

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

INFORMATICS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SUB-DIRECTORY STRATEGY DOCUMENT

STRATEGY REVIEW MAY 2006

BUILDING A HEALTHY NATION THROUGH RESEARCH



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1. BACKGROUND

The Medical Research Council (MRC) is a government-funded organisation with a mandate to conduct world-class health research, and support the policy-makers in the country by providing timely and continuously updated information. The organisation also has key responsibilities in the area of translating research results into products and tools that can be used in the planning of health activities and programmes nationally.

The informatics and knowledge management directorate's main function is to help enhance the MRC mandate on research by providing extensive informatics and knowledge management capacity within the organization. In the informatics area our main focus is to leverage technologies and systems for capturing, processing storing and disseminating strategic and relevant research information within the MRC to our various stakeholders. This is packaged to optimize the accessing essential information and knowledge by our stakeholders. The knowledge management responsibility is meant to enhance the MRC's capability in identifying key areas of excellence of strategic knowledge and ensuring that such resource is permanently embedded within the organization.

This strategic document outlines several key dimensions which this directorate must implement in collaboration with other strategic partners within the MRC and externally in order to promote the attainment of a healthy nation vision of the MRC. We believe that the directorate is a strategic partner within the MRC and that our role is critical in driving towards a world class MRC in the field of Informatics and Knowledge Management. Through sustained visionary and dynamic leadership, management and team work underpinned by a strong value and culture practice, we will ensure that this directorate supports the efforts of creating a healthy nation.

MISSION OF IKM

To provide **Strategic and operational services in informatics and knowledge management for the achievement of MRC's strategic objectives. We are a strategic partner within the MRC to catapult to a world leader in Informatics and Knowledge Management in creating a healthy nation. This mission will be achieved by implementing the following tasks and programmes:**

- Undertake research and development in informatics and knowledge management
- Research and investigate tools and media for effective information acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination
- Ensure that IKM techniques are effectively deployed within the MRC
- Developing a learning organisation through capacity building in IKM (within IKM and MRC)
- Become self-sustaining – internally and externally
- Be a strategic partner influencing strategy and policy

CULTURE

The Informatics and Knowledge Management Directorate embraces the following culture dimensions:

- **Learning , transformation and capacity building**

Including mentorship, allowing learning from mistakes, a different approach to risk-taking and mistakes, active pursuit of new knowledge

- **Information and knowledge sharing**

Create a consistent, transparent and dialogue-driven culture across divisions. Share knowledge to strengthen the directorate.

- **Teamwork**

Including exchange of the leadership process; recognition and reward for teamwork and recognitions for individual achievement work

- **Professionalism**

Including discipline and preparation and information sourcing and meeting deadlines and high standards of preparation

- **Entrepreneurship**

A business approach and strive for self sustenance and effective resource management

I KM ISSUES

- Need to clarify the role and potential role of IKM within the organisation
- Role of IKM in relation to external MRC units and the general public, as well as within the MRC
- Relationship between IKM and key external stakeholders of the MRC (government, department of Health, department of Science and Technology, department of Communication)
- Require buy-in from outside IKM within MRC in order to succeed
- Creation of IKM alignment with MRC strategic plan and objectives.
- Identify IKM roles in relation to this, e.g. leveraging technology and knowledge management to support business transformation, to support capacity development (in communities, other institutions, etc), and to find solutions which will work in under-resourced areas

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Limited financial and human resources
- Dedicated, committed and highly-skilled people
- Increase staff turnover due to contracting, conditions of service, new opportunities
- Create a learning organisation environment
- Create a corporate culture aligned to change and transformation
- Opportunities for acquiring learnerships which will reduce pressure on resources
- Maintaining transformation while ensuring high performance standards
- Remaining consistently relevant consistently
- Implementing strategy, processes and policies in order to achieve flow
- Building an effective teams within IKM
- Obtaining top management buy-in for achieving IKM strategic objectives

MRC IKM STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1: Positioning IKM strategically to enhance policy making, planning and implementation within the MRC.

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	RESOURCES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
Develop IKM strategic and policy document Discuss IKM strategic document with stakeholders in the MRC (i.e. positioning and marketing)	Strategic document Plan (for positioning and marketing)	 Project plan Leadership Time Discussion forum	Done Ongoing	Executive and Heads of Division Executive and Heads of Divisions
Marketing, promotion and relaunching of IKM around the strategic and policy document	IKM brochure	Corporate communication; Time, personnel and budget; IT infrastructure	Ongoing	Executive and Heads of Divisions
Create leadership presence, strong articulation of vision, mission and goals, and effective communication within and outside the directorate. (Ensure visibility of IKM leadership)	Positive feedback from the stakeholders. Positive image. Communication processes.	Time Personnel Corporate communication support ?? marketing consultant input	Ongoing	Executive and Heads of Divisions

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2: Develop an e-Health Research Strategy

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	RESOURCES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
Realign research activity to include e-health research	e-Health Research projects	Budget	ongoing	Executive and Heads of Divisions
Focus on Consumer Health Informatics	WMTD and ISD to conduct research and provide services within Consumer Health Informatics context	Personnel time	Ongoing	WMTD and ISD
Develop, grow and retain skills in Consumer Health Informatics and e-Health Research	Train more staff in Consumer Health Informatics and e-Health Research	Budget Recruit staff and Interns	Ongoing	Executive and Division heads
Establish learnerships in areas of IKMD expertise	Capacity development Income	Internship Training	Ongoing	Division heads

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 3: Provide expert services in Informatics and Knowledge Management within and outside the MRC.

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	RESOURCES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
Conduct a skills audit within IKM to determine expert capacity	IKM skills inventory	HR Budget	Ongoing	BIRD
Package and market expert capabilities internally and externally	Include into the general marketing for the IKM Marketing profile of IKM skills	personnel	Ongoing	Executive and Division Managers
Develop expert services aligned to MRC and other stakeholder needs	Contracts to provide services Gap analysis between skills and stakeholder needs	personnel		Executive and Heads of Divisions

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 4: Develop unique organisational capacity in health informatics (including medical informatics and bioinformatics Consumer Health Informatics)

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	RESOURCES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
Develop a training programme for personnel within and outside IKM	Capacity development plan	Budget Personnel	Ongoing	Divisional heads,
Identify institutions	Inventory of relevant providers			Heads of Division
Mentoring and coaching programme to fast-track learning of young people	Learnerships Coaching and mentoring programmes High level of competencies	Budget Time personnel	Ongoing	Heads of Division
Recruit new skills and create new capacity	New skills		Ongoing	Executive Manager

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 5: Develop and implement world class value-adding customer and key stakeholder services, processes and strategies

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	RESOURCES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
Customer service survey Link with MRC survey Could include external stakeholders	Survey Report	Budget and Resources	Ongoing	ISD, HIRD, BIRD
Benchmark IKM services and service levels against ... <i>Similar organisations locally and internationally</i>	Benchmarks for IKM services	Personnel, Time	Ongoing	Executive and Heads of Divisions
Establish best practice and standards for services	Standards and guidelines for best practice	Personnel Time	Ongoing	Executive and Heads of Division
Implement peer review mechanisms	Recommendations on standards and deviations	Budget	Ongoing	Executive and Division heads
Create technical infrastructure for IKM	Stable technical infrastructure for IKM	Time Personnel Budget	Ongoing	BIRD and MIKSD
Develop and implement an online information desk and developing a web presence for frequently asked question	Collaborative effort with corporate communication Effective interface with the public Effective routing of queries to the MRC Online directory of services Automated call handling process, in the longer term Note the need to protect IP	Corporate communication; Research administration; Other MRC directorates; Appropriate web server; 0800 number	Done Ongoing	ISD

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 6: Undertake relevant IKM research in collaboration in collaboration with other research organisations to address RSA and African health problems

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 8: Change and transformation

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	RESOURCES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
Collaborate with African organisations	Projects	Budget	Ongoing	Executive and Heads of Divisions

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 9: Undertake relevant IKM research in collaboration with other research organisations to address RSA and African health problems

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	RESOURCES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
Collaborate with National and International organisations	Projects	Budget	Ongoing	Executive and Heads of Divisions