

Research Council of Zimbabwe Newsletter

RESEARCH COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE



Leadership, Innovation and Development

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RCZ-BUSE Sign Memorandum of Understanding



In the picture BUSE Vice Chancellor Professor Eddie Mwenje (left) and RCZ Executive Director Mrs Susan Muzite at the MOU signing ceremony in Bindura

On 23 March 2016, the Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) and Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for linking the BUSE Institutional Repository to the National Research Database of Zimbabwe (NRDZ). The renewable five-year agreement which was signed at the BUSE Main Campus in Bindura is set to increase the visibility of research as the two institutions are committed to cooperate more closely towards a common goal of publicising Zimbabwean research.

The NRDZ which is hosted by the RCZ and BUSE Institutional Repository are online platforms for research promotion and publicity.

This MoU is the first of many that are anticipated to be signed between RCZ and all Universities and Institutions with institutional repositories in Zimbabwe. The initiative to link the NRDZ with institutional repositories is a response by RCZ to a suggestion by local universities and stakeholders and it is envisaged that such a linkage will popularise the NRDZ and increase the visibility of research being undertaken by Zimbabwean researchers.

In his welcome remarks, BUSE Vice Chancellor, Professor Eddie Mwenje, expressed joy at the pace at which the relationship between RCZ and BUSE was growing; "As a University, we are excited that our relationship with the RCZ continues to flourish as both parties identify important areas of engagement. In the area of research support, we are happy to acknowledge that the RCZ is supporting two major projects at the institution, one in the Faculty of Commerce and the other in the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Science," said Professor Mwenje.

Prof Mwenje further added that the platform, which will allow harvesting of metadata from the BUSE Institutional Repository, will ultimately increase access to BUSE publications and research documents; thus raising the institution's visibility. It is also expected that as more and more articles from the institution are accessed, the number of citations will also increase thus positively impacting on the University's ranking.

Speaking prior to the signing ceremony, RCZ Executive Director, Mrs. Susan Muzite, commended BUSE's readiness to implement the agreement, which made the institution stand out among many other universities that RCZ engaged. Mrs. Muzite further affirmed Prof Mwenje's assertion that the two institutions' relationship is long standing ... **pg 2**

2016 AfriGEOSS Symposium

The first symposium of the Africa Global Earth Observation System of Systems (AfriGEOSS) Initiative will be hosted by the Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) on behalf of the government of Zimbabwe. The event will take place on **27 – 29 April 2016 in Victoria Falls.**

Established in 2005, GEO is a voluntary partnership of governments and organizations that envisions “a future wherein decisions and actions for the benefit of humankind are informed by coordinated, comprehensive and sustained Earth observations and information.” GEO member governments include 101 nations and the European Commission, and 92 participating organizations comprised of international bodies with a mandate in Earth observations. The GEO community is creating a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) that will link Earth observation resources world-wide across multiple Societal Benefit Areas - Biodiversity and Ecosystem Sustainability, Disaster Resilience, Energy and Mineral Resources Management, Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture, Infrastructure & Transportation Management, Public Health Surveillance, Sustainable Urban Development, Water Resources Management - and make those resources available for better informed decision-making.

Symposium Theme and Objectives

The Symposium Theme: "Earth Observations for the Africa We Want", will focus Symposium discussions on ensuring AfriGEOSS activities respond to the broader African agendas and objectives such the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063. The objectives of the symposium are:

- Understand the role of Earth Observations in the implementation of African policies for sustainable development.
- Identify means and ways for mainstreaming Earth Observations in the decision making processes in Africa.
- Review the AfriGEOSS implementation approach and develop a detailed technical and financial programme.
- Building synergies with GEO initiatives and international initiatives relevant to Africa with continental initiatives

Registration

The registration for the symposium is now open and can be done [online](#).

Research Council of Zimbabwe and Environmental Management Agency Sign an MoU

In light of the financial constraints faced by the Government, who is one of the major funders of research in Zimbabwe, RCZ has embarked on serious resource mobilisation efforts to fund research in the country. These efforts continue to yield positive results and on 26 February 2016, RCZ secured funding for research projects in the area of environmental management. This follows the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) between RCZ and the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), which will culminate in EMA and RCZ collaborating in funding of research projects that are in line with EMA's mandate.

A Call for proposals in the research area of environmental management is expected to be published before the end of April 2015. The RCZ and EMA technical teams are currently in the process for finalising the joint call for proposals. The MoU follows another one signed with the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA) in 2015, which has already yielded results. A Call for proposals was made in 2015 to fund research in Energy, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

RCZ is delighted by the support it is getting from partnerships with its cooperating partners who have been very supportive of research.

RCZ-BUSE Sign Memorandum of Understanding... *from pg. 1*

“The RCZ has funded research from BUSE following a world class competitive and rigorous peer review process. BUSE has peer-reviewed proposals and papers for the RCZ, some of them presented at the Zimbabwe International Research Symposia. The excellent relationship we enjoy is indeed cause for celebration,” she said. The implementation of the MOU is set to commence immediately with the RCZ and BUSE Technical teams already working on configuring the NRDZ and BUSE Institutional Repository for the import and export of metadata. Delegates at the ceremony agreed that the MoU should have a quick implementation and turn around time.

RCZ Secretariat Goes Through a Staff Development Exercise

The Research Council of Zimbabwe staff underwent training to improve their skills in writing, editing, resource mobilisation, and review of research articles.

The training was conducted by the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) Centre for Professional Development from 07-17 March 2016. As a result of the high level of engagement involved in the training, RCZ offices were closed for business from 7- 17 March 2016 to facilitate attendance by all RCZ staff members.

In her opening remarks, at the training RCZ Executive Director Mrs Susan Muzite, highlighted that the RCZ Board highly valued the training. As such RCZ had to advertise in the Sunday Mail informing stakeholders of RCZ offices closure for the duration of the training period. This showed how important the training was to RCZ. ZOU was requested to equally give the training a high priority so that RCZ achieved the training objective.

The following areas were covered over the two-week training period: Report writing, Research Articles Review, Resource mobilisation, Minute taking and writing, Professional English writing and editing skills and Project proposal writing. All trained will be issued a certificate of competence.



Staff Training in Pictures



Research Calendar of Events

Name Of Conference	Hosting Institution	Date	Venue
2016 AfriGEOSS Symposium	Research Council of Zimbabwe	27 – 29 April 2016	Elephant Hills Resort, Victoria Falls
1st Biennial Symposium on Human Settlements Planning, Development and Sustainability in Zimbabwe	Faculty of Social Studies, University of Zimbabwe	23 -24 June 2016	New Lecture Theatre 400, University of Zimbabwe
Teacher Education Research Conference, 2016	Mutare Teachers College	30 June – 2 July 2016	Mutare Teachers College
Institute Of Lifelong Learning And Development Studies International Conference	Chinhoyi University Of Technology	2-5 August 2016	Chinhoyi University Of Technology
RIE-SET	Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development	31 August 2016-03 September 2016	National University of Science and Technology, Bulawayo

This research calendar of events section looks at upcoming research conferences and activities in the country. The aim of the Research calendar is to keep you updated with information on research conferences being hosted in the country's universities and colleges. If you are hosting a research conference, public lecture or research in progress workshop let us know at marketing@rcz.ac.zw so that we can help to publicise your event. Some of the information is as obtained from the respective institutional websites. Conference details are subject to change at the hosting's institutions' discretion. For more information about these conferences visit the websites of the hosting institution.

Research Stakeholder Workshop Video

RCZ is pleased to announce that the video on proceedings from the Research Stakeholders Workshop held on 25 September 2015 at Cresta Lodge, Harare can now be watched on the RCZ website. The workshop was to deliberate on how research should contribute towards the successful implementation of ZIMASSET while in the process shaping the National Research Agenda. Over 120 people participated making recommendations for successful implementation of ZIMASSET and shaping the National Research Agenda. The workshop report is available for downloading on the RCZ website.

REGISTRATION OF FOREIGN RESEARCHERS IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

The Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) is mandated to register foreign researchers as per section 27 of the Research Act. A foreign researcher is a non-Zimbabwean national and any person wishing to conduct research in Zimbabwe on behalf of a foreign institution, foreign organisation or other foreign person. As we begin 2016, it is important that all foreign researchers and their counterparts ensure that they are registered. The following is some important information about the registration process.

REGISTRATION FEES

Registration Category	Fee
Normal registration fee of foreign researchers	US\$500.00
Penalty for late renewal of registration	US\$500.00/month and part thereof
Application for extension of the study	US\$500.00
Study Amendment fee	US\$500.00

DEADLINES

- Foreigners intending to conduct research in Zimbabwe should apply for research permits from the RCZ and have them approved before arrival in Zimbabwe
- Study permits are valid for one calendar year.
- The renewal registration form should be submitted not later than one month before the expiration date.
- The applicant is required to submit a detailed report to the RCZ and the National Archives within one year of completing the research.

APPLICATION FORMS

All application forms used in the registration of research can be downloaded from the RCZ website

STORAGE OF BIO-SPECIMENS

Extraterritorial storage of bio-specimens beyond the RCZ study approved period is illegal.

INSTITUTIONS OF AFFILIATION

The foreign researcher should seek an institution of affiliation in the area of the intended research in Zimbabwe. That institution of affiliation in Zimbabwe forwards the application to RCZ. It is also up to the institution to accept the foreign researcher. Recognised institutions of affiliation are Universities, Government Ministries, Government Departments who run their own budgets and whose head is an accounting officer and any other publicly funded institutions as determined by the RCZ. It is a requirement of the law that foreign researchers be affiliated to local institutions for them to be awarded research permits.

The Global Research Council

The Global Research Council (GRC) is a virtual organization, comprised of the over 70 heads of science and engineering funding agencies from around the world, dedicated to promoting the sharing of data and best practices for high-quality collaboration among funding agencies worldwide.

The worldwide growth of public support for research has presented an opportunity for countries large and small to work in concert across national borders. Cooperation and collaboration can enhance the quality of science, avoid unnecessary duplication, provide economies of scale, and address issues that can only be solved by working together. Heads of research funding agencies have a responsibility to meet these objectives on behalf of the research community.

The objectives of the Global Research Council are:

1. To improve communication and cooperation among funding agencies;
2. To promote the sharing of data and best practices for high-quality research cooperation;
3. To provide a forum for regular meetings of the Heads of Research Councils;
4. To respond to opportunities and to address issues of common concern in the support of research and education;
5. To be a resource for those institutions wishing to build a world-class research landscape; and
6. To explore mechanisms that supports the global science enterprise and the worldwide research community.

The Research Council of Zimbabwe is the country's representative on the GRC. RCZ, represented by its Executive Director, Mrs. S Muzite has attended all annual general meetings of the GRC since its inception in 2012. In 2013 the GRC release two important research documents which are the Statement on Research Integrity and GRC Open Access Plan. The two documents are meant to encourage open access to science publications resulting from public funding. There is broad agreement that publicly funded research results should be publicly available.

Statement of Principles for Research Integrity

The Responsible Conduct of Research is at the very essence of the scientific enterprise and is intrinsic to society's trust in science. Within the framework of the Responsible Conduct of Research, the basic principles of Research Integrity - namely honesty, responsibility, fairness and accountability – are enshrined in foundational documents that also describe the responsibilities of researchers and the scientific community.

While researchers and institutions themselves remain ultimately responsible for undertaking research with integrity, research funding agencies have an obligation to ensure that the research they support is conducted in accordance with the highest standards possible. To that end, participants in the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Global Research Council recognize the following Principles to articulate the responsibilities of research funding agencies in creating an international environment in which research integrity is at the core of all activities.

Principles

Leadership

Research funding agencies must lead by example in the responsible management of research programs.

Promotion

Research funding agencies should encourage institutions to develop and implement policies and systems to promote integrity in all aspects of the research enterprise.

Education

Research funding agencies should promote continual training in research integrity, and develop initiatives to educate all researchers and students on the importance of research integrity.

Transparent Processes

Research funding agencies should, within the scope of their mandate, publish policies and procedures to promote research integrity and to address allegations of research misconduct.

Response to Allegations of Misconduct

During any investigation of misconduct, research funding agencies should support a process that values accountability, timeliness and fairness.

Conditions for Research Support

Research funding agencies should incorporate integrity in research as a condition for obtaining and maintaining funding by researchers and institutions.

International Cooperation

Research funding agencies will work cooperatively with partners to support and facilitate research integrity worldwide.

- <http://www.globalresearchcouncil.org/documents#researchintegrity>

ACTION PLAN TOWARDS OPEN ACCESS TO PUBLICATIONS

Open access can be instrumental for improving the quality and impact of research. To stimulate the development of, and potential for, new and better opportunities for scholarly and scientific endeavour, the Global Research Council (GRC) endorses this Action Plan towards Open Access to Publications as a living document. The GRC will monitor progress in implementing the Action Plan which is expected to evolve accordingly.

Assuming that providing research results in open access is beneficial to many stakeholders and will lead to better research, the plan suggests a number of activities by which participants in the Global Research Council (GRC) can foster the open exchange of research results. The plan highlights some common principles for transitioning to open access as a basis for the action plan. The proposed activities aim at raising awareness for open access, at promoting and supporting open access, and at assessing the implementation of the actions suggested. The action plan is designed to take into account that participants in the GRC come from various backgrounds, have various degrees of expertise in dealing with open access, and have different remits. Thus, funding agencies need to consider which of the proposed activities are appropriate to be taken up by (possibly consortia of) participants in the GRC.

Open access is beneficial to a broad range of stakeholders. It leads to better science e.g. by increasing access to knowledge, by improving the pace and efficiency of research, by enabling computation on research information, and by offering opportunities to foster collaboration and exchange globally. In addition, by increasing authors' visibility, open access is also beneficial to the individual researcher. Furthermore, increased access to knowledge provides societal benefits to many who rely on research results, be it in patient care, be it in politics and decision making, be it in entrepreneurship or industry, be it in journalism or society at large: there is an enormous need for research information outside universities and research institutes which can be served best by openly accessible research information.

Considering the fundamental changes in scholarly communication and the above mentioned benefits and taking into account that the Global Research Council (GRC) aims at fostering even better international cooperation, the GRC suggested the Action Plan to stimulate and support open access. Bearing in mind that research outputs take many different forms (e.g. journal articles, books, research data, animation, software or tools) and that new forms of research outputs are likely to emerge, the Global Research Council's first Action Plan concentrates on open access to research articles from scholarly journals.

The full document can be accessed on Action Plan towards Open Access [here](#).

How to write a research abstract

Research abstracts are used throughout the research community to provide a summarised description about a research project. A good abstract is usually the key to having your work selected for presentation at research conferences and workshops. Writing a good research abstract is a huge undertaking for most researchers as they wonder how to condense a months of research work into 300 to 400 words. In this article we try to provide some guidance on how to write a good abstract so that you can increase your chances of being selected for conference presentations. The first rule of writing abstract is to know the rules, every organiser of research conferences sets explicit rules about the abstracts, which usually include length of abstract. Know these rules and pay close attention to them. Reviewers will have many abstracts to look at and those that don't conform are simply discarded.

A research abstract is usually divided into four sections which are: title, author information, abstract *{introduction, methodology, findings/results and conclusion}* and keywords. It's important to note that the weight accorded to the different sections can vary by discipline.

Research Title

This should be as original as possible. It must be able to convince that the topic is important, relevant and innovative.

Authors Information

This is a list of authors starting with the name of the main author (principal investigator) followed by the second, third authors etc. If only one author has undertaken the research work, one name will appear under authors' list section. Information about institutions from where the contributing (collaborating) authors are drawn from is included in this section. If the authors are all drawn from one institute, then the name of that institute and its address should appear. However, if at least two or more institutes are collaborating in the research work, then their names should appear in a numbered order.

Abstract

1. **Introduction:** This usually consists of a several sentences highlighting a bit of background information and the research question to be addressed. Make the first sentence as interesting as possible and provide a concise review of what is known about the problem to be addressed.
2. **Methodology:** This should be mentioned in a detailed manner highlighting issues like research design, research setting, participating subjects, outcomes variables and how they are measured and the statistical methods used to analyse data.
3. **Finding/ Results:** The results section is the most important part of the abstract. This is because readers who peruse an abstract do so to learn about the findings of the study. The results section should, therefore, be the longest part of the abstract and should contain as much detail about the findings highlighting what you learned/invented or created.
4. **Conclusion(s)** and if applicable the recommendation(s). This section highlights what can be concluded by the research and its implications. This section must be supported by data presented in the abstract

Key words

These are the words that characterise the study. They should not be more than six. A good abstract typically take days to write, consultations from experienced mentors and sharing with others for them to read and critic so that you can make revisions based on feedback.

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