



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Research Committee

Terms of Reference (TOR)

October 2018

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1. PREAMBLE

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD) Research Committee has been established to evaluate, recommend and/or approve all agricultural research (livestock, crop, climate, water, natural resources and adaptive) projects to be conducted in the Province. This includes all departmental research done by LDARD officials and other organisations. Departmental research as well as studies that involves departmental research inputs must conform to the vision and mission of the LDARD. This terms of reference will be reviewed every three years.

2. MEMBERSHIP TO THE LDARD RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Members of the Research Committee shall be appointed by the Head of the Department (HOD). The LDARD Research Committee is constituted as follows:

Permanent Members

- Chairperson : Director- Research Services
- Deputy Chairperson : Any nominated Scientific Manager- Research Services, The nomination shall be done by the Research Committee Members.
- Secretariat : Delegated from within Research Services
- Scientific Managers Research Services (all)

Adhoc Members (maximum 6 per session)

- Delegates to be nominated from either the following directotates, depeding on the needs:
 - Animal Production
 - Crop Production
 - Training: Madzivhandila
 - Training: Tompi Seleka
 - Agribusiness
 - Natural Resource Management, NRM
 - Extension Services
 - Spatial Information Services
 - Rural Development
 - Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Human Resource
- External Delegates to be nominated from the following, depeding on the needs: from
 - Statistics South Africa

- Higher Education and Research Institutes

3. FUNCTIONS OF THE LDARD RESEARCH COMMITTEE

LDARD Research Committee shall perform the following functions:

- a) Evaluate, recommend and /or approve agricultural research projects to be conducted in the Limpopo Province
- b) Develop a procedure / format for research proposal, application and registration
- c) Approve amendments of original proposals
- d) Review progress on approved projects annually
- e) Provide guidance on scientific writing and presentation
- f) Provide platform for networking/collaborations with other research organisations locally and internationally
- g) Promote the dissemination of research results to clientele and sponsors
- h) Provide platform for reference and adherence to provincial research and ethics committees

These functions may be amended during the operation of the committee.

4. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Approval rest upon the decision of the Research Committee and the Chief Director. Approval will be based on criteria such as:

- Contribution to LDARD, Provincial and National strategic objectives
- Scientific value or soundness
- Benefits to clients or relevance
- Need driven
- Value for money
- Practical applicability
- Capacity building
- Innovation potential
- Technology transfer (e.g. farmers days , publications and etc)
- Ethical considerations for animal research projects

4.1. PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

The sectional head must submit the proposal to the Secretariat of the Research Committee. The preferred method to obtain approval is as follows:

- Submit the proposal to at least one peer reviewer/ LDARD in the same field.
- Scientist should submit the proposal to the relevant sectional head.
- Submit the proposal to the Secretariat of the Research Committee. The applicant shall be required to present to the Research Committee on a suggested date.
- The approved proposal must be signed by the Chairperson of the Research Committee and the Chief Director of the branch.

As an exception, however, approval in principle can be obtained by submitting a concept note to the Research Committee (this is basically a research proposal without the literature study) to get approval to start the trial. Afterwards, final approval is obtained by submitting a full proposal within three months of approval of the concept note. However, motivation should be submitted to provide an explanation on why the proposal could not be submitted as stipulated in this document.

4.2. CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

Criteria for approval is based on the following rating (Annexure A):

- Scientific merit based on scientific standards
 - Significance
 - Methods
 - Workable timeframes and budget
- Relevance to the LDARD strategic objectives or focus areas
 - How well the study address strategic objectives of LDARD, provincial and national government
 - Impact on beneficiaries
 - Potential for innovation
 - Technology transfer potential and strategy
- Overall assessment of the research proposal

5. BASIC ELEMENTS OF A PROPOSAL

5.1 RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

The following is a standard format for preparing a research proposal:

A. COVER PAGES

- Refer to Annexure B for a generic cover page for new proposals.

B. PROJECT NUMBER

- Please refer to Section 6 (Project Numbering System).

C. PROJECT TITLE

- The title must be short and well descriptive of the research project/trial.

D. INTRODUCTION

- Include a short **background** and description/statements of the **research problem and sub-problems**. State the problems and sub-problems clearly and completely.
- **Significance of the study**
 - ✓ Clearly illustrate the importance and need for the research project (why do you think its necessary to conduct such a project).
 - ✓ How well the study address strategic objectives of LDARD, provincial and national government
 - ✓ It must include a mention of beneficiaries and how they will benefit from your research.
 - ✓ Is there value for money?
 - ✓ Novelty of the study.
- What is the purpose (Objectives) of the study
 - ✓ Note: each objective should be a completely researchable unit on its own and each objective should add to the totality of the problem.
- Are there any **limitations** and /or **delimitations**, (what shall your study not entail)?

E. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND/OR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- State clearly what hypothesis will be tested (if applicable)
- What are the research questions and sub-questions (if applicable).

F. LITERATURE REVIEW

- Detailed **related literature review** must be done.
- The literature review must be in line with the proposed study- it must be relevant.
- Are there any gaps in the literature?
- If the same study has already been done, what/how shall your study add to the body of knoweldge available in the literature?

Note: A literature review is not a mere gathering of information, BUT require your assessment of what does it mean (the “so what” factor?).

G. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The following can be sub-headings under this section:

Study location/area

- Give an accurate and detailed description of the project site (such as area, coordinates, rainfall, minimum & maximum temperatures, soil types, plant communities, etc.).

Research Design

- How will you solve the research problem, achieve research objectives or test hypothesis?
- Describe the type of design and its assumptions.
- Describe the layout of the project/trial in detail (also sketch if possible).
- Describe treatments in detail (e.g. planting methods, treatments to animals etc.).

Data collection

- Describe sampling procedures (e.g., how will you select subjects for the projects?).
- Describe the data needed and means of collecting such data.
- Also include when such data will be collected.

Data analyses

- Describe foreseen analyses (statistical) of data, i.e. how will you deduce meaning from data.
- Also mention likely software package that you envisage to employ.

H. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Address ethical issues surrounding your proposed study.
- For example: confidentiality by all participants, animal handling, invasion of privacy – weigh up benefits of research with relative harm.

I. ACTIVITY PLAN

- Provide a list of each activity required in your project together with relevant sub-activities.
- Link them to their timeframes.
- Also provide in a Gantt Chart.

J. BUDGET

- Supply a proper budget in which all expected costs are given in details (if possible linked to activity plan).
- Note that the Research Committee does not fund the projects, it is the responsibility of the researcher to source funds.
- Approval of the research proposal by the Research Committee is not a guarantee for the availability of funds to implement proposed research project.

K. REFERENCES

- Provide a list of all references used in the proposal according to an accepted journal's format.

5.2 CONCEPT NOTE FOR DEMONSTRATION TRIAL

Demonstration projects/trial act as bounded experiments, trialing the application of structural innovations such as technology, infrastructure or science, as well as non-structural innovations such as education or policy programs. They can occur at a range of scales and trial any number of innovations. Each project may offer new insights into how new technology and innovation can contribute to change or enhance current practice and help shift towards more sustainable agricultural practices. The following is a standard format for preparing a demonstration trial concept note:

A. COVER PAGES

Refer to Annexure B1 for a generic cover page.

B. PROJECT NUMBER

Please refer to Section 6 (Project Numbering System).

C. PROJECT TITLE

The title must be short and well descriptive of the demonstration trial.

D. INTRODUCTION

- Include a short **background** and description/statements of the **problem and sub-problems**.
✓ What is the **purpose (objectives)** of your study
- Objectives should be clear and practical.

E. METHODOLOGY

The methodology must clearly address the objectives of the study.

F. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Address ethical issues surrounding your proposed study (if necessary).
- For example: confidentiality by all participants.
- Note: Invasion of privacy – weigh up benefits of research with relative harm.

G. BUDGET

- Supply a proper budget in which all expected costs are given in details (if possible linked to activity plan).
- Note that the Research Committee does not fund the demonstration projects
- Approval of the proposal by the Research committee is not a guarantee for the availability of funds to implement the demonstration project.

H. REFERENCES

- Provide a list of all references used in the proposal according to an accepted journal's format.

6. THE PROJECT / TRIAL NUMBERING SYSTEM

As an example, project / trial numbers will consist of the following:

LW/LR/2018/1/D

Where:

- L = Limpopo
- W = The code of the District in which the project / trial will be conducted (e.g. Waterberg)
- LR = Discipline (e.g. LR=Livestock Research, PR=Plant Research, PASER=Precision Agriculture & Socio-Economic Research)
- 2018 = the year of commencement
- 1 = Project / Trial No. 1 under the discipline Livestock Research (to be assigned by Secretariat after approval).
- D = Demonstration trial, R = Research.

The following are the abbreviations used for different Districts:

- C = Capricorn
- M = Mopani
- S = Sekhukhune
- V = Vhembe
- W = Waterberg
- L = if more than one district is applicable (provincial wide project)

Projects are done in the following disciplines, using the following abbreviations:

- LR = Livestock Research
- PR = Plant Research
- PASER= Precision Agriculture & Socio-Economic Research

7. PROJECTS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

- Projects from other institutions are not obliged to use the LDARD format.
- Projects for post-graduate studies form part of this category. The Research Committee shall verify the alignment of the research project with objectives and mandates of the LDARD, provincial and national government and recommend the project.
- Progress and final reports must be submitted to the Secriatariate of the research committee.
- Collaborative research projects from other institutions must be presented to the research committee by the principal researcher.

8. REPORTS

8.1 PROGRESS REPORTS

- A progress report for each research project/trial must be handed in annually. The deadline is the **end of September**.
- A final report must be handed in if the trial is completed within 3 months.
- An interim report is submitted if the trial is suspended for a relatively long period, but later data collection is planned. This is usually done where long-term trials are done.
- Reports must be sent to the secretariat of the Research Committee
- Data remain the property of the Department. Where collaboration with NGO's and other institutes are concerned, data are shared.

8.2 ANNUAL REPORTS

The Research Services Director compiles an annual provincial report on all research / trials and distributes it to whoever wants insight regarding Departmental research.

A. GUIDELINES FOR ANNUAL RESEARCH REPORTS

The purpose of the Annual Report is to inform Stakeholders who are mainly Farmers and Industry on Research activities of the LDARD. This is not a scientific publication but a semi-scientific report. The author is advised to have the end user in mind when compiling the report.

- **Format**

- a. Length of the report is limited to 5 pages, inclusive of reference and diagrams.

- **Structure of the Document**

- a. **Abstract** - Max 200 words

- b. **Introduction**

- Justification? What is the challenge? Problem Identified? Purpose of the study? Objective?

- i. Linkage to key strategies objective of the LDARD?

- c. **Materials and Methods**

- How were the objectives attained? What was done? Why was it done?

- i. Should be clear and concise

- ii. No bullet points or numbering allowed

- d. **Results and Discussions** -

- i. What were the key findings and what is their significance?

- ii. Diagrams (for example, Tables and Figures) should be clear and easily understandable. Should be inserted in the text at the appropriate position.

The diagram should be introduced and discussed in the text.

- e. **Conclusions** –

- i. Preferably one short paragraph and should address the objectives

- ii. Conclude on the main findings

- f. **References**-

To be in accordance with an accepted journal's format.

9 SUSPENSION, TERMINATION AND COMPLETION OF PROJECTS

- A project is suspended if it cannot continue at the current moment but continuation is planned at a later stage.

- A project is terminated if it cannot continue for the proposed duration and / or before all the objectives have been achieved.
- A project is completed if all the objectives have been achieved.
- A project can be extended if it can not be completed within the stipulated period
- The application for suspension, termination or completion must be made to the Chairperson of the Research Committee with reasonable justifications. The application must be accompanied by a report.

The format for the report is as follows:

Cover page: Annexure C

- Title
- Authors
- Station and address
- Abstract
- Keywords:
- Corresponding author E-mail:
- Introduction, the aim of the study must form part of the introduction
- Material and methods
- Results and discussions
- Challenges (Reasons for termination/suspension if trial terminated or suspended)
- Research papers published/presented in conferences/ posters presented resulting from the trial.
- Conclusion
- References

10 PUBLICATION

The Journal publications that will be paid by the Department shall be open source Journal. All research articles published by LDARD researchers will have the address of the department.


Acknowledgement of the department on all research articles published with collaborators will be negotiated.

Research Committee terms of reference

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DIRECTOR: RESEARCH SERVICES


05/12/18
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DATE

Recommended / Not recommended

7 
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CHIEF DIRECTOR: AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY
SERVICES

05/12/2018
.....
DATE

Approved / Not approved


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HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: LDARD

2018-12-13
.....
DATE