

# CONCEPT NOTE

FREE STATE PROVINCIAL TREASURY

# RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM 2017

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## 1. Introduction

The National Development Plan (NDP), through a cogent diagnostics, identifies targeted policy areas which need to be addressed between 2014 and 2030. The NDP<sup>1</sup> highlights a capable state as an essential precondition for South Africa's development and warns that such a state *“does not materialize by decree, nor can it be legislated or created from conference resolutions – that it will have to be painstakingly built, brick by brick, institution by institution”*. In the draft Public Service Research Strategy (2015-2020)<sup>2</sup>, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) recognises that the critical success factors for the implementation of the NDP are largely premised on the continual availability of solid research data for evidence-based decision-making in planning, policy and practice within all the NDP priority areas which impact on improving Public Administration.

Public Service research is premised on various policies of government and seeks to evaluate the progress made in this regard as well as identify interventions where barriers exist. The policies include the 2014-2019 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) which outlines 14 priorities for the current administration. These priorities are given effect through the 12 outcomes which are also consistent with the global 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Whilst the Research Strategy sets out the Public Service Vision for Research and Policy Analysis for the period 2014-2019, its explicit aims - consistent with the construction of a capable state - include the translation of credible research findings and recommendations into influential policy decisions, development of the public service as a credible source of high quality research and analytics and establish the public service as a hub for dialogue and debate.

In our context, the Provincial Treasury Research Colloquium encompasses the ideals of the NDP, Public Service Research Strategy, the draft 2015 Information and Knowledge Management Strategy of the Province as well as Free State Vision 2030<sup>3</sup>. Vision 2030 articulates that Free State *“shall have a resilient, thriving and competitive economy that is inclusive, with immense prospects for human development anchored on the principles of unity, dignity, diversity, equality and prosperity for all”*.

## 2. Background

Provincial Treasury hosted a 2 day Research Colloquium in September 2016, a very first of its kind in the Free State. Day 1 was attended by 42 people and Day 2 by 67 people. Present during the 2 days was

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Commission. 2012. National Development Plan. The Presidency: Pretoria

<sup>2</sup> DPSA. 2015. Public Service Research Strategy:2015-2020. Department of Public Service Administration: Pretoria

<sup>3</sup> FSGDS. 2014. Free State Growth and Development Strategy

the MEC for Finance, Director General of the Province, Head of Treasury Department and many other senior officials from provincial government departments and selected municipalities. The objective of the 2016 Colloquium was for Provincial Treasury to share the findings and recommendations of its research (including both internally completed and outsourced studies) as well as publications completed for the 2015/16 year. However, the ensuing discussions and debates highlighted the inherent potential of this newly created platform and to explore the many opportunities it presents in the quest of building a capable state, in policy development and analysis, and more importantly in building partnerships.

### **3. Problem Statement and Contextual Framework**

In its Research Strategy, the DPSA acknowledges that the public service generally does not make decisions based on empirical evidence through grounded research as an institutional practice. It further identified the lack of leveraging on the available and reliable research outcomes, sources and best practices in the development and implementation of policies, practices in operations and programmes in the broader public service as a key challenge. The unintended consequence of major policy choices pointed continually to lack of sufficient embedded research culture and practice. As a result, policy decisions and choices in the province is not sufficiently based on sound and credible research, nor does it adequately respond to dynamic realities on the ground. At provincial level, research is more often half-hearted, uncoordinated and this is further compounded by data paucity. This necessitates the need for collaboration, for leveraging on existing resources and partnerships.

### **4. Research Colloquium as Solution**

A Research Colloquium is defined as an academic meeting where the results of (scientific) research are reported. Emanating from discussions at the 2016 Research Colloquium, the need to elevate and use the Colloquium as a platform to inform, influence, enrich and enhance policy discussions and policy making in the province was identified. As such, the approach for this year is to extend an invitation to all researchers in government departments and research institutions (including private and public as well as those national) and academic institutions to share their most recently completed research works (i.e. not older than 2 years) on the Free State.

### **5. Objectives of the Research Colloquium**

The Research Colloquium - as an annual event - has demonstrated immense potential in its very first year and is part of the MEC of Finance's Programme of Action. It is anticipated that the Colloquium will

be informed mainly by the Provincial Research Strategy in future. For now, the Provincial Research Agenda<sup>4</sup> outlines the 6 pillars and 15 drivers of Free State's Vision 2030. **The 2017 Research Colloquium will be guided by and organised along these pillars and drivers as outlined in the table below.**

Table 1: Pillars and Drivers for Vision 2030

<b><u>Pillar 1:</u> Inclusive economic growth and sustainable job creation</b>	<b><u>Pillar 2:</u> Education, innovation and skills development</b>	<b><u>Pillar 3:</u> Improved quality of life</b>	<b><u>Pillar 4:</u> Sustainable rural development</b>	<b><u>Pillar 5:</u> Build Social Cohesion</b>	<b><u>Pillar 6:</u> Good governance</b>
<b><u>Driver 1:</u></b> Diversify and expand agricultural development and food security	<b><u>Driver 6:</u></b> Ensure an appropriate skills base for growth and development	<b><u>Driver 7:</u></b> Curb crime and streamline criminal justice performance	<b><u>Driver 13:</u></b> Mainstream rural development into growth and development planning	<b><u>Driver 14:</u></b> Maximise arts, culture, sports and recreation opportunities and prospects for all communities	<b><u>Driver 15:</u></b> Foster good governance to create a conducive climate for growth and development
<b><u>Driver 2:</u></b> Minimise the impact of the declining mining sector and ensure that existing mining potential is harnessed		<b><u>Driver 8:</u></b> Expand and maintain basic and road infrastructure			
<b><u>Driver 3:</u></b> Expand and diversify manufacturing opportunities		<b><u>Driver 9:</u></b> Facilitate sustainable human settlements			
<b><u>Driver 4:</u></b> Capitalise on transport and distribution opportunities		<b><u>Driver 10:</u></b> Provide and improve adequate health care for citizens			
<b><u>Driver 5:</u></b> Harness and increase tourism potential and opportunities		<b><u>Driver 11:</u></b> Ensure social development and social security services for all citizens			
		<b><u>Driver 12:</u></b> Integrate environmental concerns into growth and development planning			

<sup>4</sup> Department of the Premier. Free State Provincial Government and District Municipalities Research Agenda. 2017.

Source: Department of the Premier. Free State Provincial Government and District Municipalities Research Agenda. 2017

Against the backdrop of a dearth of research and data at subnational level, the objectives of the 2017 Research Colloquium are as follows:

- to consolidate all recently completed research on the Free State province;
- to channel all recently completed research into the 6 pillars and 15 drivers of the FSDG so as to enhance policy making and policy analysis in the province;
- to facilitate the development of a research repository for scientific research conducted on the province;
- to serve as a platform for a wider dissemination of research projects with a bearing on the Free State province;
- to develop and harness research and presentation skills of upcoming researchers in the public service in particular and the research community in general;
- to serve as a platform for debate and dialogue on the development of the province.

**Therefore, for 2017, the Colloquium will invite research papers completed between 2015 and 2017 on the Free State from researchers and development practitioners based in the public service, academic institutions as well as industry.** The packaging and duration of the Colloquium will depend on the number and nature of submissions received.

## **6. Aspects of the 2017 Research Colloquium**

### **6.1 Target audience**

The Colloquium will be attended by Politicians, Academics, Practitioners, Government Officials, Local Government Associations, State owned enterprises, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Private Sector, Farmer Cooperatives, Commerce and Industry, Labour Unions, and post-graduate students.

### **6.2 Call For Papers**

The 2017 Colloquium is organized under the theme **“Fostering a resilient, thriving, inclusive and competitive economy for human development”**. This theme is derived from the province’s Vision 2030. The call for papers - based on the 6 pillars and 15 drivers underpinning Vision 2030, will be made

from 14th July 2017 through emails, stakeholder engagements and several other government communications and media platforms.

### 6.3 Abstracts

The following shall apply for abstracts:

- Abstracts must be limited to 400 words or less.
- Roman 12 point font with 1.5 line spacing is recommended.
- The abstract title should be concise and clearly convey the subject of the abstract.
- Maximum length: 85 characters, including spaces.
- Titles should be in all upper case letters and bolded, e.g. **RADICAL ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION: AN IDEOLOGICAL DEBATE**
- Author's Names should appear immediately below the title and must be in bold.
- Abstracts should at least cover the following essentials:
  - Briefly and clearly describe the hypothesis of the study. Why was the study conducted?
  - Detail the experimental methods and processes employed in the study. What did you do?
  - Describe the precise findings of the study; promises of results “to be determined” are not acceptable. Describe what you found and include data.
  - Describe logically sound conclusions and reliable inferences drawn from the study results. Why are the study’s findings important?
  - Abstract should highlight key policy implications and recommendations.
- An indication must be provided as to whether the paper has been presented elsewhere and/or if it has been submitted or published in a journal. Details of such should be provided.

### 6.4 Colloquium Papers

All papers submitted must be informed by a clear methodological, empirical and sound theoretical framework. Authors should expose and outline the incremental contributions of their papers to distinguish it from work already done on the same topic. This calls for authors to clearly reference the views expressed by other authors or by studies published earlier. Put differently, all papers should adhere to the highest ethical standards of scientific research and should acknowledge and cite all content emphasis obtained from other sources.

Authors are required to inform the editorial committee about the status of their paper. Authors must clearly indicate “work in progress or final papers” All research papers supervised, must indicate the institution

and the supervisor and whether it is published, or still a working paper or still under review. Guidelines for the submission of Final Papers are as follows:

- 6.4.1 Draft and final papers should not exceed 7000 words (approximately 25 pages), including tables, figures and references;
- 6.4.2 The Harvard referencing method is recommended;
- 6.4.3 The cover page of the final paper must contain the paper title, the author's name, the name and date of the Colloquium. The main text of the paper should start on the following page of the document;
- 6.4.4 Acknowledgements should be written at the end of the paper under the heading acknowledgements;
- 6.4.5 Tables and figures should be numbered chronologically and have a heading and source. Explanations must be in Times New Roman 10 point font. Explanatory notes should appear below the tables or figures and above the source;
- 6.4.6 Equations should be numbered consecutively to the right of the equations.
- 6.4.7 The executive summary in the final report should include introduction, background, research questions, methodology, research paradigm and a summary of key findings, recommendations and policy implications.

Given the primary objective of the Research Colloquium as a platform to inform, influence, enrich and enhance policy discussions and policy making in the province, papers with clear policy implications and recommendations will receive priority.

## **6.5 Committees**

The success of the Colloquium rests with two committees, namely the Editorial Committee as well as the Organizing Committee. The respective roles of these committees are outlined below.

### **6.5.1 Editorial Committee**

An Editorial Committee constituting primarily of academics from local institutions of higher learning and practitioners from government departments shall be established. Guided by the objectives of the Colloquium, the Committee shall:

- 6.5.1.1 Select abstracts for presentation;

6.5.1.2 Quality Assure Final papers submitted and make binding decisions as to whether the papers meet the criteria, standards and proper referencing and acknowledgements.

6.5.1.3 Guide the development of the 6 Policy Briefs in line with the 6 Pillars of Vision 2030 with clear findings, policy implications and recommendations.

6.5.1.4 Be supported by scribes allocated to the different sessions

## **6.5.2 Organizing Committee**

An Organizing Committee constituting primarily of academics from local institutions of higher learning and practitioners from government departments shall be established. Guided by the objectives of the Colloquium, the Committee shall:

6.5.2.1 Organize and manage all logistical matters of the Colloquium

6.5.2.2 Prepare a close-out report on the Colloquium

6.5.2.3 Prepare a memo to the Province's Executive Council (EXCO) on the outcomes of the Colloquium

## **7. Format of the Colloquium**

### **7.1 Plenary**

- The following will be catered for in plenary sessions:
  - Key note addresses
  - Presentations, questions and answers sessions
  - Panel discussions
- A facilitator will be assigned per session.
- A maximum of 30 minutes per session will be allocated for a moderated open forum to allow for questions and answers after all presentations have been made.

### **7.2 Parallel Sessions**

- To deepen the quality of engagements, parallel sessions will take place and will be categorised according to the 6 pillars of the province's Vision 2030.
- Each session shall have a maximum of 2 speakers.
- A minimum of 1 discussants will be allocated per session.
- A moderator and a scribe will be assigned per session.

- A maximum of 30 minutes per session will be allocated for a moderated open forum to allow for questions and answers after all presentations have been made.

## 8. Important Timelines

- **Call for Papers:** to be issued on **14<sup>th</sup> August 2017** through various platforms
- **Abstract Submission:** **4<sup>th</sup> September 2017** – Abstracts and summary of the paper should be sent to this email address: [Colloquium2017\\_abstracts@treasury.fs.gov.za](mailto:Colloquium2017_abstracts@treasury.fs.gov.za)
- **Abstract selection:** **15<sup>th</sup> September 2017**
- **Selected Paper Submission:** **29<sup>th</sup> September 2017** – Papers selected for presentation should be sent to this email address: [Colloquium2017\\_Papers@treasury.fs.gov.za](mailto:Colloquium2017_Papers@treasury.fs.gov.za)
- **Submission of Personal Information:** **6<sup>th</sup> October 2017** – Personal information of presenters and sessions facilitators/moderators should be sent to this email address: [Colloquium2017\\_PI@treasury.fs.gov.za](mailto:Colloquium2017_PI@treasury.fs.gov.za)
- **Colloquium Dates:** **18-20 October 2017**

## 9. Guidelines for All Participants at Plenaries and Parallel Sessions

- 9.1 Participants such as session facilitators, moderators, presenters and scribes should be in the venue 15 minutes before the start of the session;
- 9.2 A **maximum of 45 minutes will be given** for all oral presentations;
- 9.3 For presentations, powerpoint slides are required as visual aid for presentations – presenters must load soft copies of their presentations 15 minutes prior to the start of the session;
- 9.4 Powerpoint presentations **should not exceed 20 slides**, excluding the slide bearing the title of the presentation. It is advisable to prepare back-up slides in the event additional information may be required during the open forum;
- 9.5 The slides, once projected, should be readable up to a distance of 12 meters;
- 9.6 The slide presentations should at least cover the following:
  - Research Objectives
  - Brief Background
  - Rationale
  - Conceptual/Theoretical Framework
  - Methods and Descriptive Statistics
  - Main Findings

- Policy Implications for Free State
- Recommendations

## **10. Deliverables of the Colloquium**

10.1 Policy Briefs in line with the 6 pillars of the province's Vision 2030

10.2 EXCO Memo on Colloquium Proceedings

## **11. Potential Partners**

Based on common interests in a variety of issues, the following have been identified as possible partners:

- Department of the Premier
- Department of Economic and Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA)
- Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)
- National Treasury
- National School of Government
- University of the Free State (UFS)
- Central University of Technology (CUT)
- University of South Africa (UNISA) – Bloemfontein Satellite
- Human Science Research Council (HSRC)
- Economies of Regions Learning Network (ERLN)
- Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC)

## **12. Evaluating the Success and/or Effectiveness of the Colloquium**

12.1 Feedback on the success and/or effectiveness of the Colloquium will be gathered by means of a feedback form

12.2 The feedback form will focus on the following dimensions of the Colloquium:

- Demographic characteristics of attendees and participants
- Quality of Research Papers
- Quality of Presentations
- Quality and Suitability of Venues and Facilities
- Quality of Catering Services Provided
- Moderators and Facilitators

- Discussants
- Quality of Discussions
- Thematic Areas covered
- Gaps and Areas of Improvements

### 13. Summary Overview of the 2017 Research Colloquium Provisional Programme

Time Allocated	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
07:30-8:30	Registrations	Registrations	Registrations
8:30-10:30	Opening Plenary 1	Panel Discussion on the role of research in policy making	6 Breakaway/Parallel Sessions ( 2 papers per session)
10:30-11:00	Tea Break	Tea Break	Tea Break
11:00-13:00	Opening Plenary 2	6 Breakaway/Parallel Sessions (2 papers per session)	Closing Plenary
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch
14:00-16:00	Snap Debate on Social Cohesion	6 Breakaway/Parallel Sessions ( 2 papers per session)	