Human Sciences Research Council
# Strategic Plan
# 2020–2025

science
& innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

# HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council

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# Statement of the Executive Authority

The development of the HSRC's Strategic Plan 2020–2025 was guided by the overarching emphasis of the National Development Plan (NDP) to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. The Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) research agenda is therefore strategically aligned to generate knowledge in support of the NDP implementation pillars, namely Inclusive Economic Growth, Capabilities of South Africans, and a Capable State.

The Plan illustrates a clear alignment of the entity's mandate to "provide for the promotion of research in the field of human sciences in order to improve understanding of social conditions and the process of social change" in South Africa and on the continent, with relevant national and international strategies and priorities, such as government's Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) for the 2019–2024 electoral period; the White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (2019) and associated five-year and decadal implementation plans; and Agenda 2063.

It also supports the six priority outcomes identified by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) to measure its impact over the five-year period, including the cross-cutting themes of partnerships, internationalisation, and transformation, which feature prominently in the HSRC's Strategic Plan.

As the HSRC's Executive Authority, I fully support the entity's Strategic Plan 2020–2025 and will work closely with the Accounting Authority, the HSRC Board, to provide guidance and support in implementing the Plan.

**Dr BE Nzimande, MP**
Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology
Executive Authority of the Human Sciences Research Council

# Statement of the Accounting Authority

In 2015/16 the HSRC reflected on the strategic purpose and focus of its research agenda, resulting in a much clearer and more unified commitment to undertake, promote and extract synergies from research that dealt with poverty, inequality and inclusive development. In excess of 500 research projects produced research and knowledge in support of the 14 MTSF outcomes. Key achievements include the following:

- The first standardised survey of innovation in the informal sector
- The first State of South Africa's Fathers Report
- Completion and roll-out of the Rural Innovation Assessment Toolbox
- Several South African National HIV, behaviour and communication surveys, providing critical information on the course of the HIV epidemic in South Africa
- A report on reducing spatial inequalities through better regulation, commissioned by the High Level Parliamentary Panel on the Assessment of Key Legislation
- Voter Participation and Election Satisfaction surveys on behalf of the Independent Electoral Commission
- Several reports of the annual South African Social Attitudes Survey
- The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
- The Labour Market Intelligence Partnership.

The HSRC contributes significantly to the development of human and social science research capacity for the country through its Research Trainee Programme. Over the past five years, the HSRC has employed 220 master's trainees, 259 doctoral trainees and 119 post-doctoral fellows.

The HSRC will continue its focus on poverty and inequality over the next five-year period. Through its vision of being a national, regional and global leader in the production and dissemination of transformative social science and humanities research in the interests of a just and equal society, the HSRC will contribute to addressing the major developmental challenges in South Africa and on the continent. It will use its unique knowledge-production abilities to support the national developmental priorities by:

- Contributing to poverty alleviation
- Offering solutions to reduce the inequality gap
- Facilitating innovation around employment creation.

In Nature (Nature 577, 295) on 15 January 2020, Hetan Shah writes: "Without human insights, data and the hard sciences will not meet the challenges of the next decade." The HSRC, with its mandate to conduct research for the public good, has both a responsibility and an obligation to provide the human insights that will complement hard sciences and technology, and assist policy makers to understand and resolve the most pressing societal issues in the country and on the continent.

I would like to acknowledge the various role players whose critical input, guidance and oversight informed the development of this Plan, which will now be implemented. These include HSRC colleagues, the HSRC Board, colleagues at the DSI and the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

**Prof. Mvuyo Tom**
Chairperson: HSRC Board
for the Accounting Authority of the Human Sciences Research Council

# Official Sign-Off

It is hereby certified that this Strategic Plan:

- Was developed by the Board and management of the HSRC under the guidance of the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology
- Takes into account all the relevant policies, legislation and other mandates for which the HSRC is responsible
- Accurately reflects the Impact, Outcomes and Outputs which the HSRC will endeavour to achieve over the period 2020/21 to 2024/25.

**Ms Jacomien Rousseau**
Chief Financial Officer

**Prof. Crain Soudien**
Chief Executive Officer

**Prof. Mvuyo Tom**
Accounting Authority

Approved

**Dr BE Nzimande, MP**
Executive Authority

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **4IR** | Fourth Industrial Revolution |
| **AISA** | Africa Institute of South Africa |
| **CSOs** | Civil Society Organisations |
| **DSI** | Department of Science and Innovation |
| **eRKC** | e-Research Knowledge Centre |
| **IT** | Information Technology |
| **IPTT** | Intellectual Property and Technological Transfer |
| **MTEF** | Medium-Term Expenditure Framework |
| **MTSF** | Medium-Term Strategic Framework |
| **NDP** | National Development Plan |
| **NSI** | National System of Innovation |
| **OCSA** | Occupational Health and Safety |
| **PSET** | Post-School Education and Training |
| **PFMA** | Public Finance Management Act |
| **RMS** | Research Management System |
| **SET** | Science, Engineering and Technology |
| **STI** | Science, Technology and Innovation |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goal |
| **TIDS** | Technical Indicator Descriptions |
| **TVET** | Tertiary Vocational Education and Training |
| **TOC** | Theory of Change |

# PART A:
# Our Mandate

## 1. CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE

As supreme law of the country, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) applies to all laws, and binds all organs of state, including the HSRC. In particular, the values enshrined in Chapter 1 of the constitution and the Bill of Rights outlined in Chapter 2 affirm the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom that underpin and permeate the research agenda of the HSRC. More specifically, in outlining the principles of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations, Section 41 of the constitution requires the provision of effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government for the republic as a whole, by all spheres of government and all organs of state.

> *The HSRC has a particular role and mandate to fulfil: It must inform the effective formulation and monitoring of policy and evaluate the implementation of policy*

Specific sections in the Bill of Rights confer particular rights and responsibilities to a research institution such as the HSRC. Section 16 addresses freedom of expression, including the right to academic freedom and freedom of scientific research. Section 12(2)(c) highlights the right not to be subjected to medical or scientific experiments without informed consent, which reminds the HSRC of its responsibility to ensure that all its research that involves or relates to human participants is undertaken ethically and with integrity.

## 2. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY MANDATES

The HSRC is a statutory research council, mandated to perform in terms of the Human Sciences Research Council Act, 2008 (Act No. 17 of 2008) (HSRC Act). This act highlights the public purpose of the HSRC and, in terms of Section 3, requires the organisation to:
  a) Initiate, undertake and foster strategic basic and applied research in human sciences, and to address developmental challenges in the republic, elsewhere in Africa and in the rest of the world by gathering, analysing and publishing data relevant to such challenges, especially by means of projects linked to public sector oriented collaborative programmes
  b) Inform the effective formulation and monitoring of policy, as well as evaluate the implementation thereof
  c) Stimulate public debate through the effective dissemination of fact-based research results
  d) Help build research capacity and infrastructure for the human sciences
  e) Foster research collaboration, networks and institutional linkages
  f) Respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups in society through research and analysis of developmental issues, thus contributing to the improvement of the quality of their lives
  g) Develop and make available data sets underpinning research, policy development and public discussion of developmental issues
  h) Develop new and improved methodologies for use in the development of such data sets.

While most of the clauses under Section 3 explain how the HSRC should do its work, Section 3(f) provides a strategic lens to help focus the research agenda of the organisation. The emphasis is on engaged research to address needs and development issues relevant to (unequal and poor) vulnerable and marginalised groups in such a way that it contributes to improving the quality of their lives.

In terms of Section 4 of the HSRC Act, the organisation is also allowed to undertake or commission research on any subject in the field of the human sciences and to charge fees for research conducted or services rendered at the request of others.

Section 2(2) of the HSRC Act confirms that the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999 as amended) (PFMA) applies to the organisation. The HSRC is listed as a national public entity in Schedule 3A of the PFMA and complies with the PFMA requirements set for institutional governance, as well as for financial and performance management and reporting.

The way in which the HSRC undertakes research is also informed by clauses in the National Health Act 2003, (Act No. 61 of 2003). The definition for 'health research' is broad, and explicitly includes "any research which contributes to knowledge of the biological, clinical, psychological or social processes in human beings". The HSRC thus adheres to the requirements for ethical conduct of research outlined in Chapter 9 of the National Health Act and associated regulations and guidelines.

## 3. INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES OVER THE FIVE-YEAR PLANNING PERIOD

The HSRC Strategic Plan is strongly aligned with national strategies, notably the NDP: Vision 2030 (2012), government's MTSF for the 2019–2024 electoral period and the White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (2019) and associated five-year and decadal implementation plans.

The overarching emphasis of the NDP and its five-year implementation plan is to eliminate income poverty and reduce inequality, by building on three pillars, namely Inclusive Economic Growth, Capabilities of South Africans, and a Capable State. The research agenda of the HSRC is strategically aligned with these pillars and purposes.

The MTSF 2019–2024 echoes the NDP implementation pillars and identifies seven priorities through which to achieve the aims of driving a strong and inclusive economy, building and strengthening the capabilities of South Africans and achieving a more capable state:

Priority 1: A Capable, Ethical and Developmental State
Priority 2: Economic Transformation and Job Creation
Priority 3: Education, Skills and Health
Priority 4: Consolidating the Social Wage through Reliable and Quality Basic Services
Priority 5: Spacial Development, Human Settlements and Local Government
Priority 6: Social Cohesion, Safer Communities
Priority 7: A Better Africa and a Better World

The cross-cutting focus areas of women, youth and people with disabilities point to a commitment to address the needs of all, including vulnerable and marginalised members of society. This commitment resonates well with the public-purpose mandate of the HSRC. Priority 1 introduces the President's District-Metro Coordination Model. The HSRC, in its renewed focus on the use and impact of its research, has an important contribution to make in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the model, and assessing the social implications and potential impact thereof in the affected communities.

The 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) identified the following as priorities:

- Raising the profile of STI in South Africa by instilling an innovation culture and integrating STI into cross-cutting government planning at the highest levels
- Strengthening partnerships between business, government, academia and civil society, and creating a more enabling environment for STI
- Focusing on innovation for social benefit and fundamental economic transformation
- Expanding and transforming the human resource base of the National System of Innovation (NSI)
- Increasing investment, both public and private, in STI.

The HSRC's strategic outcome-oriented goals, impact and outcome indicators are aligned with these priorities, and its research agenda is clearly focused on research for social benefit, as well as economic and societal transformation.

The 2013 White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sets out strategies to improve the capacity of the post-school education and training system to meet South Africa's needs. It outlines policy directions to guide the Department of Higher Education and Training (now known as the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology), and the institutions for which it is responsible, in order to contribute to building a developmental state with a vibrant democracy and a flourishing economy. Its main policy objectives are:

- A post-school system that can assist in building a fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa
- A single, co-ordinated post-school education and training system
- Expanded access, improved quality and increased diversity of provision
- A stronger and more co-operative relationship between education and training institutions and the workplace
- A post-school education and training system that is responsive to the needs of individual citizens, employers in both public and private sectors, as well as broader societal and developmental objectives.

The HSRC is not directly involved with the provision of post-school education and training. However, it is cognisant of the objectives of the PSET White Paper and can support several of these, directly as well as indirectly, through its work. One such area where the HSRC provides direct support, is in linking education and training institutions to the workplace. The HSRC continues to provide experiential learning and mentoring opportunities to post-graduate students through its Master's, PhD and Post-doctoral Fellow Trainee Programme. Further, the White Paper identifies skills planning as a weakness, being a result of, inter alia, inadequate research. This is an area where the HSRC can offer direct assistance and has done so in the recent past through the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership – a partnership programme to which it still contributes.

*The HSRC will continue to support the objectives as envisaged in the PSET White Paper through a work programme clustered as Responsive Education, Dignified Work and Meaningful Livelihoods.*

The HSRC's Strategic Plan and associated research agenda are also strongly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union Agenda 2063.



Figure 1: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The achievement of these goals depends on conditions that enable sustainable and inclusive economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all. Several of the SDGs and targets are addressed, directly or indirectly, through the strategically realigned research agenda of the HSRC.

Agenda 2063 is described as "both a vision and an action plan" for the socioeconomic transformation of Africa over the next four to five decades. It builds on, and seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development, and presents seven clear aspirations for "the Africa we want", namely:

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance
- An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- A peaceful and secure Africa
- An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, and shared values and ethics
- An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
- Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner.

With its mandated focus on developmental issues that are of national, continental and global importance, the work of the HSRC, also in the context of this new strategic planning period, is integrally related to the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) of the HSRC will lead, provide strategic direction to and co-ordinate the HSRC's existing Pan-African programme of work, and stimulate new streams of research which are informed by the vision of transforming African societies into dynamic, prosperous and safe and secure spaces.

*Possible new projects to be developed include Africa's Creative Economies, and an African Human Security Index.*

Against this background, the HSRC will continue to implement and, where appropriate, revise and strengthen existing policies and strategies to guide its strategic research focus, within the broader legal and policy framework outlined above. These policies include, but are not limited to the:

- HSRC Research Policy
- HSRC Code of Research Ethics
- HSRC Data Management Policy
- HSRC Research Integrity Policy
- HSRC Authorship Policy
- HSRC Performance Information Management Policy.

The following strategies are instrumental in implementing the HSRC Strategy and will be developed or strengthened in support thereof:

*Instrumental in implementing the HSRC Strategy:*
- *Human Resources Strategy*
- *Information Technology Strategy*
- *Research Use Strategies*
- *Business Development Strategy*

**(i) Human Resources Strategy**
A set of Human Resources strategies must support the organisation in transforming research capabilities, by building research capacity and transforming human capital. These strategies will focus on retention, transformation and capacity development.

**(ii) Information Technology Strategy**
The Information Technology (IT) Strategy will provide such support, processes and structures as are necessary to enable the organisation to implement its core strategy. The IT Strategy will provide solutions for global knowledge generation and dissemination; create an enabling research and technical environment; and foster new skills and capabilities by conducting research, and analysing and publishing data using Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies.

In addition to IT, a range of knowledge management activities will be established to oversee and manage data services, collections and resources. These will range from infrastructure that provides data access and longitudinal studies, to platforms that enable data analytics.

**(iii) Research Use Strategies**
These strategies will focus on research use through appropriate knowledge-brokering of outputs generated in the research portfolio. The strategies will enable and co-ordinate support and mechanisms for collaboration, convening and communicating.

**(iv) Business Development Strategy**
A robust Business Development Strategy is required to forge funding partnerships and unlock new funding sources to enhance the organisation's sustainability.

# PART B:
# Our Strategic Focus

## 4. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The following situational analysis assesses the HSRC's position in relation to government, the NSI and the external and internal forces impacting on its mandate.

### 4.1 The HSRC and Government

The HSRC's Executive Authority is the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The HSRC regularly engages with the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology on regulatory matters such as the Annual Performance Plan and Annual Report.

*The HSRC has become a regular partner on the Standing Committee on Appropriations. Twice a year it is invited to make presentations to the committee.*

Most of the work that is carried out by the HSRC relates to the seven clusters in government: Social Protection and Community Development; Human Development; Economic Sectors and Employment; Infrastructure Development; Governance and Administration; International Cooperation, Trade and Security; and Justice, Crime Prevention and Security.

### 4.2 The HSRC in the National System of Innovation

The institutions that make up the NSI are similar in many ways. They have similar challenges and opportunities. In the current economic environment, all the SET institutions have had to adjust to reduced levels of financial support from government. All institutions face challenges in developing and retaining skilled members of staff. 'Mandate creep' also sees institutions developing overlapping research agendas. What, in this environment of similarity, sets the HSRC apart from its sister institutions in the NSI?

### *Science councils*

The obvious distinctiveness of the HSRC is its mandate. It must focus on human behaviour and the implications of such on social development. Other entities also have an interest in human behaviour, but it is not their primary focus. One way of understanding this focus is to say that the HSRC, in relation to its sister Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) institutions, must lead the way for the country in the development of cutting-edge social science and humanities research and the methodologies for producing this research. In this regard, it has done better in the broad area of the social sciences than it has in the humanities. It has a track record in conducting large-scale longitudinal surveys and providing new understandings of the key problems the country has to deal with. Examples of this include the scientific capacity and practical experience the HSRC has made available through several key national surveys, such as: illuminating the scope of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; the development of improved approaches to dealing with early childhood development; and making clear to the country the extent of the challenge of learning achievement in literacy and numeracy.

### Scientific capacity

The HSRC has specialist resources for understanding what the socially determined problems of the country are, why they exist and how they may be solved.

### Research: Practical and technical aspects

The HSRC has an extensive complement of capabilities in project management, implementation of fieldwork projects, data analysis and data curation.

### *University sector*

This sector consists of 26 publicly funded institutions with multiple faculties and research units. The HSRC is a relatively small role player. Where universities primarily focus on the development of human capabilities, the HSRC's mandate and obligation concentrate on solution-orientated research. Figure 2 shows useful considerations to distinguish between the HSRC and universities.
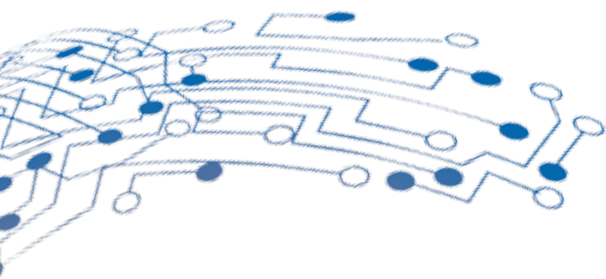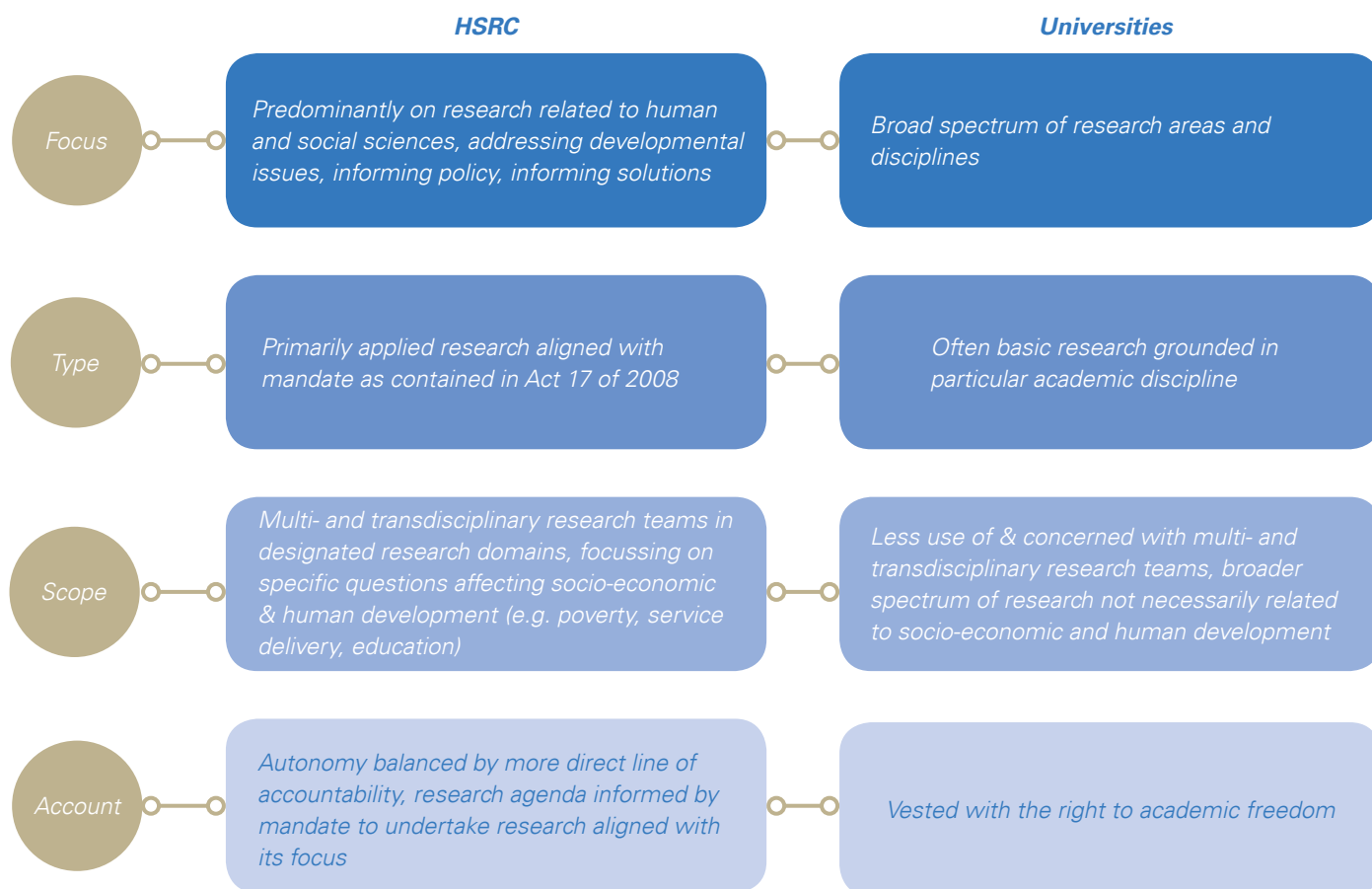
Figure 2: Typical distinguishing factors between the HSRC and universities

However, these differences are diminishing as universities are being pressurised to move towards more engaged forms of research. This has produced, as seen in the following Figure, a spectrum on which research institutions, such as the HSRC, can be placed in relation to universities.

Figure 3 also depicts potential users and/or funders of HSRC research. Active collaborations in the scientific community, both in the public and private sectors, will allow the HSRC to share in available resources – thereby also diversifying its external income sources – and provide complementary research to other research disciplines.
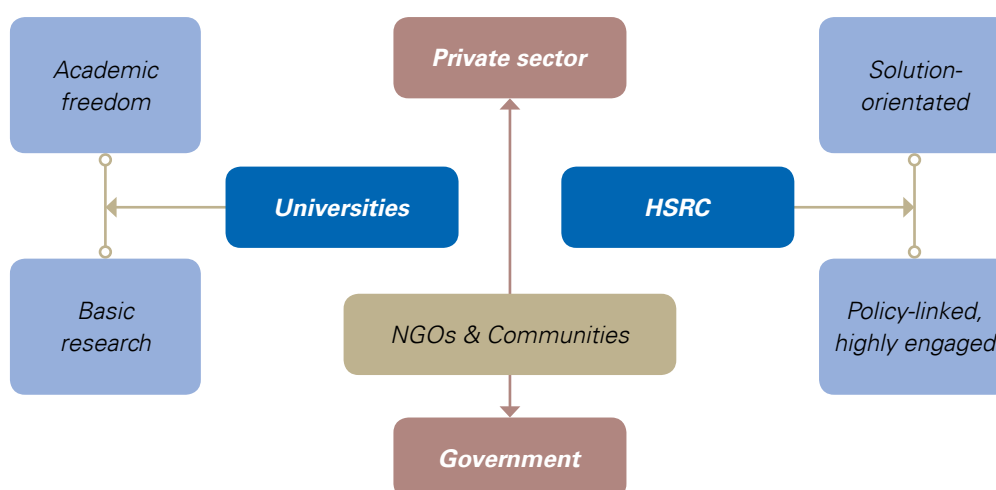


Figure 3: Spectrum of research mandate of the HSRC in relation to universities

When considering the HSRC's value proposition to attract government funding for solution-orientated research, an opportunity presents itself for the HSRC to show its distinctiveness through engagement or engaged research. It will also in this value chain emphasise the use of research as opposed to only its generation. In addition, the HSRC has an important role in establishing appropriate impact metrics across the NSI. These commitments are in line with the mandated purpose and objectives of the HSRC, as outlined in Act 17 of 2008.

The NSI also includes other agencies besides universities and science councils, such as think tanks, private sector research facilities and commercial consultancies. While the HSRC will occasionally co-operate with these organisations, it may often also be in direct competition with them, including competition for government funding. The difference between the HSRC and these organisations is its obligation to concentrate on questions relating to the public good.

*The HSRC will work with its Executive Authority to explore and unlock opportunities in the wider NSI to enable collaboration as opposed to competition.*

The joining of the departments of Higher Education and Training, and Science and Innovation under the Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Technology, is an opportunity for much closer collaboration and complementary work with universities as well as the National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences.

## 4.3 External Environment Analysis

The HSRC's international and national context for the next five years is characterised by a number of key political, economic, social and technological features. The following considerations describe the environment and its impact on the HSRC's ability to fulfil its mandate.

*While it is true that the external environment also presents several opportunities, the biggest constraint for the HSRC is that its broad mandate is allocated limited core funding.*

### 4.3.1 The Political Landscape/Government

i) An important point of departure in characterising the contemporary situation in South Africa is that it is still in a transition. It is consolidating the gains of becoming a democracy in 1994. In this process are the challenges of building legitimate public institutions and governance arrangements in which citizens have trust.

Following the 2019 elections, the HSRC has had to manage the following realities:
a) Being able to inform government policy while, as a non-partisan state entity, simultaneously providing it with critical advice and analysis
b) Consolidating its position as a trusted public institution amid general public mistrust and the disruptiveness of corruption and maladministration.
c) A realigned ministry and line department
d) Changing government priorities.

ii) International dynamics, including support to the HSRC received from foreign governments, have a bearing on the financial support available to it. The major issue here is the deterioration of multilateralism with an associated decline in support for international development agendas. Major players such as the USA, UK and European Union are becoming more internally focused, with global developmental agendas at risk of not receiving the attention and support pledged in the past.

iii) The HSRC business model and reporting standards comply with requirements set by the PFMA. While the PFMA intends to provide an enabling, performance-orientated, transparent and accountable business environment for government departments and public entities, some provisions are arguably a better fit for government departments than for entities such as the HSRC. For instance, the PFMA intends to promote a fair, open and transparent procurement process, and Treasury Regulations pertaining to supply chain management and preferential procurement are clearly intended to promote these principles. However, the constraints placed by the promulgation and interpretation of some Treasury Regulations place a dual burden on the HSRC in terms of its business and funding model:

- **Ability to form long-term collaborative and funding relationships:** Because of the onus placed on government departments to procure services in the open market, it is very difficult for the HSRC to form long-term relationships with government departments, where the HSRC is able to help inform research strategies and priorities, and also to be appointed to perform or help co-ordinate research intended to deliver on these strategies.

- **Flexibility and dexterity of research partnerships when responding to funding opportunities:** The HSRC is expected to follow open and transparent procurement processes when looking for trusted collaborators in research projects. This principle works better when supplies are sourced than when specialised services are sourced. When the HSRC has to respond to competitive funding opportunities at short notice, such a procurement regimen is especially not viable.

- **Planning, management and reporting on predetermined objectives:** The HSRC's strategic and annual planning processes and the way in which predetermined performance objectives are set, managed and reported are aligned with requirements set by National Treasury as well as by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency. These principles and guidelines seek to promote transparency and accountability, but constrain entities whose planning strategies and cycles as well as funding sources are not entirely aligned with those of government departments.

### 4.3.2 The Economic Landscape

i) The global economic climate impacts on what the HSRC will do and how it will be supported:

The consequences of the Great Recession in 2008 continue to reverberate with all the major advanced economies experiencing a slowdown. These conditions have had knock-on effects for exports and foreign direct investment in developing economies throughout the world. Countries such as China and India, after more than a decade of what appeared to be strong and sustained growth, are experiencing a slowdown in the growth of their economies, while more vulnerable developing economies such as Brazil and Turkey are in recession.

ii) Local economic climate:

The effects of global conditions have surfaced strongly in the South African economy, adversely affecting the HSRC. Economic growth over the past five years has fallen below 1% per annum, exacerbating the country's existing weak fiscal capacity. In the 2019/20 financial year, National Treasury issued directives to government departments and state-owned entities, including the HSRC, to effect savings of R30 billion in salaries. This followed a baseline reduction of R21,2 million in 2018/19. The immediate response of the HSRC was to make a number of internal cost-saving measures and raise the external funding target. With very little or no prospects for financial incentives such as inflation-linked cost of living increases and/or performance awards, staff morale has been affected.

*Intensified pressure on senior researchers to raise more external income while cutting costs also led to increased levels of competition with universities and international consulting firms, both for basic funding and for senior staff with the capacity to operate in this challenging funding environment.*

### 4.3.3 Social Considerations

i) Although many social and environmental factors affect the research agenda of the HSRC, the following critical occurrences directly impact on the HSRC's ability to respond to its mandate:

(a) The bias in both the public and private sectors towards the 'hard sciences' as opposed to what are considered to be 'soft sciences'

(b) Changes in the burden of disease in the country – the increase in the incidence of TB is affecting funding streams available to the HSRC, e.g. a particular stream such as HIV/AIDS.

ii) Public awareness, understanding and use of sciences

The uptake of knowledge among members of the public – the intended beneficiaries of the HSRC's work – is often not adequate because of a lack of trust and/or scientific literacy.

### 4.3.4 Technology Considerations

i) Fourth Industrial Revolution

The acceleration of technological change the world is seeing is impacting on South Africa. South African institutions are responding to the 4IR through multiple, parallel, and sometimes interlinked processes. An HSRC baseline study on 4IR influence in the strategies and resource allocations of higher education institutions in South Africa, shows that the 4IR has been embraced in some areas of the system. For example, a group of universities (Witwatersrand, Fort Hare and Johannesburg) has partnered with Telkom to establish a platform for engagement, titled 'SA4IR'. It aims to inform the universities' strategies and practices.

The HSRC has an important role to play in the context of the 4IR. As a statutory public research institute, the HSRC holds a critical position in the research-policy nexus, and has the necessary research capabilities to ask important questions. The HSRC's public mandate indicates a responsibility to engage with issues of technological disruption.

*The HSRC, through the establishment of a dedicated task team, is asking how it could champion the social sciences in the national 4IR policy response, with a focus on research and analysis in the context of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.*

This work will support and draw on the work of the World Economic Forum 4IR Affiliate Centre, where the HSRC is represented.

ii) Social Media

Traditional and conventional methods of communication are limited in providing the frameworks for optimal advocacy. The HSRC continues to grapple with challenges and opportunities to achieve the desired visibility to create impact. Social media platforms must be exploited intensively as part of a successful stakeholder relations strategy. Big data are currently being collected through social media and thus present an opportunity for developing new approaches to undertake research, especially in the social sciences.

*The HSRC has a critical role to play in reflecting on the ethical considerations of conducting research involving social media, or big data derived from social or other commercial platforms.*

## 4.4 Internal Environment Analysis

A resource-based view was used to reflect on the internal environment. Pertinent aspects in relation to the internal environment were considered in terms of:

- Tangible assets, such as investments and interest, cash flow, property, infrastructure, equipment and the financial model
- Non-tangible assets, such as technical knowledge and expertise
- Capabilities, including human resources and organisational structures.

When considering the internal environment, the HSRC is confronted with both strengths in support of and weaknesses to overcome in terms of its capacity to deliver on its mandate. Some of the most pertinent considerations follow:

i)  Human Resources

(a) The HSRC faces the challenge of a limited number of senior researchers who are required to raise funds, while also implementing a range of contract research projects, as well as reaching scholarship targets. At 30 September 2019, the HSRC employed 178 researchers. Of these, 84 were employed at the level of Senior Research Specialist/Senior Research Manager or above. This constitutes 44% of research staff.

As was highlighted in all previous institutional reviews, as well as in a climate survey conducted among all HSRC staff in 2016, the organisation must employ more senior researchers on permanent conditions of service to ease the burden of fund raising, and to provide reliable mentoring to its research trainees.

(b) The organisation has historically struggled to achieve its transformation targets at senior researcher levels. Resignation data show that black and female researchers are in demand and are offered very high salaries in the university and private sectors. The organisation loses its transformation capital when it loses these researchers.

*The HSRC has begun to embrace new technologies, but it must ensure that it remains abreast of developments in the field if it is to become a major competitor in the social science arena. This is largely dependent on access to resources.*

ii) Information Technology

(a) The organisation is working with outdated equipment and has no dedicated capital expenditure allocation for infrastructure. Although it has platforms to showcase longitudinal survey information and to share data, these are not state-of-the-art.

(b) Moving beyond the purely technical aspects of infrastructure provision, the IT Unit has begun to be more strategic in supporting research. It leverages disruptive modern technologies such as mobility, cloud technologies and real-time data capturing at source to optimise the research environment and introduce efficiencies into the ways in which research is conducted.

iii) Information Services

(a) A critical partner to IT and to the rest of the organisation is the eResearch Knowledge Centre (eRKC). It supports the research process by providing professional research information services, establishing data standards, preserving and sharing HSRC data and research outputs, and offering spatial computation and data analytics.

iv) Financial Resources

(a) The current financial model of the HSRC depends significantly on external funding to support research and the broader mandate of the HSRC. The recently audited ratio of parliamentary funding to external income for the financial year ending 31 March 2019 is 54:46. This means that there is pressure on the HSRC to increase external income earnings at a faster pace than the growth in its parliamentary grant, to ensure that all necessary budget commitments in terms of staff, administration, infrastructure and research can be met. This unhealthy pressure is expected to increase over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period due to budget cuts to the HSRC's parliamentary budget allocation.

## 4.5 HSRC Institutional Review, 2018

The preceding analyses of the external and internal environments represent considered viewpoints of the HSRC Board, management, senior researchers and employees. A research planning lekgotla involving HSRC management, senior researchers, directors of support units and external experts, as well as an externally facilitated strategic planning session of the Board, formed part of the process of reflecting on trends in the external and internal environments relevant to the HSRC and its research agenda.

The HSRC at times relies on independent external experts to engage with its work, in order to obtain a balanced yet critical view of its work, including its strategic direction and focus, the overall leadership of the organisation, and the quality and impact of its work. An on-going series of external programme-level reviews took place from 2017 to 2019, and an institution-wide review in 2018. Trends emerging from self-reflection documents prepared for the reviews as well as the reports of external review panels were accommodated in the summarised analysis of the external and internal environment, presented earlier.

The report of the external Institutional Review Panel (2018) highlighted

*The Review Panel urged the leadership of the HSRC to continue with its work, but with a sense of urgency; to bring its work to a next level of impact and importance; to have a stronger influence over the processes of social change that are necessary to help overcome and address the challenges and opportunities faced by society.*

the current and future importance of the HSRC and its work in South Africa and the world. In response, the Review Panel formulated ten broad recommendations that were intended to help the HSRC move from 'business as usual', to 'business unusual' over the next planning period. The recommendations were considered when developing the HSRC's Theory of Change (TOC) for the next strategic period, and in the formulation of the overall HSRC Strategy. In some instances the five-year Strategic Plan for 2020–2025 already includes responses to some of the recommendations. An overview of the summarised recommendations and immediate HSRC commitments, forming part of its considered response to the Review Report, is illustrated in Figure 4.

| Recommendation | Response |
|---|---|
| Pursue a new vision – HSRC as a global centre of excellence in Human and Social Sciences (H&SS); focus on the pressing issues facing South Africa. | The HSRC adopted new vision and mission statements, encapsulating these sentiments. |
| Play a bigger role on the African continent – build on AISA to bring an Africa lens to the HSRC's work. | The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) is being repositioned and strengthened as part of this strategic planning process, to be both the catalyst and co-ordinator of closer collaboration on the continent. |
| Improve government allocation to the HSRC with vigour as the state of the SA economy improves. | This is a recommendation that the HSRC will continue to pursue in collaboration with its Executive Authority. |
| Drastically revamp the business model to fund priority research areas. | This will form part of an ongoing process of institutional re-alignment and uncovering of funding opportunities, with support from the HSRC's Executive Authority. |
| Drastically revamp the business model to fund priority research areas. | This will form part of an ongoing process of institutional re-alignment and uncovering of funding opportunities, with support from the HSRC's Executive Authority. |
| Narrow the mandate and focus on the social determinants and outcomes of poverty and inequality. | The five-year strategy commencing April 2020 will focus on three core research areas that are aligned with the NDP implementation pillars. |
| Profile the HSRC strategically to government at all levels – advocate more to government. | The HSRC has adopted, as one of its outcomes for the next five years, a consolidated relation of trust and influence with government. (Refer to section 8.3 of the Strategic Plan). |
| Occupy the leadership space in the H&SS – be the 'go-to' for excellence in poverty and inequality research. | This is encapsulated in the HSRC's new vision and mission statements, which are at the core of and form the foundation of the next five-year strategy. |
| Strengthen research capacity leadership and seniority; bring in high calibre African and international scholars. | A suite of indicators to measure excellence and to transform research capabilities has been formulated towards this. |
| Move away from the 'short-termism' of having multiple contracts, to a long-term view to provide the evidence base for longitudinal changes and impacts for the country. | The HSRC will endeavour, over the next five years, to secure at least nine (9) multi-year projects. |
| Seek closer working relationships with partners that pursue research in the H&SS. | The HSRC Strategy for the next five years seeks to establish and solidify collaboration with the local and international scientific community. |

Figure 4: Summarised recommendations and immediate responses from the 2018 Institutional Review

## 4.6 The HSRC's Contribution to the Inclusive Growth Agenda

### 4.6.1 The HSRC's Theory of Change

**Problem statement**

With a Gini co-efficient of .68, South Africa is the most unequal country in the world. Unemployment, particularly among young people, has grown year-on-year. Instances of racism and xenophobia, indicative of a nation that is divided and vulnerable to further division, especially if the gross injustices of inequality and poverty are not acknowledged and collectively addressed, appear to be on the increase. Social media and violent protest appear to some as more effective ways of making the voices of citizens known, rather than traditional democratic processes. Young people, the first generation who have been 'born free', are feeling alienated and angered because they have not been able to gain access to meaningful, productive employment, and growth opportunities. The costs of social protection and providing access to services are becoming prohibitive for the South African Government.

Given the HSRC's mandate of research for the public good within the context of societal challenges in South Africa, the 2018 Institutional Review provided a timely opportunity to determine how well the HSRC is responding to its mandate, how it should apply itself to what it researches, and how it undertakes research with respect to the most urgent and pressing challenges in society.

*"While the HSRC is fulfilling its mandate, it is well positioned to go one step further – to be at the cutting edge of excellent research in the humanities and social sciences, timeously producing empiric, high-quality, impactful research to inform debates and policy on the key South African, continental and global challenges. This proposes more solution-orientated research."* (HSRC Review Report, 2018)

**Desired change**

The HSRC has to undertake basic and applied research that will contribute to the alleviation of poverty, a reduction in the inequality gap and the expansion of decent work opportunities for the majority of South Africa's people.

The HSRC needs to reposition itself to respond to those pressing social issues where it has a competitive advantage to generate impact.

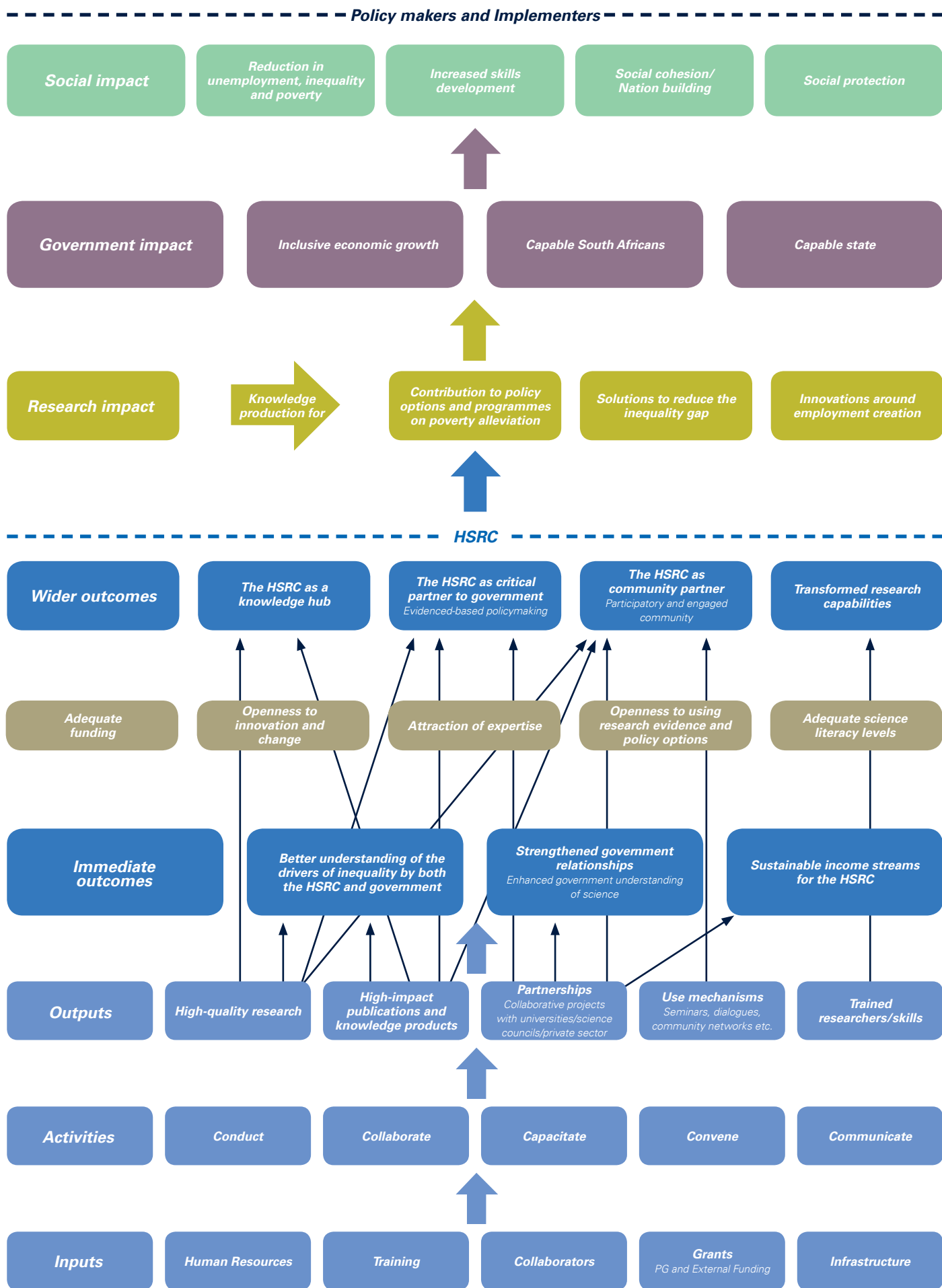The following Figure illustrates the organisation's TOC.
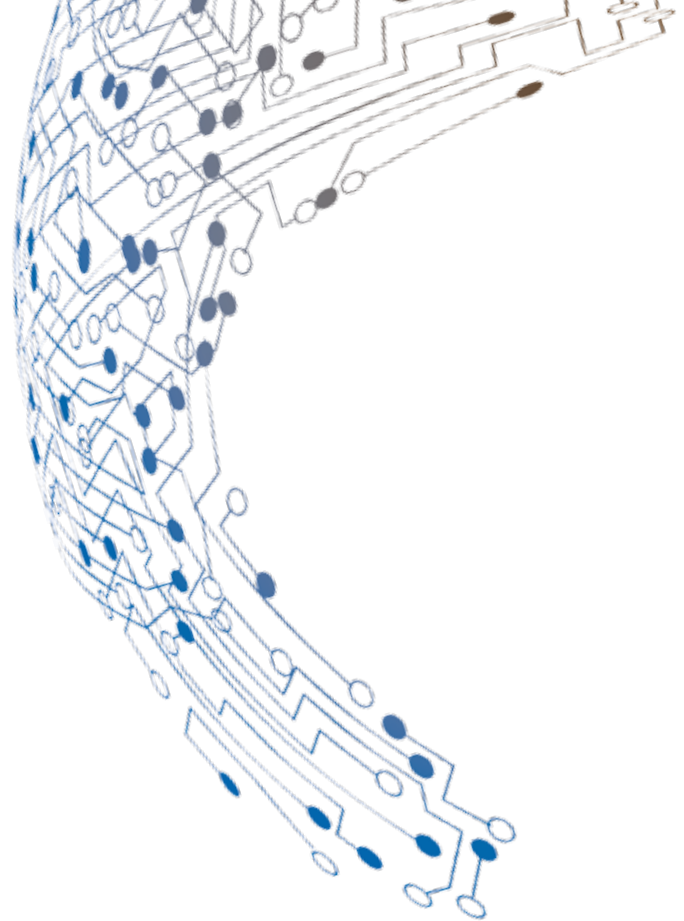
Figure 5: The HSRC Theory of Change

# 5. VISION

The HSRC will be a national, regional and global leader in the production and dissemination of transformative social science and humanities research in the interests of a just and equal society.

# 6. MISSION STATEMENT

The HSRC produces leading-edge policy research, through engaged scholarship, to utilise in understanding and explaining social conditions and informing social change for inclusive growth in communities.

# 7. VALUES

## Acceptance
Respecting equality and embracing ideas, speaking out against discrimination of any kind.

## Critical friendship
Pursuing non-partisanship but collaborating with all stakeholders, including government.

## Integrity
Conducting business honestly, diligently and underpinned by ethical principles.
Embracing, but not abusing, intellectual freedom.
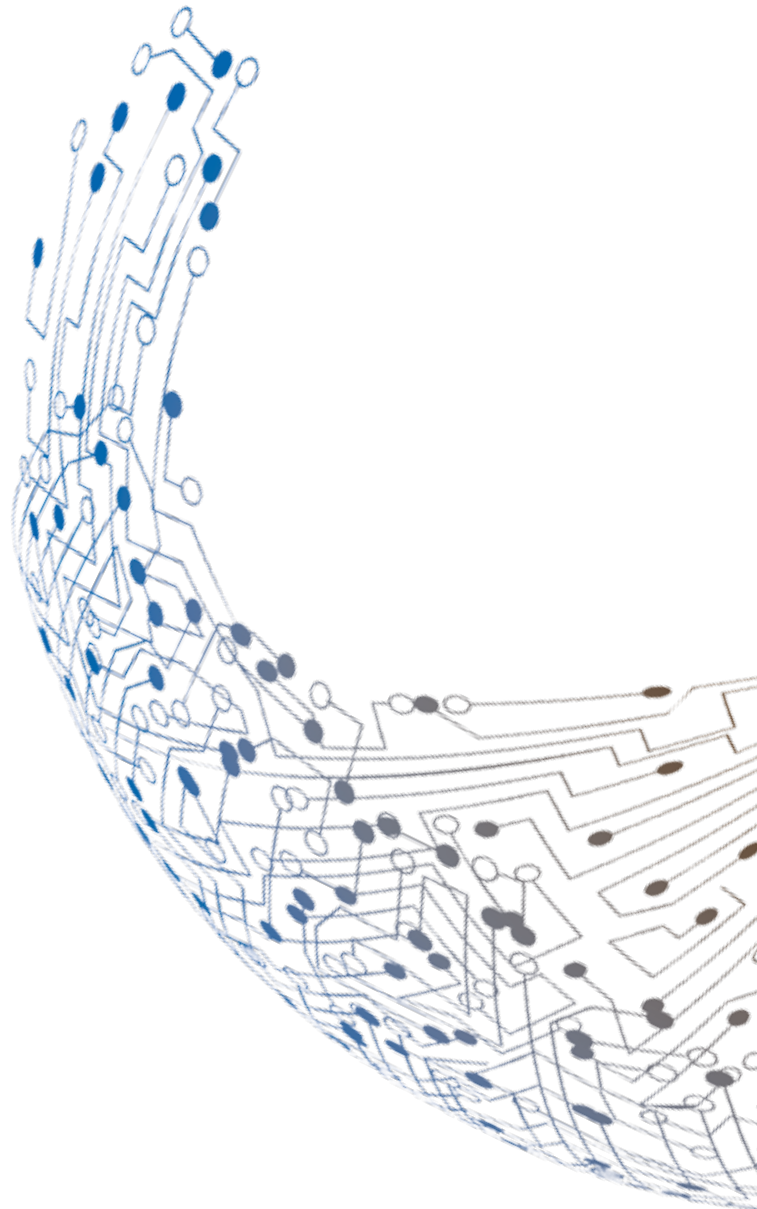
## Respect
Treating colleagues, stakeholders and members of the public with dignity and humility.
Observing organisational policies and processes.
Preserving the environment and natural resources.

## Excellence
Undertaking leading-edge research while remaining relevant.

## Trust
Creating a safe and supportive working environment for colleagues.

# PART C: Measuring Our Performance

The TOC model on page 17 outlines the change that the HSRC wishes to achieve through its engaged research and research dissemination activities over the next strategic planning period. Institutional performance information, including the statements reflecting desired impact and outcomes of its work, as well as the indicators of performance selected to support and illustrate these, are underpinned by the TOC for 2020 and beyond.

The HSRC as a research organisation seeks to inform change in society through knowledge production, which may impact on decision-making and policy. In its knowledge-production role, it relies on policy makers and implementing agents, particularly government, for the uptake and use of its knowledge products to create ultimate social change.

The strategic outcomes set for the HSRC are realistically expected to be achieved over the next ten years, hence five-year targets should be regarded as contributing towards the achievement of goals that are aligned with a vision for 2030.

## 8. INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

### 8.1 Measuring the Impact



**HSRC Impact Statement**

**A South Africa where poverty is alleviated**
Through its **realigned and engaged research agenda**, the HSRC will **contribute** to **government policy options** and **programmes on poverty alleviation**.

**A society in which inequality gaps are reduced**
In **collaboration** with government and civil society role players, the HSRC will work with research peers and communities to **develop and test research-based solutions** to **reduce the inequality gap**.

**An economic climate that stimulates employment creation**
By **strengthening** its research **focus** on **economic growth and human capabilities**, the HSRC will use its work around the **4IR** and **engagement with young people** to **identify and develop research-based innovations** around **employment creation**.
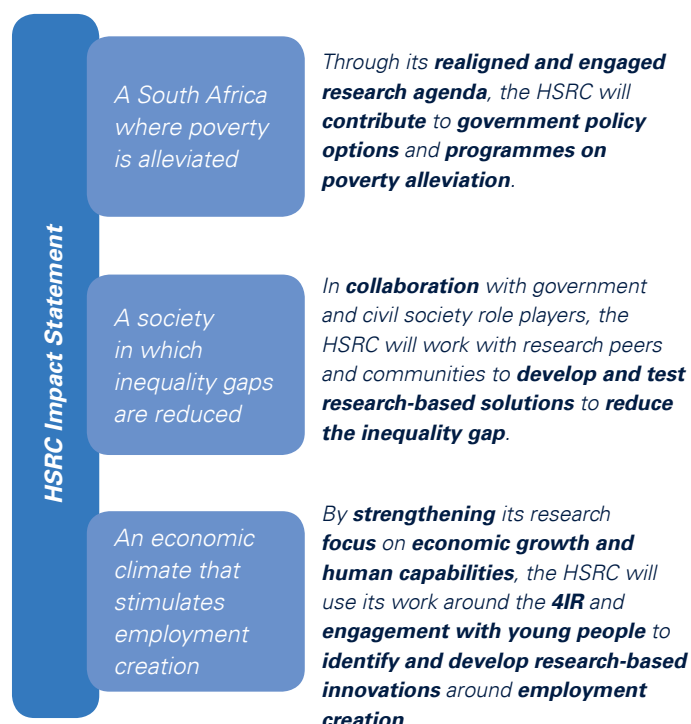
Figure 6: The HSRC Impact Statement

### 8.2 Measuring Outcomes

The HSRC will utilise its unique knowledge-production capabilities over the next five years to achieve the following outcomes:

- National, regional and global leadership in the production and use of targeted knowledge to support the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of employment
- A consolidated relationship of trust and influence with government to help guide and inform policy
- Recognition as a trusted and engaged research partner with scientific communities and civil society.

The HSRC's research impact will support the NDP: Vision 2030 and the NDP's pillars as contained in its five-year implementation plan: Inclusive Economic Growth, Capabilities of South Africans, and a Capable State. It will also create impact in the seven MTSF priorities (refer to page 23).

The DSI has identified six outcomes that will be used to measure its impact over the five-year period. These are:



**DSI Outcome 1**
A transformed, inclusive, responsive and coherent NSI

**DSI Outcome 2**
Knowledge utilisation for economic development

**DSI Outcome 3**
Human capabilities and skills for the economy and for development

**DSI Outcome 4**
Increased knowledge generation and innovation output

**DSI Outcome 5**
Knowledge utilisation for inclusive development

**DSI Outcome 6**
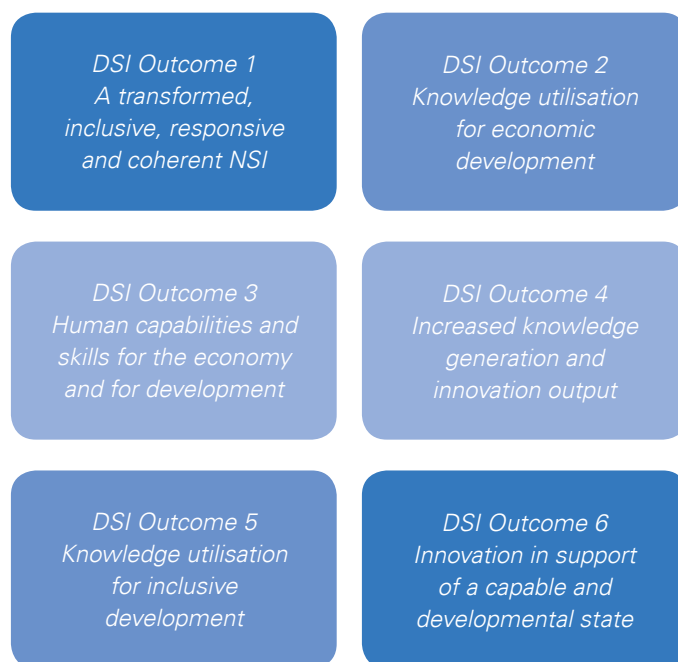Innovation in support of a capable and developmental state

Figure 7: DSI Outcomes

The HSRC is committed to supporting the DSI Outcomes over the five-year period, as reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Outcomes, indicators and targets for the five-year period, showing alignment with DSI Outcomes

| MTSF Priority | Priority 7<br>A better Africa and a better World | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Outcome Indicator** | **Baseline** | **5-year target** | **DSI Outcome** |
| National, regional and global leadership in the production and use of knowledge to support the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of employment | The number of research articles that achieve a citation count of 10 within five years of initial publication | 10 | 170 | 2. Knowledge utilisation for economic development<br><br>5. Knowledge utilisation for inclusive development |
| | The number of curated datasets downloaded for secondary use | 496 | 663 | 2. Knowledge utilisation for economic development<br><br>3. Human capabilities and skills for the economy and for development<br><br>5. Knowledge utilisation for inclusive development |
| | The number of applied outcomes emanating from collaboration on the African continent | New | 1 | |
| MTSF Priority | Priority 1<br>A Capable, Ethical and Developmental State | | | |
| **Outcome** | **Outcome Indicator** | **Baseline** | **5-year target** | **DSI Outcome** |
| A consolidated relationship of trust and influence with government to help guide and inform policy | Number of government services or functions where the HSRC research results provided decision support | New | 1 | 2. Knowledge utilisation for economic development<br><br>4. Increased knowledge generation and innovation output<br><br>5. Knowledge utilisation for inclusive development<br><br>6. Innovation in support of a capable and developmental state |

| MTSF Priority | Priority 3 Education, Skills and Health Priority 6 Social Cohesion, Safer Communities | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome** | **Outcome Indicator** | **Baseline** | **5-year target** | **DSI Outcome** |
| Recognition as a trusted and engaged research partner with scientific communities and civil society | The number of community innovations supported or enabled by HSRC research | New | 1 | 1. A transformed, inclusive, responsive and coherent NSI

2. Knowledge utilisation for economic development

3. Human capabilities and skills for the economy and for development

4. Increased knowledge generation and innovation output

5. Knowledge utilisation for inclusive development

6. Innovation in support of a capable and developmental state |
| **MTSF Priority** | **Priority 3 Education, Skills and Health** | | | |
| **Outcome** | **Outcome Indicator** | **Baseline** | **5-year target** | **DSI Outcome** |
| Transformed research capabilities | The percentage of senior researchers (at the level of Senior Research Specialist/Senior Research Manager or higher) from designated groups, with permanent appointments | 52% | 70% | 1. A transformed, inclusive, responsive and coherent NSI |
| **MTSF Priority** | **Priority 2 Economic Transformation and Job Creation** | | | |
| **Outcome** | **Outcome Indicator** | **Baseline** | **5-year target** | **DSI Outcome** |
| Sustainable income streams | Annual income derived from international funding agencies | R76 million per annum | R80 million per annum | |

## 8.3 Explanation of Planned Performance Over the Five-Year Planning Period

*National, regional and global leadership in the production and use of targeted knowledge to support the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of employment*

Through its vision of being a national, regional and global leader in the production and dissemination of transformative social science and humanities research in the interests of a just and equal society, the HSRC will contribute to addressing the major developmental challenges in South Africa and on the continent.
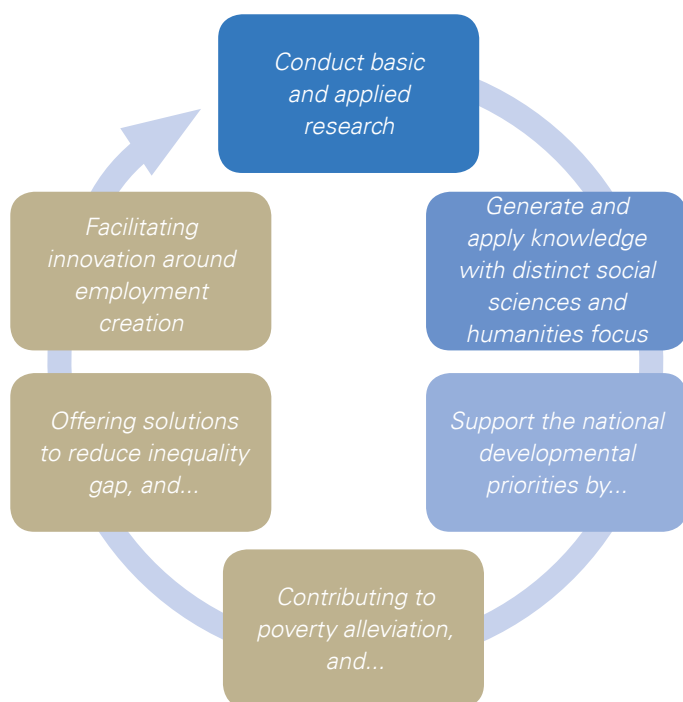


Figure 8: The HSRC's support to the national developmental priorities

The HSRC will lead in initiating and convening to foster and increase co-operation, collaboration and communication among excellent researchers and research institutions. The aim is to deliver knowledge for policymaking and devise solutions for pressing public matters.

The HSRC's own demonstrated research excellence and proven capability to bring the right experts together will be measured by indicators such as publications, citations and events.

*A consolidated relationship of trust and influence with government to help guide and inform policy*

The HSRC will demonstrate the value and impact of the knowledge it produces to forge relationships with all spheres of government, including parliament and the judiciary, in support of creating a capable state.

To achieve this, it needs to forge meaningful partnerships within government and disseminate relevant information in suitable formats to government stakeholders. This requires a robust stakeholder and communications strategy, as well as a strengthened business development plan to ensure that the HRSC becomes a preferred service provider in terms of government's research needs.

> *By being a trusted partner to government, the HSRC can assist policy makers by guiding and informing policies and decision-making through careful knowledge-brokering of high-quality, high-impact output.*

The success in achieving this will be measured by means of indicators to track requests received and information provided to government.

*Recognition as a trusted and engaged research partner with scientific communities and civil society*

The HSRC will contribute to developing the capabilities of South Africans by establishing itself as a trusted and engaged partner with both scientific communities and civil society. By forging active collaborations in the scientific community, it will be able to share, and share in, resources, and provide complementary research to other research disciplines.

To achieve this, the HSRC will require support from its Executive Authority to facilitate processes, systems and structures that are conducive to collaborative projects, rather than competition. In addition, it must endeavour to understand the needs of communities and be able to package and present science for sharing through community networks.

A suite of indicators tracking community involvement and active collaboration in the science community, including reciprocal skills transfer with colleagues in the Global South, will be used to monitor progress.

> *These collaborations will be used to stimulate community innovation through knowledge sharing and enhancing communities' understanding and use of science.*

The HSRC will approach these outcomes through a programme of work organised around three divisions aligned with the NDP implementation pillars. Transformative and Inclusive Development will be central to each of the divisions. The divisions will each focus on two programmatic themes.

The following Figure illustrates the alignment of HSRC outcomes, divisions, and programmatic approach with the NDP Implementation Pillars and the MTSF 2019–2024 Priorities. The content that follows after the figure concerns the areas grouped by the pink shaded block.
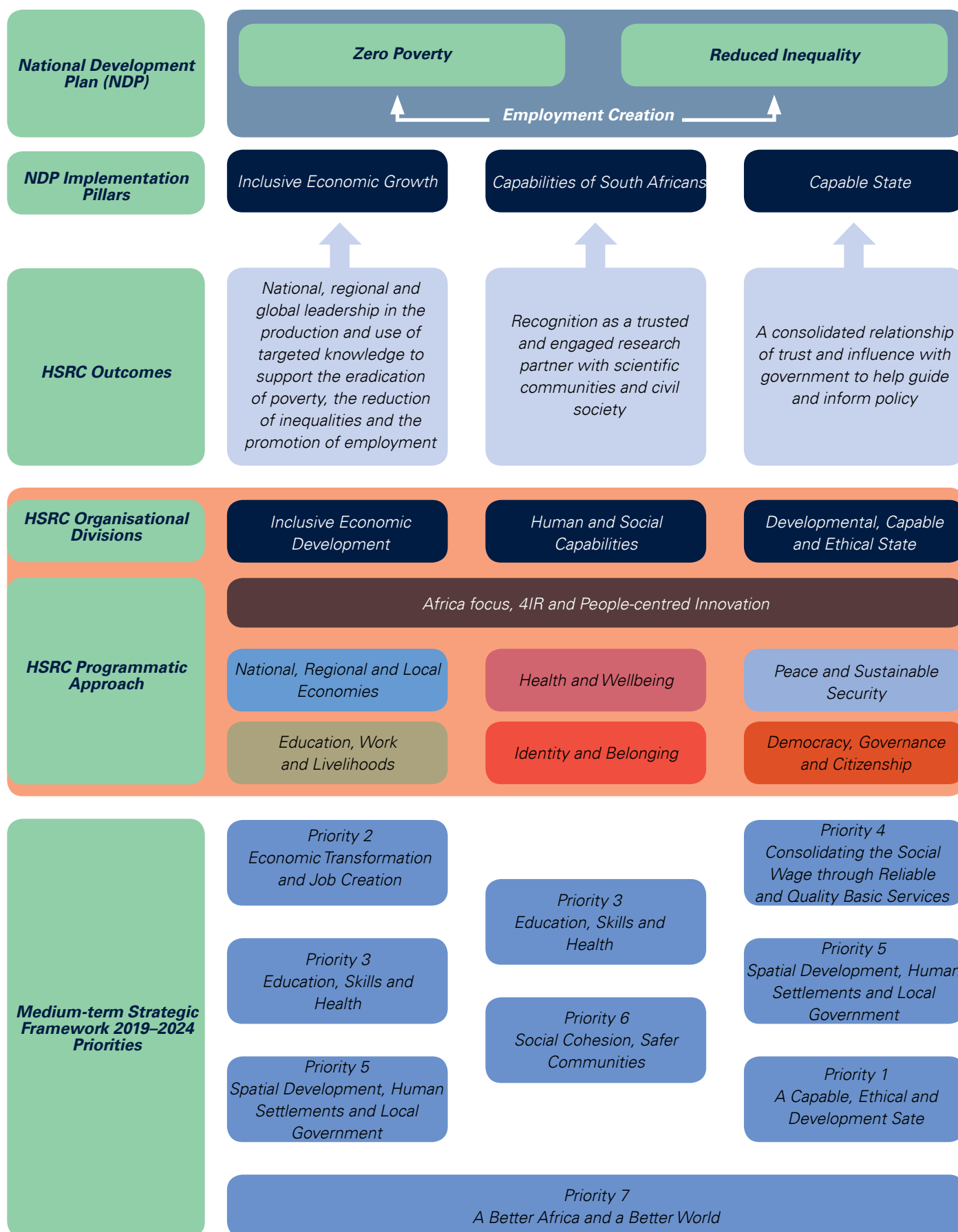


Figure 9: Alignment of the HSRC outcomes, divisions, and programmatic approach with the NDP Implementation Pillars and the MTSF Priorities

**HSRC division:** *Inclusive Economic Development*

There is national consensus that accelerated economic development is fundamental to tackling poverty and inequality in a way that is sustainable. Complementary research is required to support the development of economic policies that will engender the growth of a more dynamic, more productive economy that is able to reduce poverty levels and bring about greater equality, recognising the tensions between quantitative and qualitative growth. In the apartheid context of South Africa there would have to be a spatial dimension to this agenda, including how to support the distinctive strengths and address the challenges of city-regional economies, including townships and rural areas.

*An urgent research task is to identify priority actions to generate faster national economic growth while leaving no-one behind. This requires a better understanding of the structural obstacles, such as social and spatial divisions, concentrated corporate ownership and wealth, and a poor quality education and training system, which are responsible for impeding inclusive economic development.*

The country requires models of innovation that emphasise its systemic and dynamic nature, covering companies in the formal sector, as well as other economic and social actors, informal enterprises, and township and rural settings. Innovation that orientates science and technology to people-centred development needs to not only promote cutting-edge ideas and advanced knowledge, but also effective social and economic applications and adaptations. This requires a focus on building technological capabilities, know-how and learning, particularly at the local level.

Education has always been central to economic growth and all-round human development. In a changing world, research needs to investigate the tension between improving education quality and responding to technological change in the world of work, here and in Africa. As conventional employment changes, and demands sophisticated skill-sets, there is a need to research new opportunities for meaningful livelihoods outside the formal economy, including the creative and caring industries.

**Programmatic approach:** National, regional and local economies

The national economy is made up of diverse regional, city and local economies. The human settlement system comprises many villages, towns, townships, suburbs and other urban communities. This does not correspond neatly with the geography of the national economy, for historic and contemporary reasons. In fact, a striking mismatch between the distribution of the population and economic opportunities threatens the viability of many communities and forces extensive migration and long-distance commuting.

A parallel set of research questions concerns the structure and dynamics of the macro-economy. One of the tensions requiring investigation is that which sits between macro-economic growth and redistribution. A 'growth-first' agenda means increasing confidence among domestic and foreign investors, lowering business costs, cutting red tape, reinstating fiscal and monetary disciplines, and rebuilding integrity in public institutions. But it will take time for the benefits to translate into more and better jobs, higher tax revenues, improved public services and higher social grants. Another tension to be explored is between macro-economic management using orthodox policy instruments and structural transformation through more direct state intervention to diversify the skewed patterns of economic activity, ownership and control.

*One purpose of this research priority is to understand the changing location of the economy and its implications for human settlements and patterns of migration and mobility. An underlying question is how to promote more equitable and integrated forms of spatial development. This requires an analysis of the shifting economic geography of the country, as well as changing settlement patterns and community dynamics.*

The HSRC has considerable expertise in spatial economic development (rural, urban and regional), human settlement formation and community dynamics. The key stakeholders include the national departments of Trade, Industry and Competition; Human Settlements; Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development; local government; and National Treasury, along with key provinces and metropolitan municipalities. Figure 10 outlines an important goal of this division.
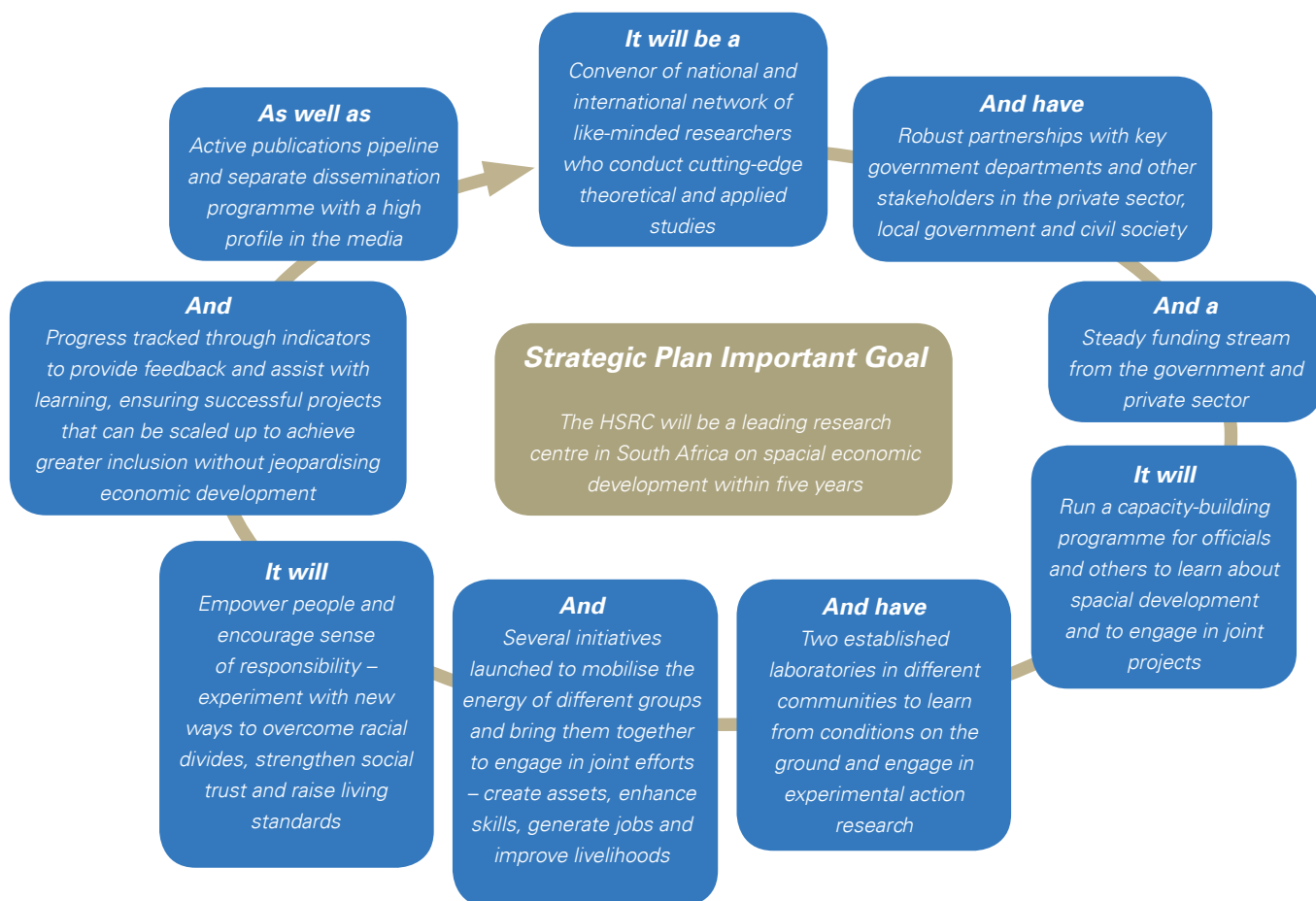
The diagram contains the following boxes:

**It will be a**
Convenor of national and international network of like-minded researchers who conduct cutting-edge theoretical and applied studies

**As well as**
Active publications pipeline and separate dissemination programme with a high profile in the media

**And have**
Robust partnerships with key government departments and other stakeholders in the private sector, local government and civil society

**And**
Progress tracked through indicators to provide feedback and assist with learning, ensuring successful projects that can be scaled up to achieve greater inclusion without jeopardising economic development

**Strategic Plan Important Goal**
The HSRC will be a leading research centre in South Africa on spacial economic development within five years

**And a**
Steady funding stream from the government and private sector

**It will**
Empower people and encourage sense of responsibility – experiment with new ways to overcome racial divides, strengthen social trust and raise living standards

**And**
Several initiatives launched to mobilise the energy of different groups and bring them together to engage in joint efforts – create assets, enhance skills, generate jobs and improve livelihoods

**And have**
Two established laboratories in different communities to learn from conditions on the ground and engage in experimental action research

**It will**
Run a capacity-building programme for officials and others to learn about spacial development and to engage in joint projects

Figure 10: A significant goal in the Programmatic approach: National, regional and local economies

**Programmatic approach:** Responsive Education, Dignified Work and Meaningful Livelihoods

It is critical that, as part of the HSRC's strategic focus on transformative and inclusive people-centred development, it focuses on research and public dialogue on the link between responsive education, innovative and dignified work, and broader definitions of livelihoods in bringing about inclusive and transformative development in an unequal world.

Education has always been considered central to development and economic growth. However, education at all levels in South Africa requires agile responsiveness – in quality, accessibility and content, including contextually relevant (or decolonised) education. Research is needed that investigates the tension between education that incrementally improves, adapts and responds to technological change, and technology's concomitant adjustments to the nature of work in South Africa and the rest of the continent.

South Africa has long struggled with the issue of quality education. The era of technological disruption and innovation poses new challenges that education will be expected to address. Included in this will be the ability of the educational sector at primary, secondary and tertiary levels to rapidly respond to the need for new forms of knowledge and knowing. At the tertiary level, issues of access will remain significant as will be the differentiation between university-level higher education offerings and those needed from the Tertiary Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. TVET will especially be required to change and adapt at great pace to embrace technological innovations. In all of these changes, issues of access, overcoming poverty and ensuring inclusivity are paramount. Furthermore, a careful interrogation of the strategic inputs that are needed to ensure quality education (such as the first 1 000 days of schooling, mother tongue language education, and the soft skills that are critical for technological innovation) is central to this value chain. Much evidence already exists and now needs to be collated, examined and disseminated to change current discourses and stimulate new practices.

*Traditional ways of 'working' and 'employment' are changing. With technological innovation rapidly spreading, a need exists to research new ways for people – especially young people – to pursue meaningful livelihoods that do not necessarily mean formal employment, but that will translate into decent work in informal or new sectors.*

The HSRC is especially concerned with the fair inclusion of those previously excluded in a country and continent still emerging from an unequal and unjust past. According to ILO definitions and statistics 'non-standard work' is now more common than 'standard work', a trend that indicates that most people in the world do not secure an income though formal employment. This is particularly true in the Global South and is likely to increase with the 4IR. The terms 'work' and 'livelihoods' are thus more inclusive than 'employment' and therefore need to be the focus of this research.

*Equal inclusion requires validating the many ways in which people in South Africa, on the African content, and in the Global South create livelihoods.*

The HSRC aims to document a range of livelihood generation strategies and to refocus the activities people spend most of their time performing as a social justice-related issue, rather than as an instrumental economic activity primarily designed to promote growth. The research will be as much concerned with skills needed for conventional economies as it will be with overlooked sectors of the economy including the 'lavender economy' (the helping and caring professions), the 'orange economy' (creative industries), the 'blue economy' (oceans), the 'green economy' (energy), the 'invisible economy' (unpaid and exploitative work), the 'third sector' (community, not-for-profit work and social enterprises), and the 'unknown economy' (x-tech).

**HSRC division:** *Human and Social Capabilities*
A central concern for this division is to focus on human beings and their development in the face of the social realities of poverty and unemployment, and inequalities of class, race and gender. In particular, this work will actively explore the ways in which agency, attitudes, aspirations, capabilities and other psychosocial factors reinforce or liberate people from the constraints imposed by their social environments.

**Programmatic approach:** Health and Wellbeing
The basic and intermediate needs for humans to flourish are physical health, nutrition (food and water), healthcare, safe birth control and child-bearing, a safe physical environment and mental health. The key dimensions of wellbeing encompass bodily wellbeing, mental health, access to quality health services and a good physical environment. Given South Africa's history and ever-changing landscape, understanding is needed of how cultural and social dynamics influence health behaviours and wellbeing to inform tailored health promotion interventions. The performance of South Africa's health system has been poor, despite good policies and relatively high spending as a proportion of the GDP. The research should seek to understand the ways in which people navigate their health and wellbeing for the purpose of developing policies and practices that will lead to a health system that is patient focused and managed on the basis of principles of universal healthcare and provision.

The key constraints facing health systems include inequitable and fragmented allocation; slow gains in life expectancy and reduction of child mortality; gross inequality; the growing complex of the burden of diseases; and poor governance, management and accountability. Addressing these constraints requires reorientation of health systems towards comprehensive primary healthcare and institutional reforms for implementation of National Health Insurance to create one health system that will translate into improved human and social capabilities through improved health and wellbeing.

*A transformative and inclusive research agenda should focus on spatial differences that reinforce separation and inequalities such as unequal healthcare provisions across geographical and social spaces.*

Social protection is an important component of health and wellbeing. It refers to policies, programmes and measures designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to manage social risks, such as poor health, disability, social exclusion, old age, food security, social relief programmes and access to services. By 2030 the NDP aims to have achieved an inclusive social protection system that addresses all areas of vulnerability and is responsive to the needs, realities, conditions and livelihoods of those, including women and children, who are most at risk.

*Development of social protection systems helps the poor and vulnerable cope with crises and shocks; invest in the health and education of their children; and protect the ageing population.*

**Programmatic approach:** Identity and Belonging
Identity is individual, social and political. Who people are is shaped by social categories such as race, gender, sexuality, class, ability and age. The social categories people inhabit can exacerbate or ease their differences and the extent to which they feel they belong. Identity and belonging have been shaped in very particular ways in South Africa. The apartheid system constructed racial categories that denied or afforded access, resources and privilege to persons belonging to specific groups. The formal systems of apartheid have been abolished, but for many, the ways in which they see themselves and their sense of belonging, are still tied to 'race' constructions.

While black South Africans suffered discrimination because of their racial classification, women were subjected to both racial and gender discrimination. It is only through better understanding the complexity and interrelatedness that research will be able to offer explanations for why these problems continue to find expression in families, institutions and communities, and offer possible solutions to address them.

Addressing the intersections of gender, race and class with poverty and inequality requires working at the socio-psychological levels where identity and belonging are experienced and its impact on everyday life is keenly felt. Transformative research should focus, for example, on schools and higher educational spaces that are confronted by continued cultures of privilege that create a sense of alienation and disconnection.

*There is a need to interrogate the links between gender, race and class and how these shape poverty and inequality in South Africa. A transformative and inclusive research agenda will confront the institutionalisation of power that results in rigid cultures that limit the advancement of women, black and gender-fluid people.*

To foster greater inclusion of all its citizens as well as the dismantling of systemic inequalities, methodologically this work must be participatory and collaborative, transdisciplinary and intersectional and will prioritise cross-stakeholder dialogue and conversation with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as well as corporate and academic institutions in the country and across the region. This strategy of engagement, in partnership with government, CSOs and others, would produce outputs that draw on not only longitudinal and large-scale data sets but also smaller focused qualitative studies.

> *Data sets will form the evidence base for robust arguments in favour of greater social inclusion at all levels of society and in the inclusion of diversity and difference in policy, guidelines and frameworks at a national and regional level.*

The work in this thematic area will address identity, belonging and health from the perspectives of gender and race and the impacts these continue to have on various aspects of human and social life.

**HSRC division:** *Developmental, Capable and Ethical State*
Priorities here focus primarily on the attainment of SDG 16 that seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all; and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, as well as Agenda 2063 that seeks peace and security and economic integration on the continent.

> *The HSRC will undertake research, implementation and advocacy support in the service of the public good and South Africa's national priorities to strengthen social cohesion; create safe communities; build a capable, ethical and developmental state; and work towards a better Africa and world.*

To seek evidence-based responses to these goals, the HSRC will aim to provide insight into the nature of current challenges and ways of managing these more effectively through applied and basic research, policy advice and implementation support, and building partnerships and networks.

The organisation will contribute knowledge towards the development of a new peace agenda globally and work with governments, oversight bodies and civil society to improve and strengthen accountability through participatory democracy. In addition, it will aim to provide evidence for a values-based approach to development. An ethical – or values-based – approach puts people at the centre, as actors, mediators and recipients. Simultaneously, rights must be respected by all who are involved in development, peace and security.

**Programmatic approach:** Peace and Sustainable Security
A developmental, capable and ethical state is not possible without ensuring peace and sustainable security within South Africa and beyond its borders. To work towards a more socially cohesive citizenry and safer communities, it is necessary to focus on building a "better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world". South Africa is a key player in the

quest for peace and sustainable security on the continent and globally. It occupies this position in a period where violent conflicts have increased, the world is less peaceful, and insecurities generated by climate change, environmental factors and energy and water shortages abound.

> *The HSRC aims to provide insight into the nature of challenges and ways of managing these more effectively through evidence-based policy advice and implementation support, applied and basic research and by building partnerships and networks.*

South Africa increasingly has to deal with a range of peace and sustainable security challenges (high crime rates, gender-based violence, inequality, service delivery, governance, food insecurity, climate change and the like), as well as engage with sustaining peace and security on the continent and globally (through its engagements in SADC, AU and the UN). To be a credible leader in peace and security globally and continentally, South Africa has to create a peaceful and secure environment at home and be innovative in proffering new solutions and peace agendas to continental and global peace and security challenges.

**Programmatic approach:** Democracy, Governance and Citizenship
Participatory democracy is a right that enables the realisation of all other human rights. Yet there are no national policy frameworks guiding the quality and direction of participatory democracy. Fundamentally, improving participatory democracy in South Africa must confront the problem of a lack of trust in leadership, slow progress towards delivery of socioeconomic rights, and persistent, historical exclusions. Re-building the state's relationship with citizens is thus an integral task of the developmental democratic state, requiring effort, commitment and imagination beyond technical processes of service provision. It also requires acknowledging and addressing the multiple and overlapping forms of exclusion that vulnerable groups experience in South Africa. A collaborative, co-governance approach, based on meaningful engagement between citizens, the state and its institutions is needed.

Effective institutions are foremost lacking at local government

> *The research will focus on values-based leadership and its role in building a developmental, capable and ethical state where accountability and participation are prioritised.*

level. While government has conducted several capacity audits of municipalities, capacity building programmes have largely failed, as indicated in the Auditor-General's reports. Strong intervention should be directly linked to improving and streamlining intergovernmental relations to improve the delivery of services and the fulfilment of socioeconomic rights.

The HSRC will work with governments, oversight bodies and civil society to improve and strengthen participatory democracy though research and implementation support, and advocate for the adoption of a values-based approach to development, with a focus on developmental local government and accountable leadership.

In looking at the programmatic focal areas, the HSRC will take a continental view of the issues. Africa is a site both of learning and of engagement for the HSRC.

The organisation also enters this new period fully aware of the importance of innovation. The Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators will be crucial to the HSRC's approach in this regard. The DSI White Paper 2019 reflects attempts to reorientate the NSI to address the country's socioeconomic development challenges in a more contextually grounded manner than in the past, based on the premise that innovation systems must be developed to support not only inclusive economic growth but also environmental sustainability, inclusive development and improved government performance. Emerging economies like South Africa require models of innovation that emphasise the systemic and dynamic nature of innovation. These models should be orientated towards companies and the formal sector, other economic and social actors, as well as to informal enterprises and settings, including township and rural communities. Innovation that orientates science and technology towards people-centred development must not only promote innovation but also its effective social and economic uses, processes and organisation. This requires a focus on technological capability building, particularly at local levels.

To address technological capability building, increased understanding about the 4IR is critical. The impact of the 4IR in the domains of education, work and livelihoods is complex. Research is required into new modalities and priorities for learning and teaching, changes to skills demand in the labour market, and changes to the nature of work and livelihoods. In the domain of human and social capabilities, technological change is altering existing notions of identity and belonging, including the growing roles of social media in the public sphere. Emerging technologies are creating new potential for health care, such as new forms of intelligence for health care management, and advances in genetic medicine and prosthetics. More broadly, technological disruption is having an impact on human wellbeing in all its dimensions. In response to growing industrial automation, questions of social protection now increasingly raise the challenges of reskilling and other protections against technological unemployment.

*"The HSRC will look at how technological disruptions are both facilitating and impeding inclusive development. It will seek to open new areas of enquiry into the use of new technologies to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of public institutions, protect the public from cybersecurity threats, and support democratic processes through increased participation and access to quality information. It will play a leading role in the country to assist in the development of innovative ways to mitigate the impediments and leverage the opportunities."*

The HSRC will also (i) Transform research capabilities and (ii) Secure sustainable income streams.

### Transformed research capabilities

The HSRC's approach to transformation over the five-year period will not be limited to demographic transformation. It will also focus on:

i) Developing the required internal processes and systems to enable economic, efficient and effective implementation of the HSRC mandate.

ii) Approaching the research life-cycle – including data gathering, reporting and dissemination, data storage and sharing, and knowledge use – in new and innovative ways.

iii) Building research capacity and transforming human capital.

To achieve this, the HSRC will put in place appropriate policies and strategies to support the core business strategy, including a suite of Human Resources, Information Technology, Business Development and Research Use Strategies (also refer to section 3 above).

Building research capacity and transforming human capital will also contribute to developing capable South Africans. Towards this end, the organisation will measure progress against a set of indicators on employment equity, and learning and development.

### Sustainable income streams

The HSRC must secure a steady income stream to ensure its sustainability and alleviate the pressure on senior researchers to raise income year-on-year. To achieve this, it is imperative that it focuses on securing multi-year grants of between three to five years. It will forge collaborative partnerships with universities, science councils and the private sector, locally and internationally, to respond to calls for proposals, but also initiate grant proposals. It will retain its ability to respond to short-term projects, but not as a main income stream. In both instances, only those projects that are clearly aligned with the HSRC's research focus will be pursued.

In addition to the parliamentary grant, the HSRC will continue to pursue a ring-fenced government allocation to ensure sustainable funding especially for selected longitudinal surveys. These surveys are instrumental in providing comparative data in key areas of health, social attitudes and education, and generate knowledge that should be used in both government planning and monitoring.

Forging funding partnerships and diversifying sources of income will require a strengthened business development activity.

# 9. KEY RISKS

Table 2: Key risk and risk mitigation

| Key risk | Outcome | Risk mitigation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sustainability** | Sustainable income streams<br><br>Relationship of trust and influence with government<br><br>Transformed research capabilities | SA Government (MTEF) funding covers a three-year cycle.<br><br>Multi-year external grants and funding (3 years and above).<br><br>Diversification of funding sources.<br><br>Develop innovative research ideas and methodologies.<br><br>Develop a communication and branding strategy to position the HSRC as the leading social and humanities research institution.<br><br>Review the relevance and effectiveness of the current business model.<br><br>Establish a Knowledge Commons to optimise the use of library resources and services in pursuit of enhancing researchers' knowledge base and skills. |
| **Relevance and impact of HSRC** | Relationship of trust and influence with government<br><br>Trusted and engaged research partner with communities and civil society<br><br>National, regional and global leadership in production and use of targeted knowledge | Develop a stakeholder strategy (long and short term) to consolidate and initiate conversations and relationships with key role players in government and the broader funding community.<br><br>Apply baseline funding for emerging research and advocate the impact of the research to stakeholders and funders.<br><br>Broaden the outcomes to include advocacy and research impact.<br><br>Enhance the HSRC African footprint.<br><br>Match opportunities with proven capabilities.<br><br>Surplus funds to be retained in programmes as seed capital to bankroll the research of emerging social and humanities challenges.<br><br>Ongoing monitoring of changes and priorities in the research markets.<br><br>Review and co-ordinate effective platforms for dissemination of research outputs to stakeholders.<br><br>Research ethics and governance structures in place to deliver quality research. |

| Key risk | Outcome | Risk mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| **Human resources** | National, regional and global leadership in production and use of targeted knowledge | Implement talent management and retention strategy. |
| | Transformed research capabilities | Develop and articulate the Employee Value Proposition. |
| | | Review and develop an HSRC remuneration/ compensation philosophy. |
| | | Implement succession planning for executive management and key roles. |
| | | Develop and implement a performance model. |
| | | Design and implement an Accelerated Development Plan for black researchers. |
| | | Enhance the post-doctoral fellow and PhD researcher trainee programmes. |
| | | Develop new partnerships with research organisations. |
| **Physical and IT infrastructure, systems and equipment** | Transformed research capabilities | Formulate a funding proposal for submission to DSI and National Treasury to address aging IT and physical infrastructure deficiencies. |
| | | Information security controls in place. |
| | | Governance oversight structures in place to monitor the effectiveness of mitigation and initiatives. |
| | | Planned preventative maintenance programme in place to drive Occupational Health and Safety (OHSA) and building regulation compliance. |
| | | Regular OHSA audits conducted to drive compliance and flag risk practices. |
| | | Establish a Records Management Office in compliance with requirements as stipulated in the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000). |
| | | Develop a website to provide online access to information and resources for eResearch knowledge production via the intranet |
| | | Develop an eResearch support strategy, in line with latest trends, to enable a support service, in line with 4IR expectations. |

# PART D:
# Technical Indicator Descriptions (TIDS)

| Indicator Title | 1.1 The number of HSRC research articles that achieved a citation count of at least 10 within five years since initial publication |
|---|---|
| Definition | The number of HSRC research outputs, recognised as HSRC peer-reviewed journal articles in the five annual reporting periods preceding the year under review, but limited to only those articles indexed in the SCOPUS database, with at least 10 citations listed in the SCOPUS database as at the last day of the year under review |
| Source of data | Research Management System (RMS) research outputs |
| Method of calculation/Assessment | Identify all HSRC peer-reviewed journal articles captured in the RMS in the five years prior to the year under review (current reporting period):<br>• Select from these articles, only those listed in the SCOPUS database<br>• Obtain and capture the number of citations listed in the SCOPUS database for each selected research output, as at 31 March of the current reporting period<br>• Identify those research outputs with a citation count of 10 or more<br>• Count the total number with a citation count of 10 or more |
| Assumptions | • Source data are complete and accurate<br>• The HSRC subscription to SCOPUS is maintained |
| Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable) | • Target for women N/A<br>• Target for youth N/A<br>• Target for people with disabilities N/A |
| Spatial transformation (where applicable) | • Contribution to spatial transformation priorities N/A<br>• Description of spatial impact N/A |
| Desired performance | Equal to, or higher than targeted performance |
| Indicator responsibility | Director: e-Research Knowledge Centre (eRKC) |

| Indicator Title | 1.2 The number of curated datasets downloaded for secondary use |
|---|---|
| Definition | The number of instances where HSRC-curated datasets are downloaded for secondary use via the HSRC's research data repository during the period under review |
| Source of data | • The downloads are registered in a database linked to the HSRC's research data repository<br>• IT is responsible for managing the HSRC's research data repository and extracting the required statistics from the database<br>• This is subsequently verified by the Head: Digital Curation in the eRKC |
| Method of calculation/Assessment | Count the number of downloads of curated data sets during the period under review |
| Assumptions | • At least ten new datasets are curated and released per year<br>• The data repository and associated software for reporting will not be changed over the planning period |
| Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable) | • Target for women N/A<br>• Target for youth N/A<br>• Target for people with disabilities N/A |
| Spatial transformation (where applicable) | • Contribution to spatial transformation priorities N/A<br>• Description of spatial impact N/A |
| Desired performance | Equal to, or higher than targeted performance |
| Indicator responsibility | For reporting: Head of Data Curation in eRKC |

| Indicator Title | 1.3 The number of applied outcomes emanating from collaboration on the African continent |
|---|---|
| Definition | Applied outcomes emanating from collaboration on the African continent include:<br>a) Joint projects formalised by means of an active (current) contractual research agreement between the HSRC and at least one legal entity in an African country other than South Africa<br>b) Capacity building exchanges formalised by means of an active (current) contractual staff/capacity building exchange agreement between the HSRC and at least one legal entity in an African country other than South Africa<br>c) Implementable resolutions relevant to the African continent, formally adopted at a conference or workshop hosted or co-hosted by the HSRC in collaboration with regional, international or national (non-South African) partner organisations or legal entities |
| Source of data | • RMS, report, based on contracts in legal contracts repository<br>• RMS report, based on contracts in legal contracts repository |
| Method of calculation/Assessment | Simple count |
| Assumptions | RMS updated and correct |
| Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable) | • Target for women N/A<br>• Target for youth N/A<br>• Target for people with disabilities N/A |
| Spatial transformation (where applicable) | • Contribution to spatial transformation priorities N/A<br>• Description of spatial impact N/A |
| Desired performance | Increased collaboration in Africa |
| Indicator responsibility | Executive Head: AISA |

| Indicator Title | 2.1 Number of government services or functions where HSRC research results provided decision support |
|---|---|
| Definition | Number: The number of examples of government services or functions where HSRC research provided decision support |
| Source of data | RMS, drawing information from quarterly reports to Board and DSI |
| Method of calculation/Assessment | Count number of examples with supporting documentation submitted during the period under review, vetted by the Head: Corporate Communication and Stakeholder Relations |
| Assumptions | All examples of impact or uptake will be reported on |
| Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable) | • Target for women N/A<br>• Target for youth N/A<br>• Target for people with disabilities N/A |
| Spatial transformation (where applicable) | • Contribution to spatial transformation priorities N/A<br>• Description of spatial impact N/A |
| Desired performance | Equal to or more than the agreed target |
| Indicator responsibility | • Research programmes: To provide evidence of impact/uptake<br>• Office of the Deputy CEO: Research to review and record<br>• Director: Corporate Communication to vet and sign of |

| Indicator Title | 3.1 The number of innovations with community participation supported or enabled by HSRC research |
|---|---|
| Definition | In the context of this indicator, the term 'community' refers to members of a group participating in, involved in, or affected by, a research project, but who are not researchers or employed as researchers on the project.<br>An innovation with community participation is usually a social innovation, which is described as "a process or product that is new to the community, devised and used with active involvement of community members or stakeholders in a community, to resolve a social or environmental challenge affecting their community."<br><br>Innovations with community participation are usually context-specific but have the potential to be adapted or modified to be effective in different contexts.<br><br>For this indicator, innovations with community participation need not be strictly limited to social or environmental challenges affecting the community. For instance, innovations that relate to new ways of communication or improved research methods may also be recognised.<br><br>Recognition of an innovation involving community participation for purposes of this indicator will require the following:<br>• It has to be identified or enabled in the course of a research intervention and written up with community participation (e.g. by a member of the research team, in consultation with the community)<br>• The description of the innovation must be submitted to the Head: Intellectual Property and Technological Transfer (IPTT) in Legal Services who will review it and indicate whether it meets the requirements of an innovation with community participation. |
| Source of data | RMS |
| Method of calculation/Assessment | Count the number of formal descriptions of research-related innovations with community participation accepted and filed by the IPTT Office |
| Means of verification | All descriptions submitted to the IPTT office will be reviewed, categorised according to relevant criteria, and kept on file by the IPTT Office.<br>A description lodged with and signed off by the IPTT manager as meeting the requirements of innovations with community participation by the IPTT Manager will serve as evidence performance against this indicator. |
| Assumptions | Examples of innovations with community participation will be recognised and reported |
| Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable) | • Target for women N/A<br>• Target for youth N/A<br>• Target for people with disabilities N/A |
| Spatial transformation (where applicable) | • Contribution to spatial transformation priorities N/A<br>• Description of spatial impact N/A |
| Calculation type | Annual, i.e. non-cumulative |
| Reporting Cycle | Annually |
| Desired performance | Equal to, or higher than targeted performance |
| Indicator responsibility | • IPTT manager to provide guidance, review, verify and capture on reporting system<br>• Research programmes to deliver and report |

| Indicator Title | 4.1 The percentage of senior researchers (at the level of Senior Research Specialist, Senior Research Manager or higher) from designated groups, with permanent |
|---|---|
| Definition | Senior researchers: All research staff appointed at the level of senior research specialist, senior research manager or higher, as at the last day of the reporting period, excluding incoming visiting fellows and the CEO and DCEO: Research

Designated groups: According to Employment Equity guidelines

Permanent appointment: Contract letter of appointment is for an indefinite period (as opposed to a fixed-term contract)

  a. Count number of senior researchers who are from designated groups
  b. Count number of senior researchers who are from designated groups, on permanent appointment contracts

Calculate: b/a x 100 to express as a percentage |
| Source of data | RMS with report extracted from HR data |
| Method of calculation/Assessment | Quantitative calculation
  a. Count the number of senior researchers who are from designated groups
  b. Count the number of senior researchers who are from designated groups, on permanent appointment contracts
Calculate: b/a x 100 to express as a percentage |
| Assumptions | Treasury regulations will allow permanent appointment of critical research staff members |
| Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable) | • Target for women - Included in designated group
• Target for youth N/A
• Target for people with disabilities - Included in designated group |
| Spatial transformation (where applicable) | • Contribution to spatial transformation priorities N/A
• Description of spatial impact N/A |
| Desired performance | Equal to, or higher than targeted performance |
| Indicator responsibility | Director: Human Resources |

| Indicator Title | 5.1 Annual income derived from international funding agencies |
|---|---|
| Definition | The amount of external income obtained from international funding agencies, as reflected in the notes to the audited Annual Financial Statements of the HSRC |
| Source of data | Notes to the audited Annual Financial Statements of the HSRC: Revenue from exchange and non-exchange transactions |
| Method of calculation/Assessment | Simple count |
| Assumptions | The reporting format for Annual Financial Statements will remain unchanged over the five-year period |
| Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable) | • Target for women N/A
• Target for youth N/A
• Target for people with disabilities N/A |
| Spatial transformation (where applicable) | • Contribution to spatial transformation priorities N/A
• Description of spatial impact N/A |
| Desired performance | Equal to, or higher than, target set |
| Indicator responsibility | Chief Financial Officer |