



RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

CONNECTING RECs IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

TO: REASA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Title of Report	Chairperson Report
Portfolio	Not applicable
Report compiled by	Retha Visagie
Report presented by	Retha Visagie
Persons/Bodies Consulted	REASA executive members
Reporting Period	11 May 2017 – 11 May 2018
Purpose	For noting – EXCO meeting: 23 May 2018
Date	23 May 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / DISCUSSION / CONTENTS

1.1 What is the purpose of the report?

The report provides an overview of the operations of the Research Ethics Committee Association of Southern Africa since its first biennial meeting on 11 May 2017, in particular, regarding the fulfilment of REASA's objectives as set out in this report. The final report will be disseminated to members to provide them with insight into the REASA activities and outcomes achieved during the reporting period.

1.2 Brief Overview/Deliberation/Activities/Outcomes/Challenges/Key Issues

The Research Ethics Committee Association of Southern Africa (REASA) was launched on 17 September 2015. REASA is an initiative arising from the Advancing Research Ethics Training in Southern Africa (ARESA) programme. The ARESA programme, funded by the Fogarty International Centre of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), represented a collaboration between the Centre for Medical Ethics and Law, Stellenbosch University and the Center for Bioethics, University of North Carolina (2010 – 2015). Even though REASA is an initiative that originated from the ARESA programme, the association is not affiliated to any tertiary academic institution. REASA functions as a formal association incorporated not for gain (NPO) and is as such registered by the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) of South Africa (registration no 2017/145504/08). The NIH provided seed funding to kick off REASA's activities. However, the financial support is coming to an end by the end of May 2018, thus necessitating REASA to become financially sustainable as an association.

The membership grew from 11 members in September 2016, 48 members in May 2017, 63 Members in August 2017, 68 members in February 2018 and 86 members in May 2018 (increase of 78%). Some key activities achieved during the reporting period include:

- The REASA website went live end of February.
- A new REASA logo was designed with the input of the REASA Executive Committee members. The final logo was selected through a voting process.

- The chairperson and co-chairperson sent a communique to the NHREC as a way of role clarification on 2 November 2017.
- REASA planned its first membership event in the form of pre-ARESA seminar workshop on research ethics leadership in Africa on 23 May 2018.
- In addition, REASA also plans to facilitate a master class on research ethics leadership during the sixth International Association for Education in Ethics (6IAEE) Conference that will take place from 3 to 5 October 2018 at SPIER, Stellenbosch.
- REASA received two requests for training during February 2018 – one from a national government department and the other one from Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation.

2. STRATEGIC INTENT

The next section reports on the strategic alignment of the activities with reference to the REASA's constitution, vision, mission and strategic objectives. Until its formal establishment in May 2017, REASA was led by a Steering Committee. In May 2017 an Executive Committee was elected through a formal online voting process. The membership of the newly elected Executive Committee was confirmed during the first REASA biennial meeting on 11 May 2017. Since then, the Executive Committee has engaged in critical activities to ensure that REASA fulfils its promise of being an independent multidisciplinary Membership Association that serves as a platform for 'Connecting research ethics committees in Southern Africa', indicative of the Association's commitment to co-construct lasting research ethics committee (REC) networks in Southern Africa. The objectives of REASA is set out in the REASA constitution (Section 3) as follows:

- 3.1 Seeking out and establishing mutually beneficial connections between research ethics committees in Southern Africa.
- 3.2 Promoting the philosophy and practice of ethical human and animal research in Southern Africa.
- 3.3 Providing information, support and training to its membership, by (amongst other activities):
 - a. Dissemination of a Newsletter.
 - b. Organizing scientific meetings and discussions in the field.
 - c. To work in partnership with external agencies, where appropriate, to promote sound ethical standards for research.
- 3.4 Establishing local, national and international networks for the discussion of research ethics-related topics of mutual interest.
- 3.5 Facilitating co-operation and communication amongst its membership.
- 3.6 Developing regional policies on research ethics based on the collective view from the regions.
- 3.7 Providing a mentoring, consultative and advocacy service for its members.
- 3.8 Providing capacity development courses and other interventions to build the capacity and capabilities of research ethics committees in Southern Africa.

To achieve these objectives, the Association functions through workgroups.

3. COMPOSITION OF THE REASA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

As mentioned above, the REASA Executive Committee members were elected through a formal online voting process that commenced on 30 March and ended 4 May 2017. All paid-up members were invited to submit nominations for the Executive Committee. Fifty percent of the members

participated in the election process. Individual membership was confirmed during the first Biennial meeting (11 May 2017).

The Executive Committee meets the composition criteria set out in the Constitution:

- 3.1 Chair/President
- 3.2 Vice-chair/President
- 3.3 Secretary
- 3.4 Treasurer
- 3.5 Communication and marketing officer
- 3.6 Education and training officer
- 3.7 Animal ethics representative
- 3.8 Ex-officio members, including the principal investigators of the ARESA Programme and the directors responsible for overseeing the governance of REASA as a Non-Profit Organisation.
- 3.9 Up to five additional co-opted members can be included to provide additional representation or to provide specific skills or expertise.

In total, the REASA Executive Committee is composed of 13 Members (including the Ex-Officio members). Ms Kelsey Engelbrecht is not an official member of the Committee. Her role is to provide support to the committee in particular relating to the REASA-ARESA relationship. The Directors of this Not for Profit Association are: Retha Visagie, Tanya Coetzee and Keymanthri Moodley.

Regional Branch Chairs have not yet been established as stipulated in point 6.4.8 (6.4.8 “Regional Branch Chairs (once established) to ensure effective communication between the executive and regional committees”) due to insufficient capacity to drive this process. Members of the Executive Committee provides their service to REASA on a voluntary basis.

Table 3.1 REASA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Position	Member	Affiliation	Association - ARESA
Ex Officio	Prof K Moodley	Centre for Medical Ethics and Law, Stellenbosch University	Principal investigator: ARESA Programme, Director: REASA
Ex Officio	Prof Stuart Rennie	Center for Bioethics, University of North Carolina	Principal investigator: ARESA Programme
Chair	Dr R Visagie	University of South Africa	ARESA alumnus (2015), Director: REASA
Deputy chair	Prof B Morrow	University of Cape Town	ARESA alumnus (2014)
Treasurer & membership registration	Dr N Briers	University of the Witwatersrand	ARESA alumnus (2015)
Communication & Marketing	Prof W Towers	North-West University (Potchefstroom campus)	ARESA alumnus (2015)
	Dr D Jankie (DJ)	University of Botswana	ARESA alumnus (2015)
Education and training	Dr A Temane	University of Johannesburg	HREC, University of Johannesburg

	Ms M Hendricks	Stellenbosch University	Head of Clinical Psychology Department, Stikland Hospital
	Prof L Roets	University of South Africa	Deputy chair, Department of Health REC, Unisa
R&D	Dr M Molapo	University of South Africa	Chairperson of the Professional Research Ethics Committee Research Ethics Workgroup, Unisa
Animal ethics	Dr B Mohr (BM)	University of Cape Town	Advisor to REASA representing ARECs
Secretary	Ms T Coetzee (TC)	Private ethicist	Member of TUT ethics review committee; Director: REASA ARESA Alumni (2013)
Supporting Secretary/not an official member	Ms K February (KF)	Stellenbosch University	ARESA: Administrative support

4. OPERATIONS OF THE PORTFOLIO/WORKGROUP

4.1 Number of meetings held/deliberations

The REASA Executive Committee had three formal meetings since the biennial meeting on 15 May 2017.

- 26 June 2017
- 20 September 2017
- 9 March 2018

The chairperson cancelled the meeting of 15 November due to a quorum concern (5 members accepted the meeting request, 4 tendered their apology and 4 did not respond to the meeting request). A written update regarding the REASA activities was disseminated to the members via electronic mail on 11 November.

4.2 Brief discussion/Deliberation/Activities/Outcomes/Challenges

Strategic objective	Activities	Progress reporting
3.1 Seeking out and establishing mutually beneficial connections between research ethics committees in Southern Africa.	Potential training of RECs in Southern Africa. Two training requests received – one local and one from Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation Request received from one local HREC to disseminate	Training requests have not been formalized yet. Sharing of information on behalf of a local HREC.

	<p>information about a new Research Ethics Specialist position to the REASA network.</p> <p>Information session with the ARESA bioethics leadership programme graduates to facilitate their involvement in REASA.</p>	<p>16 August 2017 - the ARESA graduates have been invited as guests to the REASA workshop, 23 May 2018 as a way of establishing mutual beneficial connections between REASA and their respective RECs.</p>
<p>3.2 Promoting the philosophy and practice of ethical human and animal research in Southern Africa.</p>	<p>Resources posted on the REASA website – www.REASA.africa</p>	<p>This is an area that needs dedicated attention.</p>
<p>3.3 Providing information, support and training to its membership, by (amongst other activities)</p>	<p>Dissemination of a Newsletter.</p> <p>Organizing scientific meetings and discussions in the field.</p> <p>To work in partnership with external agencies, where appropriate, to promote sound ethical standards for research.</p> <p>Proposed research – training needs analysis</p>	<p>3 Newsletters issued since REASA's launch (March & Nov 2017 & April 2018.). The newsletters are available on the website. Positive feedback received from a number of REASA members about the value of the information shared via the electronic newsletter.</p> <p>First scientific discussion in the field – master class planned to take place in Oct 2018 as part of the 6th International Association for Education in Ethics (6IAEE) National Health Research Ethics Council – letter introducing REASA submitted to the chairperson</p> <p>A proposal was developed by Dr Molapo for consideration by the REASA Executive Committee.</p>
<p>3.4 Establishing local, national and international networks for the discussion of research ethics-related topics of mutual interest.</p>	<p>Engagement with local, national and international networks</p>	<p>Potential collaboration and future engagement with Moi University, Kenya – Research Integrity.</p> <p>Potential collaboration – African Research Integrity Network</p> <p>Collaboration with AENSA – REASA is a member of AENSA</p>

	Up to date database and member register	renewed in May 2018. Ongoing and regularly updated by the treasurer
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4 RISKS

4.1 Identify potential risks that could compromise REASA's member commitments

Not meeting our membership obligations due to capacity constraints in the form of human resources that cause delays in the execution of functions.

Financial constraints due to the fact that the membership is growing, but not sufficient to provide financial sustainability of the Association.

4.2 Identify risk mitigation strategies

Improved synergy between the EXCO members, the Workgroups and the EXCO as a whole. Increase in the membership through an active marketing campaign i.e. involvement in the sixth International Conference on Ethics Education through a sponsorship of R5000, thus getting exposure on a broader scale.

Development of a cost model for training.

Identify possible sources of funding for sustaining REASA.

5 BUDGET / FINANCIAL IMPACT

The chairperson and treasurer met on 17 February 2018 at 10:00 at Brooklyn Mall to sort out the REASA internet challenges experienced by the treasurer.

5.1 Identify financial impact relating to activities or recommended actions

Pre-ARESA workshop requires funding support from ARESA.

Engagement in the sixth International Conference on Ethics Education requires an investment of R5000 (sponsorship).

6 ATTACHMENTS

If there is a need for a more comprehensive report or any additional supporting information, then they may be included as attachments. The attachments can be listed under this section for the reader's benefit.

A. REASA Pre-ARESA workshop programme, 23 May 2018

B. Individual workgroup reports (To be attached)

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Indicate what is being requested from the REASA Executive Committee

7.1 Concerted effort by all to members to assist with the marketing of REASA to increase membership to REASA and attendance of REASA events.

7.2 Registration for CPD points by the education and training workgroup – the articles can be summarised and questions constructed relating to the contents – this could be a cost effective way of providing training.

7.3 A marketing and communication plan and finalization of the REASA business plan.



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Signature: Chairperson RG Visagie

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(if there are no attachments)



Appendix A

WORKSHOP 23 MAY 2018
SIMONSBURG CONFERENCE ROOM
SPIER WINE FARM, STELLENBOSCH

RESEARCH ETHICS LEADERSHIP: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE		
Time	Topic	Facilitator
90:00 – 09:30	Registration and Tea	
09:30 – 10:00	Introduction to research ethics leadership	Prof Shenukha Singh University of Kwazulu-Natal
10:00 – 11:00	Leadership skills for running your REC (Research Ethics Governance)	Dr Retha Visagie UNISA
11:00 - 11:15	Teatime	
11:15 – 12:15	Leadership in ethics review: Whose interest is it anyway?	Prof Lizeth Roets UNISA
12:15 – 13:00	Defending the independence of REC's	Prof Walter Jaoko University of Nairobi, Kenya
13:00 – 13:30	Wrap up and Closure	Prof Brenda Morrow University of Cape Town
13:30	Lunch	