Dear NRF stakeholder

The RISA Organisational Renewal process initiated by the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards the end of 2012 will soon commence its phased roll out. Staff plans and deployments have been completed; regular consultations with the unions have taken place and soon individual staff discussions on specific roles within the new structure will be undertaken and concluded.

The reason the NRF has embarked on this exercise stems from repeated indications from the research community, both through NRF reviews as well as targeted stakeholder surveys, that the NRF is frequently seen as a strongly hierarchical, often overly bureaucratic institution. This is not appropriate for an organisation that functions in a service environment. Changing the culture of an organisation is not an easy exercise but we will persist and ensure, with the assistance of you, our clients, that this objective is attained.

To date, this renewal has been a seamless process with all staff, union representatives and management excited to be on board for the renewal and transformation. Some of the more visible changes that have been decided upon include the establishment of new directorates, namely:

- Research Chairs and Centres of Excellence (RCCE)
- Institutional Engagement and Partnership Development (IEPD) and the re-focusing of others including:
  - Reviews and Evaluation (RE)
  - Knowledge Fields Development (KFD)
  - Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD)
  - Applied Research, Innovation and Collaboration (ARIC)
  - International Relations and Cooperation (IRC)
  - Grant Making and Systems Administration

In addition, the Knowledge Management (KM) function will be relocated as a NRF Corporate function to better serve the entire NRF.

We are particularly excited about the greater interaction the NRF will have with its various stakeholders through the new IEPD directorate. This IEPD Directorate will ensure that the NRF responds more appropriately to the particular needs of the various institutions that mark our higher education landscape and the rest of the National System of Innovation (NSI). In addition, with the growing number of applications for NRF ratings and grant funding instruments, we have created a dedicated directorate that will focus on ensuring that reviews, evaluations and assessments follow accepted international best practices. We are confident that these changes will create a more positive experience for all our stakeholders in their interaction with the NRF and look forward to engaging with the research community to optimise NRF service delivery in

The objective of the RISA Organisational Renewal is to position the NRF to better serve its stakeholders through greater client centricity and responsiveness to the needs of the community as far as is practically possible.
support of national research excellence. From 01 April 2013, the NRF will embark on its first steps under this renewed RISA and with it, a renewed focus on serving our stakeholders and developing stronger partnerships with the NRF’s clients. This requires the NRF grant making business to work as a matrix, to break down silos across the organisation and offer a seamless service-orientated experience. The various Directorates and their relationship are depicted above for information.

The major benefits this new approach matrix structure will offer our clients include:
- A single and dedicated contact point for each and every funding call or project we launch;
- A dedicate project team and project leader that will drive a call from inception to completion, even over multiple years;
- Appropriate checks and balances to ensure neutrality and truly competitive grant making across the NRF;
- The installation of a deep service culture throughout the organisation;
- A RISA Executive that takes collective responsibility for effective delivery on all NRF projects and objectives;
- A middle management structure that is tasked to develop effective team-work across the NRF; and
- A system that ensures that science outputs are systematically scanned for science communication and public understanding of science purposes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff and stakeholders for their enthusiasm and understanding through what is an exciting time for the organisation.

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We shall keep you posted on developments as the implementation proceeds.

Yours faithfully
Dr Albert van Jaarseeld