities have recently introduced Vice-Deans with responsibility for research cooperation and relations with the business world within faculties, reporting to senior management, as part of a national policy of decentralisation.

At University of Ibadan, there were also several central offices with responsibility for research uptake and they said they were considering introducing Research Managers at faculty level. The University of Calabar has recently set up a Directorate for Research, and various offices were mentioned at other universities, such as the IP Office and International Programmes Office.

Most participants agreed that there should be a central point where all research gets sent, as well as for both internal (academics) and external (funders, government) stakeholders to find out more about research carried out at the university; e.g. University Relations Office, Advancement Office and the Research Management Office. At the same time, it was noted that not all research uptake tasks need to be located in the same office, which calls for division of labour both between central offices and between central offices and faculties and coordination between these. It was noted that units currently do talk to each other, but that mechanisms for systematic communication was not clear in many universities.

University of Buea mentioned their Organisation of Work document, which unpacks roles and responsibilities of different offices and how they should cooperate and said that this has come some way to help define roles.

When asked whether a new office was needed for research uptake, it was noted that it is important to utilize resources are already available, and that offices such as Research and IP Offices could work as the link between academics and senior management. Several universities also said that as their structures for research management are in the process of being set up, it would be a good start to include research uptake in their remit.

It was also recognized that there is a need to take into account the African context, where VCs are the main contact for all external facing activity. Therefore it is important to have the ear of the leadership. There was a suggestion that any office with responsibility for research uptake report directly to the VC or are located within the VCs Office. Another idea was the possibility of sensitizing VCs to research uptake.

Staff changes and Functions related to research dissemination

In at least five universities, central offices managing and/or disseminating research have direct access to Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor Offices, either by reporting directly to these offices or by being units within these offices. Three universities have noted increases in staff managing and/or disseminating research in recent years, and in one university there is an expectation that staff increases will continue in the next 5-10 years.

One university has also recently set up a Coordination Office for Research Development (unit within the Vice-Chancellor's Office) that among other things is charged with linking with the Communication Office in order to publicise research and cooperation news.

Only one university does not have any central office for related to managing and/or disseminating research, however, the university currently has a proposal for such an office under review.

We also asked respondents to locate the responsibility of a variety of functions related to research uptake. In most universities (5), the Public Relations Office is involved in disseminating research news through newsletters and producing press releases on research findings/activities/. The VC's Office or DVC Offices in charge of Research are also indicated as carrying out functions related to research uptake, generally through specific units contained within these offices. They are for example involved in organising open days on university research activities and establishing relations with the public and private sectors. Two universities have also mentioned specific Research Fair Committees charged with organising events and exhibitions.

Three universities also cite central offices related to research management and research communication, typically being responsible for maintaining research records and databases of external contacts (sponsors, stakeholders, research programmes).

There were also examples of responses from the same institutions that contradicted each other somewhat; one response said that organising open days to showcase research findings and activities was the responsibility of individual faculties, with another respondent indicating that this is the responsibility of the central Cooperation Division. Similarly, at another university, one respondent said that training of research staff is a central as well as decentralised responsibility, with another respondent locating the responsibility with central units only. These findings may be worth discussing further in order to get a clearer picture of how functions are organised within universities.

From the discussion – Academics and professionals and research uptake

The group was asked who should be involved in research uptake, i.e. professionals, academics or both? It was agreed that departments and faculties need to be involved in operationalising the mission of the university in terms of research dissemination and uptake, but it was questioned whether they had enough interest and incentives to do so.

The University of Ibadan (UI) said that universities cannot expect the researcher to take full responsibility for the dissemination of research results. There was also a discussion as to what extent *all* academics should be involved in research uptake, as some do very little research, with some believing that they should (provided the right training and incentives were given), whereas others felt this was not practical or desirable. There was however an expectation that all researchers need to have a basic understanding of the dissemination process. The general feeling was that central offices can, and should, help in the research dissemination process and that it is the responsibility of the university to create an awareness about what professional staff and specialists can do to help, and provide training where expertise is lacking.

Institutional priorities

In five of the seven universities there is a clear link between the perceived priorities of the university and the mission statements of these universities, where all list teaching and research as core aims of the university. In one of these universities however, the central offices' responses correspond to the mission statements whilst the response from an academic did not, listing research (including external) and extension and outreach as much lower priority than the central offices.

Two universities also noted high teaching loads of academics as an impediment to engaging in research activities, but drew different conclusions from this; one listed research a low priority, whilst the other listed it as high, consistent with the mission statement in the latter and contrary to the mission statement in the former.

Three universities also explicitly noted a link between performance in teaching and research and promotion.

Most universities listed extension and outreach as average to very low priority, and three universities noted that although this area is included in the mission statements of their universities, the area is not sufficiently prioritised.

Top prioritised areas	Least prioritised areas
Teaching (listed by all responding universities as "Very High Priority")	**Outreach and Extension**
Research	**Relationships/partnership with public/NGO/private sector**
Externally funded research	

From the discussion – Constraints on research uptake

A theme that came up throughout the two-day discussions was that of structural and individual constraints of research uptake. Among the constraints mentioned most were *teaching loads* and *career progression*. It was pointed out that academics are required to teach a certain amount of hours, and that it was very hard to add responsibilities unless the institution changed the expectations and contracts of staff. It was noted that institutions need to be clear on what is expected of academics and who will pay for it.

It was also noted that externally funded projects and consultancies can help with dissemination as they include provisions in the terms of the contract. However it may not lead to research uptake by local users as publication in academic journals is prioritised. This is often linked to career progression where publication is more important than social improvement. Whilst recognising these constraints there was a clear proposal to link upward mobility to quantified and evaluated contribution of extension and dissemination activities, even if this would not replace scholarly publication. It was also suggested that if academics could show the usefulness of their research and ideas, this may also lead to more publication.

Mechanisms to develop links/partnership with the public/NGO/private sector

Five of the seven responding universities indicated that they have mechanisms to develop links/ partnerships with the public/NGOs/private sector; one university mentioning the Advancement Office and another mentioning the Linkages Committee, which is charged with the mandate to foster academic and professional linkages between the university and external bodies.

Of the five, four universities noted that these mechanisms were specifically linked to research or the funding of research. However, in two of these universities, there was disagreement regarding the existence of such mechanisms, with one respondent in each university claiming that there are mechanisms, whereas one respondent in each university said that there are no mechanisms to develop links partnerships with the public/NGOs/private sector.

From the discussion – Mechanism to get knowledge out

The group discussed the various mechanisms they currently use to help research reach its users, although it was noted that there is a lack of *cohesive approach and means* to disseminate knowledge.

Mechanisms mentioned include units that develop continuing education and short courses, business units, annual seminars for senior management, researchers and research administrators, as well as focus groups on specific research projects.

There was an agreement that it is very important to have the support of Faculties and departments but also that linkages with external stakeholders are either set up or maintained, e.g. through consultancy. It was agreed that it is the responsibility of the university to create an environment conducive to research and collaboration and that current structures could be used to achieve this by putting offices and staff within a framework of regular communication, e.g. through socials and regular meetings.

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) told us about their Technology Consultancy Centre, which helps researchers to cheaply produce goods from their research and to distribute it to users at an affordable price. They also have a Business Centre within the VCs Office, which looks at research topics that has potential for usage and help getting these into use. Other mechanisms mentioned include the Consultancy Unit at Obafemi Awolowo University, which suggests avenues to communicate research and Artisan Training provided by the University of Ghana, sponsored by local banks, where farmers approach the university with ideas for training.

Incentives for staff to develop links/partnerships with public/NGO/private sector

Four universities said that their university does not provide incentives for their academic staff to develop links with the public/NGOs/private sector. In three universities, however, such incentives were noted; two of which said their universities encourage academics to engage in consultancy activities by allowing them to use staff time or retain the main part of the profit. One university also mentioned a link between the number of linkages established and career progression.

Communication and/or marketing strategy

Most universities (4) do not have a communication and/or marketing strategy. Of the three universities that did have such strategies, all claimed these included provisions to bring awareness of research results to a wider audience. One university noted that their Technology Consultancy Centre markets research to users by producing improved equipment for the users of technology developed at the university and another mentioned Research Fairs/Exhibitions. However, one university also noted the use of scientific publications as an example, which may not reach a wider audience.

Monitoring and evaluation of external impact of dissemination of research/research uptake

Six of the seven universities do not have mechanisms in place to evaluate the impact of their research dissemination and research uptake, and neither of these universities have mechanisms to obtain feedback from users/stakeholders on the usefulness of the research that the university produces.

Three universities noted that there is a degree of tracking of academic citations; most mentioning Google Analytics and Google Scholar (although one also mentioned Scopus and SCI) as the main tools for this. However, in two of the universities it was not clear whether tracking was undertaken systematically and recorded centrally or not. One university explicitly noted that the main effort in tracking citations and impact of research was done by individual academics or research teams, often linked to career progression.

Examples of research dissemination and research uptake

We also asked respondents for specific examples of research uptake; three universities mentioned health sciences or drug related research that has successfully been implemented on a national level through community sensitisation and workshops and also presented at multilateral meetings, conferences and published in academic journals.

One university also mentioned an extension system, organised by the Institute for Agricultural Research and Training, which reaches farmers with their research outputs.

Two universities also cite influence on policy makers; at one university through the *“omulabi principle”,* which is being implemented on state level.

Section C: Research Uptake Processes in West African universities

Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer

Most universities have policies and/or procedures for the management of Intellectual Property, either set out in standalone policy documents or contained within university wide strategy documents.

Of these, three universities also have offices for Intellectual Property and/or Technology Transfer; either central or decentralised offices (part of the remit of Research Centres of the university), one university specifically noting that their IP Office had been commissioned by the government. However, most universities do not have offices for IP/Technology Transfer.

Assessment of research: potential, benefits and constraints research

There appears to be very little activity in the responding universities in terms of systematically assessing the potential value and relevance of research to the university and/or external stakeholders, although there is a general awareness of such potential.

Two universities specifically noted offices charged with identifying the value of research both to the university and external stakeholders. A few universities also mentioned publication in academic journals and tracking of citations as means to determine value of research (to the academic). This can be linked back to the necessity for most academics to publish their research in order to be considered for promotion.

Five of the seven universities indicate that their universities have policies/procedures regarding the publication of research results that may have ethical constraints or commercial value, and also for dealing with confidentiality due to ethical or commercial reasons. This is manifested through Ethics Committees in three universities, which are responsible for providing ethical clearance of research projects before they commence.

Most universities do not see any barriers to getting research into use due to Intellectual Property rights, however one university noted that there is a general lack of awareness of the IP process.

Potential users/beneficiaries of research

For externally funded research, four of the seven universities indicate that potential users of research findings are considered at the conception or planning stage of research projects. Three of these universities noted that this was usually a requirement by external funding agencies in order to agree to fund the project. A few universities stated that they consider potential users at the implementation stage of research projects, e.g. through consultation meetings.

Section D: Stakeholder Engagement

Announcing new research projects/areas

Most universities (6) use their university newsletter in order to announce new research projects/areas internally. Three universities also mentioned the university website and one university additionally used the university radio station. These universities also used the website to announce research news externally and another two universities used their newsletter for external communication of research.

There appears to be very little systematic external communication of research news and several universities employed the same channels for both internal and external communication. Three universities use national newspapers to announce new research, and two universities also use radio, either their own radio channel or by giving interviews. Two universities have also indicated convocations as occasions when research success stories are shared, although it is not clear how inclusive these occasions are in terms of external stakeholders.

From the discussion – Identifying research suitable for research uptake

The group agreed that it is necessary to differentiate between different types of research, e.g. research for the common good or industry/business driven research and that participating universities need to focus on *development research* as opposed to research in general in identifying research (and researchers) most suitable for research uptake.

The group was asked to elaborate on the internal organisation of research uptake activities; what information do central offices have on research activities, how to obtain the information and what offices *need* to know and why.

Participants noted that whilst research and dissemination activities are currently taking place at their universities, these are not well documented. Nevertheless, universities mentioned a variety of sources and means by which they obtain information on research activities. These include:

- **Annual Reports and Reviews**
- **Institutional repositories**; for PhD theses, dissertations, publications and abstracts. Often maintained by the Library, hence the emphasis on getting the Library involved in the research uptake process.
- **Academic Staff Appraisals**; staff are requested to provide proof of research activity as part of the appraisal, and at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), the annual increment is dependent on supplying this information.
- **Web searches**
- **Governmental audits**
- **Research Surveys**

At the University of Calabar, all new research has to be reported by Deans to the Director of Research, and they are also trying to set up a database with financial information on externally funded research. At OAU, the Advancement Office produces pamphlets on research breakthroughs.

At UB, the Research and Publications Office tried to get information by preparing forms and filling in the data that they had, and then asked academics to check and complete the form.

When asked what offices *need* to know and why, the group emphasised that universities need to respond to the needs of the community, which involves a two-fold approach, whereby they develop (or improve) mechanisms to engage with and understand the needs of the community and gather information on institutional capacity in order to respond to these needs.

University of Buea suggested that the most important information needed is:

- **Who i**s involved in research?
- **What** research is carried out?
- Is the research **collaborative**?
- Who is **funding** the research?

This is needed in order to respond to funding opportunities and identify new areas of funding and can also be used to avoid duplication of efforts by identifying multi-disciplinary teams (that can also apply for funding) and to justify recommendations to academics (i.e. why some academics are "chosen" for certain calls).

The group also discussed some of the constraints experienced in establishing institutional research capacity. The issue most cited was the difficulty in gathering the above mentioned information on research activities. One participant from UI commented that research at the university is mostly individually driven and that Principal Investigators see the information (and funds) as "theirs" and therefore are not willing to part with it. Several universities also mentioned Research Surveys of their staff (University of Ibadan, University of Ghana (UG) and OAU) which yielded very low response rates or no responses at all!

OAU also noted the structural challenge getting any information *not* linked to career progression, whilst others felt that this avenue should be utilised as it is a robust structure already in place. The issue is rather to include research dissemination/uptake in the appraisal process by finding means to quantify and assess these activities. University of Calabar (UC) suggested that this could be part of the quality assessment of research outcomes.

Identifying research relevant to needs of stakeholders

Assessment of research relevant to the needs of stakeholders are made by the IP and Technology Transfer Office and the Quality Assurance Unit at two universities respectively, however, a majority of the universities in the group have not stated any specific ways of identifying stakeholder needs.

One university also notes that external stakeholders contact the university with their needs and problems rather than the other way round.

At one university there was some discord between responses, where one respondent highlighted the importance of local needs and issues, whilst another respondent states that identifying stakeholder needs "has never been a concern".

Almost all universities say that they have means by which external stakeholders can find out more about specific research projects, and most mention central offices related to research as well as

departments and faculties, e.g. DVC Research Cooperation and Relations with the Business World and Research Centres, which can be contacted to find out more about the university's research.

Whilst a majority of universities are not explicit about how to find out more about their research, one university highlights that their institutional repository, which carries information on research projects, is accessible to external stakeholders and at another university the Advancement Office informs potential sponsors of research projects they could get involved in.

Priority channels for dissemination of research

Top priority channels (High-Very High Priority)	Average priority channels (Average Priority)	Low priority channels (Low – Very Low Priority)
Publication in academic journals	**Websites**	**External and Internal Newsletters**
Publication of conference papers		**TV and Radio**
Technical Reports and Policy Briefs		

Universities in the group appear to prioritise the more traditional forms of disseminating research, through publication of academic articles, conference papers and technical reports. Four universities also listed consultancy reports as a high priority channel. It is interesting to note that whilst most universities listed the newsletter as one of the main channels to announce new research projects/areas, it is perceived as a low priority channel.

Most universities (4) do not record their universities' dissemination activities, however two universities note the use of repositories where research information is being kept; at one university this is maintained by the Directorate of Research. In some cases, there is some uncertainty whether such records are kept; at one university, one of the respondents noted the existence of the university's institutional repository where research findings and publications are recorded, whilst the other respondents did not acknowledge this.

At one university, the Vice-Chancellor's Office records conference attendance.

From the discussion – Training of academic and professional staff

At present very few of the participating universities provide specific training for research dissemination and uptake. However, several universities provide research/research management training to their academic staff, including proposal writing, research methodology and induction courses for new staff. At OAU, capacity development workshops have been run through the Carnegie Initiative, and they also have a mentoring programme focusing on young women academics. The importance of providing mentors and support through research teams, and the role of the Research Office in facilitating this was also mentioned.

Both specific and strategic skills were mentioned as important components of research uptake training. For specific skills, (science) communication, interpersonal and IT skills were highlighted, however, the less tangible strategic skills were emphasised, such as encouraging researchers to identify users and how to establish impact, sensibility to local cultures and how to approach the wider community. Knowing who to approach – within the university with your research, and externally for funding and identifying beneficiaries – was highlighted as very important for the successful inclusion of research uptake in the research cycle.

The group also noted that the two courses on research uptake developed for the programme (Masters and CPD) could help with this. KNUST commented that they were necessary, as research is so varied, and that the courses would give staff an overview of the uptake process. It was also noted that central offices (e.g. RMO), could take on the role of training staff who cannot benefit from the courses directly.

The group felt that research uptake training should be provided to both academics/researchers and professional staff, as all have something to contribute; academics by considering the impact of their research on society and professionals by acting as a link between the university and external stakeholders (users, beneficiaries, policy makers, funders etc.). It was also suggested to provide training to PR staff, however there was uncertainty regarding where PR would fit in the wider structure of research uptake. The participants also commented that the PR Office could be a useful resource, but that they currently have a limited remit, focusing on VCs and student enrolment rather than research and research uptake.

It was recognised that universities are challenged in knowing which researchers to focus on and that researchers are more likely to do research at certain stages of their careers (early/mid career).University of Ibadan commented that there is an opportunity to embed research uptake in training for early career researchers and from there identify those who have the ability and enthusiasm to do research suitable for research uptake. It was also suggested that research uptake be included in training on proposal writing.

Training/guidance to research active staff

Two out of the seven universities provide training to research active staff on identifying stakeholder needs in the design and execution of research; one through the Quality Assurance Office that organises training during Summer Schools, and one university that provides training in e.g. grant-manship and grant management.

Two universities provide training in how to make research findings available to the public, through writing and communication workshops and annual research retreats organised by College Research Centres.

For the most part, very little training appear to be provided to research active staff on how to involve stakeholders in their research and how to make their research more widely accessible.

Access to specialist support resources

YES	NO
External databases	**Private sector media consultants**
Professional networks and associations	**Science writers and journalists**
	Knowledge brokers/intermediaries

From the discussion – Incentives for academic staff

None of the participating universities mentioned any specific incentives for research dissemination or uptake activities, and there was no real agreement regarding who should drive staff engagement. As one participant put it, academics are mainly concerned with *"publishing not to perish".*

However, it was agreed that successful achievements should be publicised, e.g. in University Bulletin, or by giving academics a page in the annual research reports to highlight their achievements. It was also suggested that research uptake be included in proposals for external funding in order to cover cost of research uptake activities.

Other incentives suggested included departmental and individual rankings based on research uptake activities (currently based on number of grants and publications), prizes/awards and linking research uptake to career progression. There was also a discussion regarding non-monetary incentives such as recognition, respect and trust and it was noted that researchers are often interested in further research as opposed to financial gain (e.g., through IP). University of Calabar commented that *"there is some satisfaction to see your work used in policy and practice".*

Section E: Public Engagement

Coordinating publicity communication

Most universities (6) have one or more central offices for coordinating publicity communication from the university, including Public Relations/Communication, Alumni Relations, University Relations and ICT Offices.

As none of the respondents are located in the offices listed as responsible for publicity communication, most have indicated the offices their offices work closely with, rather than the offices that the Public Relation Office(s) liaise with. Where it has been indicated (2 universities), offices include the Research Management Office, the Office of International Programmes in one university and all academic, administrative and research departments in the other university.

From the discussion – Coordination of externally facing activities

The group recognised that there can be problems of coordination within universities in communicating research; where one part of the university often does not know what contacts other parts of the university have. University of Buea pointed out that this could pose a risk if the wrong type of information is disseminated by academics (e.g. research that has IP potential) without the knowledge and support from the university. University of Calabar suggested that the quality assurance process could help in guaranteeing the quality of research before engaging with external stakeholders.

There was a general agreement among participants that the VC is often the main contact for external stakeholders and that this can create problems/tensions as it can be very time-consuming; i.e. can create bottle-necks, where external stakeholders' timeframes are much shorter than the university's. There was also an agreement that it would be more practical to have an alternative central point of contact for external stakeholders. This office would have to have sufficient authority and take into account the African cultural context where the VC is central, by reporting directly to the VC or placing the office/unit within the VC's Office.

Professional qualifications

The qualifications most listed were:

- Public Relations
- Marketing and Communications

Qualifications least listed among staff were:

- Journalism
- Science Communication

In three of the universities, respondents have indicated a variety of central offices, not necessarily their own, where staff have professional qualifications related to publicising news. It appears that professional communication skills are not confined within specific publicity offices, but spread among several central offices within the universities. Offices mentioned include, Office of the DVC Research Cooperation and Relations with the Business World, Cooperation Division, Corporate Affairs Division and Public and Alumni Relations Office.

Communication strategies/modes

The strategies most used were:

- Internal Research Newsletter (disseminated primarily towards academics, research and administrative managers)
- Press releases to external media outlets

The strategies least used were:

- Publications directed primarily towards the business community, science and/or industry
- Email distribution list of external stakeholders

Four universities also have databases of research staff with media engagement experience and publications specifically directed to Governments (local and national), NGOs/INGOs, e.g. a newsletter distributed nationally to Ministries. Two universities also mentioned Research Fairs and one also participate in the National Research Fair.

From the discussion – Communicating research findings

It was noted that mechanisms for bringing research to the attention of users needed to be improved in the participating universities, as research is currently not well documented.

However, some mechanisms are being used, including:

- **Research and Trade Fairs**; in Nigeria there are national research fairs, but universities are encouraged to hold their own
- **Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation**; (University of Ibadan) helps academics link up with industry, taking advantage of the university brand. One example was collaborating with a fast-food chain to produce a new type of maize.
- **Homecomings**; for alumni, industry and policy-makers, where all departments and faculties are encouraged to exhibit their research results.
- **Open Days**
- **Mailing Lists**
- **Website**
- **Consultancy**

The group also made suggestions for improvements including focus groups, which could include potential users/beneficiaries of research and utilising the website better, by improved targeting

and dedicated areas for research, especially development research. One university is also planning for Centres of Excellence, which are envisaged to grow into good research and research uptake units, where research is driven by professional Project Managers, academics and receive institutional support from the DVC. At University of Buea, they have also used internship programmes, which has improved the institutional knowledge of the needs of industry and the community from the feedback from students and lecturers.

It was also noted that central offices involved in research uptake can play an important role in guiding researchers in how to market their research and encouraging a general awareness of research uptake. They can also help repackage research results to improve visibility, uptake and linkages. In order to fulfill this role, they need more information on current research activities as well as key indicators of university outputs. One participant also emphasised the responsibility of the university to provide structures/facilities and qualified staff to assist academics in the assessment of the research uptake potential of research.

Fundraising strategies

Five of the seven universities have indicated that their universities have fundraising strategies, manifested for example in an endowment fund set up by the Alumni Association and new Distance Learning Programmes aimed at generating income from external sources.

Four respondents (from four universities) also stated that their universities' strategy focuses on specific development research activities/projects (e.g. Millennium Development Goals), where one university indicated that the MDGs were taken into account when applying for funds from e.g. EU and NIH for research projects in applied sciences and for capacity building for technology transfer.

In two universities, respondents differed in their answers; at one university two respondents indicated that there was no particular focus on development research activities in the university fundraising strategy and one respondent noting that there was, e.g. through the introduction of "new programmes to solve contemporary problems". At the second university the difference was more pronounced, with one respondent stating that the university does not have a fundraising strategy as it is entirely state funded, and one respondent indicating the existence of such a strategy. However, the former respondent also noted that academics undertake research on competitive grants, which is slightly at odds with the statement that the university is entirely state funded.

East African Region

Nine universities in the East African region are partners in the DRUSSA programme, coming from four countries in the region. All have contributed their completed benchmarking reports to the DRUSSA team in advance of the Leadership and Benchmarking Event. Participating East African institutions are:

University of Nairobi	Kenya
University of Mauritius	Mauritius
Kenyatta University	Kenya
National University of Rwanda	Rwanda
Kigali Institute of Health	Rwanda
Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia
Mbarara University of Science and Technology	Uganda
Makerere University	Uganda
Moi University	Kenya

Section A – Context

Mission Statements

Respondents to the benchmarking survey noted that their institutions' Mission Statements, on balance, convey the strategic importance of science, innovation, and technology in university research systems. Only one institution explicitly included the strategic importance of focusing on the humanities in their Mission Statement, although more than half of respondents indicated that there was a developmental element to the university's role in society.

One institution told us that there is a concerted effort towards multidisciplinary research, saying that they maintain an objective *"to generate and disseminate high quality multi-disciplinary knowledge"* for the social good, which suggests an interest in the role of health science, social sciences and other areas as helping foster development. One respondent was more specifically focused on health sciences, in line with a broader institutional objective.

One respondent was explicit in drawing an association between the university's research agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), although several institutions referred in more general terms to the need for their institutions to contribute to the *"welfare of society", "welfare of the nation", "sustainable socio-economic development", "community oriented education",* and the *"betterment of society."*

These community-focused objectives suggest that, in the main, all respondents have indicated that their universities maintain a strategic focus on their capacity to deliver development objectives, and to play a central role in poverty reduction. Strategically, many institutions have emphasised the role of science, technology and innovation as a means towards achieving this – though, as we see in the following section, there is not always an explicit causal relationship between science and poverty reduction in the Mission Statements themselves.

From the discussion – University Missions

Moi University told us that they review their mission every five years, assessing relevance and revising where appropriate. They discussed the role of the national Science and Technology organ in Kenya in setting an agenda for research in this area, although it is not responsible for directly funding such research. The percentage of Kenya's GDP devoted to research has not yet reached 1%, though this remains a stated aim.

The University of Mauritius spoke about a range of outreach initiatives they undertake, and that community engagement is at the heart of their institutional strategy. One of the challenges they identified is in ensuring that all staff at the university are equally aware and committed to this strategy, as not all staff are conversant with this mission. The overall rubric of research at the university, though, is seen as having strong developmental relevance, and so the outreach and uptake strategy is what they are looking to bed down.

Some institutions referred to central strategy documents regarding research uptake and dissemination, to which all faculties refer. In one example, each unit within university is expected to use main institutional strategic document into consideration when drafting their own. There is semi-annual monitoring and evaluation, involving events where academics explain their targets

and what they have been doing and why they haven't met their targets.

Overall, discussants agreed that there is a need to elevate from general mission statements regarding research uptake and communication, and towards policy frameworks that are implemented, and that involve and apply to staff across the institutions. This needs to involve doctoral schools and faculties across the institutions, and should be reflected at all levels, although there may be different levels of centralization as regards the management of such a strategy.

Environmental Scans

Several respondents cited changes in the global economy as having potentially disruptive economic effects at home, which creates uncertainty in the overall research direction of the institution. One told us that "change in the European sugar regime, globalisation of world trade, and removal of trade quotas and guaranteed prices, has led (us) to diversify its economy and find new drivers of economic growth."

While institutions strive to provide programmes and to generate research with the greatest potential for use in a development context, there are also some difficult institutional conditions which can inhibit this: Two respondents cited a need for more human resources, and more than half suggested that research uptake specifically is under-prioritised under these institutional pressures.

Concerns about overcrowding with growing graduate cohorts, and diminishing funds from government, put pressure on the university's human capacity. Government support for higher education has been described as "inadequate" with one institution noting that, in particular, there is "little funding that goes to dissemination and uptake."

There were concerns expressed about the nature of international collaborations in some instances, with three respondents citing concerns with "donor driven" research, which is more externally-facing (towards donors) than locally/community-facing. Further, one respondent told us that: "Certainly sound collaborative relations for research and training have been there between African scholars and external collaborators for a long time, even today; unfortunately the deterioration in conditions of service and the quality of local academic support has meant that many universities in Africa … have been reduced to the position of data gatherers." This highlights one anxiety about the capacity for developing strong research, tied again to issues of sustained funding.

One respondent told us that there is "inadequate commitment by the University to support research, incomplete implementation of the University research policy, inadequate guide on inter-disciplinary research." The improvement of monitoring systems, and a greater effort at policy implementation, was also cited as a key theme, and was a common theme amongst a range of respondents – drawing out some of the challenges in realising some of the strategic objectives.

Overall, respondents have expressed concern about low levels of human capacity and concerns about steady public funding, which puts pressures on all aspects of university management, but perhaps puts greater pressure on research uptake or dissemination activity.

From the discussion – External factors impacting on Research Uptake Management

Several participants spoke of changing funding landscapes in their home countries, and cited changes to national development and research agendas that impact upon institutions' own research agendas. National research councils in some countries, such as the National Council for Science and Technology in Kenya, guide research amongst the universities in the country, and while university research directorates respond to these guidelines, they nevertheless maintain their own programmes and find a balance between institutional and national priorities.

Some participants spoke of the fortune, or misfortune, of particular political environments, in which some political leaders may have a high degree of enthusiasm and influence in helping to set a national research and development funding system up, while in other circumstances, there may be an absence of political will.

Kigali Institute of Health spoke about challenges of human resources, as there are too few researchers and the budget is not there to carry out the necessary research training activities to enable taking on more relevant research. They said that, while there is some support for research from the national government, more is needed to effectively carry out the research that is most needed. They also told us that their outreach programmes are generally faculty-led, as opposed to being centralized.

Size and numbers

Of the nine respondents, only three told us that they have university staff dedicated solely to research – most institutions require staff to undertake a mixture of teaching and research activity, and three maintain an additional cohort of staff who only teach, and do not conduct research.

Despite the strategic focus on science, technology, and innovation, as expressed in several Mission Statements, there is a relatively high proportion of academic staff working in non-science fields. Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences (including business, economics, law and management), and Health Sciences each outnumbered staff in Applied Sciences in four universities that responded. In five institutions, Arts and Humanities, Social Science, or Health Sciences employed more staff than in Applied Sciences; while in only one institution did Applied Science have a larger contingent than all other disciplines. Two institutions did not have figures.

This finding partly reinforces some of the ways in which strategic objectives are not always realised fully across the institution, which is perhaps somewhat natural – developing a new desired research direction does not manifest itself immediately. Where there is dissonance, though, between strategy and operational reality, it will be useful to discuss how best to facilitate better alignment.

Section B – Research Uptake Management in East African universities

Research policy

As the building block of an institutionalised approach to research management (and research uptake management specifically), we asked respondents to provide us with insight as to their research policy framework.

All nine respondents from East African confirmed that their universities do maintain research policies, and all (but one) of them said that there is an explicit reference to "getting research into use," suggesting, again, a strong strategic attachment to research dissemination and uptake.

The office generally considered as having overall authority for getting research into use is the Research Management Office, though other models exist: Public Relations offices were cited by one, and Extension offices were cited by two institutions, while another told us that this is the responsibility of the Deputy Director of the Research Directorate specifically. On balance, though, there is a relatively centralised process for research uptake management, emanating from institution-wide offices.

From the discussion – From policies to procedures

Some participants discussed the divide between the conduct of research and the policy frameworks that enable research. One noted that research is on-going and that there are several research-active staff who are proficient in publicizing research outputs, but that their research results are not necessarily feeding into national, or institutional, policy. Further to this, the university publicises what is happening in terms of research, but there is uncertainty with regard to the uptake thereof. Institutional mechanisms were said to be required to feed research output into policy.

Another participating institution told us that their research policy, in place since 2006, was developed through much larger processes where all stakeholders participated through a series of workshops. As a result the research is applied and target-orientated. A bottom-up approach was followed.

One participant told us that their university maintains a specific IP policy, but that additional mechanisms of protection are needed, such as a form that external examiners need to complete stating that they will not reveal the results of university/postgraduate research that they evaluate.

This echoed the overall discussion – that policies, where in place, were in need of some robust mechanisms to ensure compliance with institutional strategy, and that leading research-active academic staff can play a role in the design of a new research strategy.

Offices with responsibility for uptake

When asked which offices besides the one with overall responsibility might maintain an interest in Research Uptake, the three most commonly cited examples from our list were:

Top offices with interest in dissemination of research/getting research into use
Research Management office
Vice-Chancellor's office
Industrial liaison office.

The three *least* cited were:

Offices least cited as having an interest in dissemination of research/getting research into use
Extension office
External advisory board
Public Relations office

This was an interesting finding, as it highlights some differences of opinion on structural responsibility. Despite two institutions citing Extension offices as having direct responsibility for research uptake, three institutions also told us that their Extension office (where they exist) did not even maintain a strong interest in this area. Additionally, whereas Public Relations Offices have some overall responsibility for uptake in one example, four others did not feel they had a direct interest - despite their naturally externally-facing mandate. Meanwhile, the Vice-Chancellor's or Rector's office maintained a closer interest in uptake, amongst our responses.

This suggests some emerging points for discussion, regarding the development of a common understanding of what Research Uptake is, and which area of the institution is best place to manage this work.

Staff changes

We asked respondents to let us know how staff changes have affected Research Uptake activity at their institutions. There were two examples of staff reductions, and one example of persistent understaffing concerns. In another, staff numbers have not changed per se, but the responsibility for Research Uptake has itself changed, and been moved into a central office, rather than in a discrete office for Research Management and/or Extension.

From the discussion – Staffing and Resources

One participant told us that, as regards staffing, seniority in the staffing for research uptake can be an issue – someone who is sufficiently senior may be required in order to enable a line of authority, but that there remain questions of political will in some institutions – the role of leadership was greatly emphasized.

Some argued that Research Uptake should not be the direct responsibility of the VC, as they will, in many cases, only be in their positions for five years, and when they leave, this could disrupt the momentum for implementation of research uptake strategy and policy. A discrete central unit with dedicated staff should have oversight in this area to maintain continuity.

Functions related to research dissemination

Four respondents told us that their offices for Public Relations had a significant role in managing functions related to research dissemination, as did four respondents citing Vice-Chancellors offices, indicating a high-level of centralised interest in research communication – but this does not necessarily indicate a direct interest in research uptake. The role of Public Relations offices, for example, can often be focused towards promoting a university's research capacity, in managing events, fairs and open days which can present research findings, and in ensuring media engagement strategies are implemented – this may not overlap precisely with the work of community engagement officers and extension offices.

There were some examples of responses from the same institution with some contradiction in this regard: one institutional response told us that a central Public Relations office is responsible for organising open days where research findings can be showcases, with another delegate from this institution saying that it was the responsibility of individual faculties. Developing a clearer understanding of the degree to which this activity is managed centrally, versus faculty by faculty, will be important in designing appropriate institution-wide strategies which can be implemented.

Institutional priorities

We asked respondents to tell us how they felt their institutions prioritised different essential university functions, and provided them with a list of functions from which to select. Overall, there was a very strong emphasis on Teaching, with every respondent selecting this as a very high, or high, priority. Research was also highly prioritised, with eight of the nine citing this as a very high, or high, priority.

Aside from teaching and research, priorities begin to diffuse across the institutions. Externally funded research was prioritised by four institutions, and Outreach and Extension by two.

The least prioritised areas, though, also included Outreach and Extension - five of the nine respondents rated this as a low priority. Further to this, six respondents rated Relationships and partnerships with public organizations as low priorities.

This suggests a widespread perception that, while social welfare and development objectives are widely lauded at the level of the university strategy and mission statement, the institutionalised mechanisms for delivering development objectives to the community overall is not universally developed.

Mechanisms to develop links with the Public, NGOs, and Private Sector

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, our follow-up question asking respondents to elaborate on mechanisms to develop links with public organisations did not bring out many examples. One told us that their principal mechanism for public engagement in this way involves student placements, while another told us that developing Memorandums of Understanding with external research bodies, declaring a willingness to engage in more collaborative research together, are the extent of public engagement approaches – while each of these are important, they are perhaps different from the specific mechanisms to engaging communities or ensuring research uptake.

Communication or Marketing Strategy

We saw notable variance between respondents as to how external communication was strategised – while we have seen that Public Relations offices were responsible for much of this work across universities, five respondents told us that they are not aware of a Communications or Marketing Strategy. Two said that they do have one in place, with another in development. One institution did not answer this question.

Of the two that do have strategies, one indicated that it is focused around television and radio dissemination, which might be considered a clearly community-orientated approach to research dissemination.

From the discussion – Challenges and opportunities in research communication

Regarding communication and institutional priorities for research, a number of participants told us that the heavy emphasis on publications in peer-reviewed journals was an important feature of institutional prioritization, but that this was not necessarily in line with the objectives of research uptake in the context of the discussion.

One participant told us that mainstreaming research uptake into the process of research itself was an important approach to enabling more effective communication. A communication strategy was developed at their institution to stress how to better communicate research output. However, the research work plans for lecturers have not been expanded to include any uptake component, and the normal pressures of publication in academic journals stands as the default approach to communicate research outputs.

Others connected the question of communication with questions surrounding Intellectual Property. One participant told us that most academics are very reluctant to make research outputs and breakthroughs public before having secured commercial interest around them, wherever appropriate – invitations to volunteer research for the public good seldom produce a response, and run against institutional emphasis towards publication, or industrial liaison and technology transfer.

Another participant told us that getting academics to provide output details might be more promising if tied up to accessing money for conferences, or to central research pools generally. Money could, for instance, only provided if researchers present internally to departmental audience prior to the conference, or indeed provided evidence of public engagement. This runs against some national research frame-works, though, which may not recognise certain kinds of research output, and thus may not contribute to an institutions capacity to demonstrate effective research uptake management.

All participants agreed, though, that this represents one of the most significant strategic challenges to research uptake – by what means are researchers expected to increase communication of their research, and to what ends? There are differences between what one institution deemed "charitable" initiatives, and normal linkages with industrial stakeholders. Understanding and codifying these different aims within a comprehensive research uptake strategy was deemed to be an important next step.

Monitoring and Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms

We further asked about monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure how, and whether, public engagement strategies were working. One institution told us that these mechanisms are in place, although another respondent from the same institution disagreed with this, saying there were none. In all, four respondents told us there weren't monitoring and evaluation systems in place to assess research uptake, while others did not answer.

When asked about particular examples of research dissemination and research uptake, several respondents told us that presentations at conferences and publication in journals were principal means of engaging in this kind of activity, and that in some examples, conference and events were open to the public, or focused on public organisations. The degree to which public representative were active in these fora can be elaborated on during our meeting.

Other specific examples included a radio programme, "Farmer's Voice," through which agricultural research is disseminated to rural areas. Another respondent facilitates training workshops for academic staff on how to engage in research dissemination – leading to trained-up researchers who are then encouraged to carry out research uptake work in a more decentralised, faculty-by-faculty manner.

Another speaks about an institutional drive to engage in the dissemination of research pertaining to HIV / AIDS in rural communities, and cites a range of projects which operate directly in dozens of villages, educating local people about avoiding the risks associated with infection. Child health and maternal health interventions were also cited – this respondent, in both of these cases, manages these projects with international partners.

Section C – Research Uptake Processes in East African universities

Intellectual Property and Tech Transfer

We asked respondents to tell us about their Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer policy frameworks, in order to understand levels of engagement with industry, and in disseminating commercialisable research. Six institutions told us that they do have IP and Tech Transfer policies in place – although one respondent noted that theirs is still in development, while another told us that the policy exists but "is never implemented."

Of the six respondents with IP policies, four respondents noted that there is an office responsible for the management of IP and Tech Transfer specifically.

From the discussion – Knowledge Exchange and Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property is a central question to the design of research uptake systems, but several participants discussed approaches they have taken to community engagement that allow for cooperative knowledge generation with community actors, or that involve the dissemination of established research outputs, rather than new research that may be still be commercialized.

One participant in the discussion, Moi University, gave us a key example of how research uptake is carried out through projects that engage rural communities. The university acts as the principal stakeholder in a community-university agricultural engagement programme, hosting open days with farmers and agricultural workers, and using knowledge gained from the community to help inform institutional agricultural and health policy. The School of Medicine is community based, with two people from seven farms to engage with community. The participating farmers go home with knowledge, training, and are hired on casual basis on the community farm.

The research office serves as the link between the funding agency, the research unit and the community, and plays the management role between all participant bodies. The farmers are said to receive a hybrid corn with specific nutritional properties and developed on the community farm, and that the corn is also exported. However, farmers still produce in small quantities, meaning that the university also supplements production for exporting.

Another participant told us about a project involving non-commercial research, and thus a prime example of where university-community engagement moving outside of traditional research communication streams. The project involves roof water catchment, whereby the community is taught how to use rainwater collected from rooftops, rather than depending on a water supply which may be hazardous. The project aims to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases. , which involves the prevention of water-based diseases.

While this began as a small project within an academic department, it was taken up at the district level for wider funding once the research was completed. The national government has voiced support for project to be extended to the general community more widely.

Assessment of research policy and procedures

We asked respondents to tell us about their assessment systems regarding its perceived value to the university and externally, and regarding barrier to getting research into use due to IP rights. While some told us that "inadequate manpower" or under-resourced IP offices made this assessment difficult to undertake, others provided some examples.

One told us that "invention is disclosed in IPR office where patentability and commercial viability are evaluated and appropriate legal protection taken. Patents can be licensed to companies interested in development and commercialization."

In another example, a respondent told us that

"Inventors and researchers may have their reservations on IP commercialisation, given that some of the research is done in certain industries. That mutual friendship developed becomes a barrier in transferring the university owned IP (or potential IP) to the same company which in many cases ends up as beneficiaries or major potential users. In one case, the researchers demanded that certain companies be given new plant variety materials free while others had to buy. This became tough to implement by the university causing the scientists to abandon the protection process and proceed with issuing seed at their discretion. In cases of industry, many manufacturing concerns have withdrawn from joint research ventures citing increased risks."

Even for institutions that are relatively deeply engaged with industrial liaison and tech transfer, these barriers are nevertheless significant. This suggests that developing IP policy, then, is one important step towards engaging with the commercial sector with university-generated research – but the policy requires implementation, and cases of tech transfer need individual management from a well-resourced office.

Consideration of users of research findings

Further to the dynamics of industrial liaison itself, we asked respondents how their institutions consider, or assess the utility for, a range of external users of university research. Several told us that this is somewhat contingent on the source of the research funding, and the criteria associated with particular research grants.

This speaks to some earlier concerns about "donor driven" research agenda, by which research dissemination strategies are somewhat a separate matter from that of sourcing research priorities from the beneficiary community (which, from a development impact perspective, is not the same as the funding body).

One respondent told us that "in many cases the external stakeholder beneficiaries only come in at the consumption stage which is basically during dissemination of findings." Another affirmed to us that "Ideally at the point of inception of any project, However in some cases this happens later as the project is progressing. Engagement of users happens early especially where the research is participatory."

Section D – Stakeholder Engagement

This leads us into stakeholder engagement – assessing the ways in which stakeholders and beneficiaries are pro-actively involved participating with research outputs, and how, in appropriate situations, they are involved in helping to inform the design of research agendas.

As regards university pro-activity in communicating and engaging regarding research outputs, we asked respondents how their institution announces new research projects and areas – both internally to the university, and externally.

Internally, several institutions cited updates to the institutional website as a platform for internal dissemination, as well as internal email distribution lists. One institution told us that staff are "required to update their profiles showing whatever research they are involved in on university website."

Three respondents referred to the use of notice boards to promote research activity, while one other referred to the posting of posters and the inclusion of articles on new research in an internal magazine.

Externally, there was somewhat greater variance. Some of the approaches are more directly linked to other academic communities – with research being published in journals, presented at conferences, posted on the university website (which the general public may not automatically decide to consult), and through reports to donors.

This suggests that external research dissemination is largely focused towards research partners, research donors, and academic communities with established interest in research activity, aside from questions of development impact of wider social benefit, or indeed of engagement with governmental policy makers.

Identifying research relevant to stakeholders

One institution told us that external stakeholders "usually contact (the office responsible for Research Management), and at times, directly the academic concerned," suggesting less of a process of extension and more a process of taking in information, although in a manner driven by external actors.

Another institution, though, told us that this was rare, because:

"From inception, universities were perceived to be "ivory towers" -not for access by commoners/none academicians except for support staff and family ii) the private sector, even that with affiliations abroad (developed countries), did not expect competitive research findings from local universities iii) researchers for a long time pursued research more for promotion and publication than anything else apart from private consultancies (though even utilised university time and resources)."

In three cases, respondents explicitly clarified that research funders have a strong role to play in identifying the research focus, with one telling us:

"Most of the research activities undertaken are mainly based on the priority needs of the stakeholders and development partners. All findings generated from these research activities are disseminated to the stakeholders."

Priority channels for dissemination of research findings

Whether websites or newsletters, we asked respondents to identify preferred methods of research dissemination. Overall, respondents rated most methods as high or very high priority, though some stood out. The highest rated methods were:

Top priority channels
Publication of conference papers (7 responses)
Publication in Academic journals (5 responses)
Websites (2 responses)

The least cited methods were:

Low priority channels
Newsletters (4 responses)
Technical and consultancy reports (4 responses)

It is worth noting that, as regards research dissemination, there is an apparent high priority towards academic journals and conference papers, which are an effective means of communication within the academic community – there is less emphasis, though, on some of the wider, "public" methods, including TV and Radio (one rated this highly, and two rated it among their lowest priorities).

From the discussion – Continuity and sustained approaches to Research Uptake

The approach to communication can be as important as the content of the message – several participants emphasised the need to tailor research dissemination strategies to the audience, and that, indeed, research uptake specialists can often (if not usually) be better placed than academics themselves to speak to non-academic communities in a language that is effective.

One participant told us that they maintain a Centre for Arts and Drama which uses the arts and stage plays to help disseminate messages regarding HIV and AIDS, conflict and reconciliation, and other development-relevant research. Acting, singing, and use of local languages are used to ensure that the community are able to both take in information and even participate and interact with it.

Others said that they focus on the firming-up of research uptake management policy itself, sharing experiences and approaches between academic departments and community actors, to tease out successful engagement approaches. Regular research dissemination conferences are hosted by an academic department, with the host department rotating. Various stakeholders are present at these conferences – government, community officials, and business representatives, in events that are said to be highly successful, with stakeholders "always enquiring when the next conference is coming and who will be hosting it." The university has a specific budget line for these conferences, helping to ensure that there is continuity.

We asked if training or guidance was available at their institutions for research staff to engage in the inclusion and involvement of stakeholders' needs in the design and execution of research, and making research available for public use.

Two respondents told us that there is such training available, and three told us explicitly that there is not. No other respondents indicated whether there is training or not.

Of the two that said there is some training, one noted that there is "some training on research methodology," and another telling us that "research active staff are often invited for short training on research and results dissemination" – as well as funds available for conference participation and report writing.

Other examples of training made available which can facilitate public engagement included:

- The translation of materials from English to local and indigenous languages
- Developing research information in more publicly accessible formats, such as DVDs
- Training interns in rurally-focused radio programmes designed to communication research findings

Access to specialist support resources

We asked respondents to tell us what external support services they engaged in the delivery of research outputs to the wider community. The three most-cited examples were:

- Professional networks
- External databases
- Science writers

The three least cited support resources were:

- Science writers
- Knowledge brokers
- Private sector media

The high incidence of engagement with professional networks suggests a generally-well established system of interuniversity information sharing, and dialogue regarding good practice, as well as the sharing of specific research outputs. There was somewhat less engagement with private media, or with the science communication community, which might be best-placed to bring research outputs into wider view.

Section E – Public Engagement

In our final section, we asked respondents to specify their approaches to public engagement, with a more directly community-focused sense, and less focused on research dissemination within the academic community, or towards business and industry.

Respondents told us that offices chiefly responsible for the management of public engagement are the Public Relations office (in four examples), and that they work closely with a wide range of offices internally, both central offices (offices of the DVC or VC, the registrar, and university grants office) as well as across faculties and departments. Extension or community engagement offices, or research management offices, are not mentioned explicitly by any respondents here.

We asked further about the professional qualifications of staff working in the field of Public Engagement – Marketing and Communications was mentioned by three, and Public Relations and Journalism once apiece, while others did not respond. The least cited professional qualifications included Science communication (explicitly not a qualification held by three respondents), and Journalism (by one).

Notable here is that there are skilled workers in PR and marketing in more general terms, if not in science communication itself – and that most respondents were not able to cite specific qualifications for this section. The prevalence of PR training corresponds to the central role that Public Relations offices are often given for the management of engagement and research uptake.

Identifying research to promote externally

We asked respondents to tell us how they prioritised the dissemination of research outputs external to the university and outside academic circles. The top three most cited options were:

- Press releases
- Research newsletters (internal)
- Email lists

The three least used approaches were:

- Research newsletter (external)
- Database of research staff
- Publications for the business community

Interestingly, internal university research newsletters were rated more highly as a means of communication strategy than research newsletters that were externally facing – equally, publications directed towards the business community were not highly prioritised. Media engagement seems to be widely sustained through press releases, but not often through the communication of a media-friendly research staff who might be able to elaborate on research findings more widely.

Fundraising strategy

Finally, we asked if respondents maintained a fundraising strategy, and whether there was an explicit focus within this for developing research activities.

Five respondents told us that they do maintain fundraising strategies, while only two of these five told us that it covers the development of research activities. One elaborated, telling us:

"The university Endowment Policy covers fund raising for research development and technology prototyping, and little dissemination of research results and information to the wider audience and the general public. The policy covers also training of young researchers among others."

Another tells us that, while there is a fundraising structure of some description in place, this involves *"a (fundraising) committee which has never met."*

Southern African Region

Eight universities in the Southern African region are partners in the DRUSSA programme, coming from four countries in the region. Seven contributed their completed benchmarking reports to the DRUSSA team in advance of the Leadership and Benchmarking Event. Participating Southern African institutions are:

University of Botswana	Botswana
University of Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
National University of Science & Technology	Zimbabwe
University of the Free State	South Africa
University of Limpopo	South Africa
Fort Hare University	South Africa
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	South Africa
University of Zambia	Zambia

Section A: Context

Mission Statements

Academic excellence was mentioned across the group, and all but one of the six universities mention research in their mission statements. All made some reference to 'development' (if this is understood relatively broadly) through their mission statements.

One university's mission refers to 'African culture', three explicitly mention serving or impacting on local communities, two mention development explicitly, two mention innovation, one explicitly references links to the 'world of work' (business, industry and government), and two mention entrepreneurship. One university went as far as to suggest the importance of an 'immediate' impact on and relevance to society. One university made explicit reference to the MDGs, identifying a series of research clusters which related directly to MDGs. An emphasis on developmental impact/relevance was therefore common across the group – although in some cases this was perceived more in entrepreneurial and innovation terms and in others more in terms of community engagement and relevance.

One university had a unit which was explicitly tasked with undertaking development research and which, under the wider university strategy, had a strategy which referred to responsive and relevant social leadership, and aspired to be 'transformative'.

One university had used a 'strategic cluster model' (identifying five areas where the university had strengths) to establish a framework under which a range of types of research could be undertaken (which it identified as: basic, applied, strategic, near-market, creative work, commercialisation) and through which research training and leadership development pursued.

One university had aligned its strategic areas with national 'grand challenges' and national planning commission priorities.

One university explicitly noted that postgraduates were part of its research strategy –seeing their work as part of its overall research output and seeking to capture this.

Environmental Scans

Levels of existing research activity are mixed, restricted by limited research funding in many cases, or with little institutional resource for research, despite an emphasis in mission statements. One university noted that it was largely a teaching university with relatively little research and postgraduate activity, while another noted that they had very few doctorate holders amongst academic staff, and that staff had little external exposure. One university had however significantly developed its research activity, under a new strategic framework, with the aim of becoming a research-led institution.

Several universities commented that there was little funding for research from government sources, and so where research was undertaken this was mainly supported by external funders. Several commented that their governments did not prioritise research as an area for investment.

One commented that competing demands often meant that there was a lack of funding for community engagement / research uptake work.

One university noted that it had a particular strand of activity in the area of digital scholarship – including making the university's outputs available in digital form online. Another noted that the library had established an institutional repository for the university's research outputs, but that it had struggled to get it populated.

One university made use of students, on an attachment basis, to support its research office, to develop newsletters and to manage publication records.

Two universities noted specialist centres or institutes for development work and research, designed to serve as a central node within the university, and as contact points for external organisations.

In a number of cases, the wider political and economic context, and structural legacies in the higher education and research system were noted as having a significant impact on the current state of and opportunities for research in the institution.

Size and numbers

Nearly all of the universities in the group had a greater proportion of staff in arts and humanities than in sciences, with only one exception. At all of the universities research is principally undertaken by staff who also teach – each university has some research-only staff, but numbers are typically small, and no more than 35 out of all academic staff. Several universities had teaching only staff, and in some cases these outnumbered those who also undertook research, indicating that time for research across the institution is relatively low. All universities had fairly sizeable numbers of administrative, management and technical staff.

Most universities in the group had postgraduate populations of around 12% (of all students, including non-degree students) although one university noted a much lower PG population. Numbers of research as opposed to taught postgraduates were however a lot lower – two universities had no research PGs, and amongst others the proportions ranged from 1-9% of all students. Of all postgraduates, the proportions undertaking research based degrees (as opposed to taught causes) ranged from 1% to 63%, averaging at 32%.

One university noted the difficulty of staff retention, as a result of its location, and the impact that this had on the development of its research.

Section B: Research Uptake Management in Southern African universities

Research Policies

Five of the seven universities have a research policy of some form in place, and at a fifth it exists in draft form.

Focus on getting research into use

In three of the seven universities, these policies explicitly reference getting research into use. One university noted that while there was no specific reference to applied research, its research clusters work closely with external organisations (public/private/NGO) and a significant amount of contract research is undertaken. In several universities' responses, getting research into use emphasised publishing, including via university publications offices dedicated to communicating and getting research into use

Three of the seven universities had dedicated offices or people whose duties including communicating research. One of the three noted that the duties were split between two offices, and that these weren't well coordinated. Two did not have a dedicated office, and one was not aware whether or not the institution had such a function. At another university, the research directorate played an informal facilitating role, and individual research groups are expected to develop their own uptake strategies.

From the discussion – Strategy and Mission/ Responsibility for supervising and implementing research uptake

There was a general view that responsibility for implementing research uptake was part of the Research Management function.

There was some discussion about which unit within a university is most suitable, but it was pointed out that the number of units depends on the size of University. In a small university there may be only one unit committed to all aspect of Research Management, but in larger universities there could be several. In cases when universities have a lot of different departments, communication issues are likely to arise.

There could be issues of appointing people at the right level – getting a high level academic appointment can be difficult. On the other hand administrative professionals who are non-academic people can be found. This can be a problem because senior academics don't like being told what to do by non-academics or less qualified people. One would need a need an academic of some standing to be effective.

On the other hand, the management of the actual research was the function of the faculty dean, so research uptake management could be seen as being part of his/her role if it was a component of the research itself. It was suggested that research uptake management was part of marketing research rather than the research itself.

Many universities noted having a marketing strategy as well as a research management strategy, noting again that it was more lack of co-ordination rather than elements not being in place. Some commented on the need to de-mystify research uptake and demonstrates the 'wins' and the values of research uptake.

University of Limpopo noted that the assumption of DRUSSA is that there is technology available for use, however, noted that the programme should start from the premise that there is limited technology on the ground.

Many universities noted that they have policies for research; however, it was suggested that it would also be useful to have a clear framework or implementation plan to operationalise these policies. Such a framework would give guidelines on how to record milestones and progress on research projects etc. This framework should be available to all research active staff before starting a new research project.

Offices with an interest in dissemination of research/getting research into use

Across the institution, the offices most often indicated as having an interest in research dissemination/communication were:

Offices with interest in dissemination of research/getting research into use
Research management (7 universities)
PR & Marketing (6 universities)
Extension/community engagement (5 universities)
Industrial liaison (5 universities)
VC's office (5 universities)
Library (5 universities)

The office or function indicated least often was an external advisory board or commercial service (3 universities used such a facility).

External advisory boards

Two universities have external advisory boards, four do not, and one was not aware. One of the two which did have external advisory functions noted that the university had several boards and councils to advise it on various aspects of its research work.

Staff changes

A number of staff changes, including new appointments, the establishment of new units, or expansion of existing units, or changes in the portfolios of particular people concerned with research. Only one of the seven university noted that no staffing changes had occurred.

- At one university a DVC Research had been established, along with offices of technology transfer and postgraduate studies.
- At one university the duties of the PVC Academic Affairs were due to be expanded to include research more explicitly.
- One university had lacked a director of postgraduate studies until recently, and there had also been gaps amongst the administrative staff.
- At one university the PR and research offices had both grown in size.
- At one university a research and innovation office had been established just over five years ago and there were plans to expand it in 2013

- One university noted that while individual research units had links to users, there was a need for a coherent central management function, and that this was currently lacking.

From the discussion – Staffing and research uptake

There was discussion about whether or not all academics should practice research uptake, and whether it should be part of the job description. One view was that junior staff could not do research uptake because they did not know how to do it. If it was a requirement of the job, then the staff would be held back. In some universities staff were appointed with minimal (first degree only) qualifications so research uptake would need to be in the undergraduate programme.

Research uptake also may take time and follow after the research, so this would hold juniors up. On the other hand it was argued that research uptake should be taught to junior lecturers. Until research uptake had been defined properly it could not be in a formal job description, but should be a part of learning to do research. It was suggested that giving a departmental seminar on research uptake.

It was pointed out that graduates took information out into the workforce and that this was Research Uptake, since Universities are by definition centres of Research led Teaching, and so research results should be part of the undergraduate teaching material.

It was noted that research uptake and marketing are important aspects for universities in Sub-Sahara Africa and that internationalisation could be considered as one of the core missions of the university, alongside teaching, research and community service.

Functions related to research dissemination

In four universities most of the functions were centralised under a central office or function, typically the research office, a development research institute, or a marketing/communications offices.

In three universities, most functions had some degree of centralisation, but a number of other offices were involved: in one duties were more evenly split between research and communications offices; in another there was a degree of central coordination evident under the offices of two PVCs; in another some functions were centralised, but a wide range of other offices were involved. .

Where offices other than the research were named, similar offices were named by most of the universities in the group. Marketing/communications/PR offices were named most often, with publications and information named in some cases. Other offices named included industrial liaison, technology transfer, community engagement, postgraduate studies, advancement, the library, a teaching and learning centre in one case and in some instances the VC's office, or relevant PVCs. Three universities noted that individual departments and faculties were involved.

It is worth noting that only one university noted that a community engagement or extension office was involved, although at another university a community engagement unit was noted in its 'environmental scan'. Innovation or business-focused units were noted by four of the six universities.

One university noted that communication between the various offices involved in research dissemination presented a challenge, even though there was a central office coordinating most activity.

In two of the seven universities two responses were received to the survey. These were not always in agreement – while most mentioned similar offices being responsible for similar things, there was not an entirely clear picture, with different people indicating that some duties and responsibilities lay in different places by (this may have been the result of interpretation of the question, or it may reflect confusion in responsibilities).

From the discussion – Functions and operation of research management

Various examples of the functions and operation of the research management were summarized.

In one university all research must be vetted and this needs a high level director to manage, but there is also a need for a funding manager and a Quality manager who monitors what research is happening, and records publications. Then there was a need for an assistant director for commercialisation who tries to link research with stakeholders.

Institutional priorities

Top prioritised areas	Least prioritised areas
Teaching	**Outreach and Extension**
Research	**Relationships/partnership with public/NGO/private sector**
Externally funded research	**Externally funded research**
	Research

Research is thus rated as both a high and a low priority across the group.

Mechanisms to develop links partnerships with the public/NGOs/private sector

The degree to which mechanisms for the development partnerships had been established varied. One university noted that it had no mechanism for this. Several universities named specific offices under whose mandate this fell (international offices, external relations offices, etc.). In one instance the university's PR function was noted – although this appeared to be primarily a promotional and information-dissemination function rather than partnership brokering.

In one university trade fairs and other exhibitions of the university were felt to be the primary mechanism through which external links were fostered, while in another university it was felt to be the responsibility of individual faculties, although a central office did monitor activity to some extent.

In one university this function was more considerably developed, with a central unit established to promote and manage the interface between the university and its community. At another the partnership functions were under the mandate of three DVC and director level offices.

Incentive for staff to develop such links

Three universities do not have any incentives to encourage staff to develop such links, three do have incentives in place, and one does not have formal incentives in place, but indicated that there are mechanisms to recognise such activity.

Of the universities which did have mechanisms in place to reward such activity: in one the faculty or department retains 75% of the funds generated from an external link (although this was not a direct incentive to individual staff); at another incentives have been recently introduced, in the form of a percentage of any overheads received going to staff. A third university also noted that transfer of a percentage of overheads was also a possible incentive mechanism, although it was not routine. The development of such links was however recognised in performance reviews.

Communication and/or marketing strategy

Four universities had a communications/marketing strategy, at another it was under development. Two universities indicated that they were unsure if such a strategy existed.

One university noted that the marketing department was a strategic support unit, split into a number of functions.

From the discussion – Communication of Research

In some universities the Research office has its own website page. This allows for control and quality. They can have a very good website, while the central university website can be a disaster.

Some felt that the marketing and communication unit should be responsible for research uptake. Academics disseminate through publications.

There was a general sense that communication does take place already, although it needs to be better coordinated, through new research structures, such as science parks or innovation centres and units designed to promote research. There was a lot of uncoordinated research going on: quite a bit could be commercialised if someone could assess it, and the research office is logical choice for this, and therefore for uptake. In one region the Government had agreed to set up an Institution to coordinate Research uptake.

In one University Info was communicated to the PR office and the PR office took action, inviting people to open forums. This office kept a list of people and stakeholders.

Several Universities ran research days – sometimes by faculty, run by the Dean. If it was university wide, annual research awards could be presented and the day was a marketing day for all faculties – coordinated by the research office.

In the Western Cape there was a move towards a shared resource between universities.

Monitoring and evaluation / tracking of academic citation / feedback mechanisms

There were relatively few examples of universities monitoring and evaluating their research. One university noted that it made some efforts to monitor its research impact via meetings with users/stakeholders during annual research expos. Another noted that an external media monitoring service was used to track media coverage, although no formal mechanisms existed for monitoring and evaluating research impact in terms of policy influence.

User-feedback mechanisms were on the whole under-developed, beyond academic users (citations); one university noted that individual departments held workshops with potential user groups.

There was greater evidence of citation tracking. Three universities tracked citations, or were starting to (in one instance this was the duty of the library), whilst another used the government's annual review of published outputs to track its progress here. Three universities have no citation tracking mechanisms in place.

Examples of research dissemination and research uptake

Public open days and events, at university or faculty level, or at wider national fairs and exhibitions, are employed by three universities to bring research to wider attention. University publications, including newsletters, are also used by some institutions to promote their work, although in one case this was only actively circulated internally, and in several cases these are of a primarily academic nature (e.g. journals, hosting research papers online). One university profiles its researchers in a weekly newspaper column.

- One university noted that research uptake was not yet considered a priority by the institution.
- One university had created a technology transfer office to manage its research outputs where there was a clear industry or business link.
- One university noted that it undertakes substantial programmes of action research with local NGOs, which provides a mechanism for research results to be directly implemented in social programmes.
- One university noted that research was disseminated by academic presentations internally or at conferences, although this was likely to reach only an academic audience.

Examples of specific research contributions and development outreach were mentioned at five universities and included:

- The development of 'Omega Caro E tablets'
- Training for provincial agricultural workers; wildlife studies involving rhino and giraffe tracking and tracing; work on cooking oil which had influenced the local food industry; work with local schools; chemical development with application to medical treatments (cancer detection) and acid mine water; medical nanotechnology work with applications in cancer, fungal and malaria drugs; work on nematodes in deep mine shafts.
- The development of an agricultural facility for farmers; engagement with an agriculture/land ministry arising from its research, leading to the creation of bespoke databases and climate modelling systems.
- Influencing government social policy with specific pieces of research, as well as the restructuring of a government department;
- The creation of an agricultural park (no further details were given)
- Invitations to small holder farmers to apply for Ngugi cattle – a breed resistant to tick borne diseases and able to survive during periods of drought; testing by farmers of two indigenous nematicides (chemical pesticide used to kill parasitic nematodes), for which a patent has been secured

Section C: Research Uptake Processes

IP and Tech Transfer

Six universities have IP or tech-transfer policies in place, and at a seventh this is in development.

Three universities have a dedicated IP or similar office, while at one university this is shared with three other universities in the immediate region. At two universities IP and commercialisation responsibility sits in the portfolios of a PVC or Assistant Director (one of these had still to develop an IP policy, suggesting the function was not well established). One university does not yet have a dedicated office, and did not indicate this responsibility lying elsewhere.

Assessment of research and the relevance of research to university and external stakeholders

Three universities have no mechanisms to assess the potential of research. One noted that this is the responsibility of the tech transfer office, and another that patent searches are employed. One university noted that external assessors are contracted, from public and private sectors, to advise on this. One university noted that because research is related to its strategic areas, the value of the end results to potential users is evident.

Publication of research with ethical constraints and /or commercial value

Five universities have policies in place to manage this, either free-standing or part of other policies (e.g. IP). At one the relevant policies are currently in development.

Barriers to getting research into use due to IPR

Two universities noted difficulties here. One lacks the necessary structures (a tech transfer office) which are required by the national IP act. Another identified a lack of prototype funding as the major barrier. Others didn't note any specific problems, and one commented that the requirements of IP were made clear in any contracts.

Consideration of users of research findings

Potential end users are considered to varying degrees in the design and undertaking of research, but user consultation did not seem to be significant. One does not consider users yet. Two universities consult users on occasion; another noted that they are consulted in the planning stages. At one university this depends on the contractual agreements for the specific piece of research, while at this is handled by the technology transfer office at another.

Section D: Stakeholder Engagement

Announcing new research projects/areas

Universities in the group typically rely on press releases, newsletters, reports or websites to announce their research strengths, and it is not clear that this is well developed as an activity –in several cases universities noted that it was up to potential users to check their website to find out more, or make contact with a key office or person. Much of the responsibility appears to rest on external user to locate this information themselves. At two universities, print, radio and TV are used.

Internally, research projects are announced via email lists and internal newsletters, where they exist, or through the meeting and committee structures.

Identifying research relevant to needs of stakeholders

This is done through a variety of routes, but overall this level of activity is relatively under-developed. Six universities made some attempt to do this. One university noted that research was checked against national government policies and strategic priorities to ensure relevance. Another guides the relevance of its research through a forum of regional (sub-national level) universities. Two universities noted that much of this activity depends on individual researchers, although at one of these institutions the central research and marketing functions take overall responsibility. One university noted that its outreach to stakeholders is based primarily on published outputs – it

sends publications to potential users and invites them to review them or comment. One university uses a technology park and expos and fairs to make these links.

Priority channels for dissemination of research findings

Highest priority channels	Lowest priorities channels
Publications in academic journals	**TV and radio**
Newsletters for internal audiences	**Consultancy reports**
Websites; Conference papers	**Technical reports and policy briefs**

Training/guidance to research active staff

Most universities noted that some form of training was available to staff in the identification of stakeholder needs and how to plan for uptake, but it wasn't clear how substantive or developed this was, or if it was specifically addressing these issues as opposed to broader academic and research skills development in some cases. Some training is internal, and some accessed from external organisations. Two universities indicated that this was the responsibility of each faculty, with no central training or structures in place to coordinate it, while another explained that the university has a teaching and learning centre responsible for all such training. In all but one university, there is no guidance or resources available to researchers – where guidance is available the emphasis is on writing and publishing in academic publications. One university suggested that the library would provide guidance and resources in this area.

Access to specialist support resources

Top three types of support noted as accessible to universities	Top three types of support noted as being inaccessible or unavailable
Professional networks and associations	**Knowledge brokers/intermediaries**
External databases	**Private sector media consultants**
Science writers & journalists	**Science writers and journalists**

Section E: Public Engagement

Office(s) coordinating publicity communication

At most universities, publicity is coordinated by a marketing, communications, PR or public affairs office. However, at one university the ICT unit is responsible. A range of other offices are involved, including industrial liaison, international relations, management information systems, ICT, plus individual faculties and departments.

Professional qualifications

The top two areas in which professional qualifications were held were:

- Public relations
- Marketing and communications (one university had 10 staff with qualifications in this area)

Only one university indicated that a member of staff held qualifications in science communication.

Identifying research to promote university externally

Top three communication strategies/modes used	Strategies or modes *least* often used
Email distribution lists	**Database of research staff with media experience**
Press releases	**Publications directed to government, NGOs, INGO**
Research newsletters distributed internally	**Publications directed at business community**
	Research newsletter disseminated outside the institution

Fundraising strategy

Five institutions have a fundraising strategy, and at one it is under development. Only one university noted that it had a specific focus on development research activities, although another noted that their strategy addressed this to some extent.

Research Uptake Management Priorities

This section summarises some of the priorities that universities listed following the two-day benchmarking exercise. We asked three questions to each of the participants and collated their responses – the following illustrates the key themes and major points that were raised across a range of responses in all three regional groupings.

In view of the benchmarking discussions over the past three days, what would you consider to be the main strengths and weaknesses in your university with regards to research uptake?

Strengths

- There is strong institutional support for research in the form of an overreaching research policy, an established research management structure, or an institutional research framework.
- Intellectual Property frameworks and industrial liaison systems were often said to be in place, and in several cases, business incubation units.
- Research activity has grown over the course of the last generation.

Weaknesses

- Research communication systems are not well-developed.
- A lack of staff and resources to dedicate to research uptake is seen as a widespread barrier.
- Absence of an extension or outreach office or policy can stand in the way of effective Research Uptake Management.
- Lack of coordination between faculties, departments, and senior administration can pose a challenge.

What should be your most immediate priorities in the area, and what will be the main barriers to addressing these?

Priorities

- Embedding Research Uptake in the overall Research Policy or Research Management Policy, and ensuring this is well communicated and enforced amongst all faculties and departments.
- Establishment of a well-resourced unit, office, or centre at the institution with responsibility for extension, outreach and Research Uptake, or consolidate these activities within existing bodies.

- Providing training to staff in Research Uptake, outreach and dissemination.
- Institutional sensitisation to the strategic importance of Research Uptake, building institution-wide consensus.

Barriers

- Limited knowledge regarding Research Uptake in the institutional community.
- Limited financial resources to develop this area of work and an absence of logistical and human resources.
- Institutional resistance to reforms in this area, and a sense of "policy inertia" whereby it will take time and energy to implement reform towards RUM.
- Engaging media, industry and community actors may not succeed, or will require specialised and sustained resources.

In developing a strategy for research uptake at your institution- with the support of the DRUSSA project- who would be best placed to take this forward? What do you think the main elements of the strategy should be? Are there any existing documents or policies that should be taken into account in developing strategy?

Who to take it forward?

- There is broad emphasis that the DVC or PVC responsible for Research, Extension and/or Communication is best placed to take this forward.
- Directorates of research, graduate training and/or consultancy are also cited.
- Central research offices and/or research management offices are also mentioned.
- Extension, communication and/or communications directorates are also mentioned.

Main elements of a strategy?

- A research communication and marketing plan, to ensure appropriate engagement with a range of community stakeholders (in industry, government, or rural and remote settings).
- A means to measure and quantify elements of Research Uptake, and to evaluate its successes.
- Incentives and prioritisation to ensure that Research Uptake is prioritised by academics in a similar means to the publication of research in peer reviewed journals.
- Coordination of Research Uptake strategies across faculties and departments.
- Provision of an implementation framework to help ensure a strategy is adhered to.
- Capacity building for all staff who are to be engaged with Research Uptake work.

What policies should be taken into account?

- Community development policy
- Intellectual Property policy
- Research Management policy
- University Strategic Plan
- National development policies and frameworks
- Policy on promotions and career advancement
- Teaching and learning policy
- Consultancy policy

Conclusions

The Benchmarking Exercise has helped to illustrate several things. Firstly, we have been able to draw out some of the approaches that universities are taking in managing Research Uptake activity already, as well as some of the challenges they are facing in managing this work – largely surrounding questions of sustained funding, of maintaining adequately resourced staff, and of having the appropriate incentives, time and training for academic and managerial staff to pursue uptake in a way that is coordinated and supported across the institution. While these challenges can be significant, there is a wealth of good case studies, examples of Research Uptake work that can serve as transferable models, and a wealth of experience and commitment from member universities that will be very useful in developing Research Uptake systems in future.

Secondly, we have learned a good deal about the aspirations and the long-term goals of member universities regarding strengthening Research Uptake. Participating universities have identified a wide range of policy initiatives that they believe could play a strong role in scaling up their Research Uptake activity, and, through regional discussions at the Leadership and Benchmarking Event, have begun to build consensus on the utility of institution-wide approaches. The varying contexts of different universities necessitate differentiated approaches, and unique institutional contexts require some bespoke policy frameworks – all the same, there is considerable agreement on the positive role of the university in society, the developmental potential of the university, and that Research Uptake strategies must move from the drawing board and towards greater and more measurable impact.

Through the Benchmarking Survey and the consequent discussions at the Leadership and Benchmarking Event, we have also been able to refine a series of Good Practice statements (attached to this report as Appendix I) that provide a road map for member universities as they develop their Research Uptake systems. These statements were drawn from survey responses initially, and have been further revised and focused as a result of our benchmarking discussions – while not an exhaustive guide towards any universal methodology for developing Research Uptake systems, they do provide a strong, general picture of how universities can consider moving from the strategic level to the level of implementation.

APPENDIX I

DRUSSA Benchmarking Exercise: Good Practice Statements

The statements below were identified from the pre-event questionnaires supplied by participants, from DRUSSA documentation and past exercises conducted by the Association of Commonwealth Universities in similar areas. They were then the subject of discussion at the Leadership and Benchmarking Event in Johannesburg, in each of the three regional sessions – amendments and revisions to the original Good Practice Statements were then made based on the outcomes of those discussions with DRUSSA members.

It is emphasised that, while the following statements have been revised to reflect the fullness of the three regional discussions, further comment on these statements are welcome, as they are designed to reflect the experiences and aspirations of participating universities. It is hoped that the final outcome will be a set of agreed statements which universities can use to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their current activities, and thus establish priorities for future activity.

Session One: Strategy and Mission

Revised
1. The overall mission and strategy of the University reflect the need to produce research findings for wider use.
2. The University should have a clear research strategy document which explicitly recognises the importance of research for social, economic and development needs.
3. The University research strategy should explicitly recognise the need to support research uptake activity, taking into account available resources, or reasonable aspirations for future resources.
4. Research strategy and research uptake policy documents should be taken into account when allocating internal resources.
5. Progress towards research strategy (including research uptake) should be coordinated by a senior university official (possibly Deputy Vice-Chancellor level), and the strategy should be overseen at regular intervals by a high level committee.

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6. Research uptake policies should be developed at operational level by Research Offices (or similar) with input from faculties, academics and where possible, users taking into account the mission and objectives of universities as well as individual research programmes.
7. Detailed research uptake implementation plans/roadmaps/guidelines should be developed at operational level (by Research Office or similar) to facilitate implementation of policies at departmental/faculty level and for individual academics.
8. A Research Committee should monitor the progress of research uptake polices at regular intervals.
9. Research strategy (including research uptake) should be actively communicated to staff.
10. Clear policies should exist for the ownership and management of intellectual property and publication generated by university staff.
11. Policies should be in place to ensure that ethical issues in research uptake are covered, including any conflict of interest for university staff.
12. The institution should collect sufficient information on research uptake activity to inform future policy.

Session Two: Staffing for Research Uptake

Revised
1. The university should support and facilitate research uptake activities in job descriptions of academic staff and, when appropriate, clearly state the expectations on academic staff to be involved in research uptake activities.
2. Clearly designated professional staff in the University should have responsibility for promoting research uptake amongst staff.
3. Staff/offices with responsibility for research uptake should have access to designated budgets, for both internal and external research uptake activities.
4. Staff with responsibility for research uptake should have access to the most senior level of management in the University.
5. Staff with responsibility for research uptake should have access to appropriate external expertise where necessary.
6. Staff with research uptake responsibility should be encouraged to network with similar staff at other universities within the region.
7. Staff with research uptake responsibility should be encouraged and assisted to undertake appropriate training in the field.
8. Staff with research uptake responsibility should be at a sufficiently senior level to communicate effectively with academic staff.
9. Where professional staff with research uptake responsibilities are based in different offices, clear mechanisms should exist for them to meet with each other and share information on research activities that the university is engaged in.

Session Three: Internal Organisation and Promotion of Research Uptake

Revised
1. The University should have mechanisms in place to identify research with uptake potential at an early stage.
2. The University should maintain an active database of research activities and the research specialisations of academic staff.
3. Research uptake activity should be embedded in overall research and community service objectives and should be included in relevant staff induction or postgraduate training programmes.
4. Policies should to take into account competing demands on academic time and where appropriate, encourage research active academic staff to engage in research uptake activities.
5. Clear processes should exist for decisions to be taken about the level of support available for research uptake in specific cases.
6. Clear processes should exist to determine where responsibility lies for research uptake, between the academic / research team, the University and any external sponsor.
7. Clear processes should exist for determining the nature of research activity in specific cases (for example, the possibility of commercial protection through patents) and the extent to which such decisions are delegated to academic staff.
8. The university should provide assistance to academic staff in approaching and negotiating agreements with external funders of research.
9. Academic staff, departments and faculties should have appropriate incentives to engage in research uptake activity.
10. Clear rules should exist to determine the division of any revenue received in respect of research uptake activity.
11. The university should develop means to quantify and assess the extent of research uptake activity at departmental/faculty and individual staff level.
12. Activity on research uptake should be included in criteria for the promotion and/or re-grading of academic staff where appropriate, taking into account university processes and competing demands on academic time.
13. Central mechanisms should exist to record successful research uptake activity, and to learn from the lessons of previous projects and share success stories.
14. Where professional support is available for research uptake activity, these services should be actively publicised to staff.

Session Four: Support for Externally Facing Activity

Revised
1. The University should keep records of its external contacts and potential research users in specific fields, and share these internally.
2. Academic staff should be actively encouraged to include Uptake activity in their research proposals to external bodies, and potential users should be involved in project planning from an early stage.
3. Academic staff should be assisted to match specific opportunities to specific potential users.
4. Internal assessment mechanisms should exist to assess the quality and viability of research prior to engagement with external stakeholders and users of research.
5. Mechanisms should exist for potential users of research to be aware of, and where appropriate, involved in, assessing the potential of research at an early stage.
6. The university should provide, or have access to, qualified staff to assist academics in identifying research suitable for research uptake, and advice on the most appropriate time and means to bring research to external stakeholders and users.
7. Academic staff should be provided with assistance in producing and distributing materials about their work to external audiences.
8. Specific routes to promote university research activity should be tailored to key target groups, such as business, government and NGOs.
9. A range of mechanisms should exist to bring the work of the University to external users, such as centrally produced newsletters, open days, research fairs, mailing lists and the university website.
10. Promotional activities should be aimed at a range of levels within external organisations, including senior policy makers and those at operational level, and recognise the different types of approach necessary in each case.
11. The University should maintain regular contact with appropriate media contacts.
12. Mechanisms should exist to review the effectiveness of external communication activities.
13. The University should have clear access points, with the appropriate authority, for external bodies wishing to know more about its work in specific areas.
14. The promotion of University research to external bodies should be recognised, valued and rewarded as key research activity by the University.
15. Staff should be well informed about the research activity throughout the University.