



‘Land, livelihoods and housing’ Programme STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-23

*13 June 2019 (as CLLH Business Plan)
28 February 2020 (Revised as Strategic Plan¹)*

1. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This is the strategic plan for 2019-23 for the Integrated Land Management Institute (ILMI), a research institute at the Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences (FNRSS) at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). ILMI coordinates transdisciplinary research, outreach and education in the themes encompassed in the ‘Land, livelihoods and housing’ Programme. It has the objective of becoming a full-fledged university-wide institute towards the end of a 5-year period to contribute to the University’s goal of becoming a research-intensive institution and a national and regional leader in socio-spatial issues.

2. BACKGROUND

The international dimension. The ‘land, livelihoods and housing’ thematic fields are the locus of some of the most vibrant and critical debates currently taking place, and universities all over the world have stepped up their engagement in these fields by establishing centres and institutes to mobilise and potentiate expertise around it. In Southern Africa this is also the case, and ILMI aims therefore to establish further and consolidate its presence amongst some of the important institutions in the region². University-based research institutions are furthermore not only limited to bridging the deficit in socio-spatial knowledge, but also play a role in the development of their respective base countries. They have also helped to overcome disciplinary ‘boxing’ that departmental and faculty compartmentalisations tend to promote. Through partnering with various stakeholders and through direct engagement with matters of national importance, university-based institutes have developed new and unique models for knowledge production which are now recognised as a distinct innovation from the Global South³.

Namibia’s coming-of-age with the questions of land, livelihoods and housing. After independence in 1990 ‘the land question’, understood then as a rural and agrarian matter, took centre stage in national development and inquiry. Key issues such as the increasing urban transformation, housing and urban land were given only marginal attention, and most of the research was undertaken by foreign researchers supported by international funds⁴. Furthermore, while at the moment of independence informal settlements were considered an emerging issue⁵, today most of the population is living in a ‘shack’⁶. Projections indicate that more than two million additional inhabitants will be expected in urban areas in Namibia in the coming three decades⁷, which will exert extraordinary pressures in all aspects that urbanisation entails: infrastructure development, governance, housing opportunities, among many others; with equally drastic transformations in the agriculture and natural resource management. The situation was recognised at the Second National Land Conference (2NLC) in 2018, where urban land became one of the five thematic areas, and where the President of the Republic of Namibia declared the situation in informal settlements as a ‘humanitarian crisis’⁸. Since independence there has not been such a momentum regarding socio-spatial matters as today; which creates a strategic opening for NUST to position itself as the epicentre of transdisciplinary socio-spatial inquiry and debates, and to make a dent by influencing Namibia’s long-term development in these crucial times.

Catching up with socio-spatial research. Local research on socio-spatial development, particularly in the urban field, is scarce. This may be due to the local context (e.g. the low population density in the country⁹, its hitherto

predominantly rural population¹⁰, negative connotations of living in urban areas due to historical reasons¹¹), the lack of research funds and subsidies¹², and the fact that this void has been filled largely by well-resourced foreign researchers based elsewhere in the Global North. At the moment there is no full-fledged university-based entity in Namibia with the specific focus on socio-spatial issues. Most research on related themes emanates from academic entities focused on socioeconomic issues, NGOs, and foreign cooperation agencies. This is an opportunity for NUST to cover this research field by consolidating available knowledge, filling remaining gaps, and charting new and innovative directions in socio-spatial inquiry.

Background of activities within NUST. ILMI had its origins in 2008, when it was established to promote consultancies and research at NUST¹³. However, after a period of dormancy, activities re-started when the 'Land, livelihoods and housing' Programme was established in 2015 by a group of committed members of the Department of Land and Property Sciences (DLPS) and the Department of Architecture and Spatial Planning (DASP) who joined forces to increase research and outreach activities. A part-time coordinator was appointed, who is supported by the administrative staff at DLPS. Thanks to a reserve fund from earlier work undertaken through the institute, a series of small-scale activities were able to take place; these included brown bag lectures and workshops, as well as a working paper series. In two years, about ten publications were released and a bid by ILMI won a commission by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development to undertake the Revision of the Mass Housing Development Programme Blueprint and Implementation Plan. This N\$1.4m project brought together about 32 professionals, students and young graduates from various disciplines and institutions in an effort to review long-standing policies related to housing and urban land. Several smaller research projects have been supported through seed-funding, including student-led initiatives that have yielded remarkable results. In a relatively short time, through these activities and the collective efforts of all of those involved, the Institute's work has contributed to the University's position as the preferred partner for socio-spatial inquiry and reference. Staff members of NUST have been appointed to task teams, high-level panels and committees of projects of national relevance. They have been requested to present at events of national significance, and have taken part in wide-ranging partnerships that have not only had substantial social impact, but have also attracted international recognition¹⁴. In short, NUST is well positioned to consolidate these achievements through ILMI, and become a flagship research institution attracting external funding, and supporting and raising the University's profile nationally, regionally and beyond.

3. KEY THEMATIC AREAS: LAND, LIVELIHOODS AND HOUSING.

The intrinsically transdisciplinary field of 'land, livelihoods and housing' holds the potential of becoming a flagship research focus for NUST. This area of inquiry encompasses the following: **land**, understood not only as urban or rural, but across territorial scales including aspects traditionally marginalized in urban or rural studies (e.g. infrastructure, mining, trans-boundary areas). **Livelihoods**, understood as the local and informal economies that animate human settlements and that form part of larger, often global, economic dynamics. And **housing** as a key component of a dignified life and a central social nationally and internationally.

This links squarely with the objectives of various **national agendas**, such as the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5), which is explicit about having housing and access to land as key national aims; the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP), which includes a chapter on 'Residential land delivery, housing and sanitation' within the 'Social Progression' pillar; and Vision 2030, which outlines a future Namibia able to meet its housing needs through income-generating and self-help projects.

This furthermore links with **international development agendas**, which include the African Agenda 2063, envisioning a future where 'people have access to affordable and decent housing including [...] all the basic necessities of life'; the New Urban Agenda, signed by Namibia at the Habitat 3 conference in 2016, which places 'housing at the centre' of this agenda; and several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. HOW?

ILMI will primarily aim to produce **transdisciplinary** socio-spatial knowledge. This is not only an imperative, but also a strategic move as the aim is not to duplicate existing disciplinary research agendas (e.g. departmental research strategies), institutions (e.g. Institutional Research and Publications Committee), and related activities taking place at Departmental and Faculty levels. The aim is instead to widen and deepen what is currently existing by bringing disciplines together and facilitate their productive engagement with other stakeholders.

The three areas of activity of ILMI will be **RESEARCH, OUTREACH**, and a progressive transition from non-accredited programmes in **EDUCATION** (e.g. masterclasses, summer/winter schools) to service courses for existing related academic programmes (e.g. vertical studios at DASP), and ultimately convening transdisciplinary postgraduate programmes and assist with the transition from a modality of assigning one or two supervisors per postgraduate student to advisory teams comprising various disciplines.

ILMI will focus on a targeted set of **outputs**, ranging gradually from low-threshold releases (e.g. working papers, document notes, occasional papers) to policy-influencing documents (e.g. policy briefs), peer-reviewed journal articles, research reports, and books.

5. THE STRATEGY

In line with the transition of the university from its origins as a polytechnic, ILMI's central objective will be **to create favourable conditions for lecturers and students to move from a teaching-learning environment, to a reflexive, critical, and engaged academic experience.**

The set aim of ILMI is to grow **to become a full-fledged institute¹⁵ in five years.** While centres are not integrated with the core academic programmes, **the goal is to progressively attain this status through actively developing educational activities closely related with existing programmes across the university.**

ILMI will initially avail 'seed funding' aiming gradually to be able to host full-fledged research projects. **Seed funding** enables joint research across Departments and Faculties, research-related activities (e.g. fieldwork, data collection), and encourages research outputs from coursework (e.g. research reports, research proposals). Seed funding will be availed to lecturers and postgraduate students at the university as a way to facilitate developing research projects that can attract external **research funding** to the university; the funding for these projects will be led by principal investigators.

A key aspect of the strategy is the public **outreach** programme, which so far has included events such as the Urban Forum, brown-bag meetings, workshops, masterclasses, and other engagements with key stakeholders.

6. GOVERNANCE

[NOTE: This section contains the proposed governance. However, due to unforeseen events, the interim governance is in place until further notice. See: <http://ilmi.nust.na/sites/default/files/ILMI-Governance-at-a-glance.pdf>]

ILMI's **governance is structured in three tiers:** (1) a critical mass of NUST researchers and associates at the base (the Foundational Level); headed by (2) core staff employed to lead operations (the Steering Level), advised by (3) the top office on research-related matters at the University as well as by an Advisory Board for strategic direction (the Advisory Level).

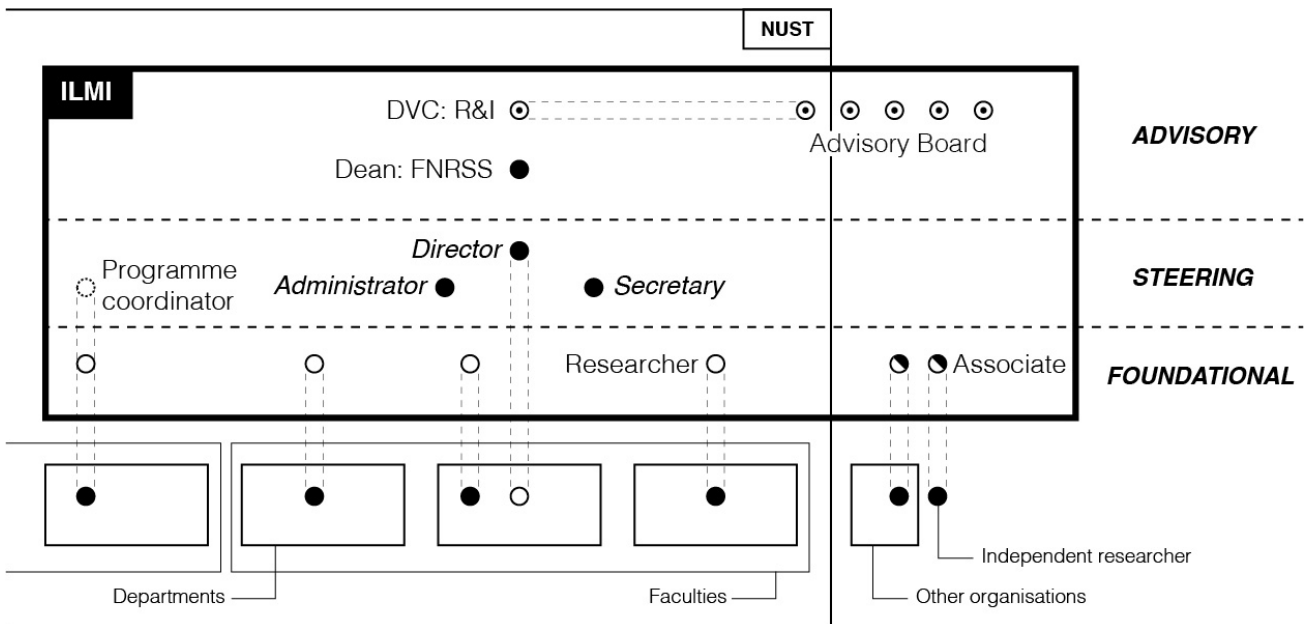
The **Foundational Level** of ILMI is composed of committed researchers based at the university, as well as associates from other institutions nationally and internationally. **Researchers and research associates** form the core team of ILMI. They are academics and university associates who have made ILMI their '*research home*', i.e. who actively undertake research and research-related activities through the ILMI while promoting and coordinating activities with fellow colleagues at their '*academic home*' (i.e. Departments, Faculties). Researchers hold a variety of qualifications, they can be staff members as well as Master and Doctoral students

of the University. Many have already proven their interest and commitment through engagements with ILMI (see 'List of Research Associates'). **Associates** are those with an affiliation to ILMI, and can be based at different institutions locally, regionally, and internationally; these can include postdocs, adjunct researchers, and visiting scholars. ILMI will also run an 'Alumni Programme' to actively engage former university graduates excelling in their field to conduct activities through ILMI.

The **Steering Level** of ILMI comprises of an executive director, administrative staff, and gradually incorporating Heads of Programmes. ILMI will be headed by a **Director** whose fundamental task is to give intellectual leadership to the activities and connect them to local, national, and international debates and initiatives. The Director will be supported by an **Administrator** with higher qualifications, capable of managing larger budgets, oversee the administration and progress of on-going activities, and be responsible for the coordination of larger-scale events; a **Secretary** will be incorporated at a later stage to support the Director and the Administrator. Progressively, as activities at ILMI gain critical mass and a full-fledged Institute is established, **Heads of Programme** will be incorporated in order to drive emerging areas of focus at the Institute.

The **Advisory Level** of ILMI is composed of the **Dean of the Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences**, who is briefed by the Director on a quarterly basis; as well as an **Advisory Board**, composed of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation, relevant stakeholders, as well as eminent and reputable individuals who have excelled in their field and that are invited to join the board to provide strategic direction. This level will also be engaged when making high-level liaison with government, private sector, and larger international institutions.

Figure 2. Proposed organogram.



7. SPACE

ILMI is currently based at the CLPS House (<http://ilmi.nust.na/?q=CLPS-House>). The premises include office space, boardroom, library, kitchen and outdoor facilities. The space is provided courtesy of the Department of Land and Property Science.

8. FUNDING

ILMI's objective is to rely on a broad array of funding sources. Initially, ILMI will rely on two core sources of funding as well as some ancillary ones; while aiming towards progressively sourcing larger research funding and grants.

In the **first stage**, ILMI will fundamentally rely on the University for the establishment of the 3 positions at the Steering Level, as these will need to be embedded and sustained through the statutory mechanisms. These positions may be initially co-funded externally, but nevertheless established within the University structures.

Discussions regarding the possibility of external funding for ILMI are currently underway with partners to enable a head start to ILMI by covering a portion of the expenses.

The ILMI reserve fund continues to seed funding and other operations. Other sources of funding that can be mobilised at this initial stage can come from consultancies and projects deriving from established cooperation agreements with key partners nationally (e.g. memoranda of understanding).

In the **second stage**, ILMI will seek national and international research funding and grants from larger institutions. This will require ILMI to demonstrate academic, administrative, and infrastructural excellence; and therefore operations will only gradually aim towards attaining this goal.

9. TIMEFRAME

This document has been approved by the **Interim Board**, and the **FNRSS Board of Studies (BOS)**. It will be discussed with other Faculties' BOS meetings, and ultimately taken to **key stakeholders and partners** throughout 2020. This document will be presented to the **University's Executive Committee (EXCO)** and subsequently to **Council**.

Table 2. Incremental development of ILMI in the Five-year plan.

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Activities | | | | | |
| Research | | | | | |
| Outreach | | | | | |
| Education | * | * | * | * | |
| Funding sources | | | | | |
| NUST | | | | | |
| ILMI Reserve fund | | | | | |
| Consultancies | | | | | |
| MoU's | | | | | |
| Research funding | | | | | |

* Education in the initial years can entail non-accredited activities complementing accredited programmes (e.g. masterclasses, summer/winter schools).

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Endnotes

¹ ILMI Board Resolution 20190613/7.2-1

² Examples of these are the African Centre for Cities, at the University of Cape Town, South Africa (<https://www.africancentreforcities.net/>); the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa (<https://www.plaas.org.za/>); and the Centre for Urban Research and Planning, University of Zambia (<https://www.unza.zm/schools/natural-sciences/departments/geography/>).

³ See: McPhearson, Timon, Susan Parnell, David Simon, Owen Gaffney, Thomas Elmqvist, Xuemei Bai, Debra Roberts, and Aromar Revi. "Scientists Must Have a Say in the Future of Cities." *Nature* 538, no. 7624 (October 10, 2016): 165–66; and MirafTAB, F., & Kudva, N. (Eds.). (2015). *Cities of the Global South Reader*. Routledge; Parnell, S., & Oldfield, S. (2014). *The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South*. Routledge.

⁴ Swilling, M. (1994). Towards and Urban Research Agenda for Southern Africa in the 1990s. In R. Stren (Ed.), *Africa* (pp. 281–374). University of Toronto.

⁵ This has been documented in early urban research in the 1990s, see: Peyroux, E. & Graefe, O. 1995. *Precarious Settlements at Windhoek's Periphery. Investigation into the Emergence of a New Urban Phenomenon*. Centre for Research, Information, Action for Development in Africa.

⁶ Through the self-enumeration efforts that the Namibia Housing Action Group and the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia conduct, it is estimated that about 2/3 of the urban population in Namibia lives in a shack. This is according to their recent "Profile of Informal Settlements 1998-2008".

⁷ See: Lühl, P., & Delgado, G. (2018). Urban Land Reform in Namibia: Getting Ready for Namibia's Urban Future. Presented at the Second National Land Conference, Windhoek: Integrated Land Management Institute. Retrieved from http://dna.nust.na/landconference/submissions_2018/policy-paper-urban-land-reform-2018-final.pdf

⁸ Republic of Namibia. (2018). Statement by His Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, at the closing of the Second National Land Conference. Windhoek.

⁹ Namibia is the second least-densely populated in the world. See: World Bank. 2018. *Population density (people per sq. km of land area)*. Available: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST>.

¹⁰ See: Delgado, G. & Lühl, P. 2018. Namibia's Urban Revolution. *The Namibian*. 29 June. Available: <http://ilmi.nust.na/sites/default/files/20180629-Namibias-urban-revolution-GD-PL.pdf>.

¹¹ There are several references available that document Namibia's spatial apartheid of the past; for example, see: Simon, D. 1991. Windhoek: Desegregation and change in the capital of South Africa's Erstwhile Colony. In *Homes Apart: South Africa's Segregated Cities*. Lemon, Anthony, Ed. Cape Town: David Philip. 174–190.

¹² The National Commission for Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) was only established in 2004 and although its aim was to promote research, science and technology, it does not currently offer incentives for the undertaken of these; see: <http://www.ncrst.na/>

¹³ See: <https://www.nust.na/sites/default/files/documents/Annual-Report-2009.pdf>, p. 43

¹⁴ An international award was recently bestowed to a partnership between NUST with informal settlement dwellers associations, NGOs, local and central government, and the private sector; see: NUST. (2019). NUST receives award for improving lives of informal settlement residents | Namibia University of Science and Technology. Retrieved from <https://www.nust.na/?q=news/nust-receives-award-improving-lives-informal-settlement-residents>

¹⁵ While having 'institute' in its title, ILMI is still categorized as a 'centre' within NUST. See: "Classification of Centres, Institutes and Units"