

Establishment of a Forum for Industry-University Regional Initiative enabling Students' Participation and improved Research Benefits



Sabita: Regions Participating in Workshops – Western, Eastern and Central
Consolidated Report on Workshops: April 2025

Creating a platform to bring the Regional Universities together with the Roads Industry, supported by the Public Sector and shaped by Pavement Engineering.

**Sharing Knowledge - Developing Skills -
Innovation through Research,
Implementing Quality Research**

Aim and Objectives of the Forum



**ESTABLISH
FORUM**

**BURSARY
PROJECTS**

**ENABLING
RESEARCH**

- Continuous training and skill development
- Guidance for research projects, already ID'd
- Transparency between sectors required
- Scholarships and bursaries with partnerships: university, industry & RAs
- Funds generated from industry, special organisations and partnerships
- Irradicate duplication in research
- Supervision to close gaps in research
- Benefits for increasing research industry participation, including students

Terms of Engagement

- How: Industry establish Research Partnerships - collaborating on specific projects, sharing resources, and jointly addressing industry challenges.
- How: Industry sponsor research projects at universities and gain access to the findings, also receive tax breaks?
- How: Industry participates in specific pavement related advisory boards to guide and inform research agendas?
- How: Industry finds Funding Graduate Research - support the development of talent and gain access to specific research expertise & via the Forum



Human Resources and Human Capital



**SUPERVISOR/
STUDY LEADER**

SPECIALISTS

STUDENTS

- Student's advisor and study leader
- Supervisor: managing degree of difficulty
- Assistance provided by specialist
- Specialist knowledge, equipment and experience is required
- Different models for students in a Forum e.g. supported by either University, Industry or Road Authority
- Contract can vary

Comparisons from Workshops

Scope

Barriers

Innovation

- Some Workshops focussed on **national** level collaboration challenges e.g. IP or bureaucracy, and others **regional** dynamics
- NB: Funding and communication gaps, regional versus systematic
- Practical, solution-driven emphasis for some. Higher level research where expensive equipment and specialists are needed

How to Optimise Research??



**KNOWLEDGE
SHARING**

**INVOLVE
PRACTITIONERS**



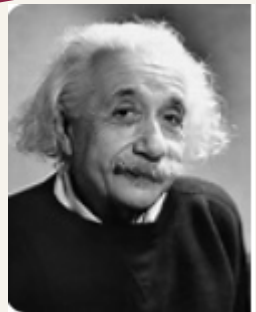
RESEARCH

**MULTI-
DISCIPLINARY**

**INVOLVE
SPECIALISTS**



PLUG THE GAPS



Challenges



- Obstacles:
 - Attracting talent
 - Brain drain
 - Lack of funding
- Solutions:
 - Direct link with industry
 - Use funding to get the best students
 - Intentional pavement knowledge development
 - MEng funding: 2-year work back period

Forum Implementation

*South African University/Industry
Research Forum - Umbrella Body*

Forum

Industry
Assocs

Representative from
Sabita

Industry
Members

3 individual industry
members

Universities

3 universities representing
the regional clusters.
Rotating Chair of Forum

Road
Authorities

Representative from
SANRAL.

Forum Implementation

Typical Regional Forum

Regional Forum

Industry
Assocs

Representatives from
Associations

Industry
Members

Representatives from
regional industry

Universities

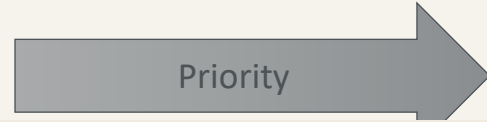
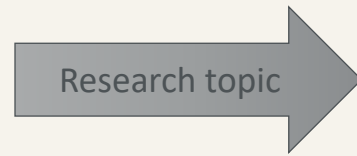
Driven and Chaired by a
Regional University. Regional
universities represented

Road
Authorities

Representatives
from Ras in region

Forum Implementation

Regional Forum - Research Projects Implementation



Regional
University

- Research contracts
- Student at appropriate levels – agreements and research process
- Workback agreements

Success Metrics

Implementation

Increase in
research funding

Univ / Stakeholder

Impactful
collaboration

- Rates of research finding
- Increase in investment funding
- Number of successful students completed postgraduate, with pre-defined targets
- Number of collaborative projects completed
- University publications or patents
- Completion of initiatives

Implementation must always have effective back-up



Thank you
Enkosi
Dankie



Photo by Stefan Els