



# APHRC Organizational Effectiveness Assessment Factsheet

May 2024

## Introduction

The African Population and Health Research Center's (APHRC) Strategic Plan 2022-2026, "A Bold New Vision," promises to make APHRC a transformative force in Africa and to tackle systemic challenges in the African research and development (R&D) ecosystem. Several new shifts articulated in the Strategic Plan led the APHRC leadership team to determine whether the Center was fit for purpose in its ability to achieve impact. This was the genesis of the Organizational Effectiveness Assessment (OEA) exercise conducted in 2022-2023.

## Overview

The OEA exercise was conducted in two phases. The first phase had a clear internal focus, assessing several organizational elements and the extent to which they were considered fit for purpose individually and collectively. The second phase had an external focus, assessing stakeholders' perspectives on the Center's work, impact and positioning. It also consisted of mapping existing organizations, institutions, and partners familiar with the Center including potential partners that APHRC could collaborate with in the future to optimize its leverage within the existing R&D system on the continent.

This fact sheet summarizes the OEA exercise, its findings, and recommendations.

## Analytical Framework

Given APHRC's strong focus on generating evidence for meaningful action, strengthening the capacity of researchers and institutions, engaging with policy makers to disseminate their research findings, influencing policy decisions, and ultimately creating social impact, APHRC decided to adapt the Social Impact Capability Framework (See Figure 1).



Figure 1 - Social Impact Capability Framework

## Validation Against OEA Framework

The findings from the entire OEA corresponded well and significantly inform APHRC's priority areas from an overall organizational effectiveness perspective. The tailored analytical framework, reproduced below, assessed a number of relevant organizational elements for effectiveness. In summarizing the findings, a color code was applied to indicate higher or lower degrees of organizational effectiveness. Green implied higher effectiveness, yellow showed a relative degree of effectiveness, and orange illustrated areas that would benefit most from dedicated attention moving forward (See Figure 2).



Figure 2 - APHRC Performance against the OEA Analytical Framework

## Summary of Key Findings

- APHRC is a confident research think tank on African health and population issues with potential to become a leading global institution. It is seen as top notch on the African continent - one of a few African organizations with scale, track record, and a strong brand for grant management.
- APHRC is recognized as a very solid organization, often peerless in its space, and is able to deliver on several levels simultaneously. In many ways, APHRC can only be defined as an impressive success story of an African-led research institution working for Africa on African issues.
- APHRC's strengths are in the areas of its external reputation; academic credentials of its staff; technical expertise; data analysis; grant management; resource mobilization and funding; systems, processes, and procedures; support systems and coordination; policy influencing; quality assurance and compliance; strategic orientation; and strategic alignment and leadership.
- APHRC's potential areas of growth are: its organization structure; demonstration of leadership; staffing capacity and structure; risk of fragmentation of funding portfolio; internal coordination and alignment; strategic communication and branding; expanding outreach with universities; policy influencing versus objectivity and independence; and positioning through innovation.

## Recommendations

The recommendations from the OEA were synthesized and categorized into four to guide further action. The categories are aligned to the four domains of the Balanced Scorecard framework as follows:

1. People and Culture
2. Systems and Processes
3. Clients and Products
4. Financial Sustainability

A comprehensive road map to implementing the recommendations was developed with each set of recommendations under the Balanced Scorecard domains assigned a responsible person. Progress has been made in implementing some of the recommendations.

## Future Challenges and the Role of APHRC

The below are envisaged challenges and opportunities for the African continent in the coming decade, in which APHRC can play a critical role.



### Climate change

APHRC can demonstrate through objective research how climate changes will impact livelihoods, migration, displacement, economic development, and inequality at large.



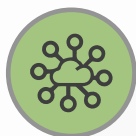
### Food and nutrition

There will be a much higher demand for understanding how food systems and nutrition patterns impact health in the populations of several African countries.



### Youth development and a growing urban population

APHRC is in a key position to influence policies in the years to come at an even higher level.



### Big data and data science

Institutions such as APHRC must be ready to show how they can analyze available third-party datasets, leading to evidence-based policy advice.



### Commercialization of health research

APHRC may want to pursue commercialized health research through targeted studies and trials to expand its sphere of influence through the all-important link to the private sector.



### Decolonialization agenda led by Africans

The recent donor shift toward decolonialization will require further articulation and should not be treated as just as another donor fad.



### Preparation for future pandemics

COVID-19 showed the need for more effective pandemic planning for the continent, as well as at national and regional levels.

## Moving Forward

APHRC's highly respected and well-earned status within the health and population R&D space is beyond question. The real challenge for APHRC is whether it should continue to follow its tested and tried success formula or pursue and co-lead a larger evidence-based policy change agenda, actively seeking to bring together key actors from the wider R&D ecosystem, and jointly producing authoritative evidence-based research and driving continental and global level policy change.