How can science councils contribute to innovation for inclusive development

A view from the HSRC

Crain Soudien
Professor
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 16 November 2015
Three generic roles expected of South African science councils

1. To enhance scientific excellence and participation in global knowledge and innovation networks
2. To create industry linkages that can promote economic growth and global competitiveness
3. To promote engagement that can contribute to a more equitable quality of life for all citizens, particularly the vulnerable and marginalised
How does your science council balance the three competing imperatives?

- HSRC focuses on two of the three generic imperatives:
  - Scientific Excellence
  - Social Determinants focussed research contributing to a more equitable quality of life and improvement in:
    - Health, nutrition, youth, education and skills

- Research for the Public Sector
  - Research into Action Unit – translating economic policy, skills, rural development, innovation into policy and research briefs
What are the internal organisational conditions that facilitate and constrain the achievement of your mandate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACILITATING FACTORS</th>
<th>CONSTRAINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Scientific Capacity</td>
<td>• Targets set centrally – cascading from top down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manage big surveys</td>
<td>• Staff retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public dissemination of knowledge</td>
<td>• Retaining skill sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High publication targets</td>
<td>• Lack of capacity in critical areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alignment with NDP</td>
<td>• Administrative demands – finding simpler ways to meet effectiveness requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implementation networks, such as PAN</td>
<td>• Integrating research across programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are the external policy, scientific or financial conditions, globally or nationally, that facilitate and constrain the achievement of your mandate?

- **Enabling factors**
  - Long-term relationships with government and funders
  - Research networks across the South
- **Constraining factors**
  - Cost of compliance
  - High income targets
  - Research expertise
What are the major common challenges for science councils in the national system of innovation that policy makers should take into account?

- “Mission Overload”
  - Multiple Policy Imperatives, constantly changing
  - Funding model – need for ring-fenced funding for strategic priorities