

A row of large, smooth, light-colored rocks extends from the foreground into the ocean. The rocks are stacked and have a weathered, rounded appearance. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a clear, light blue. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down the line of rocks towards the horizon.

*“Nobody trips over mountains.  
It is the small pebble that causes you to stumble.  
Pass all the pebbles in your path and you will find  
you have crossed the mountain.”*

-Author Unknown



# KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT

The Key Performance Indicator Report (KPI) of the MRC is organised according to the five perspectives of a modified balanced scorecard:

1. Internal processes - research strategy and Business Plan  
- Opportunity and Risk Management
2. Financial and Investment - Financial Strategy
3. Innovation, Learning and Growth - Capacity Development
4. Stakeholder and Customer Focus -Innovation and Technology - Informatics and Knowledge Management - Research Translation - Stakeholder Management
5. Transformation - Transformation and Development

## 1. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLAN

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Produce new knowledge through conducting research	Peer-reviewed publications	5% increase 2008 (2007 : 676)	+	5% increase : 706 (30 more than in 2007)
Productivity	Peer-reviewed publications in journals and books per senior scientist	5% increase 2008 (2007 : 2.00)	++	50% increase : 3.0 (236 senior scientists : – 114 intramural – 122 extramural)
Improve quality of publications	Impact factors and citations	Variable	-	Still to be measured
	Percentage in international journals	2% increase (2007 : 87%)	-	82%
Research Projects in Units	Number in 43 Units	5% increase 2008 : 441 (2007 : 420)	++	556 research projects (32% increase)
Contracts and Grants funded	Number of projects	5% increase 2008 : 196	++	57% increase : 293
Self-initiated research projects	Self-initiated Projects	10% increase 2008 : 165 (2007 : 150)	-	133
Restructuring of MRC research entities	Restructuring complete	3 NCRPs	+	3 NCRPs
Strategic review of 43 Units	Recommendations implemented	43 Units reduced to 40	+	40 Research Units
Establishment of new National Collaborative Research Programmes (NCRPs)	Two new NCRPs : Cardiovascular and Metabolic Disease African Traditional Medicines and Drug Development CARISA – Cancer Research In South Africa (established 2007).	2 new NCRPs	+	2 new NCRPs : CVD and ATM
National and international Collaborative Research Programmes	Number of new agreements	8 – 10 p.a.	++	97 in total
Five yearly MRC Unit Reviews	Unit review report (align this process also with PM system)	12 in 2008	+	12 reviews in 12 months
Research Integrity Office	RIO in place	Established	+	Functioning RIO
Improve quality of research	A-rated scientists	4	+	5 : Opie, Brombacher, Noakes, Pettifor, Vaughan
	B-rated scientists	4	+	
	P-rated scientists	4	+	
	Wellcome Trust Fellows	3	+	
	NIH 'RO1' projects	3	+	
International recognition of scientists and support staff	Technical Advisers Committees	Number	+	Academic Health Science Centres in the UK, WHO Research Strategy etc
Capital equipment expenditure	Expenditure on capital equipment	Increase	+	R16.9 million (R3 million in 2007)

## 2. FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLAN

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Grow global MRC budget	Increase (%)	Increase to R530 million (R104 023 000 (30%) increase in 2007 to R457 million)	+	R34 million (7%) increase to R531 million
Grow baseline budget	MTEF increases	R6.65 million (3.5%) increase (R22 938 000 (15%) increase in 2007)	++	R17 million (9%) increase
Grow external income : - total external income	Increase (%)	R320 million (20%) (R82 021 000 (42%) in 2007)	-	R282 million (+ R3 million) (1% increase)
- government contracts	Increase (%)	20% increase (R12 731 488 (55%) increase in 2007)	++	R35 815 585 in 2008 : increase of R12 667 425 (55%) (R23 148 160 in 2007)
- international grants and contracts	Increase (%)	R50 million (15%) (R6 059 318 (3%) increase in 2007)	+	R3.27 million (1%) increase
Leveraging of baseline funding	Ratio of external income to total income	55%	+	58% ratio external income to total income
Commercialisation income	Income	R3 million	+	R3.8 million
Salary expenditure	Gap with market	5%	-	10 - 15%
	Salary roll baseline staff (ratio to baseline budget)	R135 697 741 (69% or less)	+	53% of baseline budget is spent on salaries of baseline staff
	Salary roll total staff (ratio to global budget)	R158 584 266 (35% or less)	+	R158 000 279 (33%)
Implement full cost recovery model	Costing model working	Working cost recovery system	+	Partially working system
Improve contract database	Working electronic database	90% of contracts (by value) in the system	+	Electronic database working
Develop expanded contingency reserve : retrenchment fund	Contingency reserve	R3.5 million	++	R20 million reserves
Restructure MRC budget to spend more on research	Overhead ratio : • on baseline budget • on global budget	32% (29% 2007) 12% (14% 2007)	++ +	27% 13%
	Percentage changes in budget : • support directorates	- 2% (R62 390537) (- 8% to R63 772 762 in 2007)	-	+ 7% (R70 395 736)
	• research	+ 8% (R10 807 224) (+ 14% in 2007)	+	+ 11% (R163 346 826) (+ R17 722 000)
	• capacity development	+ 16% (R1 750 393)	-	+ 8% (1 000 000)

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Reduce professional support staff numbers	Restructure support directorates	Ratio to total staff 14% (120 professional support directorate staff ) (21% (180) in 2008, 24% (207) in 2007	-	20% (162 professional support directorate staff out of 817 staff)

Result : - means target not achieved

+ means target achieved

++ means target exceeded

Overall 121 out of 148 key performance indicators were achieved or exceeded – i.e. 82%.

### 3. OPPORTUNITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
<b>Managing Funders' interest</b> Investigate the risk around the funding mix	A funding model	Working	+	Working funding model
Use MRC reserves to renew and refurbish the organisation	Rand value of reserves	R5 million	+	R20 million used for IT, painting, capital equipment etc
Corporate governance Performance management system linking strategy to individuals' KPIs	A Business plan that links to individual performance contracts	All staff using new system	+	New system introduced
Develop and implement a procurement policy addressing BEE; supply chain etc	Policy complete	35% BEE by April 2009	-	Work in progress
Implementation of the office of the Company Secretary to advise the MRC Board and act as custodian of ensuring and implementing good governance practices	Comprehensive Board Induction and Duties of Directors and Board Members.	Active	+	Training introduced
	Implementation of Board Evaluation	Evaluation begun	-	Still to be done
	Revision of Code of Conduct for Board Members and declaration of interests	Declarations made	+	Declaration complete
Board Committees	Effective Committees	Effective Committees	+	Effective Committees
<b>Risk management</b> Risk working group	RWG functional	RWG active	+	RWG active
	Fraud committee working and reporting to Audit Committee	Active Fraud Committee	+	Complete
	Fraud Strategy and/or policy	Successful Implementation	+	Implemented
	Comply with SA GAAP and IFRS	AFS on time	+	AFS 2008 on time and unqualified
Fraud prevention	Fraud, Sexual harassment, Racism	Policies active	+	Policies active : antiracism policy latest to be implemented
	Relevant policies in line with recent law	Training, implement new models	+	Training and implementation Underway
Financial Reporting Systems	Compliance with treasury requirements	Compliance	+	Fixed asset register updated Travel system in place
Safety issues, ethics, values, human rights	SHE issues attended to	SHE	+	SHE officer, policies
Revision of MRC Policies & Procedures	MRC policies revised	Completion	+	MRC policies complete

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ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Establish Supply Chain Management unit; Update fixed assets registry, travel management remodelling; office and laboratory space management; property management; telecommunication management; fleet management; Procurement and continuous process improvement	Programmes underway	Programmes underway	+	Programmes underway Fixed asset register updated Travel system being implemented
Staff numbers	Number of staff : permanent v contract	5% growth . (2008 : 847)	-	817 (47% contract)
Turnover ratios	Staff turnover ratio	<7%	+	<7%

#### 4. HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Double PhD graduates	Number graduates p.a.	1 PhD p.a. per unit	+	62 graduates (44 in 2007) 1.6 per unit (205 enrolled)
Train black African PhDs	Number	30 PhDs : 6 p.a.	+	42 MRC-funded black African PhD students out of the total of 205 PhD students enrolled in the 40 MRC research units
Increase Career Awardees	Number	9	+	9
Develop post-docs	Number post docs	16 to 24 by 2010	+	14, therefore on track for 2010 target (plan to increase stipend instead of number in 2009)
Formal mentorship of research leadership	Number of leadership plans	1 per unit	+	5 of the 17 scientists chosen for leadership are now Directors of research units or Co-directors
Increase the proportion of African scientists over next five years	Minimum 20 additional African scientists p.a.	2007 : 85/151 (36%)	-	30% (63/210)
Develop and implement a leadership and management development strategy	Number : 19 identified Career paths	All 16 Units have plans	+	All units have plans. 4 of the research leaders identified have NRF Research Chairs (Dheda, Seedat, Mahdi); and one is a Head of Department (Mayosi)
Increase the number of black African intramural Unit Directors	Number : Increase from 2 in 2005 to 4 in 2009	2 by April 2009		1 intramural (Matsabisa), 2 extramural (Chibale, Mphahlele)
Job creation	Number of contract positions created	5% increase p.a. (91 or 12% in 2007)	+	47% of posts are contract positions (386/817) in March 2009

## 5. TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
<b>Social transformation:</b> Organisational culture and values for the MRC	New culture and values implemented	Culture and values plan	+	Antiracism policy
Develop clear career criteria for every job level and category	Criteria developed	Criteria on website	+	Criteria on website
Develop a system of broadbanding	Broadbanding system	Broadband system in place	+	Broadband system in place
Revision of Conditions of Service and employment practises	New Conditions of Service (COS) and employee relations processes	COS in use and negotiated with staff. Managers trained	+	COS negotiations underway COS approved by Board
Develop a Code of Ethics for the MRC	Code of Ethics	Code in place by Sept 2008	-	Work in progress
Development of managers in terms of management and leadership skills	Number SMP courses Number other courses	Courses in progress	+	Courses in progress
Implement an HR and pay roll system	HR System implemented	HR system implemented	+	HR system implemented
Develop and implement an Integrated Employee Wellness strategy and programme	Strategy approved Building blocks implemented	Strategy implemented	+	Strategy implemented
Ethnic and Gender transformation	MRC demographics	April 2009 :  M : F 32 : 68 African 49% Coloured 18% SA Indian 13% White 19%	+	Demographic transformation well underway :  M : F 32 : 68 African 49% Coloured 18% SA Indian 13% White 19%
Black scientists	Proportion of black scientists	55% (108/208, 52% in 2007)	+	62% (131/210)
	Proportion of African scientists	45% (83/208, 40% in 2007)	-	30% (63/210)
Black senior scientists	Proportion senior black scientists	55% (67/126, 53% in 2007)	+	56% (93/166)
	Proportion senior African Black scientists	22% (24/126, 19% in 2007)	+	23% (39/166)
Black managers	Number (per cent) black managers	65% (67/108, 62% in 2007)	+	70% (64/92)
	Number (per cent) African black managers	22% (21/108, 19% in 2007)	-	16% (15/92)

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Female scientists	Number (per cent) female scientists	60% (116/208, 56% in 2007)	+	70% (146/210)
Female senior scientists	Number (per cent) female senior scientists	67% (85/126, 67% in 2007)	+	67% (112/166)
Female managers	Number (per cent) female managers	55% (57/108, 53% in 2007)	+	57% (52/92)
Female Unit Directors	Female Unit Directors : 14 Intramural Directors 40 Directors in total	50% (7/14) 30% (12/40)	+ +	50% (7/14) 38% (15/40)
Disabled researchers and support staff	Proportion of disabled researchers and support staff	1% (0.3% in 2007)	-	0.5% (4/817)
Black African Division Managers	Number (per cent) of Black African Division Managers	35% (33% 8/24 in 2007)	-	24% (6/25)
Black African Unit Directors	Number (per cent) of 43 Unit Directors who are Black African	2 (4%) (1 in 2007)	+	8% (3/40)
	Number (per cent) of 16 intramural unit directors Black African	2 (15%) (1 in 2007)	-	7% (1/14)
	Number (per cent) of 43 Unit Directors who are black	(23%) 10/43	+	45% (18/40)
Managers and Researchers	Number (per cent) of total staff	42% (316/855 (38%) in 2007)	-	34% (280/817)
	Number (per cent) Black	57% (178/316 (55%) in 2007)	+	66% (184/280)
	Number (per cent) Black African	35% (104/316 (33%) in 2007)	+	28% (77/280)
	Number (per cent) female	57% (173/316 (55%) in 2007)	+	66% (184/280)
<b>Business transformation</b> Quality and cost of professional support divisions	Review of support Directorates	Complete by May 2008	+	Reviews complete
Skills development	Percentage of baseline salary spent on skills development	5% (3% in 2007)	-	Data only available in July
Accelerated development	Amount spent on development of future research and support leaders	R500 000 (R300 000 in 2007)	-	R400 000
	Professional support managers	Formal training courses	+	Formal training courses

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ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Organisational Development	Staff with PhD	15% (28/208 (13%) in 2007	-	9% (70/817)
	Scientists with PhD	44% (81/855(10%) in 2007)	-	32% (67/210)
	Staff with MBChB	5%(28/208 (3.3%) in 2007	-	3% (26/817)
	Scientists with MBChB	15% (28/208(13%) in 2007)	-	12% (26/210)
Peer reviewed publications with Black African scientists as primary author	Number (per cent) of total	13% (71/676 (11%) in 2007	+	20% (140/706)

## 6. INNOVATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
<b>Intellectual Capital (IC) Management</b> Manage IC to world class status	Licence Agreements	One licence agreement	+	One licence agreement
Leverage IC of the MRC to create safe, effective, affordable accessible medicines for Africa	Product development	1 product into clinical trials	+	SAAVI HIV vaccine in Phase I clinical trials
	Diabetes Spin-out pipeline	Pipeline populated with back-up compounds	+	Well stocked pipeline
Explore Public-Public Partnerships (PPPs)	Develop a PPP Strategy for MRC in eHealth	Accepted Strategy Stakeholder buy-in	+	PPP strategy developed
Create new IP -generating platforms relevant to MRC mandate	Strengthen Animal Experimental Platform cGLP/GMP facility at Delft feasibility done	Macaque research facility. Vervet monkey research programme established	+	Well established primate colonies
Mentorship programmes	Building scarce and strategically important capacity and competence	Two candidates	+	Two candidates recruited
Implement the IP strategy	IP pipeline growing responsibly	Strategy aligned with national priorities	+	IP strategy implemented
New company creation	Start-up company	One company	+	One company : Gnowmix
Incubate new technology platforms	eHealth Research and Technology Platform	Business Plan completed Director appointed	+	EHRIP progressing well Acting Director appointed
General costs Innovation and Technology Directorate	Maintaining world class practices and systems for IC Management	Benchmark as part of SETI Review	+	IC management systems in place SETI review postponed

## 7. INFORMATICS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Electronic register of grants	Online register of MRC grants	May 2009	+	Electronic register of grants on MRC website
Integration of MRC Information Systems : MIS	Integrated MIS	Online MIS	+	Online MIS : Qlikview containing management information relating to Finance, HR and other systems
MRC Electronic Databases of Journal articles : Licenses	Electronic access	Working electronic databases	+	Grants database on website Electronic access for all MRC staff has been implemented Qlikview for senior managers KPI electronic dashboard

## 8. RESEARCH TRANSLATION

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Research Translation Office	Functioning office	Office	+	RTO staff : Debbie Railoun, Benita Mayosi and Sarah Bok
Scientific writing in indigenous languages	Scientific writing in 5 languages	Programmes	+	Begun
MRC Science Centre	Planning and funding	Proposal	+	Proposal submitted to Wellcome Trust and other potential funders
Annual Report	Print on deadline	On deadline in 2008	+	On deadline in Aug 2008
Publications and video	Outputs	Research-related videos, publications and DVDs	+	706 peer-reviewed publications; 9 videos and DVDs
Technical Reports Policy briefs	Number of technical reports Number of policy briefs	20 5	++ ++	79 15
Health and Socioeconomic Impact * :  HIV and AIDS	  PMTCT  HIV incidence	  Dual therapy  Reduction	  +  +	  Dual therapy (AZT + NVP) introduced 2008 : 30 000 lives p.a. saved Reduction in incidence in young people according to DOH Antenatal Clinic Survey and HSRC/MRC National Seroprevalence Survey

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ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Tuberculosis	Comprehensive Plan for Care, Management and Treatment of HIV and AIDS	Reduced mortality, improved quality of life	+	730 000 initiated on ART : 100 000 lives p.a. saved
	Behaviour change	Increased condom use etc	+	Increased from 34 to 65% according to HSRC/MRC Survey : thousands of lives p.a. saved
	HIV vaccine	First SA HIV vaccine in Phase I clinical trial	+	SAAVI HIV vaccine trial begun in Jan 2009 in USA, June 2009 in South Africa
	Diagnostic for MDR	Adoption in health system (shorten diagnosis time from 2 months to 2 days) thus reducing MDR TB transmission	+	Adoption in health system (NHLS) after demonstration project of over 10,000 participants by MRC, NHLS and FIND Diagnostics
	New treatment regimens for TB	Treatment shortened to 4 months	+	Remox clinical trial in progress : ready for registration in 2012
	Treatment for MDR and XDR TB	Treatment for MDR and XDR TB	+	MRC Phase IIb clinical trial shows new chemical entity TMC207 is efficacious in MDR and XDR TB
Malaria	Malaria incidence	Reduction	+	Reduction in malaria prevalence by 99% in Lubombo Spatial Development Corridor
	Plan for eradication of malaria in Africa and in the world	Plan for Africa	+	MRC contracted by SADC for malaria control in Trans- Zambezi corridor
		Plan for the world	+	MRC member of MEG (Malaria Eradication Group) MRC contracted to eradicate malaria in Biolo Island, Gabon
Infectious Disease	Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) for pneumococcal vaccine	Launch with potential to save 500 000 children's lives p.a. by 2012	+	Launch of US\$ 1.6 billion AMC fund of 4 of the G8 countries, Norway and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation at G8 meeting in Rome, June 2009.
Child health	Pneumococcal and Rotavirus vaccines in South Africa's Expanded Programme for Immunisation (EPI)	Vaccines in EPI system	+	Pneumococcal and Rotavirus vaccines in South Africa 2009 after clinical trials and policy recommendations from Prof Mahdi <i>et al</i> Potential to save 25 000 children's lives p.a. in South Africa
Heart Disease and Stroke	NCRP for CVD	NCRP established	+	Advertising for NCRP Director

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Tobacco	Policy	Tobacco Act	+	Tobacco Act passed in 2008
	Smoking rates	Reduction in consumption of tobacco (from 2 billion to 1.3 billion cigarettes p.a. in 1990 – 2005)	+	55 705 lives saved p.a. due to 30% reduction in smoking since 1990
Health research policy	WHO policy on health research	Complete policy	+	WHO Research for Health Strategy completed
	GFHR WHO Ministerial in Mali	African Health Minister's policy on health research	+	Ministerial endorsement of strategy in Africa
African Traditional Medicines	National policy and legislation on ATM	Complete and promulgated	+	National Policy completed and tabled at Cabinet
	NCRP on ATM	NCRP established	+	NCRP established
	Research Colloquium on ATM	Successful Colloquium	+	Successful Colloquium
Men's health : circumcision and initiation and HIV transmission	National policy input	Research input to adopted policy	+	Research inputs into policy

\* Health policy, products, practice and health promotion, informed by MRC research that impacts on health and socio-economic state

\* Health impact

- Lives saved
- Reductions in morbidity (DALYs averted)

\* Socio-economic impact

- Rands saved or generated (each life saved is worth R3 million over 60 years lifespan if GDP per capita in South Africa is R48 000)  
(one year back at work is worth R48 000 if GDP per capita is R48 000 )
- Jobs created

## 9. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

ACTIVITY	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2008/9	RESULT	PERFORMANCE 2008/9
Develop a stakeholder plan and database	Stakeholder database and liaison	Database and plan complete	+	Database and plan complete
International Liaison	International Liaison	International strategy	+	Strategy complete
Involvement in NEPAD activities	Collaborations	Several collaborations	+	Several African collaborations
Build capacity in the MRC President's Office	Identify internal and external communication gaps	Stakeholder interactions list	+	List complete
National Department of Health	Quarterly Senior Management meetings	4	+	4
	Tasks commissioned by NDOH	4	+	4
Other Government Departments	Science and Technology Education Social Development	Number of Projects undertaken	+	Several projects
Parliamentary Portfolio Committees	Presentations	2	+	2
Provincial Government Municipalities Traditional Leaders	Meetings Projects	Number of meetings and projects	+	Several meetings
Science Councils	Meetings Collaborations	3 COHORT meetings	-	No COHORT meetings (only one held in the reporting period)
Universities	Interactions : research days, graduation ceremonies etc	Number	+	Several interactions
Conferences and events	Number	Number	+	8

## *EXPLANATION OF KPI VARIANCES*

The MRC achieved or exceeded the targets set in 121 (82%) out of its 148 key performance indicators (KPIs) for the year 2008/2009.

This document explains why the targets were missed in the remaining KPIs.

1. The KPI of impact factors and citations to evaluate the improvement in quality of publications is still being assembled in terms of knowledge management tools to correctly measure these indices.
2. The target of 89% of publications in international journals was missed as only 82% was achieved. With more sage reflection, the target was probably set too high as it not appropriate for nearly 90% of MRC publications to be in foreign journals – 80% is probably a more correct target.
3. The target of 165 self-initiated research projects was missed (only 133) as the MRC is struggling to marshal increased funds for self-initiated research projects. In the new financial year (2009/10) the funds for self-initiated research have been increased from R14.70 million to R15.93 million in an attempt to correct this fault.
4. The gap between MRC salaries and market benchmarks continues to lie between 10 – 15%, and the target of 5% gap was missed. The MRC Board has approved in the MRC Budget 2009/10 salary increases of 8 – 14%, partly in an attempt to bridge some of this gap. With MTEF baseline budget increases of 5% per annum tabled for the next three years, it will be a struggle to close the gap completely.
5. A target was set to reduce expenditure on support directorates by 2%, but the outcome was an increase of 7%. This is probably because the target set was too ambitious.
6. The target of 16% of baseline expenditure on capacity development was missed – with only 8% being achieved. This is due to budgetary constraints making it difficult to accelerate expenditure on this item.
7. The target of reducing professional support staff numbers to 120 was missed with number reached being 162 out of a total staff complement of 817 - i.e. 20%. With hindsight the target was too ambitious, and the MRC will continue to ensure that its overhead costs are gradually reduced. Currently the overhead on the total budget has been reduced to 13% - international best practice for health research councils being 10% overhead costs.
8. The target of developing and implementing a procurement policy addressing BEE supply chain issues was missed. The MRC will work energetically to ensure that the target is achieved in the coming financial year.
9. The target of implementing MRC Board evaluation was missed. The Board is working to ensure that this target is not missed again.
10. The target of 5% growth in staff numbers was missed with numbers shrinking from 847 to 817. The reason for this is that the nature of the MRC's business in which 75% of research work is funded by external income, results in marked fluctuations in numbers of contract employees recruited for each project. Currently 47% of employees are in contract posts. Such fluctuations are inevitable as 58% of the MRC budget comes from external sources – grants and contracts – rather than baseline parliamentary grant.
11. The target of increasing the number of black African scientists by more than 20 per annum was missed. The number shrank from 85 out of 151 scientists (36%) being black African in 2007 to 63 out of 210 (30%) in 2008. The MRC will need to work more energetically over the coming year to recruit and retain more black African scientists. One measure that has been taken to assist this is the formation of a Young Scientists Forum which should help MRC management to identify what are the constraints of recruiting and retaining black African scientists.
12. The MRC failed to meet the target of increasing the number of intramural black African Unit Directors from 1 to 2. An offer made to one prospective candidate was subsequently rejected; but the MRC will work vigorously to try ensure the number is increased to 2 in 2010, and more thereafter.

13. The MRC failed to put a Code of Ethics in place by September 2008. The Executive will work with the Board to ensure this is done as soon as possible.
14. The MRC failed to increase the proportion of black African scientists from the 2007 level of 40% (83/208) to the target of 45%. The proportion actually slipped backwards in 2008 to 30% (63 out of 210). The MRC will have to address this deficit through some of the mechanisms identified in bullet 11 above.
15. The MRC missed the target of 22% black African managers (19% in 2007 – or 21 out of 108). The proportion achieved was 16% (15 out of 92). Similar measures will need to be taken to correct this deficit, to those adopted to correct the dearth in black African scientists.
16. Recruiting disabled researchers and support staff continues to be difficult with the 2008 figure of 0.5% (4 out of 817) falling well short of the target of 1%.
17. The MRC missed the target of 35% black African division managers – achieving only 24% (6 out of 25). A Division Managers Forum has been established which hopefully assist in developing strategies to correct this fault.
18. Managers and researchers still only account for 34% (280 out of 817) of total staff – well short of the target set of 42%. This is partly because reduction of support staff numbers was not as successful as hoped. The MRC will continue to increase the proportion of researchers in particular employed.
19. The MRC will not know until late July whether it has reached its target of spending 5% of the baseline salary budget on skills development – the figure for 2007 was only 3%.
20. The amount of money spent on development of future research and support leaders in 2008 (R400 000) fell short of the target of R500 000. This will be corrected in the 2009/10 financial year.
21. The percentage of staff with PhDs in 2008 (9% - 70 out of 817 employees) falls well short of the target of 15%. The MRC has probably overestimated the speed at which it can correct this flaw.
22. A similar overestimate underlies the failure to reach the target of 44% of scientists holding PhDs – only 32% was attained (67 of the 210 scientists).
23. Similarly with the target of 5% of staff being medical doctors (MBChB) – only 3% (26 out of 817) are medical doctors. This is clearly inappropriate for an organization that calls itself the Medical Research Council!
24. Similarly again for the target of 15% of scientist staff being medical doctors – here the shortfall was less severe at 12% (26 out of the 210 scientists). The MRC is instituting measures to ensure that the targets in 23 and 24 are met – such as ensuring that our pay scales match those of the Occupational Specific Dispensation for doctors and nurses.
25. The MRC missed the target of three COHORT meetings (Committee of Heads of Research and Technology institutions) attended because only one COHORT meeting was held in the reporting period and the MRC President was overseas at the time of that meeting.
26. The one target that was exceeded was for the KPI 'African black PhD'. This was because the target set was for strictly MRC-funded African black PhD students; but the number reached included those funded by monies transferred to the MRC from DST and NRF.
- Prof A D Mbewu  
President : MRC