



Financial and Fiscal Commission

Research Policy Handbook 2013/2016

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

In order to address the increasingly complex public policy challenges and the dynamically changing intergovernmental relations environment, the Financial and Fiscal Commission (the Commission) has developed a 5-year strategy commencing in 2009. The primary focus of the new strategy is on outcomes of government interventions within and across various government spheres. This Research Policy is based on this research strategy and aims to advance the mission of the Commission, the relevant part of which reads:

Ultimately, the findings of its research will assist the Financial and Fiscal Commission with the following outputs and outcomes:

1. Better policy advice and recommendations which are more responsive to emerging issues of development to Parliament, provincial legislatures and to organised local government through the development of new as well as tailored and sharpened concepts and methodologies that better capture the nature, extent, and depth of the Commission's legislative mandate
2. Enhanced capacity of researchers and practitioners in the modelling, measurement, analysis, and monitoring of the developmental impact of public resources;
3. Wider dissemination and greater policy influence of supported initiatives; and
4. Enhanced collaboration among researchers, experts, policymakers, and other stakeholders in achieving fiscal sustainability and related development agenda at the national and international level through its joint research initiatives.

SECTION 2: RESEARCH PRINCIPLES, SENSITIVE RESEARCH AND CONFIDENTIALITY

1. This Research Policy intends to encourage quality research at the Commission. It does this by providing an enabling environment in which researchers can flourish and gain in stature nationally and internationally.
2. All researchers form part of both a national and international community of researchers and, as such, adhere to certain standards of relevance and responsibility. Research is therefore carried out in accordance with relevant professional codes and internationally accepted ethical guidelines for researchers.
3. The Commission subscribes to the freedom of its research staff and persons appointed or working under its umbrella to pursue research consistent with the Commission's philosophy and mission. This policy is based on the principle of freedom as guaranteed in section 16(1)(d) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996. Research freedom encourages the free exchange of ideas that is a necessary prerequisite for research excellence. This freedom is implied in all stages and aspects of research, such as theories, paradigms, publications and associations.
4. This freedom to undertake research, however, is always subject to the dictates of the researcher's conscience and to the Commission's right to know of all such activities.
5. The onus is on those undertaking research at the Commission to draw every case of potential conflict to the attention of the relevant executive head. In turn, the Director of Research and Policy should ensure that every case of potential conflict is brought to the attention of the Executive Committee (EXCO). Where, in the opinion of EXCO, it may be inappropriate for the proposed research to be undertaken, a final ruling will be obtained from the Chairperson of the Commission.
6. To support this Research Policy, the Commission will ensure that research staff have appropriate knowledge of the policy, provide supporting standards, procedures and guidelines and monitor compliance with them through management reports. The policy will be reviewed every three years. There will be minor reviews of the policy annually and when the need arises so as to keep the policy up to date.

SECTION 3: IMPACT ENHANCEMENT: ALIGNING RESEARCH PROCESS TO STRATEGY AND CYCLE

The Commission is guided in its work by a five-year Strategy up to 2014/15. The research strategy seeks broadly to position its research and recommendations at the centre of recent and ongoing reforms of fiscal systems to improve public sector performance in service delivery and establishment of a framework of fiscal discipline and accountability at all three spheres of government. The thrust is to provide new evidence-based research and influential recommendations on fiscal arrangements (in particular equitable access to public resources) and other institutional reform options that enable the country to sustain growth, reduce poverty, provide public services and progressively realise constitutionally mandated basic services. Thus, the core of the Commission work will continue to be the equitable division of revenue to enable public policy goals to be achieved, within a sustainable fiscal framework. To ensure that research is aligned to this strategy, the Commission kick-starts the research process by first defining the desired impact of its recommendations on policy as set out in the Research Strategy and pronounces on the thematic focus for the following year. On that basis, researchers then come up with individual projects to generate a portfolio of research initiatives which collectively meet those policy impact objectives. Figure 1 on page 6 sketches a process flow of the process to enhance research impact:

FIGURE 1: RESEARCH PROCESS FLOW

INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
Environmental scan of policy environment, research strategy	Commission decides on working theme for next cycle	Working theme	Areas of maximum policy impact 2 years hence area identified to guide project selection
Working theme, environmental scan, research strategy	RRP Research Lekgotla generates project titles and concept notes based on theme	Draft project titles, concept notes and rough budget estimates	All project proposals support the working theme in a competitive bidding process
Draft project titles, concept notes and rough budget estimates	All project titles and budgets mapped to a portfolio matrix to ensure alignment with research strategy and balance of the portfolio to ensure maximum policy impact. All carry over projects included in the exercises. Reviewed by Research Committee,	Portfolio matrix aligned to research strategy and working theme, supported by concept notes and rough budget estimates	Given the budget and human capacity constraints, an appropriate selection of project titles (subject areas) are chosen in line with the working theme and the research strategy. Trade-offs are identified.
Portfolio matrix aligned to research strategy and working theme, supported by concept notes and rough budget estimates	Commission approves final portfolio of projects.	Approved individual projects and budgets	Individual projects complement other projects in sub-themes and an overall working storyline, supporting the overall working theme.

The research approval process and cycle at the Commission is carried out in five related phases as follows:

1. The first phase or starting point is a Research Committee meeting that decides and pronounces on next research cycle thematic focus. This takes place in the October Research Committee.
2. The Research Division then holds a Research Lekgotla that generates project titles and research concepts aligned the set theme. This takes place in January. The project titles will be assessed to ensure that all of the Commission's priorities are covered, that the sum of all the proposals is reconciled with the budget and that storylines for sub-themes and themes are articulated, noting areas of synergy and contradiction.
3. Draft project titles, concept notes and rough budget estimates are evaluated by the Commission in March.
4. Research Committee approves final portfolio of all project titles and budgets mapped to a portfolio matrix to ensure alignment with research strategy in February the following year.
5. Commission approves final portfolio of projects and individual in March of the following year.

SECTION 4: GUIDELINES ON WRITING RESEARCH PROPOSALS

1. Commission project proposals are evaluated in two stages; the preliminary proposal and the full proposal. The project framework developed in the proposal is carried forward into annual reports and the final report. The aim of the preliminary proposal is to convince the Commission of the policy relevance and strategic value of the research being proposed. The aim of the full proposal to assure the methodological soundness and evidence basis of the proposed research.
2. **Preliminary proposals** should not exceed 12 pages. **Full proposals** should not exceed 25 pages (excluding budget and appendices). Proposals exceeding the recommended length will be returned for editing.
3. The project proposal template is a blank Word file that contains the basic headings and formatting styles for preparing the preliminary and full proposals for a Commission project (see Table below).
4. These instructions describe what to consider in developing the content and how to use the template formatting. All headings in the template must be addressed as required. You may add headings at level 2-4 as required.
5. The Research Committee and Commission will have the final say on whether that proposed work should go ahead or not and this decision should be minuted as part of the proceedings of those meetings.
6. Before any project is accepted in full, the **methodology** (including data availability) is reviewed by the immediate supervisor and the Director of Policy and Research.

Summary of contents and number of pages in the project proposal

Section	Heading	Preliminary proposal	Full proposal
1	Project outline	1-2 pages	1-2 pages
1.3	Project summary	600 words	600 words
2	Justification		
2.1	Research and development issues and priority	max 1 page	max 2 pages
2.2	Research and/or development strategy and relationship to other past Commission research and strategy	max 1 page	max 3 pages
3	Objectives	max ½ page	max 1½ pages
4	Planned impacts and adoption pathways		
4.1	Scientific impacts	max ½ page	max 1 page
4.2	Capacity impacts	max ½ page	max 1 page
4.3	Community impacts	max 1 page	max 3 pages
4.4	Communication and dissemination activities	max ½ page	max 1 page
5	Operations		
5.1	Methodology	max 1 page	max 3 pages
5.2	Activities and outputs/milestones and delivery dates	max ½ page	complete tables
5.3	Project personnel	max ½ page	max 1-2 pages
5.4	Intellectual property and other regulatory compliance	max ½ page	complete IP form
5.5	Travel table	not applicable	complete tables
6	Appendix A: Intellectual property register	complete questions	complete questions
7	Appendix B: Budget	complete tables	budget proforma
8	Appendix C: Supporting documentation	desirable	as appropriate

Below is a checklist of arguments typically used to reject proposals that a researcher must guard against:

1. Insufficient, vague or unclear description of objectives, problem and literature
2. Discrepancies between the objectives and procedures (Design flaws)
3. Limited significance of research problem
4. Nebulous, diffuse or unclear statements
5. Insufficiently limited studies
6. Lack of theoretical base
7. Unfamiliarity with the literature or methods or over-reliance on a few sources which are not cross-checked and validated
8. Poor risk management of data collection, especially primary data
9. Inability to demonstrate policy relevance of findings in a manner accessible to policymakers and oversight bodies

SECTION 5: GUIDELINES ON PREPARING A COMMISSION RESEARCH OUTPUT

1. The Commission research delivers policy recommendations covering a variety of policy issues. These should be presented in a standard format.
2. The document should cover the background, problem statement and policy issues (fiscal issues, legislative and policy issues, intergovernmental and institutional issues, and concurrent function issues) considered in arriving at the recommendation and the analysis of the options.
3. Background Section contains
 - a. Defining a policy issue which needs to be addressed.
 - b. Outlining the policy alternatives in which this issue can be addressed.
 - c. Sufficient background information to allow Commissioners to understand the context and significance of the question being researched
 - d. Proper acknowledgement of the previous work on which the research builds on
 - e. Sufficient references such that a Commissioner could achieve a sophisticated understanding of the context and significance of the question
 - f. Explanation of the scope of the researchers' work, what will and will not be included.
4. Analytical Methods section covers
 - a. Information to allow Commissioners to assess the believability of the researchers' results
 - b. Description of materials, procedure, theory used
 - c. Calculations, technique, procedure, equipment, and calibration plots
 - d. Limitations, assumptions, and range of validity of the analysis

5. Policy Recommendation section contains
 - a. Evaluating the probable outcomes of identified options and how they relate to existing policy narratives.
 - b. Recommending a preferred alternative (policy recommendation) and providing a strong argument to establish why your choice is the best possible option.
 - c. Well-defined, clear, concise, complete and easy to read recommendation
6. Full references

SECTION 6: QUALITY ASSURANCE

For enhanced research quality management and standardisation of quality, it is important to recognise that quality of research is ultimately a result of a production process whose major inputs are the quality of the researchers that do the work and data that they use. The quality control processes described should be read in conjunction with the Commission's Training and Development, Performance Evaluation and Human Resource Management Policies. It ensures that acceptable standards are enforced on the problem formulation, methods used, review, editorial and publication process, and system of incentives used for researchers. Management will here take a differentiated approach, differentiating those who do not require any capacity building from those who require support. The focus for the former group will be on retention and ongoing professional development, while for the latter group the focus will be on support plus accountability. The accountability will be enforced through academic merit (external publication, namely publication in peer reviewed journals or book chapters) and policy relevance (e.g., publication in respected popular media such as newspapers). Finally, an important aspect of research quality management initiative would be placing more emphasis on managers exercising stricter quality control on research before it gets to the Commission. But there support will be needed. This will involve investing in mentorship for our managers and researchers as well as training in fundamentals of research design and writing as well as technical editing.

The overall responsibility for quality management of research rests with the Commission itself. The Commission delegates the following to:

- a. Research Committee and Commission
 - i. providing strategic leadership in research congruent with the Commission's overall strategic goals
 - ii. The responsibility for ensuring that adequate resources are provided for research facilitation in the institution.
 - iii. Exercise oversight of the formulation of policy recommendations based on the portfolio of Commission research projects as well as previous FFC recommendations

- b. The Director of Research and Policy
 - i. responsibility for the development of an institutional research strategy and policy
 - ii. The Directorate liaises with key internal and external stakeholders such as legislatures, executive, universities and research organisations at the level of research policy, strategy and vision.
 - iii. All responsibility for the academic merits and policy relevance of research activities at the Commission, especially in managing the quality and impact of the entire research portfolio.

- c. Program Managers
 - i. Research management, for example compiling research plans and the implementation thereof.
 - ii. Quality assurance of team's research projects in terms of academic quality and policy relevance, in research projects and in rapid response submissions
 - iii. Overseeing the quality of related dissemination activities such as stakeholder workshops and public hearings
 - iv. Building research capacity and mentorship of their direct reports

All research outputs submitted to the Commission should conform to the structure contained in the 'Research Proposal' template and 'Code of Research Ethics'. In addition, the following best-practice criteria need to be taken into account by researchers and externally commissioned persons:

- a. The Commission requires that all submissions should be well-presented, clear, concise, coherent and easily readable (see 'FFC Editorial House Style' document regarding the required format for the presentation of research manuscripts).
- b. Submissions should be guided by a clear statement of the problem to be investigated; a comprehensive literature review; the methodological underpinning of the project; a systematic presentation of the arguments, supporting data, on which the recommendations and conclusions will be based.
- c. Submissions should contain accurate, reliable and internally audited data.

- d. Submissions should be subjected to internal and external peer review.
- e. Submissions should contain a clear set of policy recommendations, aimed at meeting the specific stakeholder needs, on the basis of which the study was undertaken.

The Director of Research and Policy should conduct a research audit once every five years to assess how well research meets the Commission's research objectives. On the basis of the findings, a strategy designed to improve research performance is drawn up. The audit report and strategy are then submitted to the Commission for approval as part of Research Strategy review

SECTION 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF DATA

1. Internationally data quality is generally defined in terms of its “fitness for use”. Whether data and statistical information are fit for use depends on the intended use and on the characteristics of data or information.
2. Data profiling is generally used to determine whether existing data can easily be used for other purposes, to improve the ability to search the data by tagging it with keywords, descriptions, or assigning it to a category; to provide metrics on data quality, including whether the data conforms to particular standards or patterns, to assess the risk involved in integrating data for new applications, including the challenges of joins and lastly to assess whether metadata accurately describes the actual values in the source database.
3. It is necessary to understand data challenges early in any data intensive project, so that late project surprises are avoided. Finding data problems late in the project can lead to delays and cost overruns.
4. If data officially qualifies as level 1 or official statistics it could be quoted directly in sources without any qualification.
5. However, if the data are not official statistics, the data should be scrutinised to see if any metadata (i.e. data about the data) are available. Are the definitions the same as those the study propose to use? For instance, if the study is about emerging farmers the data should also be about emerging farming. Data on commercial farming would not be relevant to the study except when comparisons are made between emerging farmers and commercial farmers.
6. Data should be checked for inconsistencies and any inconsistencies should be noted and documented. Possible duplication needs to be detected and such instances need to be flagged and removed. A copy of the flagged data needs to be kept for archiving purposes.
7. During the onset of a study researchers should determine whether source data are available and whether it provides an adequate basis to compile statistics.(e.g. administrative records). Source data reasonably approximate the definitions, scope, classifications, valuation, and time of recording required.

8. At various stages throughout the calculation process, Commission staff need to review the tables and figures to verify that the calculations are within expected limits and ranges. A process will be implemented to check any calculations.
9. The data should be checked for logical errors. Example: It would be impossible for a doctor to have a workload of 2100 patients per day.
10. In the case of survey data it should be noted whether the methodology was specified or not. If the methodology is not specified it may be advisable not to use the data.
11. SASQAF can also be used to guide data quality issues in the RRP. This is available in the data quality assurance document as compiled by the Data and Information Unit.

SECTION 8: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH DELIVERABLES

There are many reasons why it is important to define specific criteria for the evaluation research outputs and deliverables. The most important of these are:

1. To identify a comprehensive range of specific evaluation criteria relevant to research outputs and deliverables;
2. To enable a more focused review of standards and quality factors relevant to the work of the research programme;
3. To enhance stakeholder management
4. To enhance project management
5. To contribute to effective administration.
6. To provide opportunity for research staff to publish their work

The core deliverables are the preparation and presentation of research reports and papers, publications, stakeholder management and administration. The criteria for evaluating these deliverables are as follows:

Preparation and presentation of research papers
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1. Preparation of research plan, outline and timelines.
2. Compliance with standard Commission research report / paper format requirements. (Title, Author and affiliation, Abstract, Introduction, Aims and objectives, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Summary and Conclusion, References, Appendices).
3. Achievement of pre-agreed timelines for draft papers.
4. Ability to investigate and source relevant information - conducting of literature reviews, collection of empirical evidence etc.
5. Understanding of concepts and definitions.
6. Ability to develop ideas conceptually and think critically.

7. Analytical and quantitative skills
8. Writing and language skills.
9. Effective interaction – participation in workshops / seminars, engagement with project team members and stakeholders.
10. Extent to which the research objectives have been achieved and relevance of research to Commission mandate.

Publication of Research Reports and Papers

1. Number of research Reports / Papers published in Commission publications.
2. Number of research Reports / Papers published in journals, books or other credible external sources (newspapers etc).
3. Number of rapid response papers
4. Number of papers presented at national or international conferences.
5. Number of seminars presented
6. Official accolades received for specific and exceptional proposals and recommendations made.

RRP Staff Stakeholder Management

1. Number of stakeholders relevant to the organisation (including Commissioners)
2. Number of meetings, telephonic calls, emails, other correspondence relating to the research
3. Minutes of meetings with stakeholders outlining salient issues raised and follow-ups required
4. Official accolades received for specific and exceptional work such as nomination to national working committees, board membership, editorial boards etc
5. Number of proposals and recommendations made and accepted by Commission.

RRP Staff Administration

1. Preparation of “week ahead plans” and participation in agreeing deliverables and timelines.
2. Achievement of pre-agreed timelines for draft papers.
3. Informative monthly reports outlining salient issues, progress and follow-ups required
4. Compliance with standard Research and Policy monthly report format requirements (See template).
5. Good documents and file management
6. On time submission of invoices and project reports
7. Preparation of Annual Leave Plan
8. On time submission of leave forms
9. Assist other departments with administrative matters such as research management, staff recruitment, staff induction etc.

SECTION 9: MEASUREMENT AND BENCHMARKING

For purposes of external publications, in order to achieve the objectives set out above, research outputs need to be evaluated, measured and benchmarked. The following principles apply when research is evaluated and benchmarked:

1. As a general rule, assessment of research is based on the *Promotions Policy which emphasises impact through policy relevance, academic merit, stakeholder interaction, administration etc.*
2. Research excellence as determined by peer review is the only realistic, objective criterion that can be used to evaluate research.
3. Every researcher is expected to generate at least the following number of research outputs over a one year period:
 - a. Research Director – 1.4
 - b. Programme Managers – 1
 - c. Research Specialists – 0.8
 - d. Senior Researchers – 0.4
 - e. Researchers – 0.2
4. Masters' dissertations and doctoral theses are regarded as research outputs. In the case of a research master's dissertation, the researcher receives one (1) output and for a doctoral thesis three (3).

SECTION 10: PUBLICATIONS

1. The Commission encourages its researchers to publish their work in reputable outlets. This is not only in the Commission's interest in creating a body of knowledge about IGR in South Africa, but builds the individual researcher's profile as a specialist in her field, thereby enhancing her policy credibility.
2. Reporting of research and its results is the right as well as duty of researchers and institution(s) that conducted the study. Where they agree to delegate this responsibility elsewhere, they should do so only if they have received a mutually agreed commitment to publish or disseminate the research within a stipulated period.
3. Research results should be reported irrespective of whether they support or contradict the expected outcome(s). Researchers should also disclose in their publications the source(s) of funding and sponsors, if any, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. The findings should also explain whether any ethical problems were encountered and how they were dealt with.
4. The following guidelines should be followed for granting authorship credit while reporting research in any form:
 - a. substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
 - b. drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
 - c. And final approval of the version to be published.
5. Authors should thus meet conditions a, b, and c. Incorrectly appropriating authorship to oneself is an act of dishonesty and will be met with the appropriate disciplinary proceedings, in accordance with the Commission's HR Policies and 'Code of Conduct'.
6. *Declaration of Authorship:* The onus rests on internal researchers and externally commissioned persons to submit a written declaration of authorship of work submitted for consideration to the Commission, whether this be limited to specific sections of the work or attributed to the work as a whole.

7. Should all persons declare themselves co-authors of a report, each individual will assume equal responsibility for the publication/report.
8. Where a person has only contributed a particular section to a publication but is deemed, by mutual consensus among multiple authors, to justify being included as an author, such a person has the right to have a note included in the publication that specifies that he/she assumes responsibility only for the section in question. As such, responsibility for authorship will be apportioned in accordance with this declaration.
9. In the event of the impossibility of identifying the authors of specific sections of a report, co-authorship will be assumed and equal responsibility will be assigned to all relevant parties.
10. Authors should be listed sequentially strictly in terms of the quantum of their actual role in the research output and not on the basis of seniority, status or any subsidiary role with respect to an end product, e.g. simply having commissioned the research report. Where there is any dispute in this respect, the matter will be referred to the EXCO.
11. *Declaration of Contributors:* All other individuals not satisfying the criteria for authorship but whose contribution made the conduct and completion of research or publication possible should be properly acknowledged.
12. Appropriate credits should be given where data or information from other studies or publications is quoted or otherwise included.

SECTION 11: ETHICAL CONDUCT AMONG RESEARCHERS

1. Principal researchers are responsible for the ethical conduct of research by all juniors, assistants and trainees/interns. At the same time, all involved in the research, have no less of a responsibility for ensuring ethical conduct in research.
2. Juniors, assistants and trainees/interns have a right to receive, and principal Researchers have a responsibility to provide, guidance on all aspects of ethical research conduct. The principal researchers should delegate to the juniors, assistants and trainees/interns only those research tasks and concomitant ethical responsibilities that they can reasonably be expected to fulfil.
3. No researcher should engage in any racially discriminatory, sexually exploitative or other harmful practices, nor should researchers seek personal, sexual or economic gain from anybody or any organisation/institution, including other researchers, juniors, assistants and trainees/interns.
4. Juniors, assistants and trainees/interns should be appropriately acknowledged, including, where appropriate, as authors, in works to which they have contributed.
5. Researchers should not deceive or coerce juniors, assistants and trainees/interns into serving as research subjects/participants, nor use them as cheap labour.
6. In addition to researchers, other individuals such as administrative staff who may, in any way, be associated with the research, should be briefed on ethical issues and research guidelines, including the need to protect the rights of respondents and other participants.
7. Sharing of data should be done in a form that is consistent with the interests and rights of the participants. Researchers who have conducted the study, as well as the institution(s) where the study has been conducted, are jointly responsible for ensuring the protection of the interests and rights of participants, while sharing or making research data publicly available in any form.
8. The researchers who have been involved in a particular research project, and the institution(s) where the research has been conducted, are responsible for ensuring that when research data, including that which identifies respondents or other participants, is shared with other researchers, all necessary measures are taken to

maintain confidentiality on the part of those researchers with whom data is shared. Data that does not identify participants falls outside of this determination.

9. As far as realistically possible, researchers and institutions should ensure that relevant summary findings of the research are returned to the respondents and participants in a form and manner that they can understand.

SECTION 12: CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The International Standards Organisation (ISO) description of confidentiality refers to “ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorised to have access”. Confidentiality issues therefore need to be recognised and considered at every stage of the research process. These stages include the initial study design; identification, recruitment, and consent processes for the study population; security, analysis, and final disposition of data; and publication or dissemination of data and results.
2. Research intent and research proposals (including all other data obtained in the course of the research) should be regarded as confidential until the Director of Research and Policy has approved its distribution outside of the Commission. Draft proposals are often required when the data needs to be obtained, therefore the Director of Research and Policy will guide when the draft research proposal could be sent outside the Commission to obtain information.
3. According to the Southern African Association for Institutional Research a researcher shall organise, store, maintain, and analyse data under his/her control in such a manner as to reasonably prevent loss, unauthorised access, or divulgence of confidential information.
4. Researchers shall permit no release of information about individual persons that has been guaranteed as confidential, to any person inside or outside the institution except in those circumstances in which not to do so would result in clear danger to the subject of the confidential material or to others; or unless directed by competent authority in conformity with a degree of a court of law.
5. Researchers shall, at the design stage of any project, thoroughly explore the degree of invasion of privacy and the risks of breach of confidentiality that are involved in the project, weigh them against potential benefits, and incorporate that in their research proposal.
6. Researchers should prepare or approve a written description of any specific steps beyond the regular guidelines within the Commission that are necessary during the execution of a said assignment to insure the protection of aspects of privacy and confidentiality that may be at specific risk.

7. Researchers should ensure that all subjects are informed of their right of refusal and of the degree of confidentiality with which the material that they provide will be handled, including where appropriate, the implications of any freedom of information statute.
8. Researchers should apprise institutional authorities of the implications and potentially binding obligations of any promise to respondents regarding confidentiality and shall obtain consent from such authorities where necessary.
9. In all cases where a promise of confidentiality is included in the consent agreement, it must be granted and secured –regardless of the level of risk.
10. Data can often be collected anonymously, or the identifiers can be removed and destroyed after various data have been merged. When it is necessary to collect and maintain identifiable data, a data protection plan should describe the appropriate level of confidentiality protections based on the potential magnitude of the risk of harm from disclosure. All members of the research team and staff should receive appropriate training about securing and maintaining confidentiality and safeguarding data. Data should be physically secure, and all identifiable, confidential data not intended for secure archiving should be destroyed.
11. Efforts should be made to buffer or insulate research data from encroachment. When a determination is reached that the sensitive nature of the data and the potential risk of harm to individual subjects occasion legally supported confidentiality protections, the investigator (with the support of the institution) should pursue appropriate protections.
12. In some cases, data from other institutions are being used that are governed by confidentiality clauses such as data from the Department of Education or Statistics South Africa. Researchers should ensure that they adhere to these confidentiality clauses. All potential conflicts between protecting confidentiality and requirements to release information (such as institutional policies or professional ethical requirements) should be explicitly communicated.
13. Researchers should clarify current research confidentiality protections, specifically (a) what certifications are available to protect data and how each certification works; (b) which agencies are authorised to grant which certifications; (c) when certifications may be sought; (d) exactly what each certification protects (e.g., only the identifiers or all of the data); and (e) what confidentiality gaps exist in certification

(e.g., for some research, certificates of confidentiality that prohibit voluntary disclosure are needed). The Director of Research and Policy should lead an effort to ensure the adequacy of certificates of confidentiality issued by appropriate agencies.

14. The following conditions for protecting and using primary data apply:
 - a. Data may only be used for the specific purposes for which it was collected.
 - b. Data must not be disclosed to other parties without the consent of the individual whom it is about, unless there is legislation or other overriding legitimate reason to share the information (for example, the prevention or detection of crime). It is an offence for Other Parties to obtain this personal data without authorisation.
 - c. Individuals have a right of access to the information held about them, subject to certain exceptions (for example, information held for the prevention or detection of crime).
 - d. Personal information may be kept for no longer than is necessary and must be kept up to date.
 - e. Personal information may not be sent outside the Commission unless the individual whom it is about has consented or adequate protection is in place, for example by the use of a prescribed form of contract to govern the transmission of the data.
 - f. Entities holding personal information are required to have adequate security measures in place. Those include technical measures (such as firewalls) and organizational measures (such as staff training).
 - g. Subjects have the right to have factually incorrect information corrected (note: this does not extend to matters of opinion).

SECTION 13: PLAGIARISM

1. This section should be read in conjunction with the Commission *Code of Research Ethics* policy document and Copyright Policy as contained in individual employment contracts.
2. In keeping with international best practice, the Research and Policy Directorate will acquire advanced plagiarism detection software, designed to process documents and analyse their syntax, semantics and lexicon, with those of existing electronic publications, in effect, rendering a 'content match' of overlapping or duplicated text.
3. The Director of Research and Policy and Programme Managers will regularly process internally and externally authored submissions through the software and/or conduct manual reference searches at any stage of the research process.
4. Should excessive word/syntax match be detected (excessive defined as over 50% match) detected via the software processing, the following course of action will apply:
 - a. The relevant manager will discuss with the researcher and alert them to the problem
 - b. Suggestions to reduce the word/syntax match are made
 - c. The submission is re-written until it complies with the acceptable standard
5. Appropriate credits should be given where ideas, data or information obtained from other studies or publications is included. Researchers must refrain from plagiarism, piracy, falsification of research results. Committing any of these actions is regarded as a serious disciplinary offence and will be dealt with systematically, transparently and in accordance with the Commission's 'Disciplinary Code' and HR policies.

SECTION 14: RESEARCH CONTRACTS

1. Any contract entered into by, or on behalf of the Commission, or with any implied commitment from the Commission, may only be signed by the duly authorised person.
2. Contracts over proposed sponsored research should be discussed in the first instance with the Director of Research and Policy and approved by the Chairperson of the Commission.
3. Contracts over proposed donations should be discussed in the first instance with either the Programme Manager or the Director of Research and Policy, depending on the circumstances. In both cases, the advice of the Commission's Legal Officer will be sought where necessary

SECTION 15: JOINT RESEARCH INITIATIVES

1. The Commission has a five-year research strategy which has been approved in 2009. The strategy focuses on the fiscal and economic issues that affect the quality of life and well-being of citizens.
2. Budget constraints pose a risk that the Commission might not attain some of its research objectives. It will be worthwhile for the Commission to collaborate with other organisations to augment its research capacity.
3. Joint research initiatives (JRI) are undertaken by the Commission and its partners to provide financial and scientific support to researchers studying specific themes.
4. Collaboration can be in a form of research grants, partnerships, training programmes that could be of interest to the Commission, and collaboration with other countries on fiscal and economic research.
5. Scientific leadership is ensured by the Research Committee processes and a coordinating committee of experts from both the Commission and partner organisation.
6. A motivation in the form of a memo and relevant supporting documentation must be lodged with the Director of Research and Policy any member of the Commission's research team.
7. The memo must detail the nature the proposed JRI partnership takes, information about the activities of the partner, alignment of the partnership proposed activities with the research strategy and mandate of the Commission, areas of mutual benefit from the partnership, any financial implications and/or ethical considerations.
8. The Director of Research and Policy will subsequently write a motivation based on this for the consideration of the Chairperson of the Commission
9. Approval must be granted by the Chairperson before the partnership can take effect
10. Once funding is obtained to launch a new JRI, the funds are deposited and administered by the Finance Division at the Commission or as stipulated in the agreement and managed accordingly.

SECTION 16: RESEARCH WORKFLOW PROCESS AND TIMEFRAMES

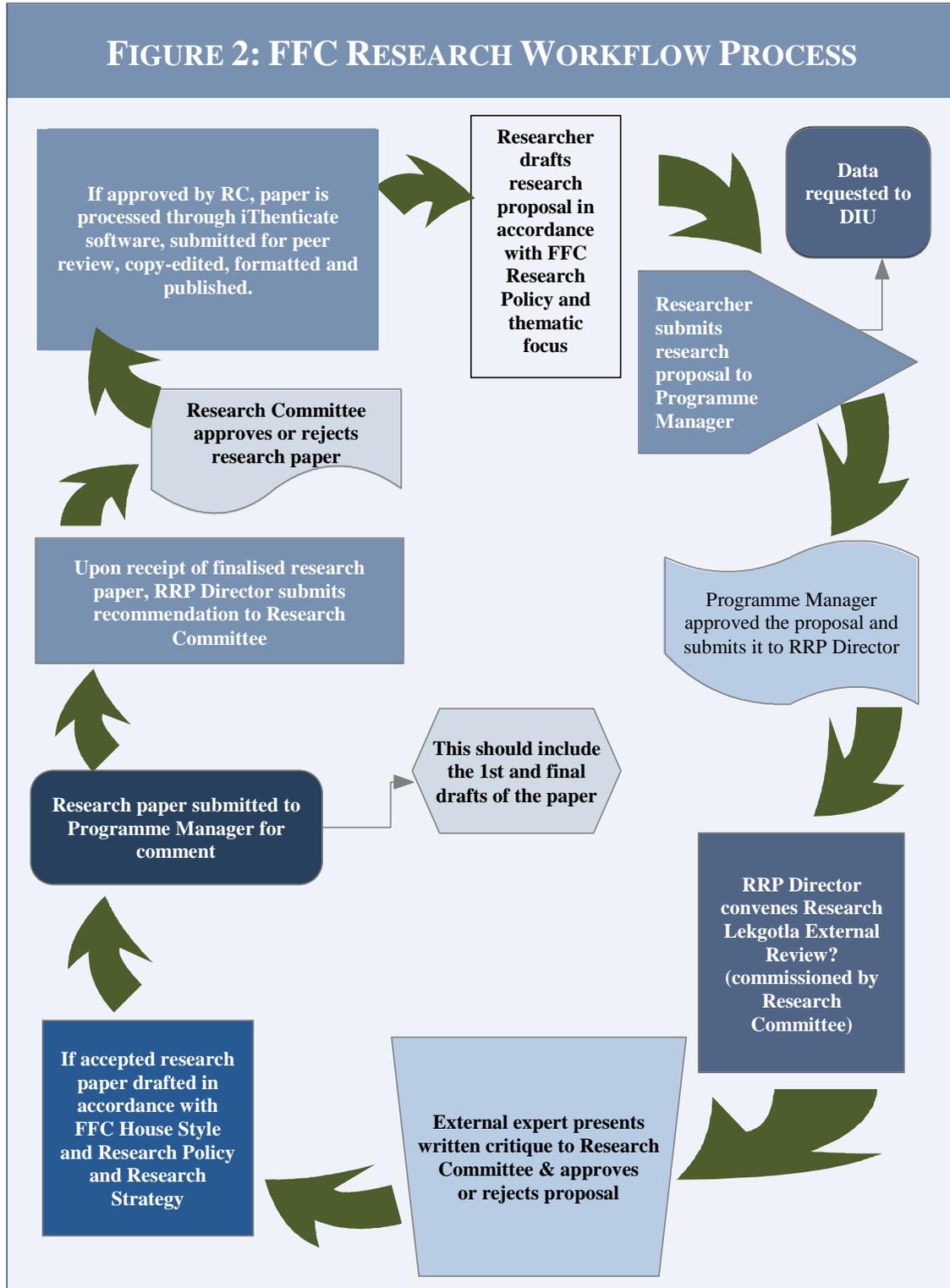
This exercise to define explicitly the research calendar and research workflow process is conducted for the following reasons:

1. To provide a road map that results in better planning relevant to Research and Policy Directorate outputs and deliverables;
2. To enhance the current performance management system and expand the system to include core deliverables and their due dates.
3. To provide opportunity for research staff to plan their time and sequence research activities, as required by the 5 year research strategy.
4. To enable a more focused review of standards and quality factors relevant to the work of the Research and Policy Directorate.

The key milestones and workflow process for the 20-month period commencing in October and ending in June of the following year are indicated in Table 1 and Figure 2.

TABLE 1: FFC RESEARCH WORKFLOW PROCESS (IN TABULAR FORMAT)

2013	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	2014	January	February
	<p>REVIEW SESSION – APPROVAL OF NEW RESEARCH PROPOSALS AT FFC BOSBERAAD. New proposals will either be accepted/rejected by the Commission.</p>	<p>End of April – Printing of Annual Submission, Technical Reports and Policy Briefs document should be completed.</p>	<p>Research report drafting ongoing between May and October</p> 						<p>Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) expected.</p> <p>At the same time, a submission to be made in response to MTBPS.</p>	<p>REVIEW SESSION – ASSESSMENT OF 1ST DRAFTS. Research Committee reports to Commission on accepted and rejected proposals.</p> <p>First drafts of research reports presented to the Commission for approval/rejection.</p> <p>Comments of the relevant Programme Managers and RRP Director also discussed at meeting.</p>		<p>Researchers will effect changes to their 1st drafts, as prescribed by the Commission.</p>	<p>2nd REVIEW OF RESEARCH REPORTS. Meeting of the Commission – finalised research reports submitted to Commission for acceptance/rejection.</p> <p>External experts will be invited to present their comments on the reports to the Research Committee.</p>
	<p>Distribution of combined Submission and Technical Report document and Policy Briefs to stakeholders to commence.</p> <p>The Research Report process then re-commences.</p>	<p>Distribution of Annual Submission Documents/products to stakeholders to commence.</p> <p>Submission to peer reviewed journals/books to commence.</p>						<p>Thematic Focus for next research cycle approved</p> <p>Draft DoR Bill expected from National Treasury.</p>	<p>Work on new project concepts in line with the approved theme.</p> <p>Work commences on response to DoR Bill.</p>	<p>Research reports should comprise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abstracts; 2. Executive summaries; and 3. Full body content of reports, appropriate referencing and annexures of research components. 	<p>Reports are processed through iThenticate software.</p> <p>If reports are not tainted, they will be submitted for external double-blind peer review.</p>		
	<p>Submission on Amendment and Appropriations Bill</p>										<p>Hold Research Lekgotla to finalise research concepts, budgets, etc.</p>	<p>Upon receipt of peer review critiques, authors will be expected to revise their submissions accordingly before Bosberaad.</p>	
	<p>Ad hoc requests attended to.</p>	<p>Ad hoc requests attended to.</p>											
												<p>State of the Nation Address presented.</p>	
												<p>Ad hoc requests attended to</p>	<p>Budget Speech is presented in parliament.</p>



SECTION 17: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND WORK CITED

Information drawn from the following sources in the compilation of this document is gratefully acknowledged:

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2. Financial and Fiscal Commission, 2007, FFC Research Policy Principles and Procedures, Draft Document, October 2007.
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