

## GOING TOGETHER:

## ADVANCING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION MANAGEMENT IN SADC

- Tuesday, 8 September 2026
- 08h15 – 12h15
- NH Hotel Johannesburg Sandton, South Africa

### Overview:

- “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” This African proverb captures the spirit of this pre-conference workshop - an interactive, solutions-driven platform designed to strengthen research innovation and management ecosystems across the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Across Africa, disparities in research capacity persist, particularly among low-resourced universities and emerging research institutions. While some institutions have established robust Research Offices (ROs) and Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs), many continue to face systemic challenges in building sustainable research support systems. This workshop addresses that gap by fostering collaboration among established institutions, experienced research management professionals, and regional research innovation and management associations.

Participants will explore how to leverage collective expertise, institutional partnerships, and existing frameworks to accelerate the development of ROs and TTOs. Drawing on practical tools such as the SARIMA Handbooks, the Declaration of PAN-RIMAs, International Professional Recognition processes such as the IPRC and RTTP processes, the Botswana Statement on Global Challenges, Research, Innovation and Impact: A Research Management Perspective, etc., the workshop will provide actionable guidance tailored to the African context.

Through case studies, peer learning, and facilitated group work, attendees will co-develop strategies to strengthen governance, build research management capacities, enhance research uptake, and promote innovation ecosystems..

### Outcome:

- Practical frameworks for establishing ROs and TTOs
- Increased awareness of key tools, associations, and resources (SARIMA Handbooks, PAN-RIMAs Declaration, IPRC, and related processes)
- Strengthened regional networks and partnerships
- Institutional action plans tailored to participant context

### DRAFT Programme Layout:

#### 1. Welcome and Introduction (15 min)

- Workshop objectives and expected outcomes
- Framing the proverb: “Going together” as a strategy for research system strengthening in SADC and Africa

#### 2. The African Research Management Landscape (45 min)

- Overview of research and innovation ecosystems in SADC
- Key challenges for low-resourced institutions
- Role of regional bodies such as the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association
- Insights from the Declaration of PAN-RIMAs

Interactive component: Participant mapping of institutional strengths, gaps and priorities **AI for Grant Writing and Proposal**

### 3. Building Functional Research Offices (45 min)

- Core components of an effective Research Office
- Grants management, research outputs, governance, compliance, and research integrity systems
- Using the SARIMA Handbooks as implementation guides
- Staffing models and capacity development pathways

#### Case Study Discussion:

- Emerging vs. established institutions in SADC/Africa

#### Tea/Coffee Break

### 4. Establishing and Strengthening Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) (50 min)

- Introduction to Technology Transfer and Innovation Management
- Translating research into impact: pathways and partnerships
- Aligning with the Botswana Statement on Global Challenges, Research, Innovation and Impact

#### Interactive Exercise:

- Designing a basic TTO model for a low-resourced institution

### 5. Professionalisation, Partnerships, Networks, and Collective Action (40 min)

- Leveraging networks and communities of practice
- The role of PAN-RIMAs in Africa
- The role of Professional Recognition: IPRC & RTTP processes
- Building equitable partnerships between institutions
- Resource-sharing models and mentorship frameworks

#### Group Activity:

- Co-developing regional support mechanisms for SADC institutions

### 6. Action Planning and Way Forward (30 min)

- Institutional action planning
- Identifying quick wins vs. long-term goals
- Commitments to collaboration and follow-up mechanisms

### 7. Closing Reflections:

- Reconnecting to the proverb: sustaining momentum through collaboration