



# THE DRAFT VIHIGA COUNTY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION POLICY

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## **PART I – INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

It is crucial that the County of Vihiga strengthens its research capacity in order to achieve its vision and mission. To this end, there is need for establishment and strengthening collaborations with partners in order to generate the requisite resources. Such resources also ought to be utilized optimally to generate the anticipated results. In this respect, the county administration targets four key measures of performance namely, relevance, necessity, internal efficiency and effectiveness. This Policy provides guidelines to ensure that research programmes meet these performance requirements. It aims at creating transparency and uniformity in the mechanism for planning, implementing and monitoring of research activities at the county level. The policy also maps out the framework for:-

- (a) Identifying and prioritizing research needs and initiating research projects;
- (b) Monitoring and evaluating research projects;
- (c) Disseminating research results and evaluating the impact; and
- (d) Identifying funding sources and modes of acquisition

### **1.1 Background**

The Executive Order No. 1 of 2017 issued by the Governor of Vihiga County placed the Research and Innovation Unit in The Deputy Governor's office based at the county headquarters. The Unit is a county wide recognized centre of excellence for theoretically informed and rigorous policy relevant research in county governance. In this regard it focuses on public governance, local politics and leadership, community cohesion and local citizenship, local governance, neighborhood governance and local democracy. The research unit intends to meet the needs of academics, policy makers and practitioners at the national, regional and local level.

At the moment the research unit undertakes research for all the departments at the County Executive including the Governor's Office and county secretary's office. The unit intends to provide consultancy, research and policy-advice to individuals and all those concerned with issues pertaining research. It also has strong recognition for universities and therefore has established links with them.

The unit members aim to be regular presenters at a range of policy conferences and policy debates.

### **1.2 Mission and Vision of the Research Unit**

The Research and Innovation Unit's policy is anchored within the context of its mission and relevant strategies to attain it. The vision of this Unit is to become a *“leader among counties in research and innovation”*.

In order to realize this vision, the Unit has set its mission as “*to be a catalyst for advancing research and innovation for socio-economic development in the County*”.

### **1.3 Functions of the Research and Innovation Unit**

The Vihiga County Research and Innovation Unit shall;

- (a) Oversee all research activities within the county.
- (b) Ensure all individuals and organizations carrying out researches within the county obtain clearance and permit from the unit.
- (c) Establish a Research and Ethics Committee (REC) which shall;
  - (i) Vet research proposals in accordance with ethical principles for researches involving human and animal subjects. These principles are:-
    - Respect for Persons
    - Beneficence
    - Justice
  - (ii) Where primary areas of application for these 3 principles shall be;
    - An informed consent
    - Assessment of risks and benefits
    - Selection of subjects
    - Maintenance of confidentiality in terms of participants’ identity and contribution to research data gathering.
    - Openness and honesty of data collectors.
    - Full explanation of the research
  - (iii) Review and approve projects involving human and animal participants and ensure they are ethically acceptable.

- (iv) Protect the welfare and rights of research participants in research and to promote ethically good human and animal research.
- (v) Monitor, evaluate and/or improve the quality of research work produced.
- (vi) Examine all data collection tools ( to ensure only intended data is collected)
- (vii) Come up with a research regulation that will be responsible for ensuring that researchers who engage in research activities in the county fulfill their legal responsibilities.
- (viii) Recommend services of consultants for big and complex researches.
- (ix) Develop MOUs for collaborations with other external partners like KNBS, Universities, NGOs, Vihiga County Assembly, research firms, development partners etc.
- (x) Involve youths in research activities and process. This shall be through:
  - a. Internship programmes at the unit.
  - b. Temporary data collection engagements
  - c. Outside collaborators to involve 30% of youths in their temporary data collection procedures.
- (xi) Support dissemination, information sharing and publication of research findings.
- (xii) Be aware of all institutions and individuals carrying out research within the county borders.
- (xiii) Issue research permits to both internal and external researchers signed by Head of Research.
- (xiv) Facilitate access to both internal and external funding for county research activities.
- (xv) Establish monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms for research activities within the county.

- (xvi) Enhance commercialization of research and innovation products by supporting the protection of intellectual property and product rights.
- (xvii) Ensure that researchers dealing with human and animal subjects observe health standards laid out in the Occupational Safety and Health Policy
- (xviii) Take custody of all equipment, materials, laboratories and vehicles purchased for the research unit.
- (xix) Under the principle of beneficence, ensure the Vihiga County Government benefits from external investigators' data collected from the county.
- (xx) Ensure that all researchers observe ethical requirements and maintain integrity in conducting research
- (xxi) Establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that all researches are completed on schedule.
- (xxii) Ensure proper and cost-effective utilization of research funds under its custody.
- (xxiii) Carry out capacity building of staff on the Research and Innovation Unit.
- (xxiv) Solicit for financial support from local, national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations to finance research.
- (xxv) Periodically review the Research and Innovation Policy and make recommendations.

#### **1.4 Core values**

The following are the core values that define the Research Unit:-

- (a) Innovation and Creativity – The unit is committed to delivering innovative solutions in delivery of our services.
- (b) Professionalism – The unit strives to uphold professionalism in whatever it does. It shall stand ethical scrutiny by being committed to high standards of excellence in its day to day operations.
- (c) Teamwork – The unit shall promote respect and unity of purpose among staff as well as promoting mutual exchange of information and experiences.
- (d) Autonomy and freedom of Inquiry – The unit shall encourage the County Government of Vihiga staff and other stakeholders to engage in free and independent thinking.

#### **1.6 Philosophy**

The Vihiga County Research and Innovation Unit shall endeavor to nurture research and innovation aimed at addressing diverse needs, respect for right to knowledge and access to information.

## 1.7 Staffing

Research Officers in the Research and Innovation Unit shall have staff who are designated and graded as below:-

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Job Grade</b>
Research Officer II	J
Research Officer I	K
Librarian/Information Officer	K
Data Analyst	K
Senior Research Officer	P

## 1.8 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The legal and regulatory framework governing the conduct of research at the Unit is derived from the following laws and policies:-

- (a) Constitution of Kenya, 2010;
- (b) Vihiga County Integrated Development Plan; and
- (c) Vihiga County Operational Manual for the Directorate of Research.

## 1.9 Scope of the policy

This policy shall apply to all departmental researches of the Vihiga County Government individual researchers, and other research collaborators.

## PART II – SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

### 2.0 Status

The focus of the Research and Innovation Unit is to carry out research and comparative studies that provide support to the County Departments and other stakeholders.

### 2.1 SWOT Analysis

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The backing of the Executive Order No. 1 of 2017</li> <li>● Experienced and effective researchers</li> <li>● Team work</li> <li>● Efficient and supportive administration</li> <li>● Political neutrality</li> <li>● Professionalism</li> <li>● Transformative and innovative officers</li> <li>● Expedient and result oriented officers</li> <li>● Training opportunities for officers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Budgetary constraints</li> <li>● Shortage of researchers</li> <li>● Insufficient infrastructure, e.g. office equipment and space, parking, ICT, research webpage and database</li> <li>● Poor connections with other research institutions in other Counties.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating and maintaining research collaboration with other counties</li> <li>● Securing intellectual property rights for research publications</li> <li>● Engagement with development partners for funding</li> <li>● Expansion of departmental skills and expertise, i.e. training on research management, planning, report writing, research quality assurance etc.</li> <li>● Effective dissemination of research findings</li> <li>● Conducting regulatory impact assessment</li> <li>● Ensuring access to information on research topics</li> <li>● Introduction of research quality assurance mechanism</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Political interference</li> <li>● Insufficient financial and administrative support from Finance</li> <li>● Side-lining of the research function at the County</li> <li>● Insufficient feedback/information from stakeholders</li> <li>● Lack of co-operation in sharing of resources</li> <li>● Lack of a proper research monitoring and evaluation system</li> <li>● Strict timelines for research and reporting</li> </ul>

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Top level support to the research department for example through approving and implementing the research agenda</li></ul> |  |
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## **PART III – GOAL OF THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION POLICY**

### **3.0 Rationale**

The aim of Research and Innovation policy is to assure quality and to provide the framework for research and innovation as a priority at the County. The policy shall create uniformity and transparency in the mechanism of planning, implementation and monitoring of the science, research and innovation process. It will also guide the evaluating process and reporting of the output.

### **3.1 Policy statement**

The Executive Office of the Deputy Governor will strengthen the Research and Innovation Unit to spearhead all research activities, to guarantee consideration of cross-cutting issues and county policies in defining and refining the Unit's research agenda, consultations, collaboration with stakeholders in undertaking research, and dissemination of research outputs.

### **3.2 The Unit's research agenda**

The Research and Innovation Unit will define and refine the research agenda for the County as necessary so as to ensure relevance of the research activities. This will be done in consultation with the other County Departments and with subsequent approval by the Deputy Governor. The research agenda and any additional proposals shall then be tabled for approval by the County Executive Committee.

The research agenda shall prioritize not only basic research but also cross-cutting issues. Progress made by the County in the implementation of the research agenda shall be reviewed annually.

### **3.3 Research priorities**

The Research and Innovation Unit will ensure that its research agenda addresses county, national and regional development needs. To do this, the Unit will work closely with other stakeholders in order to inform county, national and sectoral policies and priorities for action.

### **3.4 Stakeholder analysis**

The Research and Innovation Unit will conduct regular stakeholder analysis to identify changing needs and to promote cooperation and support in the achievement of the Unit's mandate.

### **3.5 Stakeholder mapping**

The Unit shall adopt a focused approach in mapping its key stakeholders relevant to the research subject or goal.

### **3.6 Partnerships and collaboration**

The Research Unit shall foster internal and external partnerships and collaborations in the form of committees, task forces, working groups or regional caucuses. It shall endeavor to work with other Counties.

### **3.7 Dissemination of research results**

The Research and Innovation Unit will encourage and support the dissemination of the research findings as per the existing intellectual property laws in Kenya. The dissemination will be done in collaboration with other Departments in the County and the office of the Deputy Governor.

Information held by the Unit may be accessed in accordance with Article 35 of the Constitution and any relevant laws, policies or guidelines.

### **3.8 Proprietorship of research outputs**

Proprietorship of research outputs shall be governed by all relevant laws, policies or guidelines relating to intellectual property rights.

### **3.9 Research support environment**

The County shall provide the necessary research support services to the Unit by adopting modern information management systems as well as purchasing the necessary research tools and equipment for implementation of this Policy.

### **3.10 Objectives**

The following shall be the objectives of this policy:-

- (a) To ensure relevance and necessity of research and innovation by providing a mechanism of ensuring that research addresses county development objectives and priorities.
- (b) To ensure internal efficiency by providing a modality of research and innovation co-ordination at all levels.
- (c) To ensure effectiveness of research and innovation by strengthening unit capacity for strategic, tactical and operational planning, budgeting and control of research activities.

- (d) To facilitate research and innovation capacity by enhancing the marketability of research proposals for donor funding through ensuring their quality and appropriateness.
- (e) To disseminate Research and Innovation results by prescribing mechanism for disseminating research results to end-users.
- (f) To ensure Research and Innovation ethics by setting guidelines on ethics in Research activities in the County.

## **PART IV – STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS**

### **4.1 Interventions**

The Office of the County Governor shall employ the following interventions to strengthen the Research and Innovation Unit at the County:-

#### **4.1.1 Planning**

The Research and Innovation Unit will develop strategies to formulate and implement its' programs, plans and activities.

#### **4.1.2 Budget and Finance**

The activities of the Research and Innovation Unit shall be planned annually with the approved budgetary allocation determined by the Finance Department and in accordance with existing regulations and procedures.

#### **4.1.3 Acquisition of assets**

All equipment donated to or acquired by the Research and Innovation Unit will become the Unit's assets. Equipment purchased in connection with a research project is the property of the County.

#### **4.1.4 Research Training**

The County will facilitate the capacity building of research personnel.

## **PART V – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

### **5.0 Implementation of the Policy at the County**

Implementation of this Policy remains vested in the office of the Deputy Governor. This is in accordance with Governor's Executive Order No. 1 of 2017 which states that Research and Innovation shall be domiciled in Deputy Governor's office.

#### **5.1 Quality Assurance**

The Unit will prepare and produce good quality research outputs. The Unit will form a working group that will review the research outputs to ensure uniformity, consistency and quality.

#### **5.2 Identification of Sources and Management of Research Resources**

The County shall identify and mobilize resources for the Unit including human and financial resources, and infrastructure.

#### **5.3 Research Data Bank and Dissemination of Research Results**

In this regard, the Research and Innovation Unit shall:-

- (a) establish and maintain a research activity database;
- (b) publish selected information from the database on a portal accessible by the public; and
- (c) annually publish a research bulletin containing abstracts of research projects.

#### **5.4 Research Quality Management**

The Unit shall monitor and report to the head of Research the following research quality indicators on a regular basis:

- (a) Research planning;
- (b) Research training;
- (c) Research publications per every Research Officer;
- (d) Peer reviewed research papers;
- (e) Facilities and access to information resources;
- (f) Number of staff doing research;

(g) Indicators that measure societal perceptions on County research; and

(h) Collaboration with regional and international institutions.

### **5.6 Establishing and Measuring the Impact of Research**

The Research and Innovation Unit will undertake regulatory impact assessment on County legislation and policy to assess the benefit to the public. There is need to measure the impact of research on society, and accordingly the Unit will:-

(a) Establish a feedback mechanism to assess the research impact in solving societal problems;  
and

(b) Utilise the feedback mechanism to foster continued refinement of the research agenda and methods.

## PART VI – INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

### 6.1 Implementation of the Policy

The overall responsibility of implementing this Policy lies with the Research and Innovation Unit in collaboration with the other Directorates and the overall guidance of the County through the Executive Office of the Deputy Governor. The Unit will also collaborate with other stakeholders.

The roles of the different actors are as outlined below:-

### 6.2 Role of different Research Officers

#### 6.2.1 Research Assistant

#### **Job Description**

This is the entry grade, to this cadre. An officer at this level will work under guidance and supervision of a Senior Research Officer. Duties and responsibilities include:-

- (a) help in conducting literature reviews to the study of interest;
- (b) help to prepare interview questions, interview subjects;
- (c) collect and analyze data;
- (d) maintain accurate records of interviews;
- (e) safeguarding confidentiality of subjects;
- (f) observe all the principles of research at all phases of the research;
- (g) prepare, maintain and update website materials;
- (h) help in preparations for materials to granting agencies;
- (i) help in compilation of research reports after data collection etc.

#### **Job Specifications**

For appointment to this grade, a candidate must have a bachelors degree in Social Sciences, Sociology, Public Administration, or Business Administration, Commerce and Economics from a recognized or its equivalent from recognized institution.

### 6.2.2 Research Officer III

#### **Job Description**

This is the entry grade, to this cadre. An officer at this level will work under guidance and supervision of a Senior Research Officer. Duties and responsibilities include:-

- (a) conduct literature reviews to the study of interest;
- (b) prepare interview questions and interview subjects;
- (c) collect and analyze data;
- (d) maintain accurate records of interviews;
- (e) safeguarding confidentiality of subjects;
- (f) observe all the principles of research at all phases of the research;
- (g) prepare, maintain and update website materials;
- (h) help in preparations for materials to granting agencies;
- (i) help in compilation of research reports after data collection.

#### **Job Specifications**

For appointment to this grade, a candidate must have a Bachelors Degree in Social Sciences, Sociology, Public Administration, or Business Administration, Commerce, Economics and Law or its equivalent from a University recognized in Kenya.

Relevant two years experience in a similar position will be an added advantage.

### 6.2.3 Research Officer II

#### **Job Description**

Duties and responsibilities include:-

- (a) conducting literature reviews to the study of interest;
- (b) prepare interview questions and interview subjects;
- (c) analyze data;
- (d) maintain accurate records of interviews;
- (e) safeguarding confidentiality of subjects;
- (f) observe all the principles of research at all phases of the research;

- (g) prepare, maintain and update website materials,
- (h) prepare materials to granting agencies, as well as compilation of research reports after data collection; and
- (i) provide guidance in training, supervising, guiding and mentoring staff.

### **Job Specifications**

For appointment to this grade, an officer must have:-

- (a) served in the grade of Research Officer III for a minimum period of three (3) years; and
- (b) shown competence and capability in work performance.

#### 6.2.4 Research Officer I

### **Job Description**

Duties and responsibilities include:-

- (a) plan for research;
- (b) help in training data clerks;
- (c) conduct literature reviews to the study of interest;
- (d) prepare interview questions;
- (e) analyze data, maintain accurate records of interviews;
- (f) safeguarding confidentiality of subjects;
- (g) observe all the principles of research at all phases of the research;
- (h) prepare, maintain and update website materials;
- (i) prepare materials to granting agencies;
- (j) compilation of final research reports after data collection.

### **Job Specifications**

For appointment to this grade, a candidate must have:

- (a) served in the grade of Research Officer II for a minimum period of three (3) years; and
- (b) demonstrate competence and capability in work performance.

## **6.2.5 Research Officer**

### **Job Description**

Duties and responsibilities include:-

- (a) coordinating departmental activities;
- (b) coordinating facilitation for staff;
- (c) ensuring continuous office supplies;
- (d) undertaking budgeting;
- (e) participating in formulation of policies and implementation;
- (f) coordination of office correspondence or other forms of communication; and
- (g) training, supervising, guiding and mentoring staff.

### **Job Specifications**

For appointment to this grade, a candidate must have:-

- (a) Served in grade of research Officer I for a minimum period of three (3) years;
- (b) attended senior management course lasting not less than four (4) weeks; and
- (c) demonstrate competence and capability in work performance.

Duties and responsibilities include:-

- (a) reports to the Deputy Governor;
- (b) supervision of research projects from planning stage up to the final project completion;
- (c) develop research schedules and monitor activities of research teams;
- (d) choose how to collect data and offer recommendations on evaluating the project;
- (e) identify project goals, research methods, variables and other test parameters;
- (f) communicate with team members and verify that all projects and tasks are on schedule;
- (g) oversee gathering of data based on the county and departmental needs;
- (h) analysis and synthesis of various sets of data;
- (i) interpretation of data and writing of reports;
- (j) resenatation of research findings and reports;

- (k) manage information in data bases to ensure they remain secure as well as ensure that all team members complete their tasks and work cooperatively with the team;
- (l) attend seminars and meetings pertaining research; and prepare materials for submission to granting agencies and foundations.

### 6.2.6 Principal Research Officer

#### **Job Description**

Duties and responsibilities include:-

- (a) overseeing research projects from planning stage up to the final project completion;
- (b) initiate research schedules and monitor activities of research teams;
- (c) analysis and synthesis of various sets of data;
- (d) interpretation of data and writing of reports;
- (e) manage information in data bases to ensure they remain secure as well as ensure that all team members complete their tasks and work cooperatively with the team;
- (f) attend seminars and meetings pertaining research;
- (g) prepare materials for submission to granting agencies and foundations;
- (h) coordinating preparation of budgets for Research Work;
- (i) help in recruitment of research staff;
- (j) training, counseling, guiding, and mentoring of staff; and
- (k) help in establishing research offices at sub-county and ward levels.

#### **Job Specifications**

For appointment to this grade, a candidate must have:

- (a) served in the grade of Senior Research Officer for a minimum period of three (3) years; and having produced and presented at least 5 research reports;
- (b) have a masters degree in social sciences, or its equivalent from an institution recognized in Kenya;
- (c) demonstrate competence and capability in work performance; and
- (d) must have attended a senior management course lasting not less than four (4) weeks.

### 6.2.7 Deputy Director, Research

#### **Job Description**

- (a) assist in all the duties of the director that involve overseeing research work activities in the county;
- (b) identify human resource needs for the Unit and recommend to the Director; and
- (c) help in establishing research offices at the sub-county and ward levels.

#### **Job Specifications**

For appointment to this grade, a candidate must have:-

- (a) served in the grade of Principal Administrative Officer for a minimum period of three (3) years;
- (b) demonstrate competence and capability in work performance; and
- (c) attended Strategic Leadership Development Programme lasting not less six (6) weeks from a recognized institution;
- (d) having published at least 5 research projects; and
- (e) possess at least a masters degree from a recognized university

### 6.2.8 Director Research

#### **Job Description**

Duties and responsibilities include:-

- (a) ensuring efficient utilization of resources;
- (b) undertaking budget preparation and monitoring expenditure trends;
- (c) approving expenditure; coordinating interdepartmental activities;
- (d) monitoring and evaluation of Research projects;
- (e) performance management;
- (f) managing quality standards and procedures;
- (g) formulating and implementing policies; and
- (h) counseling, guiding and mentoring of staff.

## **Job Specifications**

For appointment to this grade, an officer must have:-

- (a) served in the grade of Deputy Director, for Research for a minimum period of three (3) years;
- (b) attended Strategic Leadership Development Programme lasting not less six (6) weeks from a recognized institution;
- (c) shown competence and capability in work performance;
- (d) having published not less than 5 research projects; or
- (e) possess at least a masters degree from a university recognized in Kenya.

## **PART VII – MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

### **7.1 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The County shall develop and adopt internal controls and protocols to guide the approval, control and monitoring of research processes. Monitoring of the Unit's activities will be focused on each policy objective, and on the capacity and infrastructure development of the department, with indicators provided on each policy measure.

The Unit will build a culture of evaluation from the outset, addressing evaluation priorities in research planning, design, delivery and refinement. The Department of Planning in the County will monitor and evaluate the research activities. Regular revisiting of departmental strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats will be key in achieving the policy goals.

## **7.2 Policy Review and Reporting**

This Research and Innovation Policy shall be reviewed every three years to ensure relevance and to accommodate changes in the operating environment.

The Head of Research and Innovation Unit will regularly report to the Deputy Governor on the implementation of this Policy, who in turn will administratively report to the County Executive Committee. This is the reporting structure to be observed in the implementation and application of this Policy by staff in the Research Department:

