



Terms of Reference for a SARIMA Community of Practice

Community of Practice	Northern Region Community of Practice (CoP) for Research Ethics and Integrity in Southern Africa
Initiator	Northern Regions and Surrounds Community of Practice for Ethics and Integrity
Approved by	
Version number	01
Term	This Terms of Reference (ToR) is effective from (insert date) and will be ongoing until terminated by agreement between the parties
Date approved	

1. Purpose

1.1 The Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the status, vision, mission and purpose of the Community of Practice (CoP), as well as the functions and responsibilities of the Executive Committee and the members of the CoP.

2. Name of Community of Practice

Northern Regions and Surrounds Community of Practice for Ethics and Integrity in Southern Africa and Surrounds (COP)

3. Status and Vision

3.1. Status

The Community of Practice (COP) operates under the auspices of the Southern African Research Innovation and Management Association (SARIMA). The CoPs are voluntary structures reporting on their activities to SARIMA. SARIMA supports the establishment of the CoPs and provide them with resources to promote their functioning.

3.2. Vision

The CoP will Shape the future through collaboration and networking.

3.3 Mission

The CoP will shaping the future of professional development in research administration and management in Southern Africa through the fields of ethics and integrity.

4. Purpose of Community of Practice

The purpose of the CoP is to:

- develop research ethics and integrity professionals' (administrators and managers) capabilities as a key stakeholder group, but also those of administrative assistants, researchers and research ethics and integrity committees (RECs), through focussed training and shared dialogue specifically on research ethics and integrity;
- be innovative in educating stakeholders on the vital role that research ethics and integrity plays in the research administration and management;
- create support networks in Southern Africa and beyond, inform policy on research ethics and integrity, and strengthen ties with key governing agencies and organizations; and
- provide avenues for sharing information, solutions and advice with peers on common problems within the research administration and management community, and more specifically in research ethics and integrity.

5. Composition, Membership and Terms of Office

5.1. Executive Committee (EXCO)

(a) As per COP the following are positions that are required to be filled by the members of the EXCO:

- Chair / Co-Chairs;

- Deputy Chair (Not applicable if there are Co-Chairs);
- Secretary;
- Treasurer (if needed);
- Advisory Members expertise or competencies in research ethics and integrity management, research; legislation, compliance and other; and
- EXCO General Members.

(b) The EXCO can have up to 11 (eleven) members inclusive of the positions above.

(c) Membership of the EXCO must be diverse and representation from relevant institutions in the specific region must be encouraged.

(d) The members must promote the values and principles set out in the Code of Conduct (**Appendix A**).

5.1.1 Functions of the Chair/Co-Chairs and/or Deputy Chair

(a) The chair/co-chairs convenes and presides over meetings.

(b) The chair/co-chairs perform additional functions as determined by the EXCO.

(c) The chair/co-chairs organize, schedule and delegate assignments to the members.

(d) The chair/co-chairs report the activities of the COP to the broader COP annually.

(e) Submits an annual report of the COP activities to the SARIMA Office (sarima@sarima.co.za).

(f) Submits a bi-annual report of the activities of the EXCO to the COP members meeting.

(g) In the absence of the chair (and there are not co-chairs), the deputy chair convenes and presides over meetings.

5.1.2 Functions of the secretary

(a) compiling an agenda for each meeting;

(b) distributing the agenda and all relevant documents to all members of the Committee at least five working days before the meeting;

(c) keeping minutes of each meeting of the Committee.

(d) performing such additional functions as determined by the Committee.

(e) maintain and securely store records; and

(f) assisting with the compilation of the COP reports.

5.1.3 Functions of the EXCO members

- (a) attend meetings and guide decision-making for the common good of the community of practice;
- (b) review all relevant material before meetings;
- (c) have the authority to approve resolutions through a vote based on sound deliberation and practice;
- (d) advise SARIMA on matters of promoting research ethics and integrity in Southern Africa;
- (e) participate in development, networking, support and training initiatives.
- (f) organise plenary research ethics and integrity sessions annually.

5.1.4 Terms of Office

- (a) Members of the EXCO are nominated by a CoP member and elected to the Committee for a term of two years, renewable once for another two-year term.
- (b) A nominated member must accept the nomination in writing.
- (b) Members will receive a letter of appointment from SARIMA (template attached as Appendix B) through the relevant COP.
- (c) Research Professionals / Managers on EXCO members must be paid up members of SARIMA.
- (d) This afore-mentioned condition (c) is waived for individuals which would not be eligible for SARIMA membership, however, their participation in driving the CoP initiatives are critical, such as academics and/or researchers.
- (e) The current chair/co-chairs will remain on the committee for another term to ensure continuity of the functions of the EXCO.
- (f) The Deputy chair will be considered to take over the position of chairing the Committee.

5.1.5 Meetings

- (a) The Committee meets at least quarterly or as so required. A chair or co-chair can call for an ad hoc meeting when the need arises.
- (b) A meeting has a quorum if 50% plus one of members are in attendance.
- (c) Decisions are based on consensus.
- (d) In the absence of consensus, decisions need a 50% plus one vote.
- (e) The advisors to the EXCO have full voting powers.

5.1.6 Termination of membership

(a) If members resign from the committee before their term of office expires, they will notify the committee in writing thirty calendar days before the resignation comes into effect.

5.2. COP membership

(a) On the establishment of the COP, membership will be determined by the COP and who the COP's target audience is.

(b) The COP encourages representation from relevant stakeholders in the region, including SADC members.

(c) COP membership is voluntarily, and members are to join in good faith and promote the values of research ethics and integrity as per the Code of Conduct.

(d) The members must promote the values and principles set out in the Code of Conduct (Appendix A).

(e) The following individuals are eligible for COP membership: research ethics and integrity professionals' (administrators and managers); research administrative assistants, researchers, and members of research ethics/integrity committees (RECs).

5.2.1 Functions of the CoP members

(a) set goals and achieve objectives aligned to the vision and mission of the COP;

(b) respect, trust, dedication, integrity and sharing a common vision are crucial interpersonal qualities that drives the performance of the COP;

(c) members will provide a service to the CoP and practice transformational leadership - linked to the qualities of the members;

(d) The CoP's contributions can be shaped through networks, including an affiliation to member organisations. These networks will assist the CoP to leave more significant impact on the research management profession, including research ethics and integrity;

(e) Drive of university collaboration for improvement of processes and implementation of policies;

(f) Work done by CoPs to be disseminated and published through scholarly platforms.

5.2.3 COP membership

(a) CoP membership is current from the time of acceptance of a nomination until termination.

- (b) Confirmation of membership is provided by the secretariat in writing.
- (b) A member that wishes to resign from the CoP notifies the Chair/Secretariat in writing.

5.2.4 CoP Meetings

- (a) The COP will meet at least biannually or as required.
- (b) The Secretary may request agenda items from COP members, which the Secretary will add to the agenda and then will distribute the agenda within a reasonable time before the meeting is held.
- (c) An agenda is circulated together with the minutes of the last meeting to COP members.

5.2.4 Quorum

No quorum requirements for attendance at CoP meetings.

6. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

- (a) EXCO members undertake to maintain confidentiality of discussions of confidential and sensitive matters at EXCO meetings. This practice is affirmed by signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement to maintain confidentiality.
- (b) CoP members are required to declare a conflict of interest, and if required, recuse themselves from discussion and / or decisions at meetings. When confidential matters are discussed, the Chairperson negotiates the rules of engagement.
- (c) Concerns about breaches of confidentiality by EXCO members should be raised with the Chair of the CoP in the first instance and, if not addressed to the satisfaction of the complainant, thereafter with the appointed SARIMA Research Management Portfolio, within thirty (30) calendar days. If these concerns are not addressed satisfactorily, the matter could be referred to the SARIMA President, within thirty (30) calendar days.

7. Administrative Support

- (a) The SARIMA Office provides administrative support, for example, market the annual or training events / webinars hosted by COPs, administer the registration form, and provide a digital platform to host virtual workshops or events, where applicable.
- (b) Each CoP elects a Secretary who will set-up meetings, and drafts agendas, meeting minutes and provide support for other administrative duties.

Appendix A: Code of Conduct

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Members of the Northern Regions and surrounds Community of Practice (CoP) for Research Ethics and Integrity lays forth the principles and values that guide how we conduct ourselves as members of the Executive Committee and the CoP.

By signing this Code, you agree that you have read and will respect the principles and values.

The ethical values that guide the conduct of members include collaboration, respect, integrity, accountability and care. These require that members:

- 1 comply with the stipulations set out in the CoPs Terms of Reference and all applicable laws, regulations and policies;
- 2 be respectful of other's perspectives and experiences;
- 3 focus on the common good for the community as a whole;
- 4 protect confidentiality of information;
- 5 avoid conflicts of interest and declare potential conflict of interest in a timely manner at meetings;
- 6 execute assigned duties diligently, honestly and to the full benefit of the community;
- 7 provide timely feedback at meetings, where applicable;
- 8 attend and participate actively in meetings and events, provide timely apologies if unable to attend and acknowledge receipt of communication;
- 9 use and develop resources, outputs and deliverables with honesty and integrity;
- 10 strive towards collegial relationships with key stakeholders and interest groups.

Appendix B: Appointment Letter – Member of the Executive Committee



Leadership in Research & Innovation Management

SARIMA Secretariat
C/O The National Research Foundation (KMS)
P O Box 2600
Pretoria 0001
Tel: 00 27 (0) 12 841 3329
Fax: 00 27 (0) 866 303 336
www.sarima.co.za

Date: dd/mm/yyyy

Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr/Prof
Name of Institution

Appointment as member of the Steering Committee: [name of COP]

This letter serves to confirm that [name of COP member] has been appointed as a member of the Steering Committee for the [name of COP].
This appointment is for the duration of two years, which expires on dd/mm/yyyy.

The work of the Steering Committee falls within the scope of the SARIMA Research Committee and is supported by the SARIMA Office.

SARIMA is grateful for your willingness to serve on the Steering Committee and wishing great success in promoting the professional development of research administrators and managers.

Yours faithfully,

[name]
Vice President: Research Management

Southern African Research & Innovation Management Association (Assoc. incorporated under Section 21. Registration Number 2002/027438/08. VAT Reg. No. 4590204113)
The Company's registered office is at the National Research Foundation (KMS), Meiring Naude Road, Pretoria, South Africa where a list of the directors' names is available for inspection