

**Southern African Institute
for Collaborative Research
(SAICOR)**

Strategic Plan 2023-2028

SAICOR Leadership

Introduction

Southern African Institute for Collaborative Research (SAICOR) embodies a bold vision for the future of scientific knowledge, innovation, education, and evidence in the fields of medicine, public health, epidemiology, disease surveillance, economics, demography, gender, education, geography – climate and environment and other social sciences.

SAICOR will establish itself as a major multi-disciplinary research hub in medicine, public health, epidemiology, sexual and reproductive health and rights, disease surveillance, economics, demography, gender, education, geography – climate and environment and other social sciences in Zambia and around the world. The institute will link talented and ambitious young researchers from Southern Africa to collaborate with experienced researchers in African Universities and internationally to pursue ground-breaking research in the mentioned fields. SAICOR will also strive to be the knowledge management resource centre in the mentioned fields for Southern Africa and a training ground for young researchers.

The SAICOR strategic plan 2023–2028 lays out an ambitious but achievable set of goals which will see the actualization of the SAICOR mission to nurture Interdisciplinary research, knowledge management and educational hub for the next five years.

Vision

To advance the well-being and conditions of people and the environment through excellent interdisciplinary research, knowledge management and education.

Mission

Create a centre of excellence for collaborative research in the southern region that contributes to policy development, knowledge management, cross learning, capacity development, mentoring and advance scientific research.

Overall Strategies

To achieve distinction in the next five years to identify research challenges of high societal importance that require our interdisciplinary skill set and to establish ourselves as a distinguished resource of expert knowledge in these areas. To do so, we will:

- Institute avenues to accelerate interdisciplinary research that will lead to funded centres of excellence.
- Build a vibrant community of collaborators through events and activities, core facilities, seed grants and external multi-PI/large grant applications.
- Establish strategic partnership with academia, research institutes, and relevant government ministries to support research, education, and workforce development.
- Pursue funding opportunities in research, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), report writing, data analysis (both qualitative and quantitative research), editing of reports and dissemination of results as a commercial entity.
- Create advanced mentorship curricula for masters, doctoral students, and post-doctoral scholars.
- Promote the SAICOR and its research through media outreach, educational symposia, and other vehicles.
- Engage with the public to inspire and promote interdisciplinary research through public engagement and educational events and connect with stakeholders to influence future policy.
- Secure the institute's financial sustainability by increasing revenue from government, bi-and-multi-lateral donor agencies, non-profit organisations, philanthropic organisations and donors, and core facility usage.
- Pursue Regional, Continental and International Partnerships for the development of local communities and attaining local solutions with greater productivity and output.

GOALS

Goal 1: Interdisciplinary research in medicine, public health, epidemiology, sexual and reproductive health and rights, disease surveillance, economics, demography, geography – climate and environment and other social sciences.

Objectives:

- Create a vibrant community of collaborators.
- Develop a platform for advanced mentorship for students and postdoctoral scholars.
- Establish the institute as a prestigious resource of expert knowledge for government and the public at large.

Implementation Plan

To pursue the above objectives, we will:

- Ensure high visibility of SAICOR.
- Ensure the use of SAICOR as a strategic meeting point for experts who are connected to the discipline areas of interest and who will broaden the scientific perspectives and networks.
- Identify all appropriate funding opportunities.
- Build online presence through the website and social media.
- Apply for appropriate training grants to support research.
- Establish a clear plan for media coverage of publications, awards, and other accomplishments.
- Conduct outreach activities to educate the local community about SAICOR.
- Identify opportunities to support government policies and decision making.

Goal 2: Recruitment of high calibre researchers and foster a platform where disciplinary/interdisciplinary research in medicine, public health, epidemiology, sexual and reproductive health and rights, disease surveillance, economics, demography, geography – climate and environment and other social sciences can be conducted.

Objective: To attract high calibre researchers in the scientific disciplines who will be able to conduct research and be knowledge experts in their field.

- Identify scientific challenges whose solutions require interdisciplinary approaches and will have significant societal impact.
- Create appropriate vehicles to accelerate research in identified areas.
- Design appropriate research that will address identified research needs.
- Implement events and activities that explicitly promote collaborations.

- Create a platform for innovative discussions on research and for exchange of scientific information.
- Create opportunities to attract and support talented doctoral and postdoctoral fellows.
- Engage with local communities and stakeholders to inspire and promote research through public engagement and educational events.

Goals 3: Strategic partnership and collaboration

We will establish SAICOR as a valued source of expert knowledge for industry, government, and the public in its initiative areas, and as a leader in transdisciplinary research. It will serve as an intellectual magnet for visiting scholars, early careers researchers, public sector workforce and entrepreneurs of the future through its advanced research.

SAICOR will be a unique research institute with a complex scientific and educational scope. SAICOR recognize that partnership with external entities will be critical in advancing the SAICOR's mission to carry out leading-edge disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, ensure financial stability, and help build our reputation for innovation and nurturing of talent.

Partnerships will be carefully selected and prioritized, formalized in agreements or memorandum of understandings, and aligned with the SAICOR mission, its competitive advantages, and uniqueness. Several modes of partnerships will be expected, including shared use of space, research contracts and collaborations, and internship and fellowship opportunities.

Objectives: To foster strategic partnerships at national and international academic level, in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government ministries, inter-governmental bodies, and the private sector. We will do the following to foster these partnerships:

- Develop a formalized process to identify and secure partnership agreements and memorandum of understandings.
- Implement a mapping and monitoring system to record and track the partnerships and their outcomes.
- Formalize academic – industry/government partnerships opportunities through funded innovations.
- Capacity building provide targeted opportunities for collaboration.

Goal 4: Business Development

We will create opportunities to secure funding from traditional grant – funding agencies; develop strategies to gain philanthropic and foundation support; explore innovative working models academia – private sector collaborations; capitalizing on the institute’s research facilities; consultancy and unique workforce training opportunities.

Develop a business plan for business continuity.

Objectives: To achieve its aspirational agenda of research and education programs, SAICOR must secure revenue from multiple sources, including:

- Government and NGOs
- bi-and-multi-lateral donor agencies
- Academic, industry, and non-profit research partnership
- Philanthropic and foundation organisations
- consultancy
- Core facility usage and training.

Goal 4: Institutional Resiliency

Objectives: To develop, maintain and strengthen institutional systems, including:

- Human resources systems
- Financial systems
- Grant management
- Procurement systems
- Policies and procedures

SWOT ANALYSIS

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) were identified by members of the Board.

Strengths

- Positive experience with other research institutions.
- Proactive Partnership with UNZA.
- Board members and Staff that support the mission.
- Potential for growth.
- Dedicated and expert staff.

Weaknesses

- Distinguishing qualities and identity not yet known.
- Fiscal uncertainty.
- Opportunities.
- Partnerships in support of Institute initiatives.
- Partnership opportunities.

Threats

- Presence of other similar institutions.
- Public perceptions and lack of knowledge about research.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

KPIs are there to inform the Institute of its effectiveness. They are important, as they quantify the value that is being generated and they can be used as a benchmark to improve over time.

- Time savings
- Monetary savings
- Product improvements
- Service improvements
- Learning achieved throughout the process.
- Transferable skills gained.
- Number of MoUs signed and implemented.
- Number of Valuable partnerships formed.
- Number of Projects undertaken.
- Average market readiness/technology readiness level of project
- Variance between project concept and deliver.

- Time taken for a project to be delivered.
- Time taken for a project to break even.

Operational Plan

ACTION	ASSG.TO	PURPOSE	DEADLINE

Strategy

To deal with this operational plan and generate better outcomes, the institute incentivizes employees to increase their work efficiency.

Team

The Chief Operations Officer will be in charge of the operational plan and overall oversight will be provided by the CEO.