

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA**

**RESEARCH POLICY**

**(NMK-RC)**

**MAY 2010**

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**Preamble**

National Museums of Kenya (NMK) is a corporate body established under the National Museums and Heritage Act of the laws of Kenya (2006 No. 6). Being the custodian of Kenya’s rich and diverse heritage, NMK is a complex multi-disciplinary corporation with diverse resources and activities with a mission of enhancing knowledge, appreciation, respect and sustainable utilization of the national heritage for the benefit of Kenya and the world. The mandate of the institution is to:

- (i) Serve as a national centre of heritage for the repository of materials that are of scientific, cultural, technological and human interest.
- (ii) Serve as a place where research and dissemination of knowledge in all fields of scientific, cultural, technological and human interest may be undertaken.
- (iii) Identify, protect, conserve and transmit the cultural and natural heritage of Kenya.
- (iv) Promote cultural and natural resources in the context of social and economic development.

The generation, documentation and dissemination of knowledge, information and innovations are key for the conservation, preservation and sustainable utilization of Kenya’s biological and cultural heritage. The NMK mandate as stated above significantly revolves around the research arms of the institution. It is therefore paramount that a research policy is in place to provide guidelines for effectiveness and efficiency within the concerned arms of the institution. The policy guarantees that NMK’s research work is beyond reproach, adheres to internationally acceptable scientific ethics and standards and undertaken through recognized institutional systems and structures.

In its efforts to realize its vision, mission and objectives, NMK continues to put emphasis on enhancing quality research, attraction and retention of qualified and motivated staff, transfer of knowledge from NMK and the utilization of the same for the creation of national wealth and conservation of national heritage as well as fostering linkages between NMK research arms and other research institutions. Furthermore, linkages with

industries through consultancy, research contracts and commercialization of inventions, innovations and research findings are also emphasized, besides strengthening of infrastructure and facilities for Research & Development (R & D) for the institution to competitively maintain its place among its peers.

## **I. JUSTIFICATION AND RATIONALE FOR NMK-RP**

The NMK is categorized nationally as a research institution and is endowed with well-trained and qualified personnel as well as specialized laboratories, equipment and animal facilities. It subsequently aims at undertaking strategic, opportunistic and contract research, driven by national priorities as well as international public good. Its research activities and programmes endeavor to utilize institutional resources to generate new knowledge through R&D. For NMK to fulfill its function and research agenda effectively there is need for a comprehensive and enabling National Museums of Kenya Research Policy (NMK-RP). The NMK-RP shall provide broad guidance and direction to NMK's research activities and programmes towards creation of information, knowledge, technologies and innovations. The policy provides broad based guidance on the generation of new knowledge, development of products and services, information dissemination and knowledge sharing and also takes care of the interests of all the shareholders in the generation and commercialization of these products.

The NMK will remain focused on integrated service delivery by ensuring that all heritage management activities undertaken or promoted meets and exceeds the stakeholder's expectation and this will partly be achieved through its research programmes. The policy will therefore be implemented by all the three research arms of the institution namely, Directorate of Research and Collection (DRC), Institute of Primate Research (IPR) and Research Institute for Swahili Studies in Eastern Africa (RISSEA).

The NMK research objectives and activities are guided by the broad NMK Vision and Mission as spelt below:

### **Vision**

“To be a global leader in heritage research and management”

### **Mission**

“To promote conservation and sustainable utilization of national heritage through generation, documentation and dissemination of research and collection knowledge, information and innovations”

## **II. RESEARCH MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES**

The NMK mission as stated above, demands that major research areas are clearly defined and that they are in tandem with the mission. Subsequently each of the directorates mandated to conduct research has specific objectives which define their research agenda. However, since institutional mission and vision may be reviewed from time to time as new strategic plans are rolled every five years these objectives also stand to be reviewed as appropriate.

### **i) Directorate of Research and Collection (DRC)**

The Directorate is charged with the mandate of generating, documenting and disseminating national heritage information and knowledge and be the custodian of the national collection. Its mission therefore revolves around “*effective and efficient management of national heritage through rigorous scientific activities and programmes that are focused on sustainable use, conservation and preservation of the country’s heritage*”. The broad objectives are:

- a) To spearhead research and conservation of modern and prehistoric flora and fauna
- b) To spearhead research and conservation of prehistoric and modern culture including Traditional and Cultural Expressions
- c) To curate and preserve collections to international standards
- d) To serve as a repository for the country's natural, cultural, prehistoric materials as well as contemporary and modern artifacts
- e) To document and disseminate information collected through research for the benefit of end users
- f) To serve as a place where learning takes place through student attachments and short term specialized courses
- g) To leverage financial resources, including entering into partnerships, to achieve the above objectives

## **ii) Institute of Primate Research (IPR)**

The broad mission of the Institute is to contribute to knowledge that will lead to improvement of human health, conservation and biodiversity. The objectives of Institute of Primate Research are:

- a) To pursue excellence in scientific research that has the potential to alleviate health challenges.
- b) To promote science and technology through research programmes and services
- c) To offer training to staff and students that produces graduates who are practical, well informed, efficient and self reliant
- d) To offer expertise in areas of national and international scientific development

e) To offer a range of opportunities for research and training to students, local and international collaborators

f) To source and prudently administer resources to achieve the above objectives

### **iii) Research Institute for Swahili Studies in Eastern Africa (RISSEA)**

- a) To undertake a well coordinated, integrated and holistic studies on the Swahili society in the East African region
- b) To document and preserve all research work on the Swahili society and culture
- c) To revive and preserve Swahili arts, crafts and other forms of cultural expressions

There are other core NMK directorates such as the Directorate of Museums Sites and Monuments, which may conduct management related research and these will be covered by this policy.

### **Principles and Standards of NMK Research**

The NMK will;

- focus on object/specimen-oriented, museological and multi-disciplinary academic research of national and international importance.
- target its research activities to assist deliver the strategic goals of its mission and objectives.
- aim to draw in students, local communities and other research partners to contribute to its programmes.
- be mindful of all issues that have ethical and IPR implications and apply appropriate controls.

## **II. HERITAGE COLLECTION MANAGEMENT**

NMK is the repository for the National Heritage Collection which includes biological, pre-historic and cultural materials. This collection will be used to serve the research and educational interests of staff and the general public as appropriate. However, use, security and general management of the collection will be guided by the NMK **Collection**

**Management and Conservation Policy.** The policy provides guidelines regarding the scope and use of NMK collections, including new acquisitions, access, de-accession and disposal, loans, exhibits, and collection handling and use. Transfer of materials to external destinations shall be guided by Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) between NMK and the recipient following the NMK MTA format. Each of the collecting departments shall be expected to develop and review its own collection management and conservation procedures and processes on a regular basis, and this will include guidelines for protecting the collection from destructive or adverse study methodologies..

The Collection Management and Conservation Policy shall be the main vehicle for internal controls over collection activities within NMK. The internal controls shall spell out policies, organizational structure and procedures adopted to safeguard assets, ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and promote efficient use of resources. Where possible, the use of information technology will be highly encouraged to make collection information and knowledge reach a wider population.

### **III. ENHANCING RESEARCH CAPACITY**

It is in the interest of NMK that it builds the right human capacity and research facilities to ensure high research standards and quality. To this end, NMK will strive to promote and avail training opportunities to its staff to the highest level possible and shall further promote the culture of competitive appointments. Being a national institution, NMK will also strive to contribute its share of national capacity building in fields that it has strength in. It will therefore provide opportunities, as capacity may allow, for students and staff from other organizations to train within its research directorates. Requirements for these training opportunities will be mutually agreed upon between NMK and specific institutions and students. There will be continuous efforts to upgrade NMK's research facilities and equipment.

The NMK recognizes that besides its staff, clients are critical resource in achieving its mission and therefore respects client diversity. The institution therefore, emphasizes



mutual respect for individuals, especially local communities and research partners, and ensures equitable recognition of their contribution to the success on NMK research agenda. In this regard, NMK is committed to timely and quick response to clients concerns and needs.

#### **IV. GRANT MAKING FOR RESEARCH**

Given the broad mandate, diversity of research programmes and activities going in NMK and the limited government grant to the institution, NMK researchers will be expected to aggressively source for research grants from diverse sources including development partners, international funding organizations and other national public sources, in order to conduct their research and collection activities. Resource mobilization for research activities and programmes will therefore be a key activity for all researchers. Researchers will be expected to initiate the development of proposals as per their areas of expertise, and this will be cleared through laid down institutional systems with final approval of the Director General, depending on specific donor requirement.

All agreements governing funded grants will be signed by Director General, on recommendation from the Director in charge. For purposes of institutional administration and costs all grants will be charged institutional overheads of 12.5%. However, the NMK finance department will be expected to fast track access to the research funds for purposes of timely delivery of the research results.

#### **V. DATA AND INFORMATION SHARING**

NMK Research, Collection and Documentation activities and programmes generate massive and valuable data and the institution is committed to providing and sharing this data/information with its partners, individuals, institutions and societies. However, the sharing of this information shall be governed by **NMK Data and Information Sharing Policy**. The policy provides broad guiding principles for sharing NMK data and

information and it is expected that all NMK research staff, together with their collaborators shall adhere to the requirements of the policy.

The release of data to specific institutions or individuals will be regulated through agreements to ensure that the information is used for the intended purpose. NMK will charge a minimal fee towards maintenance of the data in databases and data processing. Payment will also be levied to those who require data for commercial purposes such as for production of books and films.

## **VI. COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH**

NMK benefits significantly from collaborative efforts and expertise of individuals not regularly in full NMK employment. Their contribution is valued and shall be governed by **the NMK Affiliation Policy** together with specific agreements or Memoranda of Understanding.(MOUs). For scholars to be offered affiliation status with NMK, he/she must be an individual who is research oriented and is prepared to take an active part in the Museum's research programmes, and whose research will contribute towards achievement of the institution's research goals and objectives.

The implementation of collaborative research activities shall be based on specific work plans agreed upon by NMK and its respective affiliate. Such activities, including budgets necessary to implement them, shall be developed and modified through mutual agreements and approved by both parties through the exchange of letters of agreements or MoUs. Sources of funding shall be clearly documented in the agreement.

### **Joint publications**

Any scientific publication or presentations arising from collaborative research work including scientific papers, books and proceedings of conferences, seminars and workshops will be authored jointly to reflect partnership in such programmes.

NMK shall periodically review the results of joint research projects to determine if any research findings, including processes and methods, constitute patentable technology as guided by the NMK- **Intellectual Property Policy**.

## **VII. DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS**

NMK is committed to nurturing a strong culture in the generation, sharing and application of heritage knowledge and information emanating from its research findings. To this end, the institution expects all its researchers to make public all their research findings as much as possible. However, this is expected to be so only after the information has been assessed for purposes of patenting any new innovations. Placing information in the public domain will be through scientific publication in peer reviewed journals, exhibitions, public lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops and the general public media services. However, all researchers will be required to clear with the management before any information is placed in the public media.

## **VIII. CONSULTANCY SERVICES**

To provide an official mechanism for NMK researchers to bid for consultancies, nationally or internationally, and create a channel for income generation for NMK and extra incentives to researchers, NMK has put in place **NMK Consultancy Services Policy** to guide researcher's engagement on consultancies using institutional time. Subsequently NMK researchers will be allowed to officially undertake consultancies as per the policy. Specific terms for each consultancy shall be mutually agreed based on this policy.

All consultancies will be governed by a clear agreement signed by the Director General as recommended by the Director in charge of the Directorate under which the consultancy falls. The agreements will clearly stipulate the obligations of the research team and those of the client as well as the timelines and funds available to undertake the work.

20% of the proceeds from all consultancies, i.e. associated professional consultancy fees, will go to NMK research while the consulting team shares the remaining 80%.

## IX. RESEARCH POLICY ADMINISTRATION

The implementation of this policy will, on the whole, be monitored and evaluated by Director General in consultation with the Directors. The Directors will constitute the NMK Research Policy secretariat for purposes of updating and improving on this policy. All NMK researchers and stakeholders will be encouraged to make submissions to the secretariat from time to time as need may arise. Such submissions will all be synthesized by the secretariat and used to revise the policy as and when such need is identified.

**The overall custodian of this policy is the Board of Directors**

### Reference Policies Cited

NMK Intellectual Property Policy (In preparation)

NMK Collection Management and Conservation Policy

NMK Data and Information Sharing Policy

NMK Consultancy Services Policy

NMK Affiliation Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors on .....

15<sup>th</sup> July, 2010

Signature .....

*Handwritten signature*

Chairman .....

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