1st KEFRI Institutional Colloquium Report

# Introduction

KEFRI had had colloquiums that were region based conducted by Central Highlands Eco-regional Research Programme (CHERP) up to the emergence of Covid-19 restrictions that prevented physical meetings. KM Section approached CHERP management with the idea of holding the colloquiums virtually and have them institutional. Mr. Linus and Mr. Kamau worked together to plan how to achieve, based on lessons learnt from the CHERP colloquium, it was agreed that the scientists need to be motivated, the colloquia need to be regular, there was need to have diversity of topics presented, and a way to make it easy, affordable, and appealing to all KEFRI staff.

It was agreed that all presenters will be interviewed on their career history, lessons learnt, success stories and special attention given to the topic they are presenting. This video was to be played and broadcasted on KEFRI website, social media and KEFRI screens in the institute for a week before and a week after colloquium. A six months schedule of presenters was to be prepared, power point template, speakers profile template, and a timeline of activities.

The first institutional colloquium presenter was agreed to be the Board of Management Chairman, who was interviewed on this career history and speakers profile was done.

# The First KEFRI Institutional Colloquium

The 1st KEFRI Institutional Colloquium was held on 4th April 2022 at KEFRI headquarters’ auditorium. It was attended by 91 physical and 55 virtual participants. The presenter was Dr. Sammy Letema – KEFRI Board of Management Chair. He presented on “Visibility and Impact for 21st Century Scientist”.

The colloquium started at 11.00am with a word of prayer by Miriam Gathogo and Dr. Mbuvi welcomed all members presented before inviting Dr. Mutitu to introduce CHERP staff. Dr. Mutitu introduced staff from Nyeri and Rumuruti centers, the technical staff, foresters, interns and scientists.

Dr. Mbuvi introduced staff from headquarters and those who participated virtually form other eco-regional programmes. Then welcomed Dr. Jane Njuguna – SDD R&D to make her remarks.

Dr. Jane welcomed the Director – Dr. Cheboiwo who had joined in virtually from Geneva to make remarks. The director thanked the Dr. Letema for accepting to be the first presenter and informed participants that the colloquia will be monthly to help KEFRI research and researchers increase in visibility as we aim to be ranked in SCImago institutional ranking.

Dr. Jane indicated that KEFRI research visibility had improved over the time and thanked the board chair for his leadership, she introduced Dr. Letema by reading his profile and invited him to make his presentation.

# The Presentation: Visibility and Impact for 21st Century Scientist

Dr. Letema presented publishing data from google scholar and Scopus on scientists’ publications and noted that there has been improvement in the number of scientists who are publishing. He noted that there are fewer publications in Scopus than in Google scholar.

He said that there are three categories of research; the science of doing, science of thinking and science of deep thinking. KEFRI need to move from the prestigious but slow, frustrating and painful category of deep thinking. This category requires creativity, patents and innovations.

To achieve visibility in research he proposed the following:

* Updating of CVs every six months
* Registering of innovations (patents)
* Publishing in high impact journals
* Publicizing KEFRI innovations, technologies on KEFRI social media, website, radio and TV.
* Collaborating with fellow researchers and also with other institutions
* Award highly published researchers
* Develop incubation and commercialization center
* Retrain, retool and use of appropriate commutation for researchers
* Develop systems and procedures for commercialization and innovation
* Promotions be based on productivity

# The way forward

* KEFRI to focus on visibility and impact of research that leads to innovations and patents
* Develop systems and procedures for idea management
* Scientists are made not born – anyone of the researchers can be visible and can have impact.
* All scientists to appreciate that research is slow, frustrating and painful process

# Discussions

## Reducing funding from the government

The presenter indicated that there will never be enough funds from government to conduct research, only one percent of GDP is allocated to research and scientists have to work hard to get sponsorship and funding form elsewhere.

## How to measure capacity building output of researchers

Researchers that are involved in capacity building sought to find out how their efforts can be measured and included in performance and productivity. The response was that there must be first a research output (product, technology, innovation) that has been produced by research process before stakeholders are trained, demonstrated on how to use/apply it.

## Research infrastructure

The presenter was asked to comment on KEFRI infrastructure. The response was that KEFRI has several labs and equipment that are mostly underutilized. He also mentioned that if any researcher was in need of an equipment that is not available in KEFRI, there are funds set aside for sending samples for testing elsewhere including outside the country.

## Measurer in place for productivity

The presenter said that every position had requirements such as number of publications, experience in lower positions and performance assessment results. These form the measures of productivity. He also mentioned that the performance Improvement Plans (PIP) also helps researchers in improving on their performance.

Cost of publishing

The high cost of publishing was mentioned as a deterrent in publishing in high impact journals. To this the presenter agreed and said that there are funds set aside for this but for only papers of high impact. He also said that there are open access publishing which is charged, free publishing which is not accessible for some time unless one buys, there are also offers for young authors, third world countries, invited publications. The cost should not be a reason for not publishing. Dr. Ndufa also added that at the point of conceptualizing a project one should have in mind a targeted journal and include the cost of publishing in the budget.

# Appendices

## Appendix I: KEFRI Colloquium Programme

**Speaker:** Dr. Sammy Letema, Chair KEFRI Board

**Topic**: Visibility and Impact for 21st Century Scientist

**Venue:** KEFRI HQs Auditorium

**Date**: 5th April 2022

**Time:** 11.00 – 12 noon

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| **Time** | **Activity** | **Responsible** |
| 10.30 - 11.00am | Registration | Mr. Victor Kamau |
| 11.00 – 11.02am | Prayers |  |
| 11.02 – 11.10am | Introduction  | Dr. MTE Mbuvi |
| 11.10 – 11.20 am  | SDD – R&D Opening remarks and Speaker introduction | Dr. Jane Njuguna |
| 11.20 – 11.45am | Colloquium presentation | Dr. Sammy C. Letema |
| 11.45 – 11.55am | Discussions | Dr. James Ndufa |
| 11.55 – 12 noon | Vote of Thanks | Ms. Sheila Mbiru |
|  | Prayers |  |

**Session Chair:** Dr. Jane Njuguna

**Rapporteur**: Mr. Victor Kamau / Elema Mohamed

**ICT Support:** David Omuse