



**Network for Education &
Multidisciplinary Research Africa
(NEMRA)**

HANDOVER REPORT

**PROF. STELLA NEEMA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD (2020-2023)**

To

**DR MARTIN ONGOL
CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD (2023-2026)**

JULY 2023

Message of the inaugural Chairperson of the Board (2020-2023)



Prof. Stella Neema
NEMRA, BoD Chairperson
2020 - 2023

The Board of Trustees, the outgoing Board of Directors, the incoming Board of Directors, NEMRA's Technical Advisors, the Executive Committee, NEMRA members, our partners and the entire research community interested in research for and about Africa.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the opportunity I was given to lead the first elected NEMRA Board of Directors. I thank the NEMRA members who put their trust in me. I thank the founders for their approval. I thank my teammates on the NEMRA advisory team for their support. I am deeply grateful to the members of the Board who sacrificially and faithfully served with me for a full 3-year tenure. I thank the Executive Committee who assisted us in the operational implementation of the NEMRA mission. And finally, I thank the host of NEMRA partners and collaborators who have stood with us along this journey.

The 2020-2023 Board of Directors achieved three main milestones: (i) Shaping the strategic direction of NEMRA, (ii) Streamlining operational policies and guidelines, (iii) Defining NEMRA's Governance Structure. We trust that this provides the incoming Board of Directors with a foundation on which to continue building NEMRA to its desired vision.

We have provided various documents as reference points for the various aspects communicated in this report. They are a guiding point for the decisions the incoming Board will be making in the next three years.

The narrative about the research landscape in Africa is getting better. The continent is making great strides economically, politically, socially etc. The future for us and the generations to come looks promising. I am honored to be part of the process that is shaping this narrative through a pursuit of the NEMRA vision.

I wish unprecedented fruitfulness to the incoming Chairperson of the Board of Directors and his team. May NEMRA be blessed and multiply.

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1.0 Introduction

The handover report from the Chairperson of the Network for education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA) Board of Directors (BoD) was prepared at the end of the 3-year term of NEMRA's inaugural BoD which assumed office through the General Election in July 2020. It will be presented to the incoming Chairperson of the BoD running 2023-2026 at the official handover ceremony.

1.1 Objectives of the report

The objectives of the report are to:

- i. Communicate the vision, mission, and the strategic position/direction of NEMRA to the incoming BoDs
- ii. Inform the Chairperson of next session and his/her team about all matters pertaining to the management of NEMRA as an inter-institutional research organization.
- iii. Assists the Chairperson of next session and his/her team in preparing to move forward processes that the inaugural BoD started by outlining major achievements of the 2020-2023 BoDs and mandates that require follow-up action by the Chairperson-elect during the new session.
- iv. Outline best practices and lessons learned from the current session.
- v. Contributes to a smooth transition from one session to the next.
- vi. Document institutional memory of the work of the inaugural BoD Chairperson, her Vice and the team of BoD representatives she served with.

1.2 Composition of the 2020-2023 Board of Directors

7 Members

Prof. Stella Neema – Chairperson
Dr. Medard Twinamatsiko – Vice Chairperson
Prof. Kukunda Elizabeth Bacwayo – Academic Institutions Representative
Mr. Arthur Makara – Government Institutions Representative.
Dr. Christine Mwebesa – Finance Director
Mr. Patrick Mutabwire – PhD students' representative
Ms. Jacqueline Nassimbwa – Business/Civil Society Representative

3 Ex-Officials

Dr. Robert Kakuru – Company Secretary
Dr. Loice Natukunda – Board of Trustees Representative
Dr. Juliet Kyayesimire – Managing Director.

1.3 The mandate of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors was mandated to:

- i. Provide oversight and general management of the strategic direction of NEMRA
- ii. To preside over the Management of NEMRA programmes in accordance with Articles and Memorandum of Association.
- iii. Develop and establish policies for an effective and efficient governance system.
- iv. Recruit and supervise the Managing Director as well as the Executive team who run the day-to-day activities of the network.
- v. Mobilise, acquire, control, and protect NEMRA's resources including partnership relationships and collaborators.

The mandate of the various representatives on the BoD is outlined in the NEMRA manual annexed on this report

2.0 The strategic direction and status

The 2020-2023 BoD developed NEMRA's 5-year strategic plan basing on the analysis that the network's founders made in the year 2018 concerning research capacity building, research, and research products utilisation in Africa. The summary of their analysis is presented below together with the vision, mission and objectives that were consequently set to respond to the then prevailing circumstances.

2.1 The 2018 contextual analysis

- i. The fragmented efforts to teach, carryout, manage and utilise academic research were yielding very little returns on investments made. Obtaining synergetic outcomes through inter-institutional and multidisciplinary networking was envisioned as a strategy for neutralising the negative effects of working in silos to produce relevant research and make it available to users.
- ii. Postgraduate schools were looking for ways to boost completion rates of their research students. NEMRA was formed to contribute to processes that accelerate this.
- iii. Universities in Africa were (and to some extent still are) heavily inclined to teaching. Although teaching is key, research is a core function of any university and NEMRA was formed for peer inspiration and support across universities to be more involved in research and enhance a research culture among academics.
- iv. The quality of postgraduate research programming, coordination, training, supervision management and output could be improved to provide research students a more conducive environment to pursue their masters and PhD research programs.

2.2 The vision, mission, and objectives

"NEMRA envisages a wide and well-resourced network of academic researchers and practitioners advancing a culture of intellectually generated evidence-based policy and practice in Africa". Its mission is to demystify the issues around doing academic research, develop insights across a wide array of disciplines, share ideas and develop networks in the process of providing solutions to societal problems through research and postgraduate education.

NEMRA has five strategic objectives that are coherently linked to each other to achieve the ultimate purpose of this network.

- i. To provide a platform for an inter-university research related collaboration, networking and mutual support among academic researchers, postgraduate students, and practitioners.
- ii. To offer complementary services to institutions and schools of postgraduate studies around research capacity building thereby increasing completion rates of postgraduate students and enhance the research culture among academics.
- iii. To produce relevant, high quality academic research outputs for policy and decision making at every level of society on the continent.
- iv. To build a research data and information infrastructure to manage and support the dissemination and enhanced availability of academic research outputs to users.
- v. To mobilise resources, institutional and individual membership for acceleration of attainment of NEMRA's Vision.

2.3 2020-2024 Strategic actions and status

The 2020-2024 strategic actions have been pursued through 3 departments of the Executive. These are:

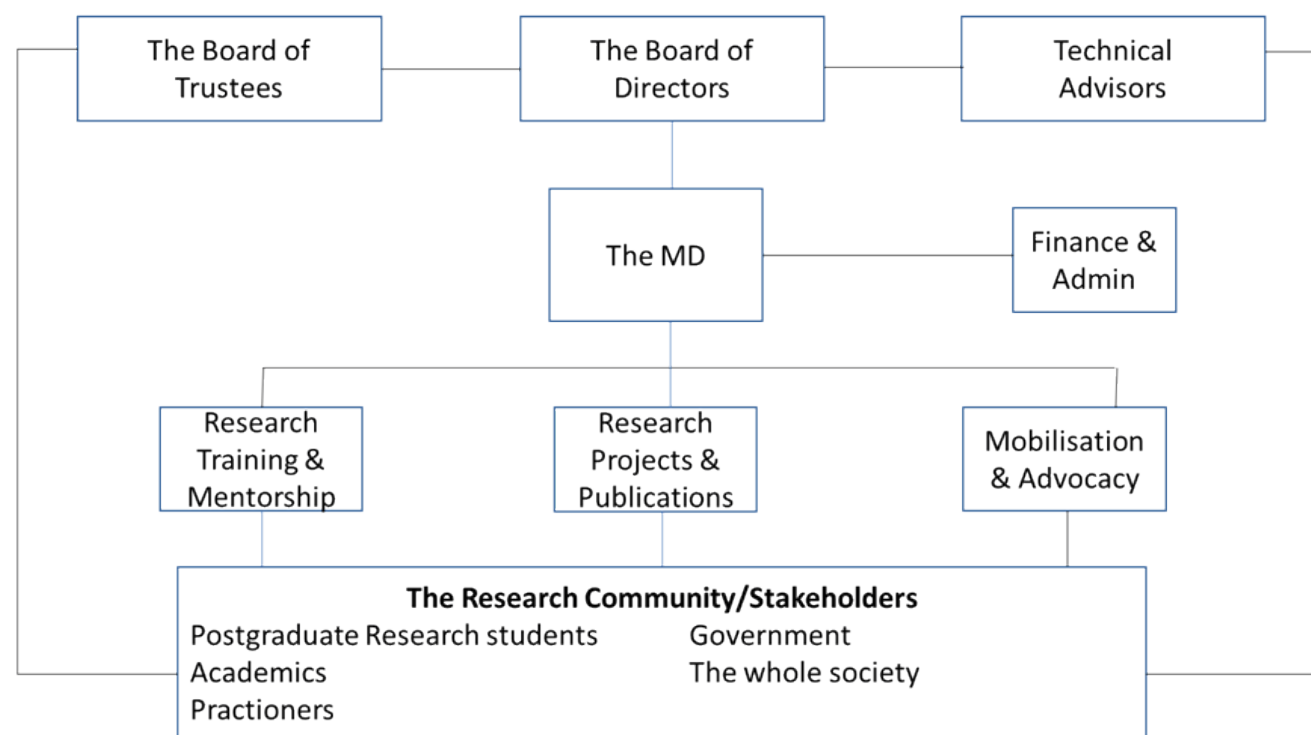
- i. Training and Mentorship: Offering complementary services to schools of postgraduate studies around research capacity building and mentorship thereby increasing completion rates of postgraduate students, enhance the research culture among academics and build an intellectual group of scholars.
- ii. Mobilisation and advocacy: Providing a platform for an inter-university research related collaboration and networking among academic researchers, postgraduate students, and practitioners as well as mobilising, institutional and individual membership for acceleration of NEMRA's vision through publicity and advocacy
- iii. Research projects and publications: Producing relevant, high quality academic research outputs for policy and decision making at every level of society on the continent; and 2) Disseminating and enhancing availability of academic research outputs to users.

A technical report from the MD and financial report are annexed on this report to indicate the 2023 status. (Please see annex 3 & 4)

3.0 The management structure

NEMRA operates under the following management structure.

The NEMRA Organogram



The Board of Trustees (BoTs) constitutes the founding members of NEMRA. The BoDs is elected by the members at the General Assembly. Technical advisors are nominated by the Board of Trustees to advise on matters concerning a) Research and publications, b) Resources mobilization and c) Legal affairs. The Executive is appointed by the BoDs to execute the day-to-day running of the network under the leadership of the Managing Director.

The Board of Trustees include:

- i. Prof. John Mugisha – Chairperson
- ii. Prof. Doris Kakuru
- iii. Assoc Prof. Mesharch Katusiime
- iv. Dr. Loice Natukunda
- v. Dr. Dick Kamuganga
- vi. Dr. Sazir Mayanja
- vii. Dr. Christine Mwebesa

The technical advisors for NEMRA are:

- i. Prof. Stella Neema – Research and publications
- ii. Prof. William Bazeyo – Resources Mobilisation
- iii. Ms. Mercy Kinobwiso – Legal affairs.

The Executive include:

- i. Dr. Juliet Kyayesimira – MD
- ii. Dr. Gad Ruzaaza – Coordinator Training and mentorship
- iii. Ms. Nagawa Goretty – Coordinator Research projects and publication
- iv. Ms. Hadijah Yahay – Coordinator mobilization and advocacy
- v. Mr. Vincent Ssekitoleko – Coordinator Finance and administration

4.0 History and Achievements of NEMRA

4.1 3 stages of NEMRA's journey

NEMRA was initiated in September 2018 in response to issues noted in section 2.1 above. The network has since made significant strides in tackling these issues as evidenced in the technical reports attached herewith.

Figure 1 below summarizes the journey so far in three stages, the start year, exponential growth, and governance years. The start year included milestones like official registration of the network and opening of the bank account. The day-to-day operation were managed by handpicked volunteers under unstructured operations. NEMRA experienced exponential growth in the period 2019-2020. The current stage has involved streamlining various governance issues as indicated in the achievements of the 2020-2023 BoDs.

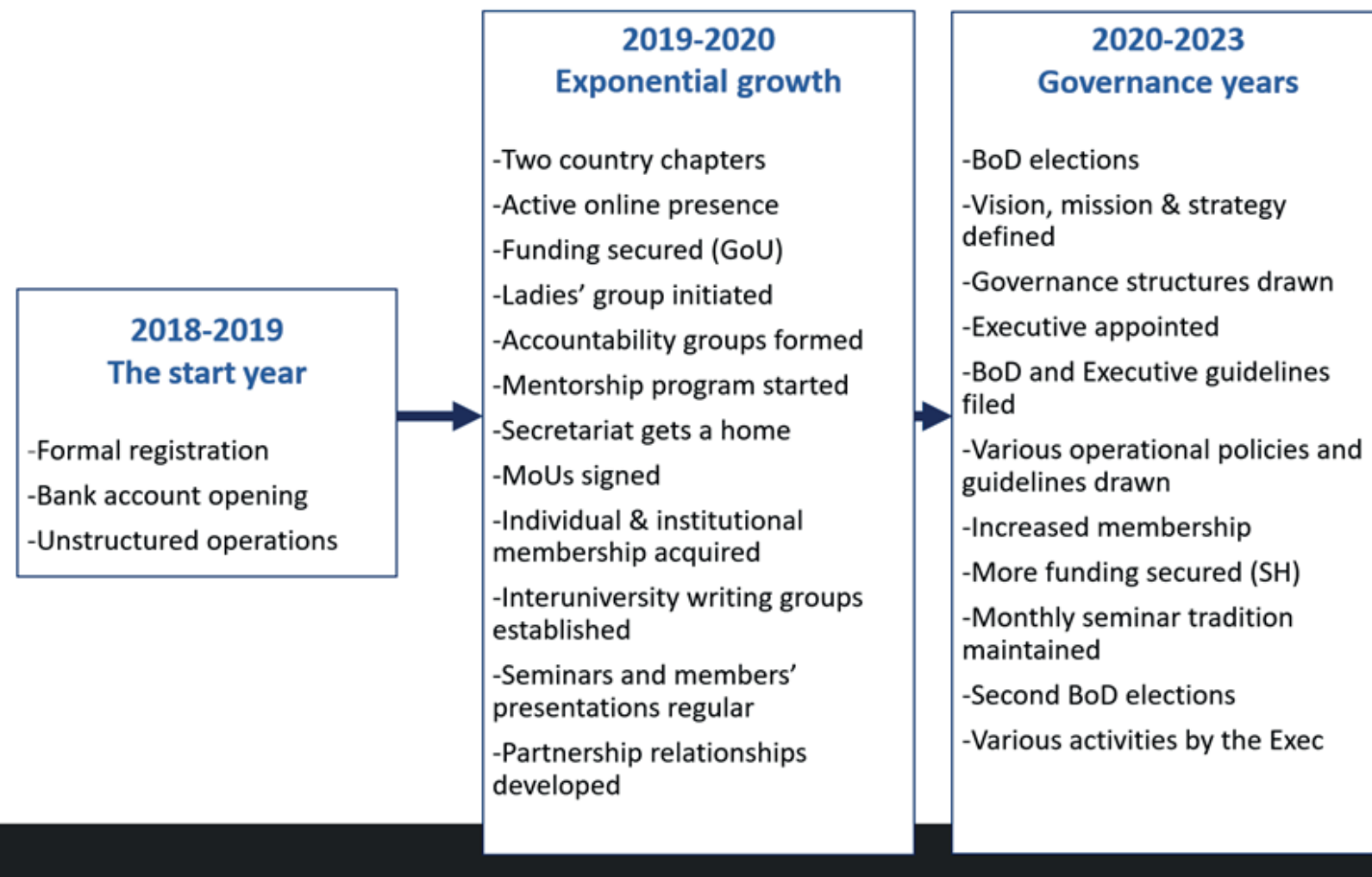


Figure 1: 3 Stages of NEMRA's Journey

4.2 The 2020-2023 BoD Achievements

The 2020-2023 BoD has streamlined three important aspects of NEMRA as an organization:

- i. The strategic direction
- ii. The operational procedures and guidelines
- iii. Governance structures.

Milestone 1: The Strategic Plan

The BoD drew the current strategic plan for NEMRA with 3 core areas of focus i.e. i) Researcher training, mentorship and development, ii) Research projects and publications and iii) Mobilisation and advocacy. The strategic and operational actions have been centered around these three areas.

Milestone 2: The operational procedures and guidelines

The BoDs developed policy guidelines for the smooth running of the network. These have been documented and annexed on this report. (Please see the NEMRA operational manual annexed)

Milestone 3: Governance structures

The BoD drew the Governance structure of nemra and defined the distinctive role of each component of the organogram. The achievements above are summarised in the figure below.

The 2020-2023 BoD milestones

Strategy

Operations

Governance



"Excellent Research for societal wellbeing"

Strategic PLAN 2020-2024

NEMRA OPERATIONAL MANUAL



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1. INTRODUCTION

NEMRA Establishment and Role
Vision, Mission, core values and philosophy
Purpose of the manual
Scope
Applicability of the manual
Approval

2. MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

The Board of Trustees
The Board of Directors
The Technical Advisors
The Executive Committee
Subscribed members

3. HUMAN RESOURCE

Management of the Human Resources
Recruitment and appointment
Staff Development
Remuneration
Discipline and grievances handling

4. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Training and mentorship
Training policy
Mentorship guidelines
Research projects and publication
Research agenda
NEMRA grants
NEMRA research projects
Dissemination
Mobilisation and advocacy
NEMRA representation
Finance and Administration

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

APPENDICES

The NEMRA Organogram

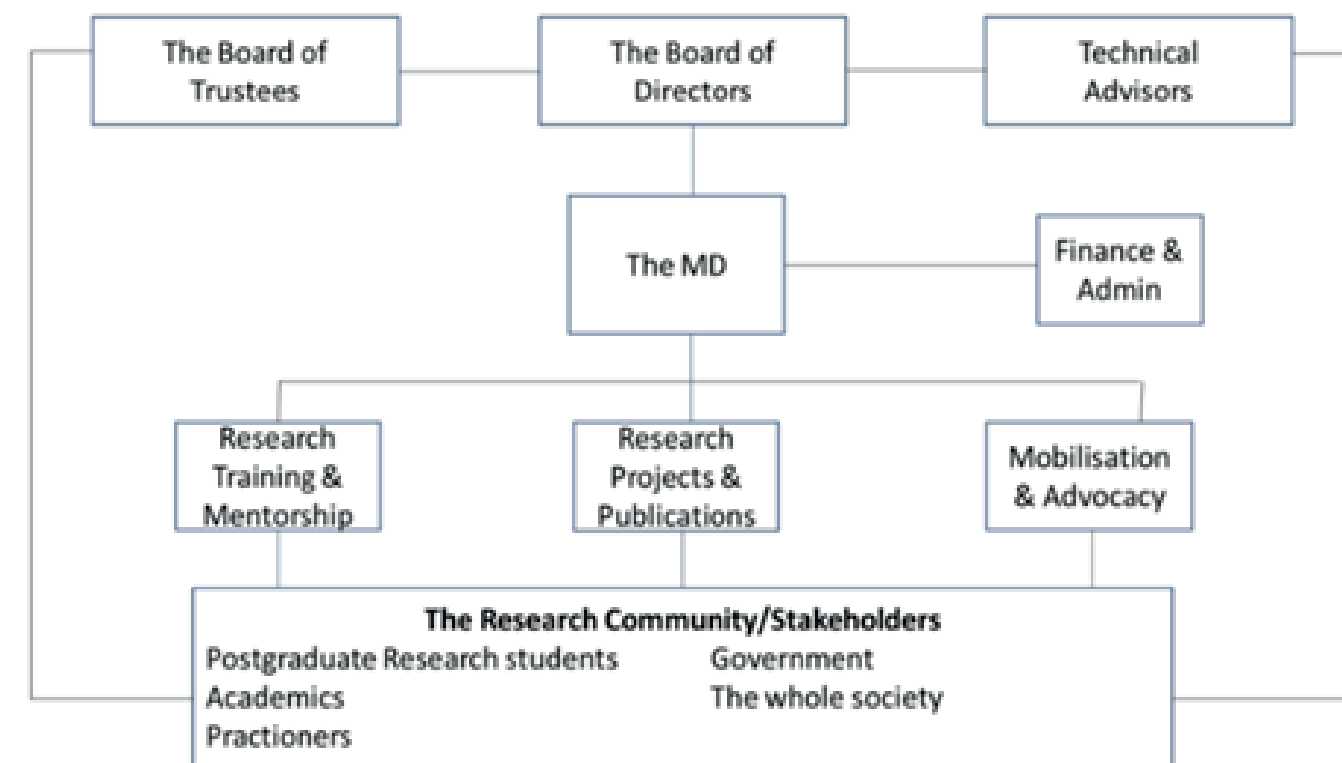


Figure 2: The 2020-2023 BoD achievements

5.0 Subcommittees of the BoD

5.1 The appointments committee

The NEMRA appointments committee is the BoD's subcommittee that assists the Chairperson to appoint and appraise the Executive Committee.

5.2 The finance committee

The finance committee is the BoD's subcommittee that assists the Finance Director in matters concerning of finances acquisition and utilisation.

6.0 Partnerships

The (2020-2023) Board has established partnerships that are willing to move forward with the incoming BoDs to achieve the intents of the collaborative programs. These are:

- **NEMRA/UNCST partnership to:** (a) Enhancement of mutual understanding, creation of a cordial relationship between researchers/research organisations and the UNCST, (b) Enhance research capacity building for research management and administration, (c) Enrich collaboration and knowledge sharing between research institutes, HEIs and the private sector, (d) Manage quality assurance and auditing of field activities for research in the Humanities and Social Sciences and (e) Advance dissemination of research through technical and/or policy briefs, newsletter series, a peer reviewed journal and other publication outlets.
- **NEMRA/NPA Partnership to:** (a) Map out the technical requirements for a database of research expertise and research output in Uganda, (b) Develop and implement a digital National Researchers' platform to host and share research expertise and research outputs in Uganda, (c) To gather and analyse data of researchers' profiles and research outputs, (d) facilitate capacity development for maintenance and the utilisation of the National Researchers' platform, (e) Do joint proposal development and resources mobilisation for collaborative projects, (f) Partner in monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance of research undertakings and projects in the country.
- **NEMRA/Academics Without Borders Partnership** to develop and deliver a training of trainers' program for developing various research skills among early career researchers in Uganda.
- **NEMRA/ South East Technological University Ireland (SETU) partnership.** NEMRA is in a partnership relationship with SETU as an institutional member.
- **NEMRA/The University of Lincoln (UoL) partnership.** NEMRA is in discussion with the UoL for partnership for possibilities around academic mobility and exchange among UoL staff and the network members.

The finance committee is the BoD's subcommittee that assists the Finance Director in matters concerning of finances acquisition and utilisation.

Wishing you all and NEMRA a fruitful 3 years ahead and more.



**Network for Education &
Multidisciplinary Research Africa
(NEMRA)**

HANDOVER REPORT

BY

**DR. CHRISTINE CHARITY MWEBESA
FINANCE DIRECTOR ON THE BOARD (2020 - 2023)**

JULY 2023

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2.2 Functions of the Finance Sub-Committee

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5.0 Challenges encountered

6.0 Lesson learnt

7.0 Roadmap for the Incoming Finance Director and Team

8.0 Conclusion

Appendix I The Audit Report 2021-2022

1.0 Introduction

The Network for Education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA) was founded in 2018 with the main purpose of making research easy and enjoyable for postgraduate students. However, as the idea took shape it became clear that the need was broader requiring to include also early career researchers, research supervisors, and already established researchers both in the academe and practice. This shaped the vital foundation upon which NEMRA was formed informing the objectives, mission, vision, values, and ultimately the key structural components of the Network. This handover report, therefore, provides the functions of the Finance Director on the Board, the formation and functions of the Finance Sub-Committee, Achievements, a summary of the Audit Report, challenges encountered, lessons learnt, and the Road map to the incoming team.

2.0 Functions of Finance Director

The Network for Education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA) was founded in 2018 with the main purpose of making research easy and enjoyable for postgraduate students. However, as the idea took shape it became clear that the need was broader requiring to include also early career researchers, research supervisors, and already established researchers both in the academe and practice. This shaped the vital foundation upon which NEMRA was formed informing the objectives, mission, vision, values, and ultimately the key structural components of the Network. This handover report, therefore, provides the functions of the Finance Director on the Board, the formation and functions of the Finance Sub-Committee, Achievements, a summary of the Audit Report, challenges encountered, lessons learnt, and the Road map to the incoming team.

Financial strategy

The periodic Financial Strategy shall be stipulated in the five-year strategic plan. The Executive Committee shall, with the leadership of the Finance Director and supervision of the Board chair, draw an annual financial strategy including fundraising and the budget. The strategy shall be communicated to the Board.

Financial Reporting

The Finance and Administration coordinator shall provide monthly financial reports to the Managing Director for presentation to the Board at the quarterly Board meeting. The annual financial reports shall be presented to the members at the AGM by the Finance Director on the Board.

NEMRA Assets and properties

Procurement of assets and supplies.

Requisitions for procurement of supplies shall be submitted to the Managing Director and approved by Chair- Board of Directors and the Finance Director representative on the Board. Procurement of supplies shall be undertaken by the Coordinator Finance and Administration.

Custody of NEMRA assets

The Coordinator Finance and Administration shall be in charge of custody of NEMRA assets at the network's premises.

Petty cash

The coordinator Finance and Administration shall submit requisition for petty cash through the MD for approval by the Chair Board of Directors and Finance Director on a quarterly basis.

NEMRA fees and payment

The Board shall determine the membership fees from time to time. Fees to NEMRA activities, e.g. training programmes shall be determined by the respective coordinator and approved by the Board. The Coordinator Finance and Administrator shall collect and receipt all forms of fees paid into NEMRA bank account and/or through Mobile Money Transfer.

2.1 The Formation and Function of the Finance Sub-Committee

The Finance Sub-Committee was formed by the resolution of the Board. It comprised three members; FD, Ms. Jackie Nassimbwa and Mr. Patrick Mutabwire who were all members of the Board. The sole responsibility of this Sub-Committee is to ensure that the Network is operating with the financial resources it needs to provide programs and services to the community.

2.2 Functions of the Finance Sub-Committee

The functions of this sub-committee are:

- The Committee holds a meeting at least two weeks before the Board meeting (unless it is a special meeting) so as to furnish the Board with up-to-end financial information.
- The Committee from time to time, may convene for planning meetings and training.
- The Committee members will be asked to attend special events and assist in the sourcing of donors and friends for the Network.
- Ensure that accurate and complete financial records are maintained
- Monitor income and expenditures against projections
- Review and recommend financial policies to the board, including ensuring adequate internal controls and maintaining financial records in accordance with standard accounting practices.
- Ensure that accurate, timely, and meaningful financial statements are prepared and presented to the board
- Present monthly financial statements to the board
- Propose for board approval a budget that reflects the organization's goals and board policies
- Safeguard the organization's assets

3.0 Achievements

NEMRA has achieved a number of milestones since its inception. The first achievement was qualifying for the Makerere Research Innovation Fund (Mak RIF II) worth Shs. 150,000,000/- in 2020 to the project of establishing an interuniversity research and innovation community of the early career researchers in Uganda (IRIC-ECRU). Finance directorate together with the Executive Committee managed the fund to its final conclusion by facilitating 7 seminars and 3 co-creation workshops.

Another Achievement was the successful lobbying of Shs. 300,000,000/- to the President of the republic of Uganda of which Shs. 50,000,000/- was released in June 2023 with the promise of clearing the balance in the FY 2023/2024.

With the help of the Board, the Executive Committee has negotiated with various Government Agencies including NPA and UNCST to partner with NEMRA hence some MOUs have been signed. This is an achievement which not only puts NEMRA into its mandate but also opens up collaborations for sustainability of the Network.

4.0 Summary of the Audit Report 2021 & 2022

With the guidance of the Board, Auditors' service was sought by putting a call and three companies expressed interest with one emerging the winner. JP Partners was brought on Board and an Audit for the period of 20/21 and 21/22 was conducted. The Report is attached as Appendix 1.

5.0 Challenges encountered

1. Due to lack of funds the Executive's honoraria has never been paid and there was no facilitation for the Board.
2. Governance – this is work in progress
3. Higher expectation of the network members with less commitment to subscription
4. Inconsistent subscription
5. Limited resources (both human and financial)
6. Short period of RIF and stringent government conditions of Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets (lengthy process of procurement) could not fit in the one year hence we lost the opportunity of acquiring the assets. The Network was only able to get Shs. 70m which according to the budget was meant to be cash payment and the rest of Shs. 80m was meant to cover the assets.

7. Whereas NEMRA has been gifted with many great brains and willing hearts, there has been few hands.

6.0 Lesson learnt

During the three years I learnt a lot:

1. Passion is important but without the right resources it cannot do much.
2. It is one thing to plan and another to implement and the processes of both is very important.
3. All little contributions should be recognized and celebrated.
4. The interdepartmental linkages are as critical as the individual departmental functions.
5. Consultation and Communication are nuggets to the success of the Network.
6. The strength of the Network can actually be its weakness (regardless of how knowledgeable I am, humility is key).
7. There is no end to learning.

7.0 Roadmap for the Incoming Finance Director and Team

Whereas there has been great progress and achievements, there is still a lot to work on for more excellent results:

1. Empowering and making the finance sub-committee more engaged in the day -to-day operations of the Network.
2. Developing strong policy on Financial Internal Controls.
3. Addressing all the recommendations made in the Auditors report.
4. Looking at more ways of expanding the scope of mobilizing funds for the network.
5. Having a policy that defines how future Boards will be remunerated.
6. Policy on resource mobilization and percentage sharing between the mobiliser and the network.

8.0 Conclusion

It has been a great honour to be part of NEMRA's birth and serving on its Inaugural Board for the past three years. The achievements made, lesson learnt and growing together can never be down played.

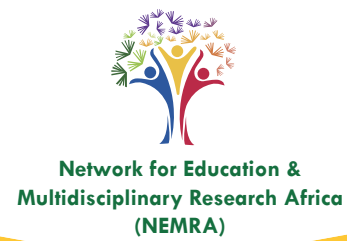
I pledge my continuous support because I am confident that NEMRA is going places and will definitely change the research landscape in Uganda and beyond.



Network for Education &
Multidisciplinary Research Africa
(NEMRA)

NEMRA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

JULY 2023



1.0 Introduction

NEMRA is a network of researchers from around the World who fall in the scope of postgraduate research students, early career researchers, senior academics and practitioners with the focus on strengthening and deepening multidisciplinary research in Africa. We provide a platform for inter-university networking and collaboration in interdisciplinary research capacity development among the members. NEMRA wants to develop capacity for quality postgraduate education especially for research capacity, productivity and impact in an environment of collegiality. The group operates as an independent not-for-profit network with a vision, mission and objectives as stipulated below:

1.1 Vision: NEMRA envisages a network of academic researchers advancing a culture of intellectually generated evidence-based policy and practice in Uganda and beyond.

1.2 Mission: To demystify the issues around doing academic research, develop insights across a wide array of disciplines, share ideas and develop networks in the process of providing solutions to societal problems through research.

1.3 The objectives:

- (1) To provide a platform for an interuniversity research related collaboration and networking among academic researchers, postgraduate students and practitioners.
- (2) To offer complementary services to schools of postgraduate studies in the area of research capacity building thereby increasing completion rates of postgraduate students, enhance the research culture among academics and build an intellectual group of scholars.
- (3) To produce relevant, high quality academic research outputs for policy and decision making at every level of society on the continent.
- (4) To disseminate and enhance availability of academic research outputs to users.

2.0 QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE PLANS FOR 2023

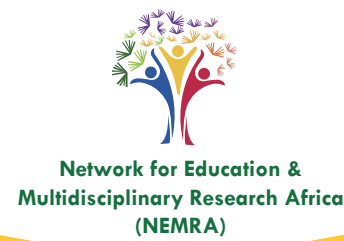
2.1 NEMRA Membership and Subscriptions

In the current quarter, NEMRA has maintained a membership count of 165 individuals. This includes 11 life members, 5 honorary members, 2 institutional members, and 139 individual members. In total, only 91 members are up-to-date.

2.2 Membership Relations and Engagements

NEMRA Certificates

During this quarter Q1 & Q2, all new and subscribed members have been issued their membership certificates. Additionally, participants in the Advanced Research Methods workshop received certificates signed by the workshop facilitator. To ensure a positive membership experience, an orientation session was conducted for new members, introducing them to NEMRA programs and encouraging active networking within the community.



Recognizing the importance of the initial 30 days for new members, efforts will continue to facilitate easy connections and collaboration through their Writing Accountability Groups (WAGs). A welcome information package for new members will also be prepared to enhance their integration into NEMRA.

Branding & Communication

The NEMRA website underwent a revamp, incorporating all social media platforms to enhance visibility. However, the web gateway is still being worked on to drive traffic to the website. Furthermore, plans are underway to explore online membership registration and subscription options, including the embedding of a payment system. Improvements are required on the website to facilitate online membership applications, registration, and payment processes, as well as membership renewal reminders. Efforts will be made to encourage more members to join NEMRA, and the website will be kept up to date with upcoming events. Content creation, such as short videos for the YouTube channel, will be a focus, and opportunities will be channeled through the website. The quarterly newsletter will serve as a consistent means of communication to promote benefits and highlight opportunities available to members.

2.3 NEMRA Programs

NEMRA recognizes the need to realign its programs to better meet the expectations and needs of its members. A membership survey will be conducted to gather feedback and assess the activities that have benefited members the most, along with suggestions for improvement. The following programs and activities are currently in place:

(1) Trainings & Capacity Building

- Monthly seminars
- Workshops
- Annual conference presentations
- Mock presentations

(2) Networking & Special Events

- New member orientation
- NEMRA Breakfast meeting
- NEMRA Anniversary celebration
- End of year party

(3) Peer-to-peer Engagements

- Mentorship engagements
- Writing Accountability Groups (WAGs). These writing groups will spear head project proposal writing.

We hope to redraw these based on the following thematic research areas: Urbanization and cities, Youth and livelihoods, Triple planetary crises, public health, Socio-economic resilience, and we will an option for other research areas identified by members.

2.4 NEMRA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The following persons were appointed as the NEMRA executive committee and have been serving for the last 2 years;

Name	Role
Dr Juliet Kyayesimira	Managing Director
Dr Gad Ruzaaza Ndaruhutse	Training and Mentorship Coordinator
Ms Nagawa Gorrety	Research and Publication Coordinator
Ms Hadijah Gorrety	Mobilisation & Advocacy Coordinator
Mr Vincent Ssekitoleko	Finance & Administration

2.5 Volunteer Support

The executive committee above volunteers and at time get overwhelmed with work.

So the Training and mentorship department selected a volunteer for this department and Ms Kyogabirwe Olive took on this role and has been working with the Coordinator Mr Gad Ruzaza. In quarter two (Q2) of 2023, four volunteers have joined the management team in the Research & Publication and Mobilization & Advocacy departments.

I) Research & Publication and Mobilization

- Mbabazi Sarah
- Mr Musinguzi Peter Kabaseke

II) Mobilization & Advocacy

- Mr Ruyendo Ruyendo
- Ms Helen Kirunda

NEMRA has initiated a needs assessment to identify potential volunteers for team project activities and management.

3.0 NEMRA -UNCST MoU

NEMRA has signed an MoU to tackle 5 research areas in collaboration with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology.

These are:

1. Enhancement of mutual understanding, and creation of a cordial relationship between researchers/research organisations and the UNCST
2. Research capacity building for research management and administration.
3. Collaboration and knowledge sharing between research institutes, HEIs and the private sector
4. Quality assurance and auditing of field activities for research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.
5. Dissemination of research through technical and/or policy briefs, newsletter series, a peer reviewed journal and other publication outlets.

4.0 Ongoing projects

UNCST & NEMRA collaboration birthed a research on the study 'STATUS OF RESEARCH MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN UGANDA'. The implementation of the project is ongoing and training the research assistants, pre-testing of the study tools was done. Samples to survey were selected from the database provided by UNCST. Work was allocated to the research assistants to embark on data collection. The data collection has been finalized and the study covered the entire country and especially in the selected HEI's and research organisations. The following research associates (NEMRA members) have been involved in data collections;

1. Helen Kirunda
2. Olive Kyogabirwe
3. Peter Musinguzi
4. Aisha Wastsembe
5. Sylvia Nabasumba
6. Angella Ahimbisibwe
7. Martin Muhereza

The data entry awaits more release of funds to facilitate this process and others ahead.

5.0 Challenges

The following challenges have been identified:

- (1) Access to quarterly bank statements: There is a need for regular access to quarterly bank statements to effectively monitor membership subscriptions paid directly to the bank.

Note: The audit process has been finalized and we hope to have the resolution to change signatories filed and hence effect the process of change of signatories.

- (2) Diversifying income sources: NEMRA aims to explore alternative options to diversify its income streams. This includes charging for seminars and workshops for all members, establishing an active NEMRA grants & projects team, fundraising, selling branded items to NEMRA members and well-wishers, and other income-generating options that align with the organization's mission.
- (3) Accumulated dues for the NEMRA executive who have for the last 2 years never received their quarterly appreciation payments.
- (4) Need a formalize engagement with the volunteers.

6.0 Future Plans:

- (1) Conduct a membership survey to gather feedback and align programs with member expectations.
- (2) Continue improving the website, including online membership registration and payment systems.
- (3) Increase content creation for the YouTube channel and maintain an updated website with upcoming events.
- (4) Implement the suggested thematic research areas for Writing Accountability Groups (WAGs) for project proposal writing
- (5) Conduct a needs assessment to identify more volunteers for project activities and management.
- (6) Seek solutions to challenges related to accessing bank statements and diversify income sources.
- (7) Fundraising for NEMRA

By addressing these challenges and implementing the future plans, NEMRA aims to enhance member engagement, provide valuable programs, and strengthen its organizational structure and financial sustainability.

Department	Services	Department Head	Contact details
Managing Director	Grants & Projects <i>Want to join a NEMRA team project?</i>	Dr. Juliet Kyayesimiira	kyajejue@gmail.com 0702557243
Finance & Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEMRA Membership and subscriptions • NEMRA Certificates • NEMRA programs • Want to Volunteer in any department? 	Mr. Vincent Ssekitoleko	Vincent.ssekitoleko@gmail.com 0754890118
Training & Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to participate in capacity building (seminar or workshop)? • Want a Mentor/ Mentee? 	Dr. Gad Ruzaaza Ms. Olive Kyogabiirwe	gruzaaza@must.ac.ug 0772621303 olive.mentor1@gmail.com 0779306831
Research and Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to have a mock presentation of your research? • Want to present in a NEMRA Conference? • Publications • Want to join a writing accountability group (WAGs). For project proposal writing as per the thematic areas. 	Ms. Goretty Nagawa Mr. Peter Kabaseke Musinguzi Ms. Sarah Mbabazi (WAGs Coordinator)	nmgoretty@gmail.com 0772641706 kabaseke2015@gmail.com 0782332561 msarah0704@gmail.com 0788920920
Mobilisation & Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website and social media issues • NEMRA news and community events • Advocacy and publicity 	Ms. Yahya Hadijah Ms. Helen Kirunda Mr. Rugyendo Arinitwe	hadijah51@yahoo.co.uk 0701642989 helen.kirunda@gmail.com 0756904040 rugyendo@gmail.com 0752466778

NEMRA 2023 Q2 TECHNICAL REPORT

Presented to the BoD meeting on 30th June 2023

Department	Q2-2023 activities	Planned activities for Q3-2023
Training and Mentorship	<p>April 2023: RESEARCH TRANSALTION: How to Newsify Research Outputs- A Case of ResearchFinds News (www.researchfindsug.com) By Mr Arinaitwe Ruyendo</p> <p>May 2023: 3 days Blended workshop on Advanced Research methods. By Dr Peter Samuels of Birmingham City University, UK</p> <p>June 2023: Opportunities for research, faculty and student mobility and collaboration: Global North and South Partnerships. By Dr David Rugara, University of Lincoln, UK and Dr Paul Agu Igwe, University of Lincoln, UK</p>	<p>Monthly seminars for Q3 will be planned as scheduled.</p>
	<p>To get a volunteer for Mentorship -Mentees program</p> <p>Project Academics Without Borders (AWB) and EASRN targeting building of academic writing communities among Early Career Researchers (ECRS).</p>	<p>To orient the volunteer to steer up for Mentorship Mentees program The workshop/seminar To help on February 2024. The project team currently drafting the modules.</p>
	<p>NEMRA-UNSCT project started and a team of Research associates from NEMRA completed data collection.</p>	<p>Data entry is pending and awaiting funds from UNCST</p>
Research projects and publications	<p>The department got 2 volunteers Mr Musinguzi Peter and Ms Sarah Mbabazi and they department has been holding meetings every fortnight. They are re-organizing the writing/ accountability groups.</p> <p>Submitted a proposal in response to IDRC call for proposal on Future works. NEMRA was the lead applicant and the PI-Prof Neema Stella (our chairperson Board). The proposal submitted was entitled 'LEVERAGING TVET AND GRADUATE TRAINING FOR SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE OF WORK IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA'</p>	<p>To group NEMRA into the different writing groups as per the research/ thematic areas of interest</p> <p>Inviting skilled persons to encourage the writing groups and give guiding tips</p>

Department	Q2-2023 activities	Planned activities for Q3-2023
	<p>Collaborators: University of Rwanda (Rwanda) and Mkwawa University College of Education (Tanzania) and University of Botswana (Botswana) and Chinhoyi University of Technology (Zimbabwe). NEMRA Writing team comprised Dr. Juliet Kyayesimira, Ms Jacqueline Nassimbwa, Dr Karlmax Rutaro, Asiimwe Joy.</p> <p>Team of NEMRA members were working on research proposal with prog Augustus Nuwagaba and submitted to SVRI Research Grant. The research was entitled 'Sexual Violence against the girl child: Analysis of the prevention and interventions programs in Uganda and Kenya.' NEMRA writing team consisted of; Dr Anicent Nyagoma, Dr Juliet Kyayesimira.</p> <p>One member presented her PhD work during this quarter.</p>	<p>Write more research projects as per NEMRA thematic areas.</p> <p>Encourage more PhD students to present their work.</p>
Mobilization and Advocacy	<p>NEMRA membership had increased but slowly and members only join during the monthly seminars</p> <p>Worked on branding materials for NEMRA including flyers, pull-up banners, teardrops etc</p> <p>The website was restored and more updates were added.</p>	<p>To follow up on the mobilization for HEI's partnerships plus other government institutions like NPA and others.</p> <p>Need to formalize the engagement of the person in charge of website by signing a contract.</p>
Finance and Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Coordinated and provided finances for NEMRA activities -Communication and Branding was continuously done by using NEMRA Logo in all our official communications for visibility. -Recorded monthly seminar sessions to be accessed on our YouTube but also were shared with the NEMRA official members. -Coordinated and supported the Audit process with JP partners and the process was finalized. -Coordinated website updates -Coordinated the certificates for NEMRA members for te May seminar with Dr Peter Samuels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on subscriptions for members and renewals -Lead efforts for working on more branding materials for NEMRA -Provide support and finances and coordinate audit. -Filing for NEMRA

Report from Nassimbwa Jacqueline, Business/ Civil Society Representative on the Board (2020-2023)

Introduction

This write up will support the report from the outgoing Chairperson of the Network for education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA) Board of Directors (BoD) who led a 3-year term from July 2020 to July 2023. The Chairperson's report will be presented to the incoming Chairperson of the BoD running 2023-2026 at the official handover ceremony.

I have prepared this write-up following the realization that this position, like others had no clearly defined, or assigned roles. With this write up, I aim to achieve three main objectives.

- i. Reflect on Civil Society and why research is relevant
- ii. To document how NEMRA can add value to civil society, and possible roles of the Board representative in this position
- iii. To share framework for research departments developed further

1. Defining Civil Society

This refers to all forms of social action conducted by groups or institutions that have no connections with the state. It includes organized actors or institutions, and organic groups that have presence in public life and act on behalf of the people. They vary by size, structure and platform ranging from international non-governmental organisations to small, local organisations. Below are examples of civil society actors. The list is extracted from here (p5).

- NGOs, CSOs and non-profit organisations that have an organised structure or activity, and are typically registered entities and groups
- Online groups and activities including social media communities that can be "organised" but do not necessarily have physical, legal or financial structures, such as the exhibition campaigns by Dr. Spire Sentongo

- Social movements of collective action and/or identity, which can be online or physical
- Religious leaders, faith communities, and faith-based organisations
- Labour unions and labour organisations representing workers
- Social entrepreneurs employing innovative and/or market-oriented approaches for social and environmental outcomes
- Grassroots associations and activities at local level, including old student associations
- Cooperatives societies
- Youth clubs
- Independent radio, television, print and electronic media
- Community-based organizations
- Academic and research institutions

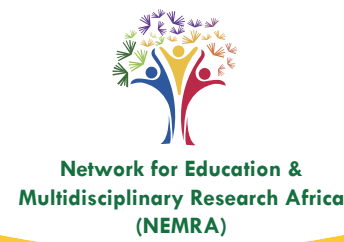
2. Role of civil society

- They are watch dogs to ensure that government respects, protects and fulfils human rights. They also play watch dog for each other, holding duty bearers and government actors accountable for human rights violations.
- They play an advocacy role, which includes raising awareness on pertinent issues, being a voice for vulnerable/ marginalized groups, and calling to action, among others.
- They are service providers, and complement government services in different sectors.

3. The civil society - research linkage

Civil society contributes to improving lives of the world's poorest, and is a key actor in the realization of the sustainable development agenda. To achieve this, they require well researched evidence to inform their interventions, innovations and/or life changing solutions. However, in some countries such as Uganda, research skills to, for example, design compelling advocacy plans are lacking. This is attributed to low budgets to attract skilled researchers. Poorly conducted research results in weak advocacy, member mobilization, and communication plans. Ultimately, policy engagements are less transformative (if at all) than intended.

Additionally, the institutions with experienced researchers such as those in academia and those outside academia have weak collaborative efforts with the implementers of the research.



4. NEMRA's value to civil society

The 2020-2024 strategic actions are three

- iv. Training and Mentorship: Offering complementary services to schools of postgraduate studies around research capacity building and mentorship thereby increasing completion rates of postgraduate students, enhance the research culture among academics and build an intellectual group of scholars.
- v. Mobilisation and advocacy: Providing a platform for an inter-university research related collaboration and networking among academic researchers, postgraduate students, and practitioners as well as mobilising, institutional and individual membership for acceleration of NEMRA's vision through publicity and advocacy
- vi. Research projects and publications: Producing relevant, high quality academic research outputs for policy and decision making at every level of society on the continent; and 2) Disseminating and enhancing availability of academic research outputs to users.

Through this strategic direction, NEMRA can add value to civil society through different avenues

- a. Strengthening capacity of civil society organizations to conduct research applicable to their cause. This includes, providing guidance on how to set up a research department, skills needed, soft and hard ware, etc.
- b. Strengthening capacity of resident researchers in organizations to conduct high quality research through mobilizing them to join NEMRA and participate in training and mentorship programs.
- c. NEMRA can collaborate with civil society actors to develop action research relevant to the needs of the organization.
- d. Planning and Implementing knowledge mobilization activities that include civil society actors who can translate the research to action. This would include co-creation activities where research findings are utilized to innovate, or to develop action plans. NEMRA researchers and civil society actors can also develop peer-reviewed articles together.

5. Suggested Roles of Board member

- a. Identifying opportunities to engage with civil society
- b. Challenging the Executive to engage with civil society. This can be enforced through a civil society engagement guide, the development of which can be influenced by the next BoD. This can be included in the NEMRA operational manual.
- c. Supporting the Executive to mobilize researchers from civil society to join NEMRA.

6. Framework developing a guideline for a research department

On two occasions, I was approached (as a researcher in the civil society space) to support persons on how they could develop research departments. I put together a framework that I shared with them. This still requires some work but can be developed further if found relevant..



Network for Education &
Multidisciplinary Research Africa
(NEMRA)

REPORT

By

Patrick Kyamukaate Mutabwire
Chairperson NEMRA Appointments Committee

7th July, 2021- December 2022

The Chairperson Board of Directors,
NEMRA

ASSESSMENT OF NEMRA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE

1.0 Introduction

The NEMRA Appointments Committee (NAC) was established during the 12.05.21 Board meeting to oversee the process of appointment of the Executive Committee for a 3 year term from July 2021-June 2024.

The Committee advertised, interviewed candidates on 04.06.2021 and NEMRA Board recruited the executive committee comprising five officials to the positions as indicated below;

Names	Institution	Highest Qualification	Position interviewed for
Dr. Juliet Kyayesimira	Kyambogo University	PhD in Biology	Managing Director
Dr. Gad Ruzaaza	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	PhD, Higher Education Management and Administration	Coordinator Training and Mentorship
Ms. Goretty Nagawa	Bishop Stuart University	MSc. Environmental Science	Coordinator Research Projects and Publications
Ms. Hadijah Yahyah	Kampala International University	LLM-Natural Resources	Coordinator Mobilization and Advocacy
Mr. Vincent Ssekiteleko	Mutesa I Royal University	BBA (Finance & Accounting)	Coordinator Finance and Administration

Candidate Results

Candidates		Dr. Juliet Kyayesimira	Dr. Gad Ruzaaza	Ms. Hadijah Yahyah	Ms. Goretty Nagawa	Mr. Vincent Sekitoleko
Position		MD	CT&M	CM&A	CR&P	CF&A
Assessment Criteria and points						
	Points/100					
Education Requirements	20	20	20	15	15	12
Understanding and Commitment to NEMRA	20	17.5	15.33	18.33	18.17	15.67
Skills and Knowledge	15	13.17	12.67	13	12.5	13.67
Experience	20	17.33	15.67	17.5	17	15.67
2020/22 Departmental Plans	15	14	9.67	14	14	13
Others/Specify	10	7.83	7.67	7.17	6.83	7
Total Score	100	89.83	81.01	85	83.5	77.01

2.0 Assessment Process

In the assessment, the performance levels were described as Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair and Poor. In order to quantify the assessment, the performance levels were awarded scores namely; 5 for excellent, 4 for Very Good, 3 for Good, 2 for fair and 1 for Poor.

The main areas of assessment were on: -

i) Key responsibilities related to the main activities in the respective department.

ii) NEMRA core principles were;

- a) corporate identity and brand;
- b) serving stakeholders' needs;
- c) resource mobilization;
- d) internal human resources competences;
- e) accountability and transparency record;
- f) results orientation and performance.

The results and recommendations arising out of the assessments of members of the Executive Committee are indicated below:

2.1 Managing Director

Name of Appraisee: Dr Juliet Kyayesimira

Job Title: Managing Director

Date of Employment: Period under Review 1/7/2021-31/12/2022

Dr Juliet Kyayesimira, the Managing Director NEMRA carried out individual assessment which was submitted to the Chairperson Appointments Committee for appraisal.

The assessment and recommendation are as below:

Individual Assessment			Average	Appraiser's Assessment		Average
	score	%	%	score	%	%
NEMRA core principles	28/30	93.3	92.7	26/30	86.7	85.4
Key responsibilities	46/50	92.0		42/50	84.0	

2.1.1 Recommendations

There should be a performance evaluation at every end of year.

Dr Juliet Kyayesimira will benefit from coaching and mentoring on resource mobilization to bolster the search for resources for NEMRA activities. The MD has also requested further orientation on NEMRA's strategic direction and the vision of founders.

2.2 Assessment of members of the Executive Committee by the Managing Director

Each member of the Executive Committee carried out individual assessment. The Managing Director who supervises the Team on the Executive Committee was the appraiser. The results of the assessments and recommendation are indicated 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 below:

2.2.1 Coordinator Mobilization and Advocacy

Name of Appraisee: Ms. Yahya Hadijah

Job Title: Coordinator Mobilisation and Advocacy

Date of Employment: Period under Review 1/7/2021-31/12/2022

Individual Assessment			Average
	score	%	%
NEMRA core principles	26/30	86.7	92.4
Key responsibilities	49/50	98.0	

2.2.1.1 Recommendation

The evaluation indicates that the departmental role was played in liaison with other departments. The coordinator indicates a need for a boost in the support from the Board of Directors to mobilize partnerships and collaborations.

The coordinator would like to be offered training in Communications skills.

2.2.2 Coordinator Research projects and publications

Name of Appraisee: Ms. Goretty Nagawa

Job Title: Coordinator Research and Publication

Date of Employment: Period under Review 1/7/2021-31/12/2022

Individual Assessment			Average
	score	%	%
NEMRA core principles	18/30	60.0	66.7
Key responsibilities	22/30	73.3	

2.2.2.1 Recommendation

The coordinator indicates a need for sufficient resources to run the activities of the department

The department registered achievements on role 1 (Developing multidisciplinary research teams to respond to funding calls and conduct research projects). One of the achievements on this appears on role number 5 where teams were formed and produced works that were published in the print media. Notable achievement is also on role number 6 where mock vivas and NEMRA friendly presentations were made for feedback on members' work.

2.2.3 Coordinator Finance and Administration.

Name of Appraisee: Vincent Ssekitoleko

Job Title: Coordinator Finance and Administration

Date of Employment: Period under Review 1/7/2021-31/12/2022

Individual Assessment			Average
	score	%	%
NEMRA core principles	27/30	90.0	93.9
Key responsibilities	44/45	97.8	

2.2.3.1 Recommendations

The department indicates achievement on all the roles and challenges common to the other departments.

The Coordinator indicates a need for information about NEMRA management structure, who the founders are, their vision and other technical issues like who manages the website. He would like to be supported to come up with diverse ideas on income generating activities for NEMRA. He suggests installation of automated systems in managing membership related issues. He would like to be supported to attract more volunteers in managing the day-to-day activities as well as delivering what is promised to subscribed members.

He would like to be supported on Completion of CPA certification.

2.2.4 Coordinator Training and Mentorship.

Name of Appraisee: Dr. Gad Ndaruhutse Ruzaaza

Job Title: Coordinator Training and Mentorship

Date of Employment: Period under Review 1/7/2021-31/12/2022

Individual Assessment			Average
	score	%	%
NEMRA core principles	27/30	90.0	93.4
Key responsibilities	29/30	96.7	

2.2.4.1 Recommendation

This department indicates monthly research capacity building seminars as the key achievement in line with role number 1 (Organise and oversee periodic interinstitutional research workshops, seminars and other capacity building and mentorship activities).

3.0 OBSERVATIONS

Dr Juliet Kyayesimira operated with four members of the Executive Committee in difficult circumstances where NEMRA resource base was weak. However, recent partners engagements by NEMRA in resource mobilization give a ray of hope of generating funds which can be used to implement NEMRA activities. In effect the Executive Committee was working on Probono basis.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION TO THE NEMRA BOARD

I recommend the following to the current Board and incoming appoints' committee:

1. Encourage the incoming Board of Directors to put in place an Appointments Sub-committee to follow-up the results of this assessment and prepare to assess the Executive Committee's final period in office (January 2023-June 2024)
2. The incoming Board may consider ways of tackling the problem of limited financial support that hindered the Executive Committee from delivering on most of their roles.
3. The incoming Board and Appointments Sub-committee is urged to orient the Executive Committee about NEMRA's strategic direction, management structure and operational guidelines of the network.



Patrick Kyamukaate Mutabwire

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