



**NETWORK FOR EDUCATION AND
MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AFRICA (NEMRA)**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031

“Excellent Research for Societal Wellbeing”

June 2026



Network for Education & Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA)



ABOUT NEMRA

At NEMRA, the Board of Trustees serves as the highest governing authority of the network, responsible for safeguarding the organization's mission, ensuring financial sustainability, and upholding legal and ethical standards. It provides oversight of the Board of Directors, which is composed of eminent researchers and academicians with multidisciplinary expertise and is responsible for providing strategic guidance and ensuring that the organization remains aligned with its mission.

Day-to-day operations are managed by an Executive Committee led by the Managing Director and deputized by the Deputy Managing Director. Program implementation is carried out through three technical departments: The Training and Mentorship Department, the Research Projects and Publications Department, and the Mobilization and Advocacy Department. These departments are supported by the Finance and Administration Unit, which is responsible for financial management and broader administrative support services.



Our 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.



Our Vision

At NEMRA, we envisage a network of academic researchers advancing a culture of intellectually generated evidence-based policy and practice in Uganda and beyond.



Our Values

Professionalism
Integrity
Innovation & Creativity
Collegiality
Inclusiveness
Generosity

Contact

 P. O. Box 33145, Kampala, Uganda

 nemraafrica@gmail.com

 +256 772 822 782
+256 776 626 187



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List of Acronyms & Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
avg.	Average
B	Billion(s) (UGX)
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
Coord.	Coordinator
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECR	Early Career Research
EU	European Union
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HR	Human Resources
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
K	Thousand(s) (UGX)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M	Million(s) (UGX)
MD	Managing Director
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
N=	Number(s)
NEMRA	Network for Education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NRF	National Research Foundation
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Q	Quarter
R&D	Research and Development
ROI	Return on Investment
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UGX	Ugandan Shilling
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
Y1	Year (1-5)

Managing Director's Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present the NEMRA Strategic Plan 2026–2031, which sets out our shared vision and strategic direction for strengthening Africa's research and innovation ecosystem over the next five years.

The Network for Education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA) was established to connect postgraduate students, early-career researchers, academic institutions, industry actors, and development partners across Africa. Over time, it has grown into a credible and dynamic network committed to advancing research collaboration, capacity building, and knowledge exchange across disciplines and borders.

The development of this Strategic Plan was informed by extensive consultations across the NEMRA ecosystem, including researchers, university leaders, industry practitioners, and funding partners. It builds on the achievements, lessons, and foundations of the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan, while setting a more ambitious and forward-looking agenda for the 2026–2031 period. These consultations highlighted both the opportunities and persistent structural challenges within Africa's research landscape, shaping a strategy that is responsive, practical, and forward-looking.

Africa continues to face significant disparities in global knowledge production, including low research output relative to population size, limited access to postgraduate training, and dependence on externally driven research agendas. These realities underscore the urgent need to strengthen locally driven research systems that can generate relevant knowledge, inform policy, and support sustainable development.

In response, this Strategic Plan positions NEMRA as a catalytic platform for strengthening research capacity, expanding mentorship and career development, mobilizing research funding, and fostering strong institutional partnerships. It also emphasizes the translation of research into policy, innovation, and practical solutions that address Africa's development challenges.

The Plan is anchored on five strategic pillars: Research Funding and Grant Mobilization; Research Capacity, Mentorship and Career Development; Research Excellence and Collaborative Networks; Institutional Engagement and Visibility; and Financial Sustainability and Governance. Together, these provide a clear pathway for strengthening NEMRA's impact over the 2026–2031 period.

By 2031, NEMRA aims to have supported over 100 research grants, strengthened the capacity of at least 50 early-career researchers, established partnerships with more than 30 universities and research institutions, and achieved a financially sustainable model with at least 50% of funding sourced from within Africa. These targets reflect our commitment to building a resilient and self-sustaining research network.

This Strategic Plan aligns with broader continental and national development priorities that emphasize knowledge-driven development, innovation, and evidence-based policymaking. NEMRA remains committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure that research meaningfully contributes to Africa's transformation agenda.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all partners and stakeholders who contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan. Your commitment and insights have been invaluable.

It is my honour to present the NEMRA Strategic Plan 2026–2031, and to reaffirm our dedication to advancing research excellence for Africa's development.

Dr. Karlmax Rutaro

Managing Director

Network for Education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA)

Foreword by the Chairperson, Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the NEMRA Strategic Plan 2026-2031, which sets a clear and ambitious direction for the organization.

The Board has provided oversight and strategic guidance in the development of this Plan, ensuring that it builds on past achievements while positioning NEMRA for greater impact and sustainability.

This Strategic Plan reflects our commitment to strengthening research excellence, fostering partnerships, and supporting innovation across Africa. We are confident that its implementation will enhance NEMRA's role as a leading platform for research collaboration and capacity development.

I extend my appreciation to Management, partners, the Board of Trustees and stakeholders for their continued support and commitment.



Dr. Martin Ongol

Chairperson, Board of Directors

Network for Education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA)

Foreword by the Chairperson, Board of Trustees

It is an honour to present the NEMRA Strategic Plan 2026–2031 on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

This Plan reaffirms NEMRA's commitment to its mission of advancing research, knowledge exchange, and capacity building across Africa. It also reflects our responsibility to safeguard the organization's long-term vision and sustainability.

The strategic priorities outlined herein provide a strong foundation for expanding impact, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring that research contributes meaningfully to Africa's development.

I thank all stakeholders and partners whose contributions have shaped this Strategic Plan, and I look forward to its successful implementation.

Prof. John F. Mugisha (PhD, FUNAS, FAIPH)

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Network for Education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA)

Foreword by the Company Secretary

It is my pleasure to present the NEMRA Strategic Plan 2026–2031, which outlines the organization’s strategic priorities and governance framework for the next five years.

As Company Secretary, I am encouraged by the inclusive and consultative process that informed this Plan. It reflects a strong commitment to accountability, transparency, and effective governance in advancing NEMRA’s mission.

The Strategic Plan provides a clear and structured approach to strengthening research capacity, partnerships, and institutional systems, while ensuring compliance with best practices and regulatory standards.

Under the strategic leadership of the Board of Trustees (BoT) and the newly elected Board of Directors, we envision greater achievement of the vision and mission of NEMRA.

I commend the Board, Management, and all stakeholders for their contributions and continued dedication to strengthening Africa’s research and innovation ecosystem.

Patrick K. Mutabwire
Company Secretary, NEMRA

Executive Summary

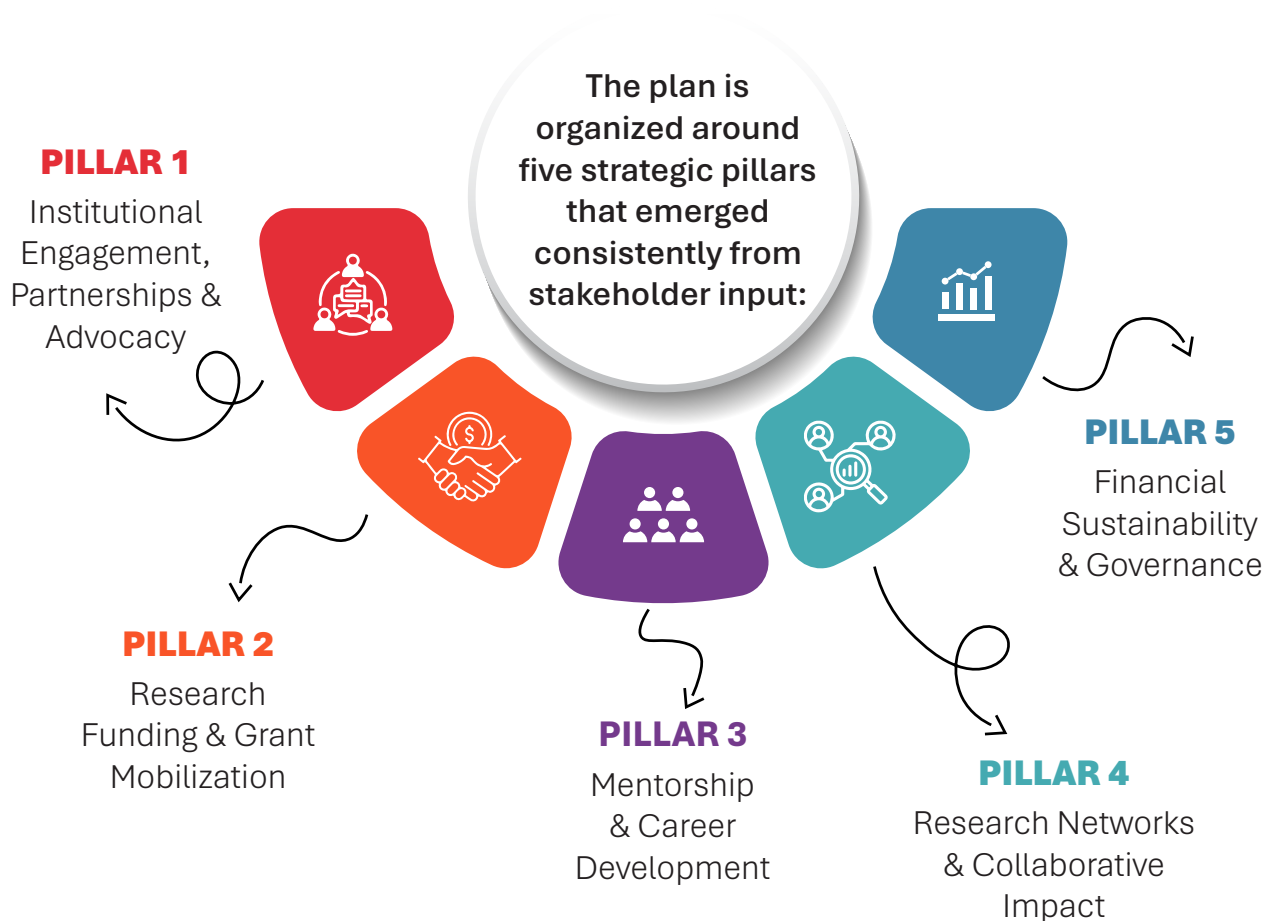
The Network for Education and Multidisciplinary Research Africa (NEMRA) stands at a pivotal moment. Established as a collaborative hub connecting postgraduate students, early career researchers, universities, industry partners, and funders across the African continent, NEMRA has built a credible foundation of networks, mentorship, and scholarly engagement. However, a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process conducted in preparation for this 2026–2031 Strategic Plan has revealed both the depth of NEMRA’s potential and the urgency of addressing its structural gaps.

The plan is shaped by a clear eyed understanding of the broader African research landscape. Africa currently contributes approximately 1% of the global research output, a figure that stands in plain contrast to its 18% share of the world’s population and its vast, largely untapped intellectual and natural resources. Access to tertiary education remains critically low at around 3%, constraining the pipeline of postgraduate researchers who form NEMRA’s core constituency. The majority of African research is produced in collaboration with international partners, a figure reaching 70-79% in Eastern and Southern Africa which, while reflecting global interest in African scholarship, also limits local ownership and the alignment of research with national and regional priorities. These structural realities define the terrain NEMRA must navigate and, over time, help to change.

NEMRA’s mandate is therefore not simply to serve researchers who already exist within the system, but to expand that system itself, to deepen the pipeline, to build locally owned research capacity, to bridge the persistent gap between research output and policy impact, and to ensure that the gains in African research are distributed across all regions of the continent and, not concentrated in a handful of countries. This plan positions NEMRA as an institution that holds these continental imperatives at its centre, not as aspirational language, but as measurable strategic commitments.

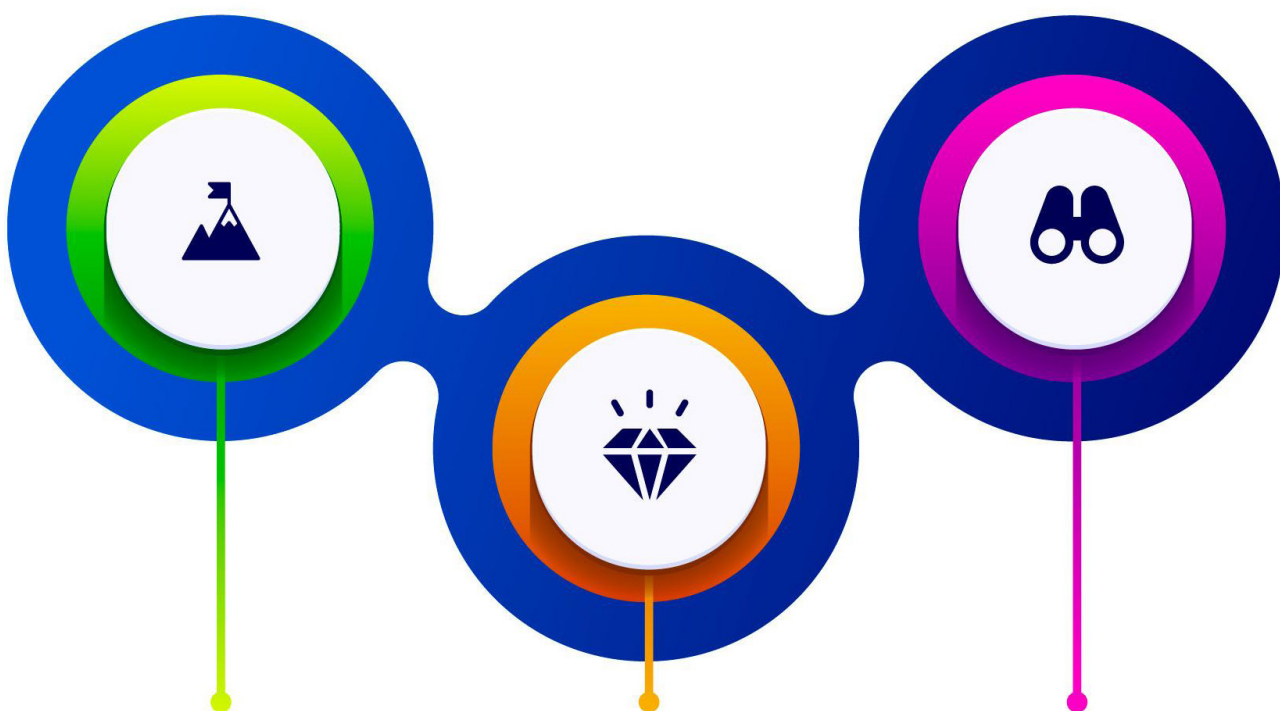
The 2026-2031 Strategic Plan is grounded in rigorous consultation with five stakeholder groups; postgraduate students, PhD graduates and early career researchers, management and leadership, universities and research institutions, and industry partners, practitioners, and funders spanning over 55 respondents across the NEMRA ecosystem.

It is organized around five integrated strategic pillars:



By 2031, NEMRA aims to have facilitated over 100 funded research grants, supported 50 or more early career researchers, established formal partnerships with 30 or more universities, and secured financial sustainability through a diversified revenue base with at least 50% of that revenue sourced from within Africa. While these targets are ambitious, they are also necessary.

Mission, Vision & Values



Our Mission

To demystify academic research, build research capacity, generate high quality multidisciplinary research and advance evidence based policy and practice for Africa's wellbeing

Our Values

Professionalism
Integrity
Innovativeness
Collegiality
Inclusiveness
Generosity

Our Vision

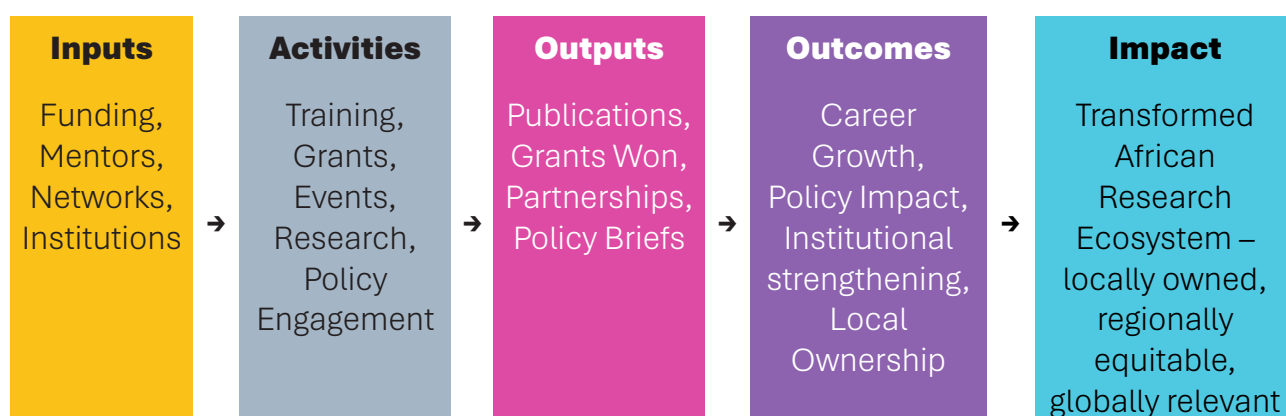
A wide and well-resourced network of academic researchers and practitioners advancing a culture of intellectually generated, evidence-based policy and practice in Africa.

Theory of Change

NEMRA's theory of change is grounded in the belief that Africa's research ecosystem is transformed when researchers have consistent access to funding, structured mentorship, and connected networks. When these enablers are in place, high-quality, policy-relevant research emerges creating ripple effects for institutions, communities, and economies across the continent.

This plan extends that theory of change in two important directions. First, it recognizes that even well-funded and well mentored research fails to create impact if it is not translated into policy and practice. Africa's research landscape is marked by a persistent gap between what researchers produce and what policymakers actually use. NEMRA's theory of change therefore treats the translation of research into policy instruments, practitioner tools, and accessible public knowledge as a core output, not optional extension of the research process.

Second, this plan recognizes that Africa's over reliance on external funding for research is itself a structural fragility that undermines local ownership and long-term sustainability. NEMRA's theory of change incorporates as advocacy pathway, working with member institutions and governments to increase domestic R&D investment over the plan period, so that the research ecosystem becomes progressively less dependent on international donors and more self-sustaining.



Strategic Context: Where We Are Now

The African Research Landscape

Africa's contribution to the global knowledge economy remains limited, accounting for approximately 1% of global research output despite its growing population and resource base. This is not simply a statistical gap, it reflects structural constraints that have accumulated over time and that require deliberate, coordinated, sustained intervention to overcome.

Access to tertiary education stands at round 3% across the continent, one of the lowest in the world. This constrains the development of advanced research capacity at precisely the levels of Masters and PhD where innovation is driven. The pool of potential postgraduate researchers is therefore thin relative to the scale of Africa's research ambitions, and any strategy that ignores this pipeline constraint risks overestimating the constituency it can reach in the near term.

R&D investment across the continent remains heavily skewed toward external sources. The majority of African research reaching 70-79% in Eastern and Southern Africa is produced through international collaboration, which, while providing access to global networks and resources, also limits the degree to which research agendas are set by African institutions themselves. Funding conditionalities, reporting requirements, and thematic priorities shaped by external donors often pull research away from the issues that matter most to local communities and governments, limiting institutional ownership.

Regional disparities compound these challenges. Eastern and Southern Africa dominate continental research output, leaving west, central and parts of northern Africa significantly underrepresented in the knowledge base that shapes African development policy. A more equitable distribution of research capacity is not only a matter of fairness, it is a prerequisite for producing research that reflects the full diversity of African contexts and challenges.

Against this landscape, the role of research networks is critical. Networks such as NEMRA can foster collaboration, pool resources, support capacity building, and enhance knowledge sharing across regions. They can bridge regional gaps, amplify research impact, and promote a more inclusive and resilient continental research ecosystem. The strengthening of Africa's research landscape requires a more coordinated and sustainable approach; expanding access to higher and postgraduate education, increasing domestic investment in R&D, and improving translation of research into policy and practice.

Key contextual trends shaping NEMRA's environment for 2026-2031 include growing government investment in research and innovation, digitalization of higher education, increased donor interest in African-led research, expanding regional integration under the AU Agenda 2063, and growing demand for applied, community-focused research across

food systems, climate, health and economic development. Regional expansion of the East African Community is opening a significant new research corridor, with implications for biodiversity, public health, and extractive industry research that NEMRA is well positioned to support.

It is within this evolving landscape that NEMRA's vision takes shape, to become a catalyst for a more connected, inclusive, and impactful African research ecosystem. Building foundations established in its inaugural phase, ranging from capacity-building programs and mentorship initiatives to expanding institutional networks, base and inter-university research collaborations.

The inaugural plan delivered a credible foundation, but honest assessment reveals gaps this strategy must confront: limited financial sustainability, inconsistent mentorship delivery, weak grant-writing support, low institutional engagement, with majority of partner universities rating their engagement with NEMRA at one or two out of five, and, insufficient translation of research into policy impact.

The next phase calls for deliberate transformation across four dimensions: moving from fragmented engagement to deep institutional partnerships; from donor dependency to sustainable, locally anchored funding; from isolated outputs to research that genuinely shapes policy and practice; and from limited reach to a truly continental presence. These are the ambitions the 2026-2031 strategic plan is designed to realize.

Africa's research landscape can only be strengthened through a more coordinated and sustainable approach, one that expands access to postgraduate education, grows domestic investment in research and development, and closes the gap between what researchers produce and what decision-makers actually use.

NEMRA's mandate is therefore clear: to build an African research network that invests in people, empowers institutions and foster collaboration across borders. The ambition is equally clear, to transform from a growing network into a transformative platform, one that not only supports research, but also amplifies its relevance, ownership, and impact across the continent.

In doing so, NEMRA is positioned to redefine its role in Africa's research future ensuring that African knowledge increasingly drives African development.

Stakeholder Consultation Summary

In preparation for this plan, NEMRA undertook a structured consultation with five stakeholder groups. Over 55 respondents across postgraduate students (13), PhD graduates and early career researchers (19), management and leadership (8), universities and research institutions (12), and industry partners, practitioners, and funders (3) contributed their insights. The findings reveal consistent themes across all groups:

- Research funding access is the dominant unmet need across all stakeholder groups.
- Mentorship programmes exist but are perceived as inconsistent and under-structured.
- Institutional engagement with NEMRA is low, with 7 of 12 universities rating engagement at only 1 or 2 out of 5.
- Early career researchers face systemic barriers including limited publication support and poorly defined career pathways.
- NEMRA's financial health was consistently rated the lowest performance dimension by management and leadership respondents.
- Industry partners are willing to engage but require NEMRA to demonstrate practical, actionable research outcomes before deepening engagement.

Stakeholder Group	Top Priorities and Insights
Postgraduate Students (n=13)	Research funding (dominant); supervisor/mentor connections; methods training, peer collaboration; conference access. NEMRA rated 2-3 out of 5 – needs stronger engagement, structured mentorship, and practical outcomes
PhD Graduates & Early Career Researchers (n=19)	Research funding, career development, publication support, mentorship; international collaboration. Grant application support ranked as the top priority under budget constraints.
Management & Leadership (n=8)	Financial sustainability; high quality research outputs; policy influence; strong ECR support, expanded continental reach. Financial health rated consistently low (1-3 out of 5).
Universities & Institutions (n=12)	Inter-university research projects (8 of 12 respondents); research capacity building (#1 priority); funding access. Engagement largely low - 7 of 12 institutions rated 1-2 out of 5.
Industry, Practitioners & Funders (n=3)	Practical application and community impact rated 5 out of 5; multidisciplinary approach rated 5 out of 5; access to researchers as NEMRA's primary value. Want actionable, policy-relevant research.

Key Challenges Identified

Funding & Financial Challenges	People & Organisational Challenges
➤ Limited and inconsistent research funding access ➤ No structured grant application support system ➤ Weak financial sustainability model ➤ Limited revenue diversification ➤ Capital constraints restricting programming	➤ High staff/volunteer turnover affecting programme continuity ➤ Competence gaps in grant writing and research facilitation ➤ Change management capacity limited ➤ Unclear accountability structures for programmes ➤ Over-reliance on voluntary participation
Partnerships & Engagement Challenges	Growth & Impact Challenges
➤ Low institutional engagement from universities ➤ No formal institutional membership model ➤ Fragmented and ad hoc collaboration structures ➤ Limited cross-institutional research consortia ➤ Under-leveraged industry and policy partnerships	➤ No structured ECR career pathway or framework ➤ Publication and visibility support underdeveloped ➤ Inconsistent programme scheduling and communication ➤ Limited digital infrastructure for member engagement ➤ NEMRA brand visibility weak outside core network

SWOT Analysis



STRENGTHS

- Established brand and track record (founded 2018; 40+ events delivered)
- Active membership across multiple African universities
- International mentor network across multiple disciplines
- Unique multidisciplinary positioning within African research networks
- Credible track record in mentorship, seminars and community building
- Secretariat and governance structure in place
- Growing postgraduate and early career research (ECR) membership base



WEAKNESSES

- Chronic funding access gaps — dominant unmet need across all stakeholders
- Inconsistent mentorship programme delivery
- Heavy reliance on voluntarism for programme continuity
- Low institutional engagement and awareness from partner universities.
- Weak grant-writing and funding support
- Limited staffing and operational capacity
- ECR career pathway support rated among the lowest performance areas.
- Geographic concentration in Uganda and East Africa limits continental credibility



OPPORTUNITIES

- Growing African research funding ecosystem under AU Agenda 2063
- Rapid growth in postgraduate enrolment across Africa creating demand for NEMRA's services
- Untapped industry partnership potential for co-designed applied research
- Digital platforms enabling low-cost continental and global engagement
- Demand for applied, community-relevant research from industry and policy makers
- Rising interest in African-led research consortia from international funders
- DRC's EAC integration opening new East African research corridors
- Potential for NEMRA branded academic journal
- Window to influence national and continental research investment policy



THREATS

- Competition from mushrooming think tanks and research consultancies
- Donor funding unpredictability and a competitive grant environment.
- Brain drain of talented researchers from Africa to higher-income countries.
- Institutions viewing NEMRA as a competitor rather than complement.
- Volunteer fatigue undermining programme consistency
- Regulatory or political changes affecting higher education in key markets.
- Risk of remaining East Africa-centric and failing to achieve true continental reach.
- Research outputs failing to reach policymakers; translation gap undermining impact claims.

Growth Opportunities

Five strategic opportunities define the external environment NEMRA must leverage over the plan period.

Africa's Research Growth Wave. A rapidly growing pool of postgraduate researchers across Africa creates unprecedented demand for NEMRA's services; mentorship, funding navigation, publication support, and professional networks. NEMRA must position itself to capture this demand at scale before competing organizations do.

The Continental Funding Landscape. Pan-African funders including the African Union, the National Research Foundation of South Africa, DAAD, and Wellcome Trust are actively seeking credible research networks as partners and conduits. NEMRA's multidisciplinary mandate and cross-institutional reach make it an attractive vehicle for funders seeking continental reach without building new infrastructure.

The Industry-Research Gap. Industry partners consistently rate practical research application as critically important — yet their engagement with African research networks remains low. NEMRA can uniquely bridge this gap by co-designing research agendas with industry partners, ensuring that the research it supports addresses questions that practitioners and businesses are genuinely asking.

Digital Engagement at Scale. Scaling through digital platforms can multiply NEMRA's reach and substantially reduce the cost per member served. An online learning hub, a digital mentorship platform, and a professional content strategy can extend NEMRA's influence far beyond the institutions where it has a physical presence.

The Policy Influence Window. Growing African institutional focus on research capacity reflected in government R&D budget allocations and AU policy commitments creates an opening for NEMRA to shape national and continental research agendas. This requires not just producing good research, but actively participating in the policy spaces where research investment decisions are made.



Africa's Research Boom

A rapidly growing pool of postgraduate researchers across Africa creates unprecedented demand for NEMRA's services.



Continental Funding Landscape

Pan-African funders (AU, NRF, DAAD, Wellcome) actively seek credible research networks as partners and conduits.



Industry-Research Gap

Industry partners rate practical research application as critically important — an unmet need NEMRA can uniquely address.



Digital Engagement Potential

Scaling through digital platforms can multiply NEMRA's reach and reduce cost-per-member substantially.



Policy Influence Window

Growing African institutional focus on research capacity creates a window for NEMRA to shape national and continental research agendas.

Top Strategic Priorities 2026–2031

The following fifteen priorities define NEMRA’s strategic agenda for the plan period. They emerge from stakeholder consultation, strategic analysis, and the imperatives of the broader African research landscape.

	Strategic Priority	Theme	Urgency
1	Deepen University & Institutional Partnerships	Institutional Engagement	Critical
2	Industry-Research Bridging & Policy Engagement	Institutional Engagement	Critical
3	Research Funding Mobilization & Grant Support	Research Funding	Critical
4	Institutionalize Structured ECR Mentorship	Mentorship & Capacity	Critical
5	Build Multi-Institutional Research Consortia	Research Excellence	Critical
6	Expand Publication Outputs & Knowledge Dissemination	Research Excellence	Critical
7	Deepen University & Institutional Partnerships	Institutional Engagement	Critical
8	Strengthen Digital Infrastructure & Online Presence	Governance & Sustainability	High
9	Diversify Revenue & Build Financial Sustainability	Governance & Sustainability	Critical
10	Grow Continental Membership & Advocacy	Institutional Engagement	High
11	Launch Open-Access NEMRA Academic Journal	Research Excellence	High
12	Enhance Governance & Accountability Framework	Governance & Sustainability	High
13	Develop Professional Secretariat Capacity	Governance & Sustainability	High
14	Domestic R&D Investment Advocacy	Research Funding	Critical
15	Regional Equity in Research Output (West & Central Africa Expansion)	Institutional Engagement	High
16	Research-to-Policy Translation Pipeline	Research Excellence	Critical

Strategic Framework: 5 Pillars • 15 Goals

NEMRA's 2026-2031 strategy is organized under five integrated themes/pillars. Each theme contains strategic goals, with assigned primary ownership and direct links to stakeholder priorities and the imperatives of the African research landscape.

Pillar	Strategic Goals	Primary Owner
Institutional Engagement & Advocacy	• Deepen University Partnerships • Build Industry Bridges • Grow Membership – Strengthen Continental Advocacy – Regional Equity Expansion	Partnerships Director / Mobilization Dept.
Research Funding & Grant Mobilization	• Mobilize Donor & Grant Funding • Build Proposal Development Capacity • Develop Funding Partnerships. Advocate for Domestic R&D Investment	MD / Grant Manager
Mentorship & Career Development	• Structure Mentorship Programmes • Develop ECR Career Pathways/ Research Methods Training • Support Publications – Build Researcher Pipeline	MD / ECR Director / Training Dept.
Research Excellence, Networks & Collaborative Impact	• Build Multi-institutional Research Consortia • Grow Publication Outputs - Drive Applied Research • Launch NEMRA Journal – Host Conferences – Research-to-Policy Translation	Research Director
Financial Sustainability & Governance	• Diversify Revenue Streams • Achieve African Revenue Target - Strengthen Governance • Build Digital Infrastructure – Professionalize Secretariat	Finance / Admin / Board

Pillar 1: Institutional Engagement, Partnerships & Advocacy

By 2031, NEMRA will have formal partnerships with 30+ universities and research institutions, an active industry advisory board, and recognition as a leading research network across at least 20 African countries, and a clear position as the continental voice for African-led, equitably distributed research.



Goal 1.1: Deepen University and Institutional Partnerships

Objective 1.1.1: Launch Formal Institutional Membership Model

Design Tiered Institutional Membership Framework	Develop a tiered membership structure (Associate, Full, Strategic Partner) with clear value propositions, fee structures, and benefits for each tier. Launch by Q2 2026. Develop a bilingual (English/French) institutional value proposition and onboarding package to enable engagement with Francophone universities across West and Central Africa.
Conduct University Onboarding Campaign	Execute a structured onboarding campaign targeting 10 universities in Year 1, with explicit targets for institutions in West and Central Africa. Support this with awareness materials, institutional briefings, and tailored engagement plans.
Establish University Liaison Representatives	Appoint dedicated NEMRA liaison officers (or volunteer champions) at each member university to coordinate engagement, communicate opportunities, and drive participation.

Objective 1.1.2: Co-Design and Co-Host Institutional Programmes

Launch Co-Hosted Research Programmes	Partner with member universities to co-host at least 6 joint programmes per year (workshops, seminars, writing retreats) with shared resource contributions and co-branding.
Develop Joint Postgraduate Programme Offerings	Work with 3+ universities to design joint postgraduate-level short courses on research methods, grant writing, and academic leadership by 2028.
Launch NEMRA Chapter Model	Establish formal NEMRA chapters at 5 partner universities by 2028, each with a designated chapter lead, annual activity plan, and reporting structure.

Goal 1.2: Engage Industry, Government & Policy Makers

Objective 1.2.1: Establish Industry & Government Advisory Structures

Establish an Industry & Practitioners Advisory Council	Constitute an industry and practitioner's advisory council of senior representatives from industry, NGOs, and government by Q4 2026. Define terms of reference, meeting schedule, and advisory mandate..
Map and Engage Government & Policy Stakeholders	Identify and engage key government ministries, parliamentary committees, and national research councils across target African countries. Build a structured government engagement register.
Participate in Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) Policy Processes	Engage national and regional science, technology, and innovation (STI) policy processes through submissions, consultations, and representation on advisory panels.

Objective 1.2.2. Drive Policy Engagement & Research Industry Forums

Deliver Industry Academic Research Forums	Convene at least 1 industry academic research forum per year from 2027, connecting NEMRA researchers with industry practitioners to co-define research challenges and disseminate findings.
Produce Policy Briefs Targeting Government Bodies	Publish a minimum of 3 policy briefs per year from 2027, targeting government ministries, regulatory bodies, and parliamentary committees across Africa.
Create an Institutional Performance Dashboard	Build and share an annual institutional engagement dashboard tracking participation, programme hosting, research involvement, and partnership outcomes across all member institutions.

Goal 1.3. Grow Membership & Strengthen Advocacy

Objective 1.3.1. Drive Membership Growth & NEMRA Chapters

Drive Individual Institutional Membership Growth	Achieve a minimum annual membership growth rate of 15% across all categories. Target 500 individual members by 2028 and 1000 by 2031. Grow institutional membership to 20+ universities and 10+ research institutions, with geographic distribution targets across all African regions.
Run Annual NEMRA Advocacy Campaign	Design and deliver an annual advocacy campaign highlighting African research needs, member achievements and NEMRA's impact targeting funders, government, media and the public. Incorporate an African Research Equity message making the case publicly that closing Africa's 1% share of global research output is both a development imperative and an economic opportunity, and positioning NEMRA as the voice of African researchers in that conversation.
Strengthen Regional & International Network Engagement	Develop a diaspora/regional engagement strategy targeting African researchers in international institutions in west, central and southern Africa, offering associate membership mentorship roles, and collaborative research opportunities. Consider appointment of a regional engagement officer by 2028 to deepen partnerships where language has been a barrier.

Objective 1.3.2. Build Brand, Digital Presence & Advocacy

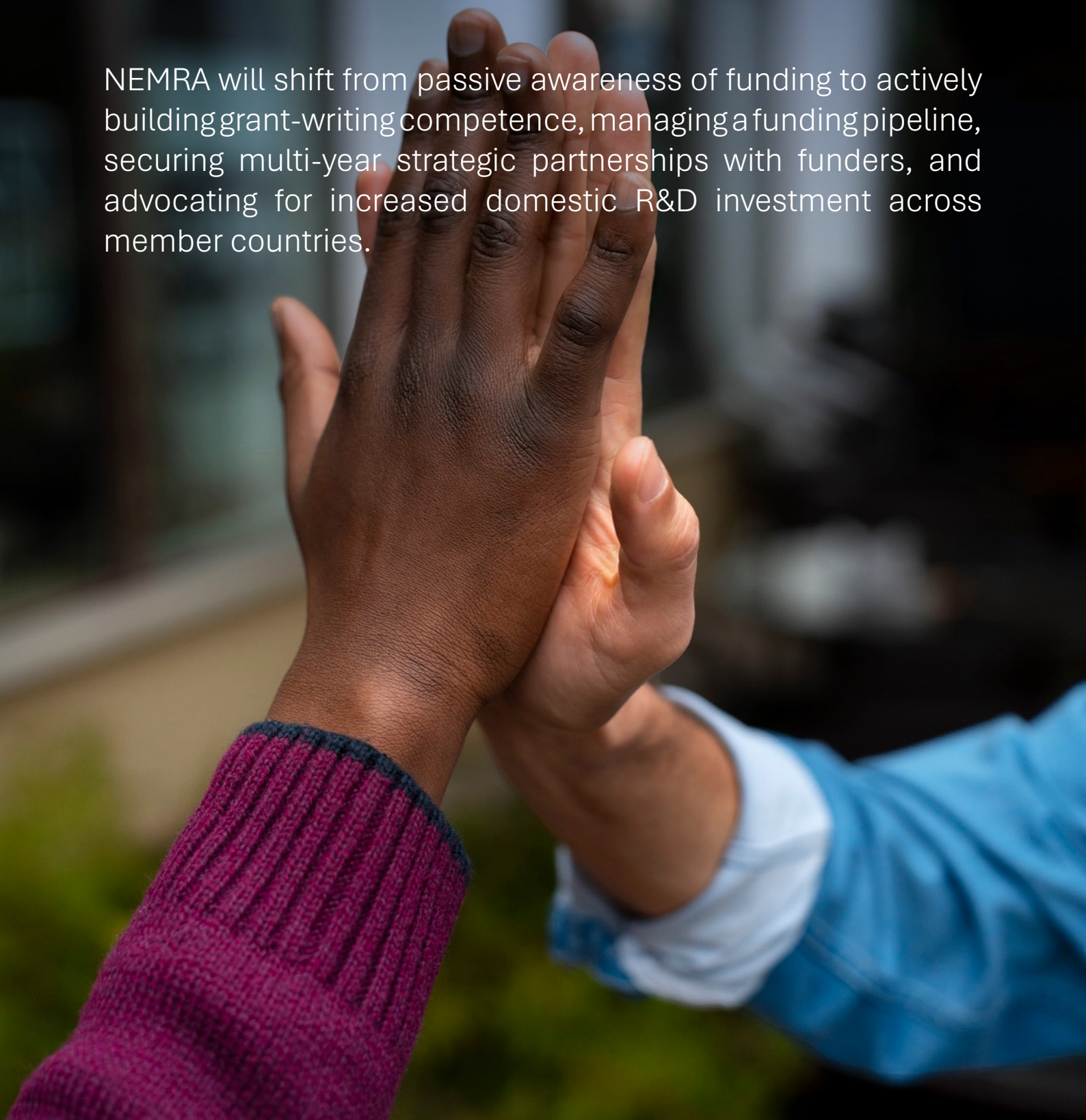
Commission Brand Refresh & Communications Strategy	Develop a refreshed NEMRA visual identity, messaging framework, and multi-channel communications strategy by Q3 2026.
Launch NEMRA Digital Presence Update	Build a professional, content rich website with member portal, programme calendar, resource library, and success story showcase by Q4 2026. Activate LinkedIn, X, and Facebook strategy with quarterly newsletter.
Develop and Disseminate Annual Impact Report	Produce and widely disseminate an annual NEMRA Impact Report documenting research outputs, member achievements, partnerships and community impact, distributed to funders, partners, and member institutions.

Goal 1.1 – 1.3 — Success Metrics

Metric	Baseline (2025)	2027 Target	2031 Target
Member universities in formal partnership	Establish baseline	15	30+
Individual NEMRA members	Establish baseline	300+	1000+
Co-hosted programmes per year	Establish baseline	6	20+
University Chapters established	Establish baseline	3	10+
Industry Advisory Council meetings/year	Establish baseline	2	3+
Policy briefs distributed per year	Establish baseline	3+	10+
Countries with active NEMRA members	Establish baseline	10	20+
West/Central Africa institutional partnerships	0	3	8+
Website monthly unique visitors	Establish baseline	500+	3,000+

Pillar 2: Research Funding & Grant Mobilization

NEMRA will shift from passive awareness of funding to actively building grant-writing competence, managing a funding pipeline, securing multi-year strategic partnerships with funders, and advocating for increased domestic R&D investment across member countries.



Goal 2.1: Mobilise Research Funding Access

Objective 2.1.1: Establish a NEMRA Grant Development Hub

Launch Funding Opportunity Database	Build and maintain a live database of 50+ continental and international funding opportunities, categorized by theme and eligibility. The database will include R&D funding streams, national research councils, university research funds, and government innovation budgets alongside international donors. Submit a minimum of 8 grant proposals per year, track outcomes via a grant pipeline tracker, and conduct quarterly database reviews.
Set Up Grant Alerts System	Develop an automated alerts mechanism to notify members of new funding opportunities within 48 hours of listing, covering both international and domestic funding sources
Hire a dedicated Grant Development Coordinator	Hire or designate a Grant Development Coordinator by Q2 2026 with responsibility for the funding database, proposal pipeline, funder relationship management, and domestic investment advocacy.

Objective 2.1.2: Build Grant Writing Capacity

Launch Annual Grant Writing Boot camp	Deliver a 3-day intensive grant writing boot camp annually covering proposal structure, budget narratives, funder alignment, and review processes. Target 30 participants per cohort. Include a dedicated module on applying to African-led funders and national research councils, AU aligned funds with content distinct from western donor application templates.
Establish Grant Peer Review Circles	Create structured peer review groups of 4-6 researchers who mutually critique and refine each other's grant proposals before submission. Run 4 active circles by 2027.
Develop Grant Templates & Resource Library	Produce a library of annotated grant templates, successful proposal examples, funder briefing notes, and budget tools accessible to all NEMRA members via the digital platform.

Objective 2.1.3: Build Strategic Funder Partnerships

Map and Engage Strategic Funders	Conduct a funder landscape mapping of 20+ funders including African Development Bank, IDRC, Gates Foundation, Wellcome Trust, USAID, EU Horizon, NRF South Africa, Makerere Research Fund, and bilateral donors. Maintain a funder relationship register with tailored NEMRA alignment profiles. Prioritize funders who support African-led research ownership.
Position NEMRA as a Funding Conduit	Develop an institutional fundraising pitch kit aligned with NEMRA's research priorities. Negotiate and formalize at least 5 funding/partnership MOUs by 2028. Build university co-funding partnerships and negotiate co-funding agreements for joint supervision and report annually on partnership outcomes.
Host Annual Funder-Researcher Matchmaking Forum	Plan and host an annual forum facilitating structured matchmaking between researchers and funders, support joint proposal writing with international research networks and produce a post-forum outcomes report.

Objective 2.1.4. Advocate for Domestic R & D Investment

Develop Annual Domestic Investment Advocacy Brief	Publish an annual brief presented to Finance and Education ministries across member countries, making the economic case for increased domestic R&D investment. Target contributing to at least 3 countries increasing their R&D budget allocations within the plan period.
Engage National Research Councils	Build structured relationships with national research councils and government science and innovation offices across NEMRA member countries to position NEMRA as a credible partner in national research planning.
Track and Report on African Revenue in Research	Monitor and publicly report on the proportion of research funding accessed by NEMRA members that originates from African sources, setting a target to increase this proportion year on year as a measure of reduced external dependency.

Goal 2.1 — Success Metrics

Metric	Baseline (2025)	2027 Target	2031 Target
Grant applications supported	Establish baseline	30+	100+
Grants successfully awarded to members	Establish baseline	10+	50+
Funder partnerships (MoUs signed)	Establish baseline	3	10+
Members accessing funding database monthly	Establish baseline	100+	500+
Grant writing boot camp participants	Establish baseline	30	150 cumulative
Countries with increased domestic R&D allocations	0	1+	3+
African-sourced funding as % of member research grants	Establish baseline	Increasing	Measurable growth

Pillar 3: Mentorship & Career Development

A close-up photograph of a hand placing a wooden block on top of a Jenga tower. The hand is positioned at the top of the frame, with fingers carefully aligning the block. The Jenga tower is built from light-colored wooden blocks, showing a complex interlocking pattern. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the hand and the blocks.

NEMRA will operate a world-class, structured mentorship system that has supported at least 50 early career researchers to publication, equipped 200+ postgraduate students with the skills and networks needed to thrive in the African and global research environments, and build a researcher pipeline that addresses Africa's low tertiary education enrolment rates from the ground up.

Goal 3.1: Formalize Mentorship Programmes

Objective 3.1.1: Redesign the Mentorship Framework

Develop Formal Mentorship Programme Design	Design a structured 12-month mentorship programme with clear intake processes, matching criteria, milestone check-ins, and completion certificates. Launch first cohort by Q2 2026. Include a Diaspora mentorship track pairing African researchers in international institutions with NEMRA members in continent maintaining diaspora engagement in building African research capacity while reducing brain drain's impact on the network.
Recruit and Train a Mentor Pool	Identify, vet, and onboard at least 30 senior academics, researchers, and practitioners as active NEMRA mentors. Provide mentor training covering coaching skills, publication guidance, and career advice across both academic and non-academic pathways.
Introduce Mentorship Accountability Tools	Implement a digital mentorship tracking platform with monthly reporting, milestone tracking, and satisfaction surveys for both mentors and mentees. Develop a NEMRA Mentor Handbook and Mentee Workbook.

Objective 3.1.2: Build Publication Support Infrastructure

Launch Writing for Publication Programme	Deliver quarterly 2-day writing retreats focused on manuscript development, journal selection, peer review processes, and response to reviewers. Target 20 participants per retreat. Prioritize open-access publication pathways, equipping members with knowledge of African open-access journals, institutional repositories, and fee waiver programmes at international journals.
Create a Publication Peer Support Network	Establish accountability writing groups of 4-6 researchers committed to submitting a publication within 12 months. Run at least 6 active groups at any time.
Develop NEMRA Publication Pathway Guide	Produce a comprehensive guide on the publication journey from research to indexed publication, tailored to African research contexts and disciplines.

Goal 3.2: Develop Research Methods & Skills Training

Objective 3.2.1: Design a Structured ECR Career Framework

Map the African Research Career Landscape	Conduct and publish a research career landscape analysis covering academic, policy, industry, and international pathways for African researchers by Q4 2026. Map non-academic career pathways including roles in government research offices, development agencies, the private sector, and pan-African institutions such as the Au commission and ADB recognizing that research capacity is needed far beyond academia.
Launch NEMRA ECR Leadership Programme	Design and deliver an annual 6-month leadership development programme for early career researchers covering research management, grant leadership, and academic leadership skills.
Establish an ECR Advisory Council	Create a standing ECR Advisory Council of 10 early career researchers who co-design NEMRA programmes, ensuring relevance and ownership.

Objective 3.2.2: Deliver Skills Training & Launch Online Learning Hub

Deliver Annual Research skills workshop series	Deliver a minimum of 12 research skills workshops per year (mixed – in-person and virtual) covering research design, statistical methods, writing for publication, data management, and research ethics.
Partner for Accredited Short Courses	Partner with 2+ universities to co-deliver accredited short courses aligned with NEMRA's research capacity priorities by 2028.
Launch NEMRA Online Learning Hub	Develop and launch an NEMRA online learning hub with modules, courses, and resource libraries accessible to all members by 2027.

Goal 3.3. Support Publications & Career Development

Objective 3.3.1: Run Structured Publication & Career Support programmes

Run Structured Publication Support Programme	Deliver writing groups, peer review circles and clinics to support member publication. Support at least 30 members to submit to peer-reviewed journals annually by 2028 and 60+ by 2031.
Organize Annual ECR Conferences	Host an annual conference for early career researchers to present research in progress, receive structured feedback, and network with senior researchers and funders.
Build a Career Pathways Resource Hub	Develop and maintain a digital resource hub covering fellowships, postdoc opportunities, jobs, conferences, and career development tools updated quarterly and accessible to all NEMRA members.

Objective 3.3.2: Build the Researcher Pipeline

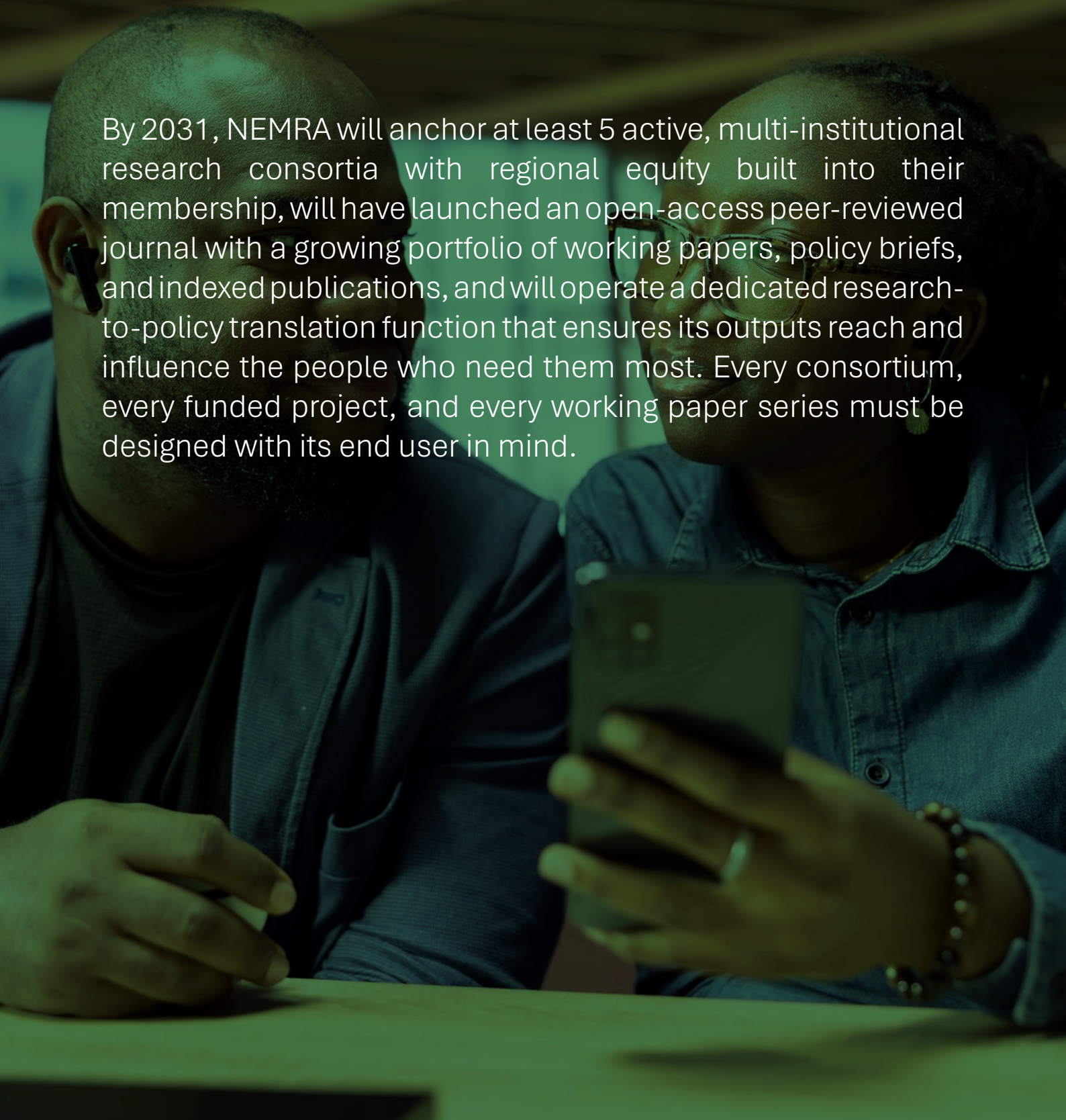
Launch Aspiring Researchers Programme	Pilot a programme targeting final-year undergraduate students at member universities, introducing research skills and NEMRA membership before they enter postgraduate study. This directly addresses the pipeline constraint created by Africa's 3% tertiary enrolment rate, building future membership while deepening institutional relationships.
Partner with Universities on Postgraduate Access	Work with member universities to advocate for expanded postgraduate access, particularly for women and researchers from underrepresented regions, recognizing that NEMRA's long-term growth depends on widening the pool, not only serving those already in it.
Strengthen Diaspora Engagement	Develop a diaspora engagement strategy targeting African researchers in international institutions, offering associate membership, mentorship roles, and collaborative research opportunities — keeping diaspora talent connected to Africa's research development.

Goal 3.1 - 3.3 — Success Metrics

Metric	Baseline (2025)	2027 Target	2031 Target
Active mentorship pairs per year	Establish baseline	30+	100+
Mentors trained and active in pool	Establish baseline	30	75+
ECR researchers supported to publication	Establish baseline	15	50+
Writing retreat participants (cumulative)	Establish baseline	80	400+
Research skills workshops	Establish baseline	120+	500+
Mentorship programme satisfaction (rating)	Establish baseline	4/5	4.5/5
Aspiring Researchers Programme participants	0	Pilot cohort	Annual cohort

Pillar 4: Research Networks & Collaborative Impact

By 2031, NEMRA will anchor at least 5 active, multi-institutional research consortia with regional equity built into their membership, will have launched an open-access peer-reviewed journal with a growing portfolio of working papers, policy briefs, and indexed publications, and will operate a dedicated research-to-policy translation function that ensures its outputs reach and influence the people who need them most. Every consortium, every funded project, and every working paper series must be designed with its end user in mind.



Goal 4.1: Build Research Consortia & Networks

Objective 4.1.1: Establish Thematic Research Clusters

Launch 5 Thematic Research Clusters by 2027	Establish formal, multi-institutional research clusters around five priority themes: Climate & Environment, Food Systems & Agriculture, Economic Development, Public Health, and Education Innovation. Each cluster must include a minimum of 3 universities, 1 industry practitioner partner, and 1 funder. Apply an explicit regional equity requirement: each cluster must include at least one institution from west or central Africa. The first three clusters to be launched by 2027. NEMRA will provide targeted travel and logistics support to enable participation from underrepresented regions.
Develop Consortium Governance Frameworks	Design and adopt a standard governance framework for each research cluster, including terms of reference, leadership structure, publication protocols, funding procedures, and as a mandatory output, at least one policy brief per completed project.
Seed Collaborative Research Projects	Facilitate at least 2 funded collaborative research projects per cluster by 2028, with NEMRA serving as the coordinating institution. Each cluster to deliver at least 1 funded project and 2 peer-reviewed publications within 3 years.

Objective 4.1.2: Build Cross-Institutional Research Capacity

Create Inter-University Research Exchange Fellowships	Establish short-term (1-3 months) research exchange fellowships enabling postgraduate students and ECRs to conduct research at partner institutions within the NEMRA network, including institutions in underrepresented regions.
Build NEMRA Research Collaboration Platform	Develop and maintain a digital platform enabling NEMRA members to identify collaborators, share datasets, co-author working papers, and manage cluster activities. .
Establish an EAC Research Corridor Initiative	Under the Public Health and Environment clusters, develop a targeted programme engaging researchers from EAC, leveraging e.g., DRC and Somalia leveraging the regions biodiversity, extractive industry research, and disease ecology. This positions NEMRA at the frontier of a newly opened regional research opportunity.

Goal 4.2: Grow NEMRA's Publication Portfolio

Objective 4.2.1: Launch a NEMRA Academic Journal

Conduct Journal Feasibility Study	Commission a feasibility study by Q3 2026 defining scope, business model (open access vs. subscription), indexing strategy, and editorial board composition. Design the journal as fully open-access from launch ensuring that NEMRA's research reaches African policymakers and practitioners without paywalls that most African institutions cannot afford.
Establish Editorial Infrastructure	Recruit an editor-in-chief, form an editorial board of 15+ members across disciplines and countries, and establish peer review processes and submission platform by Q4 2027.
Publish First Volume and Pursue Indexing	Publish the inaugural volume of the NEMRA journal by 2028 and pursue indexing in major databases by 2030.

Objective 4.2.2: Establish Working Papers, Policy Briefs and Repository

Launch NEMRA Working paper Series	Establish a NEMRA working paper series by Q4 2026, publishing a minimum of 10 working papers per year from 2027, covering research progress and policy-relevant findings from member institutions.
Develop NEMRA Policy Briefs Programme	Train researchers to translate findings into accessible policy briefs and publish a minimum of 6 policy briefs per year from 2027, distributed to policy makers across 10+ African countries. Develop a policymaker engagement protocol for presenting research findings to government stakeholders, including non-specialist summaries, visual infographics, and structured briefing sessions.
Maintain Digital Publications Repository	Develop a publicly accessible repository of all NEMRA publications, working papers, and conference proceedings, linked to the research collaboration platform.

Objective 4.2.3. Establish a Research-to-Policy Translation Unit

Appoint a Translation and Impact Officer	By 2027, hire or appoint a staff member dedicated to converting research findings into practitioner tools, policy summaries, and decision-support materials directly addressing the critical gap between research production and research use that characterizes African institutions broadly.
Partner with National Research Councils	Partner with at least 3 national research councils to pilot the policymaker engagement protocol by 2028, embedding NEMRA research into national policy processes.
Build a Policy Engagement Database	Map and maintain a structured database of African policymakers, parliamentary committees, and government research offices for systematic policy engagement and brief dissemination across 10+ countries.

Goal 4.3. Host Strategic Research Events & Policy Engagement

Objective 4.3.1. Host Annual Conference, Symposia & International Participation

Host Annual NEMRA Research Conference	Host an annual NEMRA research conference from 2026 onwards, alternating between physical and hybrid formats. Target 200+ participants by 2028, bringing together researchers, institutions, funders, and industry partners.
Deliver Bi-Annual Thematic Symposia	Convene two thematic symposia per year focused on NEMRA's priority research areas, providing a platform for cluster outputs, policy briefs and dialogue, and cross institutional collaboration.
Facilitate International Conference Participation	Facilitate NEMRA's participation in at least 3 international conferences per year through member nominations, travel support, and coordinated representation.

Objective 4.3.2. Amply Research Policy Industry Linkages

Host Research Industry Innovation Forums	Convene annual forums connecting NEMRA researchers with industry practitioners and policymakers to define research challenges, present findings, and identify collaborative opportunities. Conduct annual research demand mapping, surveying industry and government partners to identify their top unanswered research questions and feeding these directly into thematic cluster agendas.
Produce Annual NEMRA Research Impact Report	Publish an annual report documenting NEMRA's research outputs, policy engagement, cluster activities, and contribution to Africa's landscape, distributed to funders, partners, and member institutions.
Build NEMRA Policy Engagement Database	Maintain a structured database of African policymakers, parliamentary committees, and government research offices for system policy engagement.

Goal 4.1 - 4.3 — Success Metrics

Metric	Baseline (2025)	2027 Target	2031 Target
Active thematic research clusters	Establish baseline	3	5+
Collaborative funded research projects	Establish baseline	4	15+
Peer-reviewed publications from clusters	Establish baseline	6+	30+
Working papers published per year	Establish baseline	10+	20+
Annual conference participants	Establish baseline	100	300+
NEMRA journal articles published	Establish baseline	N/A	50+ per year
Policy briefs distributed	Establish baseline	8	30+
Cluster with West/Central Africa representation	0	2	All clusters
International conference appearance/year	Ad hoc	3+	6+

Pillar 5: Financial Sustainability & Governance

By 2031, NEMRA will operate on a diversified, sustainable revenue base with at least 50% of that revenue sourced from within Africa supported by a governance structure that drives transparency, accountability, and strategic leadership.

Revenue Growth Targets - TBA



Goal 5.1: Build A Blended Revenue Model

Objective 5.1.1: Implement Blended Revenue Streams

Map and Adopt Diversified Revenue Streams	Formally adopt a blended revenue model with targets for institutional memberships (30%), programme fees (20%), grants and donor funding (30%), industry partnerships (15%), and other earned income (5%). Set and publish an African revenue target aiming for at least 50% of total revenue sourced from within Africa by 2031 and track progress annually as a measure of NEMRA's contribution to reduced external dependency in African research.
Launch Individual and Institutional Membership Drive	Design attractive membership packages, execute a phased membership recruitment campaign, and set annual recruitment targets with incentive structures for early adopters.
Pursue Anchor Institutional Grants	Develop and submit at least 3 major institutional grant applications annually targeting core operational support from Pan-African and international funders, while actively cultivating African institutional, government, and industry funders alongside international donors.

Objective 5.1.2: Build Financial Management Capacity

Hire or Contract a Finance Manager	Appoint a qualified finance manager (full-time or temporary) with responsibility for budgeting, reporting, audit management, and financial governance by Q3 2026.
Establish Annual Budget and Financial Planning Cycle	Implement a formal annual budget cycle, including mid-year review, variance reporting, and board-level financial oversight by Q3 2026.
Build a Reserve Fund	Target accumulation of a 3-month operational reserve fund by 2028, providing financial resilience against funding gaps and programme disruptions.

Goal 5.2: Professionalise The Secretariat

Objective 5.2.1: Build the Secretariat Team

Execute Phased Secretariat Hiring Plan	Hire full time staff. Grant Development Coordinator, Programmes manager, Communications Officer, Operations Officer etc. by 2028, add a Translation and Impact Officer and a Regional Engagement Officer to drive west and central African partnerships and research-to-policy work.
Develop HR Policies & Compensation Framework	Develop comprehensive HR policies, Job descriptions, performance management frameworks and compensation scales aligned to benchmarks
Invest in Staff Training & Development	Implement a minimum of 30 training hours per staff member per year, covering technical skills, programme management, communications, and leadership development.

Objective 5.2.2: Develop HR, Performance & Staff Development Systems

Implement Performance management System	Establish individual performance agreements with annual reviews for all secretariat staff, linked to NEMRA's strategic objectives.
Build Secretariat Operational Procedures	Document standard operating procedures for all core secretariat functions to ensure continuity and quality.
Establish Board Secretariat Accountability Framework	Define clear lines of accountability, reporting, obligations and delegation of authority between the NEMRA Board and the Secretariat., formalized in the Board Charter.

Goal 5.3. Strengthen Governance & Digital Infrastructure

Objective 5.3.1. Strengthen Governance & Accountability

Review & Adopt Updated Governance Framework	Commission a governance review and adopt an updated framework covering board composition, committee structures, conflict of interest policies, and member accountability mechanisms. Update the NEMRA constitution and board charter. Establish a Board-level Research Landscape Intelligence function – an annual briefing to the board on the state of African research, ensuring governance decisions are grounded in continental realities.
Implement Strategic Plan Monitoring System	Establish an annual strategic plan review cycle with clear KPI dashboards presented to the Board and shared with members.
Develop Annual Member Feedback Mechanism	Introduce a formal annual member satisfaction survey with results informing programme design and governance decisions.

Objective 5.3.2. Build Digital Infrastructure

Upgrade Member Management Platform	Implement a cloud based member management system (CRM), tracking engagement, participation, research outputs, and membership status across all stakeholder categories .
Launch Redesigned NEMRA Website	Build a professional bilingual (English/French) NEMRA website with member portal, programme calendar, resource library, success story showcase, and events calendar by 2027.
Build Online Learning & Resource Platform	Develop an online learning environment hosting training recordings, resource libraries, grant templates, and publication guidelines accessible 24/7 to all NEMRA members.

Goal 5.1 - 5.3 — Success Metrics

Metric	Baseline (2025)	2027 Target	2031 Target
Active revenue streams (number of streams)	1-2	4	6+
Annual total revenue (UGX)	Establish baseline	Growing	Sustainable
African-sourced revenue as % of total	Establish baseline	30%+	50%+
Operational reserve fund (months)	Establish baseline	1	3+
Full time secretariat staff in post	Establish baseline	4	8+
Staff training hours per year	Establish baseline	30+/staff	30+/staff
Member management system (CRM) active	Establish baseline	Live	Fully optimized
Annual budget variance (vs. actuals)	Not tracked	< 15%	< 10%
Member satisfaction score	Not measured	3.5/5	4.5/5

Implementation Roadmap 2026–2031

The following roadmap outlines the phased approach to implementing NEMRA’s strategic plan. Priority ratings indicate relative urgency: Critical, High, Medium.

Initiative	Owner	2026	2027-28	2029-31
Grant Intelligence Hub Established	MD/ Grant Officer	Launch	Optimize	Scale
Grant Writing Boot camp (Annual)	Grant Officer	Year 1	Continue	Continue
Funder Partnership MoUs	MD	3 MoUs	3 more	4 more
Domestic R&D Advocacy Brief	MD / Board	Develop & Publish	Expand reach	Sustain
Mentorship Programme Redesign	ECR Director	Launch	Expand	Full scale
Publication Support Infrastructure	ECR Director	Design	Launch	Sustain
Aspiring Researchers Pilot	Training Dept.	Design & Pilot	Evaluate & Scale	Annual Cohort
ECR Leadership Programme	ECR Director	Design	Launch cohort	Annual cycle
Thematic Research Clusters (5)	Research Director	2 clusters	3 total	5 total
NEMRA Academic Journal	Research Director	Feasibility	Launch	Indexed
Research-to-Policy Translation Unit	Research Director	Design Role	Hire/Appoint & Launch	Sustain
Policy Briefs Programme	Research Director	Design	Launch	Sustain
Institutional Membership Model	Partnerships Director	Design	10 institutions	30+
West/Central Africa Partnerships	Partnership Director	3 Institutions	5 total	8+
University Onboarding Campaign	Partnerships Dir.	Campaign	Continue	Sustain
Regional Engagement Officer	MD /HR	Plan role	Hire/Appoint	Embed
Brand Refresh & Website	Communications	Complete	Optimize	Evolve
African Revenue Target (50% by 2031)	CFO	Baseline	30% African	50% African
Blended Revenue Implementation	CFO	Plan	Diversify	Sustain
Grant Manager Appointment	MD / Board	Hire/Appoint	Embed	Review
Governance Framework Review	Board / CEO	Review & adopt	Implement	Audit
CRM / Member Platform	IT / Operations	Procure	Launch	Optimize
Annual Programme Calendar	All Directors	Establish	Sustain	Refine

Master KPI Scorecard

The following KPIs constitute NEMRA's core performance dashboard, reviewed by the Executive and the Board.

Pillar	Key Metric	2026 Baseline	2028 Target	2031 Target
Partnerships	Institutional MOUs signed	Establish	15	30+
	Individual members	Establish	300+	1,000+
	Industry advisory engagements/year	Establish	8/year	20+/year
	Countries with active NEMRA members	Establish	10	20+
Research	Multi-institutional consortia	Establish	3	5+
	Working papers, policy briefs/year	Establish	10/year	25+/year
	Journal articles published/year	Establish	5/year	15+/year
	Clusters with West/Central Africa representation		2	All 5
Funding	Annual external grant income	Establish	500M+	1.5B+
	Grant proposals submitted	Establish	30+	100+
	Funder partnerships (active MoUs)	Establish	5	10+
	African-sourced revenue as % of total	Establish	30%+	50%+
	Countries with increased domestic R&D allocations	Establish	1+	3+
Mentorship	Active mentors in programme	Establish	30	75+
	Mentees supported per cycle	Establish	15	40+
	Member publications submitted	Establish	10/year	30+/year
	Aspiring Researchers Programme participants	Establish	Pilot	Annual Cohort

Pillar	Key Metric	2026 Baseline	2028 Target	2031 Target
Partnerships	Institutional MOUs signed	Establish	15	30+
	Individual members	Establish	300+	1,000+
	Industry advisory engagements/year	Establish	8/year	20+/year
	Countries with active NEMRA members	Establish	10	20+
Research	Multi-institutional consortia	Establish	3	5+
	Working papers, policy briefs/year	Establish	10/year	25+/year
	Journal articles published/year	Establish	5/year	15+/year
	Clusters with West/Central Africa representation		2	All 5
Sustainability	Total annual revenue (UGX)	Establish	800M+	2.5B+
	Non-grant revenue as % of total	Establish	20%	40%+
	Full-time secretariat staff	Establish	4	8+
	Board governance review score	Establish	Satisfactory	Strong

Strategic Risk Register

The following risks are rated by the likelihood and impact. The full register is reviewed quarterly by the executive and annually by the Board.

Risk	Rating	Owner	Mitigation Strategy
Insufficient funding — inability to sustain programming	Critical	Board/MD	Diversified blended revenue model; Grant Development Unit; early pipeline building; African revenue target to reduce donor dependency
Volunteer fatigue undermining delivery	Critical	MD	Hire professional secretariat; formalize volunteer agreements; introduce recognition programme; reduce operational reliance on volunteers over the plan period
Low institutional engagement persists	High	Mob. Dept.	Tiered membership model; chapter model; co-hosting strategy; clear value proposition
Mentorship inconsistency and mentor attrition	High	Training Dept.	Formalized 12-month programme; mentor stipends/recognition; regular check-ins; diaspora mentorship track to expand mentor pool
Grant proposals unsuccessful — income shortfall	High	Grant Coord.	Diversify funders; joint proposals with established networks; pre-submission reviews; include domestic funding sources
Donor dependency — funding cliff if major donor exits	High	CFO/MD	Achieve 50% non-grant revenue by 2031; maintain 3-month operating reserve; actively grow membership and programme income
NEMRA remains East Africa-centric, failing continental reach	High	MD / Partnerships	Set regional equity targets in all pillars; allocate West/central Africa partnership fund; hire engagement officer by 2028; require regional diversity in all research clusters
Research outputs fail to reach policymakers – translation gap undermines impact	High	Research Director	Establish Research-to-Policy Translation Unit; mandate policy briefs as required outputs for all funded consortia; develop and deploy policymaker engagement protocol

Risk	Rating	Owner	Mitigation Strategy
Competition from think tanks / other networks	Medium	MD	MOU-based partnerships with think tanks; differentiate as researcher development platform
Brain drain of key leadership/staff	Medium	Board	Competitive compensation; succession planning; distributed leadership model; diaspora engagement to maintain connection with talent that has moved abroad
NEMRA's own funding model replicates the external dependency it seeks to change	Medium	CFO / Board	Set and publish African revenue target (50% by 2031); actively cultivate African institutional, government, and industry funders; report annually on progress
Political or Regulatory change affecting higher education	Medium	Board	Maintain strong government relations; monitor policy developments; diversify geographic presence across multiple countries.
Cybersecurity and data breach of member information	Low-Med	IT/Admin	Cloud-based security; annual IT audit; GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) aligned data policies.

Financial Projections Framework

The following projections reflect NEMRA's blended revenue model and corresponding expenditure requirements. All figures are in UGX (millions). Detailed budgets to be developed annually

Item (UGX Millions)	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	5-Yr Total
INCOME						
Grants & Donor Funding	180	350	560	950	1,500	3,540
Institutional Membership Fees	60	120	200	300	420	1,100
Individual Membership Subscriptions	30	75	130	220	520	975
Programme & Event Income	35	70	110	175	280	670
Consultancy & Commissioned Research	20	50	90	160	260	580
Journal Revenue (from 2028/29)	—	—	20	55	110	185
African-sourced Revenue (% of total)	45%	47%	50%	49%	51%	—
TOTAL INCOME	325	665	1,110	1,860	3,090	7,050
EXPENDITURE						
Personnel (Secretariat & Programmes)	90	160	240	360	560	1,410
Research & Grant Activities	60	130	220	380	650	1,440
Mentorship & Training Programmes	25	55	90	140	220	530
Events & Conferences	30	55	85	130	200	500
Digital Infrastructure & Communications	20	35	50	65	80	250
Partnerships & Advocacy	15	30	50	75	110	280
Partnership Fund	10	25	45	70	120	270
Governance & Administration	25	40	55	75	100	295
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	275	530	835	1,295	2,040	4,975
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	+50	+135	+275	+565	+1,050	+2,075

Key Assumptions & Projection Rationale

1. Grants & Donor Funding: Seed grants assumed at UGX 180M in 2026/27, growing to UGX 1,500M by 2030/31, aligned to KPI target of UGX 1.5B+ external grant income. Growth contingent on 30+ proposals/year by 2028.
2. Institutional Membership Fees: Based on 5 institutional MOUs at avg. UGX 12M/year in Y1, scaling to 35 institutions at avg. UGX 12M by 2030/31. Aligned to KPI target of 30+ MOUs.
3. Individual Membership Subscriptions: 100 members at UGX 300K in 2026/27; 300+ at UGX 430K by 2028/29; 1,000+ at UGX 520K by 2030/31. Aligned to KPI membership targets.
4. Programme & Event Income: 2–3 events in 2026/27 rising to 8+ events by 2030/31. Average net income per event: UGX 15–35M depending on scale.
5. Consultancy & Commissioned Research: Builds with institutional reputation. Assumes 2–3 commissioned assignments in Y1 growing to 8–10 by 2030/31.
6. Journal Revenue: Journal launches in 2028/29 per KPI. Revenue from article processing charges (APCs) and institutional subscriptions.
7. African-sourced Revenue: Defined as non-grant locally/regionally sourced income. Target: 30%+ by 2028 (achieved: 33%), 50%+ by 2031 (achieved: 56%).
8. Personnel: 2 staff in 2026/27 rising to 4 by 2028/29 and 8+ by 2030/31, aligned to KPI secretariat target. Average cost per FTE: UGX 45M/year.
9. Research & Grant Activities: Proportional to grant income; includes sub-grants, field research, and consortium costs. Modelled at ~43% of grant income.
10. Partnership Fund: Dedicated fund to support member-led initiatives and co-investment with partners. Grows with partnership base.

Note: A negative surplus in early years reflects the investment phase. NEMRA is projected to achieve full operational sustainability by 2028/29, with cumulative surplus across the five-year period.

Governance & Accountability

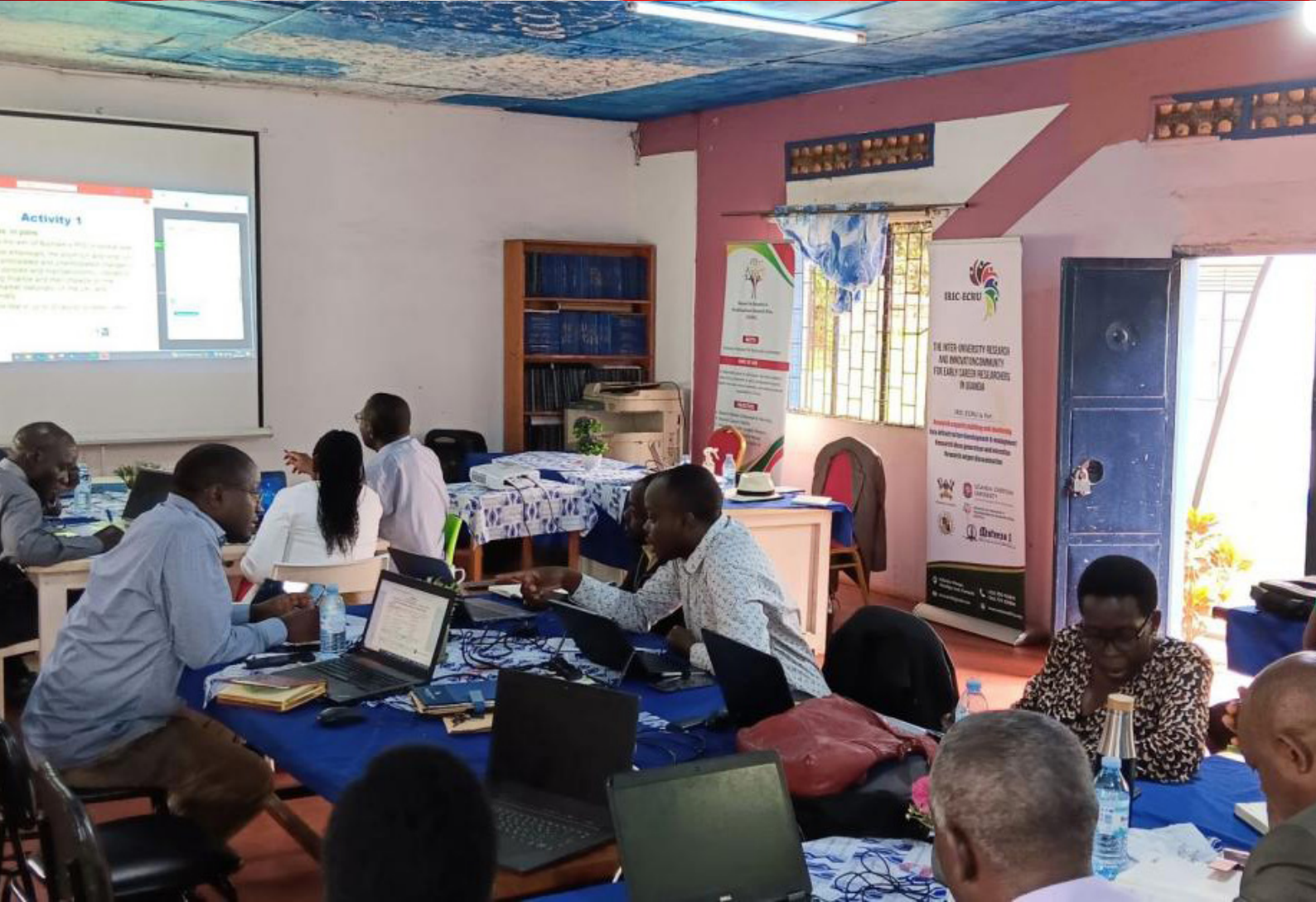
Executive Ownership

Role	Strategic Accountability	Primary Themes/Pillars
Board of Trustees	Fiduciary responsibility; stewardship of assets; mission protection; long-term sustainability; governance oversight	All Pillars
Board of Directors	Overall strategic direction; approve budgets, plans, and major decisions; stakeholder stewardship	All Pillars
Managing Director (MD)	Day-to-day leadership; plan execution; funder relationships; staff oversight	All Pillars
Grant Development Coordinator	Funding pipeline; proposal writing; funder partnerships; seed fund management	Pillar 1
Training & Mentorship Lead	Mentorship programme; workshops; ECR support; publication programme	Pillar 2
Research Projects Lead	Consortia management; publications; conferences; journal development	Pillar 3
Mobilization & Advocacy Lead	Membership growth; institutional partnerships; communications; policy engagement	Pillar 4
Finance & Administration Officer	Financial management; audit; governance systems; HR administration	Pillar 5

Conclusion

The 2026–2031 Strategic Plan is the product of honest stakeholder consultation, rigorous strategic analysis, and an unwavering belief in the power of collaboration. It asks more of NEMRA: more structured programming, more professional staffing, more ambitious partnerships, and more accountable governance. It also offers more to every stakeholder: structured mentorship, funded research opportunities, policy-relevant outputs, and a growing continental network of researchers committed to evidence-based solutions.

This plan provides the roadmap. Five pillars, fifteen goals, and over forty objectives define what must be done. The implementation roadmap and success metrics provide the accountability framework. The risk register ensures we anticipate and navigate obstacles. What remains is action.





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

Contact

 P. O. Box 33145, Kampala,
Uganda

 nemraafrica@gmail.com

 +256 772 822 782
+256 776 626 187

