



# **The Impact of Creation of National Research Pool Fund for Nigerian Economy**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to foster collaboration between academia, industry, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations by providing financial resources that enable innovative research initiatives with real-world applications and to establish a centralized funding mechanism that allocates resources to priority areas of research and development, in particular, enhancing national competitiveness through strategic investments in cutting-edge research and innovation. Encourage collaboration and partnerships among researchers, academic institutions, industries, and government agencies thereby strengthening interdisciplinary collaborations among researchers from diverse fields. Enhance the quality and impact of research outputs by providing sustained financial support and to drive innovation, technological advancement, and socio-economic progress through targeted investment in research initiatives. Encouraging public-private partnerships to facilitate technology transfer and commercialization of research outcomes, especially through developing Triple-Helix Knowledge Transfer Partnerships that enable the flow of innovation to industry and market. Promoting evidence-based policymaking through rigorous scientific studies. Attracting global attention and investment in Nigerian research capabilities. Building capacity within the research ecosystem through training programs and mentorship schemes

*Key Word: Impact, Creation, National, Research, Pool, Fund, Nigerian Economy*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria, as a developing nation, recognizes the pivotal role that research and innovation play in driving sustainable development and addressing societal challenges. However, despite the abundance of talent and potential within the country, the research ecosystem often faces challenges such as inadequate funding, limited infrastructure, and fragmented efforts. In light of this, the creation of a National Research Pool Fund (NRPf) emerges as a strategic initiative to consolidate resources, promote collaboration, and foster a culture of innovation across various sectors in Nigeria.

To address this issue, we propose establishing a National Research Pool Fund (NRPf), which will serve as a centralized mechanism to support high-impact research projects across various sectors. The NRPf aims to foster collaboration between academia, industry, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations by providing financial resources that enable innovative research initiatives with real-world applications. The NRPf will fund research proposals addressing priority areas such as agriculture, industry, health, energy, environment, education, and information communication technologies (ICT). Proposals must demonstrate clear relevance to national priorities, have strong multidisciplinary teams, and showcase potential for impactful results. Applicants may include individuals or groups from academic institutions, research centres, private companies, and other relevant entities.

This paper is devoted to the research of the effectiveness of pool funding as a scientific concept and practical approach to finance sustainable development goals at international and national levels. The essence of the concept is grouping together funds of different economic agents in order to increase the financial capacity and to minimize risks in financing sustainable development goals. According to authors' research, this approach is particularly relevant for countries with transition economies or developing countries, where most of the sustainable development goals are unsolved and require significant resources to finance them. The institutional and economic mechanism for implementing such approach is the creation of national Pool Funds for financing sustainable development programs.

A prerequisite for the creation of such funds is the development of a national strategy for financing sustainable development programs in accordance with socio-economic realities and the possibilities of involving various economic agents and partners in the joint financing of programs to provide a secure future for the next generations. Other important prerequisites for the foundation of Pool Funds for sustainable development are: determination of sources of accumulation of financial resources; selection of effective and adequate financial instruments; conducting control of purposeful use of funds and determination of socio-economic effect from financing of projects and programs of sustainable development.

According to this approach it will contribute to the concentration and unification of sources and mechanisms for financing sustainable development programs at the national level, as well as for monitoring the use of funds for their intended purposes. There is no doubt as to the potential theoretical impact of pooled funds on the quality of crisis response. That is why there is still a strong interest in pooled funding despite their limited reach. To achieve their full potential, however, pooled funds would need to constitute a significant portion of funding for humanitarian action. While there has been a steady increase in the share of humanitarian funding channeled through pooled funds, it still accounts for less than 10%. It is expected that contributions to pooled funds will continue to grow by 2030, but it is unlikely that the balance of power between different funding volumes will look much different. There is no clear forward looking or consolidated strategy for humanitarian donors on pooled funds. Looking at the commitments set out in the UN Funding Compact aiming to double the share of non-core contributions to the UN provide through development pooled funds as a proxy, that commitment is on track, but it has gone from 5% in 2017 to 11,7 % in 2020 (UN, 2022). At the same time, the number of Member State contributors to development-related inter-agency pooled funds has decreased between 2017 and 2024 (Ibid.). There appears to be interest from donors to invest into pooled funds, but questions remain not only as to the volume but also as to whether the base of donors interested in them will be broadening. Further questions remain as to the interest of various stakeholders (from donors to agencies) to invest into a full rethink and implementation of current humanitarian coordination structures which are interconnected with the effective impact of pooled funds. (UN, 2022).

Recent trends have shown that there is an interest in setting up different models of pooled funds (humanitarian, nexus, development, NGO-led, global thematic pooled funds) as well as funds being used as 'quick fixes' to secure significant and quality financing. The volume of official development assistance (ODA) provided by multilateral development banks to the annual largest 20 recipients of humanitarian assistance has grown significantly, doubling from US\$5.8 billion in 2015, to US\$11.6 billion in 2020 (Development Initiatives, 2022). The World Bank in particular is providing more financing through crisis-focused mechanisms that increasingly intersect with traditional humanitarian response. (World Bank 2022).

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## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Conceptual Frame Work

Pooled funds have grown in number and funding levels, and they have been increasingly used to help meet the commitments agreed to in the Grand Bargain. Not needing to justify their value anymore, pooled funds are currently at a crossroads as new models and approaches emerge. In practice, such funds channel only a small percentage of the overall humanitarian funding and are not without constraints. (Mårtendal, 2024)

The literature shows that some improvements in their ways of working and performance are still needed. A comprehensive analysis of the relative value of pooled funds for their different types of stakeholders is also missing. It worth paying attention to them. It is not a matter of whether to invest into influencing their future progress or not, but rather how. Pooled funds hold the promise of better-quality funding, flexible and un-earmarked and for many L/NNGOs, they are the sole source of direct funding. Not having to rely on pass through funding from operational agencies, pooled funds are a critical element in the sustainability of many L/NNGOs. (Thomas, 2022).

They can be an incredible 'force for good' to create space for innovation, enable greater coordination and more effective humanitarian responses. They do operate, however, within a humanitarian architecture that has its own shortcomings. Where the system works well, pooled funds have already demonstrated their potential. Where it does not, pooled funds are not able alone to change the rules of the game. To fully fulfil their promises, pooled funds will need not only to grow but also to be looked at as an essential component of any reform of the humanitarian coordination architecture needed. With the current promise of an increased proliferation of pooled funds in the future and a diversification of their models, it will be important to track their progress. There are undoubted advantages in leveraging the complementarity of the different funds with other financing tools and across pooled funds available in any given context. There is also a risk that complementarity gives way to competition especially in the absence of a clear analysis of the comparative value of each fund and in the case of drops in overall humanitarian funding flows. ICVA and their members have an important role to play in charting the way for pooled funds to fulfil their promise for all donors, INGOs, L/NNGOs alike.

### Governance Framework, Structure and Processes:

The NRPF will be governed by a board comprising representatives from key stakeholders, including federal ministries, State Government, higher education institutions, Research Experts, industry leaders, and civil society organizations. Develop transparent and accountable processes and fairness in fund allocation, project selection, and performance evaluation. A secretariat will manage day-to-day operations, oversee proposal evaluation processes, and monitor project progress and also establish a governing body tasked with overseeing the administration, management, and allocation of funds within the NRPF.

### Funding Mechanism:

However, there is need to mobilize financial resources from government appropriations, private sector contributions, international partnerships, and other sources. Implement a sustainable funding model that ensures regular replenishment and growth of the NRPF. Prioritize long-term investment strategies aimed at fostering innovation, capacity building, and research excellence. Initial capitalization of the NRPF can come from contributions made by participating stakeholders, international donors, and government budget allocations. Over time, it is envisioned that the NRPF will become self-sustaining through revenue generated from intellectual property rights, licensing agreements, patents, and spin-off ventures resulting from funded research projects.

**Research Prioritization:**

Identify key areas of national importance and strategic relevance through consultations with stakeholders and experts. Allocate funds to support research projects addressing critical challenges in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, energy, environment, and technology. Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-cutting research initiatives to tackle complex problems comprehensively.

**Capacity Building and Infrastructure Development:**

Invest in the development of research infrastructure, facilities, and laboratories to support cutting-edge research activities. Provide grants, scholarships, and fellowships to nurture a vibrant community of researchers and innovators. Facilitate knowledge exchange, training programs, and workshops to enhance research capabilities and skills development.

**Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment:**

Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress, outputs, and outcomes of funded research projects. Assess the socio-economic impact, commercialization potential, and scalability of research innovations. Utilize feedback and lessons learned to inform future funding decisions, policy formulation, and strategic planning.

**Expected Outcomes**

By fostering a culture of innovation and knowledge exchange, the NRPF has the potential to catalyze transformative change in Nigeria's economy and society. Some anticipated benefits include: Increased productivity and competitiveness in targeted industries. Improved access to essential goods and services. Creation of new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. Enhanced human capital development. Greater resilience against external shocks and crises.

**Expected fund results**

To design a fund for performance in line with results-based management principles and practices, a fund's theory of change must be translated into a set of concrete expected fund results. These results summarize the change that the fund aims to bring at three levels:

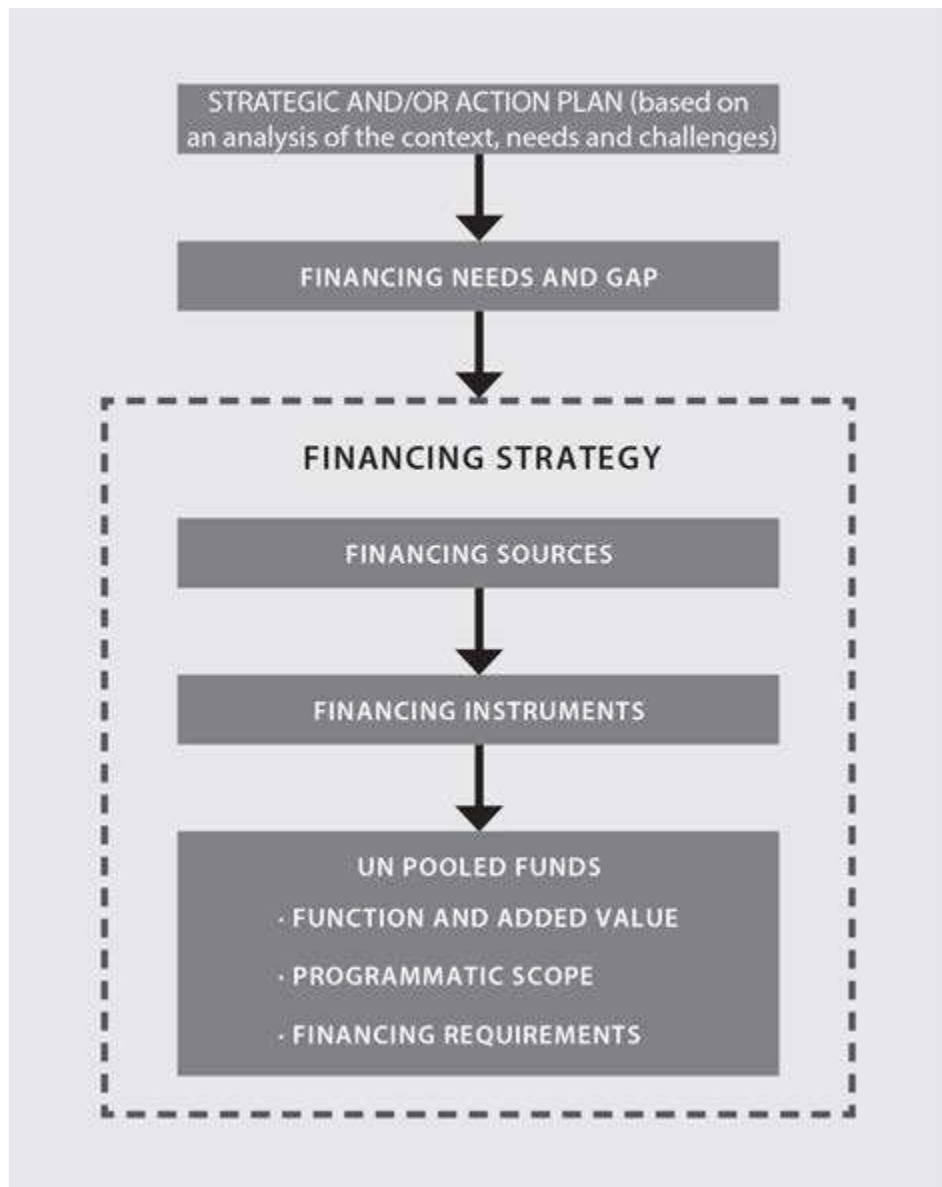
- **Fund impact(s):** the long-term impact on identifiable population groups produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly and intended or unintended.
- **Fund outcomes:** usually show changes in institutional performance or behavior among individuals or groups.
- **Fund outputs:** usually show changes in skills or abilities, or the availability of new products and services that are achieved with the resources provided within the time period specified. Outputs are the level of result in which the comparative advantages of individual agencies emerge and accountability is clearest. (Bosch, Fabregas, & Fischer, 2023). It is also useful to show the fund's expected results graphically to visualize the causal linkages between different levels (i.e. how fund outputs are expected to result in fund outcomes) and how expected fund outcomes contribute to the overall desired fund impact. There are multiple ways of graphically illustrating a theory of change.

A recent paper commissioned by the Utstein Group (Howe, Munive, & Rosenstock, 2019). recommended that pooled funds should be used as a platform to improve risk management practices. By nature, a pooled fund is a risk sharing mechanism, enabling stakeholders to take on more risk together than each individual stakeholder could take on alone. The governance structure, which brings together UN, government, donors and other stakeholders, offers an opportunity to develop a common understanding of the risk context and mitigation measures. 38 Established in Norway in 1999, the Utstein Group is a group of government ministers working together to drive the development agenda forward, focusing on implementing an international consensus on development cooperation.

**Fund Risk Management Strategy.**

The main purposes of a fund risk management strategy are to: accelerate delivery and increase fund impact; ensure that fund operations do no harm'; verify that funds are used for their intended purpose, and build risk management capacity of national institutions.

### Strategy and Action Plane Model



#### Propose potential financing instruments to address the identified financing gaps

There are a number of different financing instruments to channel the three main sources of finance, such as the national budget, pooled financing mechanisms, lending instruments, and projects. A variety of instruments are needed to meet the priorities articulated in country-level strategic plans. The specific mix will depend on the country context and the mapping of available and potential financing sources. Different financing instruments can be combined and sequenced, depending on their programmatic scope and comparative advantage.

(Howe, Munive, & Rosenstock, 2019). Pooled funds, in particular, aim at financing transformative change through supporting a wide range of intimately linked activities pursuing a common development objective. They can be designed in a number of ways to address specific characteristics of the financing gap and to leverage financing opportunities in a specific context. (Metcalf-Hough., & Spencer, 2022).

Process and practices for assessing the financing requirement for

The role of pooled funding mechanisms is likely to grow in the coming years, as the development finance architecture evolves rapidly. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be reinforcing the need for multi-partner financing aligned with specific global public goods. This could lead to the establishment of new global facilities aligned to the SDGs which enable a collective response to shared challenges. The UN and its partners have accumulated a wealth of experience over the past decade with system-wide development, humanitarian and recovery pooled financing mechanisms. The success of issue-based UN pooled financing mechanisms for the post-2015 development agenda, however, will depend on the quality of fund design and administration, fund operations, and fund implementation. (UN OCHA. 2022e).

Pooled funds can be powerful instruments for achieving transformative change in support of the post-2015 development agenda. To leverage the potential benefits and limit the potential drawbacks, the way in which funds are designed matters. Upfront investment in fund design will save time, lower transaction costs and increase its impact. The key fund design components include clarifying the function and added value of a fund within the broader financing ecosystem, delineating its programmatic scope, articulating its theory of change to achieve its expected set of programmatic results, establishing its results-based management system and its risk management strategy as well as right sizing its governance structure. Each component of fund design is intimately linked.

A shared theory of change and robust RBM system will significantly reduce risks and the need for a comprehensive risk management structure. Conversely, a costly fund's risk management structure will be required to compensate for the lack of a strong theory of change and RBM system. Finally, fund design itself is dynamic, iterative and sometimes overlapping process. A dynamic process of fund design, operation and implementation ensures that pooled funds are both financing and learning instruments, fit for purpose in support of transformative change. Achieving the ambitious goals of sustainable development, both at international and national levels, requires high attention to the problems of their financing. These issues are particularly applicable for countries with transition economies or developing countries, where most of the sustainable development goals are unsolved and required significant resources to finance them.

N pooled funds<sup>8</sup>

### Empirical Review

The review of the literature has shown the attention pooled funds have garnered as a humanitarian financing tool in recent years. The purpose of the article is to study the scientific and practical significance of pool funding mechanism to provide financing for sustainable development goals at global and national levels. Research review of the scientific literature showed that the pool funding is being considered as the grouping together of assets and related strategies of economic agents to increase the financial capacity and to minimize risks. The purpose of creating financial pools is joint provision of large loans; carry out financial, commercial or other large-scale operations, large industrial or other construction, development of production of new products, etc. Creating financial pools makes it possible to conduct large financial transactions with combined financial resources of all pool participants. An example of such operations can be syndicated lending, when several banks combine their efforts to provide large loans or financing large-scale projects. (Milante, & Lilja, 2024).

Their purpose is to limit the extent of possible losses to each pool member in the event of adverse effects of the risk and to receive profits from mediation in the allocation of financial resources. The founders of the financial pools can be any owners of financial resources, the states, banks, enterprises, residents and non-residents, citizens. Combining their financial capabilities, all pool participants can actively participate in solving different tasks at the micro, macro and global levels. The mechanism of pool financing is particularly relevant for solving the tasks of sustainable development financing, since these issues require the accumulation of significant financial resources. (Bosch, Fabregas, & Fischer, 2023).

The example of Nigeria shows that the financial support of international organizations for achieving the goals of sustainable development is of great importance. However, the solution to most of the problems of sustainable development at the national level is impossible without the development of a comprehensive strategy for sustainable development of the country, in which the issues of mechanisms, resources and tools for financing sustainable development should be prioritized. In this context, the funding pool mechanism, which provides the possibility of creating a pool of funds for the financing of sustainable development goals at the national level, deserves special attention. (Pearson 2024),

Creation of Pool Funds for sustainable development financing should be regarded as an economic and institutional mechanism for funding sustainable development goals at the national level.

(Barbelet, Davies, Flint, & Davey, 2021). Steps for developing of Pool Funds for sustainable development financing must include: development at the state level national strategies for financing sustainable development (determination of priority goals and directions of financing); - determination of sources of accumulation of financial resources (funds of international organizations, state and local budgets, non-state funds, funds of commercial structures, private individuals, etc.); - selection of effective and adequate financial instruments (international transfers. budget allocations, loans, tax incentives etc.); - conducting control of purposeful use of funds and determination of socio-economic effect from financing of projects and programs of sustainable development (analysis of socio-economic indicators). In our opinion, such approach will contribute to the concentration and unification of sources and mechanisms for financing sustainable development programs at the national level, as well as for monitoring the use of funds for their intended purposes. (Saez, Konyndyk, & Worden, 2021).

From these positions, it is expedient to use a pool funding approach in order to accumulate and concentrate resources, as well as to reduce the risks, for resource provision of programs and projects for sustainable development. The institutional and economic mechanism for implementing such an approach is the creation of national Pool Funds for financing sustainable development programs. A prerequisite for the creation of such funds is the development of a national strategy for financing sustainable development programs in accordance with socio-economic realities and the possibilities of involving various economic agents and partners in the joint financing of programs to provide a happy future for the next generations. (Stoddard, Poole, Willits-King, Shoab, 2023).

A United Nations inter-agency pooled fund is a mechanism used to receive contributions from multiple financial partners and allocate such resources to multiple implementing entities to support specific national, regional or global development priorities. These open-ended funds operate as pass-through mechanisms and as such do not require all participating organizations to comply with the operating procedures of a lead agency. Instead, pooled funds offer a flexible mechanism that enables participating organizations to handle implementation according to their own operating procedures for procurement

and financial management. By avoiding any duplication of operating procedures, pass-through mechanisms minimize implementation delays and transaction costs. Single-agency pooled funds, on the other hand, receive contributions from multiple financial partners and allocate such resources to projects implemented by the receiving agency only. (Weinlich, Baumann, Lundsgaarde, & Wolff, 2020). Pooled financing mechanisms also potentially offer a number of options to individual development partners and recipient countries to better manage the combined set of contextual, strategic, programmatic and operational risks in, for example, complex post-crisis situations or climate change related interventions. (Ali, Loduro, Lowilla, Poole, & Willitts-King, 2018). There are repeated calls for pooled funds to provide more effective capacity strengthening to L/NNGOs (Barbelet et al., 2021; Featherstone et al., 2019; Featherstone & Mowjee, 2020; Howe et al., 2019; Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2022; Poole, 2018). Although there are a growing number of good practices and lessons learned which could be generated from pooled fund practices, there is no systemic approach to capacity building (including by conducting baseline assessments for capacity strengthening purposes), nor evidence that efforts benefit the organizations in the long term rather than simply the fiduciary responsibilities of the fund itself (Featherstone & Mowjee, 2020b).

There is a call on funds to adopt an “investment mentality” to NGO capacity building to borrow the term from the Near Network (Poole, 2018) and further invest in financing organisational development (Barbelet et al., 2021). There is also the call for more focused attention on women-led organisations, facilitating their capacity strengthening and their access to financing (Featherstone & Mowjee, 2020b). As highlighted in the MOPAN assessment on multilateral effectiveness, CBPFs played an important role as intermediary funding mechanisms for L/NNGOs. However, it “found no increase in the resources going towards strengthening the capacity of local actors and little progress in creating more meaningful partnerships with them, beyond sub-contracting”(MOPAN, 2021). In terms of access to funding, the adoption of tiered financing by the Start Fund and some CBPFs is seen as generally positive in terms of bringing on board a larger and more diverse groups of L/NNGOs (Poole, 2018; Thomas, 2023). Barriers however persist especially for smaller NGOs and community-based organisations. Beyond having to operate online and in English, L/NNGOs must meet due diligence criteria, which have yet to be harmonized among donors (Thomas, 2023). Partner Capacity Assessments which follow the due diligence are viewed as demanding processes, beyond the reach of many organisations (Carter, 2018).

It has been noted that the need for increased coordination and harmonization among and between pooled fund mechanisms and other donors will only increase as more funding is focused on the few L/NNGOs able to meet international due diligence criteria (Ali et al., 2018). To remedy some of these challenges, localization reviews recommend increasing the “quality and quantity of funding going to local actors through pooled funds”(Barbelet et al., 2021). Others call for the establishment of funds dedicated to L/NNGOs, and/or funds directly managed by local and national actors themselves, further enhancing L/NNGO visibility with bilateral donors (Barbelet et al., 2021; Howe et al., 2019; Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2022; MOPAN, 2021; Poole, 2015).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted survey design. Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used. Primary data were obtained through oral interviews and questionnaire. Secondary data used were obtained from books, internet, and journals. The population comprises the academia, industry, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The result showed that creation of Pool Funds for sustainable development should be regarded as an economic and institutional mechanism for funding sustainable development goals at the national level by providing financial resources that enable innovative research initiatives with real-world applications. Encourage collaboration and partnerships among researchers, academic institutions, industries, and government agencies thereby strengthening interdisciplinary collaborations among researchers from diverse fields.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data generated from the field survey using the questionnaire as instrument were presented in tables. The Z-test, simple regression and Chi-square statistical techniques were used in testing the hypotheses.

### The Creation of National Research Pool Fund for Nigeria Work plan

No	ACTIVITY	NARRATIVE
1	<b>DESK RESEARCH</b>	
	Mapping and Analysis of Fund types available in Nigeria for various Research Activities	
	Review of Legislative and Regulatory Framework for important Funds	
	Review of current Legislations and amendment in progress	
2	<b>CONSULTATIONS &amp; ENGAGEMENT</b>	
	<b>2.1) Inter-ministerial briefing</b>	On strategic co-operation, co-ordination and alignment
	<b>2.2) Consultation and Engagement of key:</b>	Co-operation and co-ordination,

	<p>2.2.1) Domestic Trust Fund holders, TET fund, ITF, PTF, Lottery Fund, Local Content Board, NASENI, Primary Health etc</p> <p>2.2.2) Donors, Development Partners, International Charities, International Foundations and Major Private Sector Funders</p> <p>2.2.3) International and other Domestic Research Funds and Foundations.</p> <p>2.2.4) Briefing and Consultation of the National Assembly on Legislative and Regulatory Framework and Amendments required</p> <p>2.2.5) Consultation with the Presidency, Attorney General etc. on possible use of Presidential Executive Order</p>	<p>Domestic resource alignment.</p> <p>Counterpart funding approach</p> <p>Legal instrument</p>
3	<b>DEVELOPMENT PLANNING</b>	
	<p>[Technical Working Group (TWG) Approach]</p> <p>3.1) TWG on Governance Framework, Structure and Processes</p> <p>3.2) TWG on Funding and Resource Mobilisation</p> <p>3.3) TWG on Strategic National Priorities and Research Prioritization</p> <p>3.4) TWG on Infrastructure Development,</p> <p>3.5) TWG on Skills and Capacity Development</p> <p>3.6) Conclusion of the Legislative and Regulatory Framework and amendments</p>	
4	<b>IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN</b>	
	<p>Inauguration of Governing Framework:</p> <p>4.1) Board of Trustees,</p> <p>4.2) Management Board</p> <p>4.3) Executive Management Chaired by CEO/Exec. Sec</p> <p>4.4) Sub-Committees</p>	

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the establishment of the National Research Pool Fund represents a significant step towards realizing Nigeria's full potential in research and innovation and as well as represents a transformative initiative aimed at catalyzing research and innovation-driven development. This is frankly the first real step in building industry, education partnership and closing the skills gap between the skills profile of our graduates and the labour market. By consolidating and leveraging existing strengths and resources, fostering collaboration, and prioritizing strategic investments, the NRPF has the potential to accelerate progress towards national development goals, enhance global competitiveness, and improve the quality of life for all citizens. Through sustained commitment, effective governance, and stakeholder engagement. The NRPF will serve as a cornerstone for building a knowledge-based economy and driving sustainable growth in Nigeria, which. No doubt, would enhance Nigeria's position as a regional leader in science, engineering, technology and innovation.

### Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. There is need for Legal experts and stakeholders to ensure compliance with existing laws and regulations. It is recommended to appoint members of the NRPF board, ensuring representation from diverse stakeholder groups and expertise in research, finance, governance, and policy.
- 2...Establish the secretariat responsible for day-to-day operations, project management, and coordination of fund allocation processes. Convene meetings with representatives from academia, industry, government entities, and civil society to discuss and finalize the operational framework of the NRPF.
3. Gather input and feedback from key stakeholders to ensure alignment with national research priorities and objectives. Legal and Regulatory Framework Development should Draft the legal framework and regulatory guidelines governing the establishment and operation of the NRPF. 4. Develop a sustainable financial strategy focused on revenue generation from intellectual property rights, spinoff ventures, and strategic partnerships.
4. Develop an operational plan outlining the fund allocation process, proposal evaluation criteria, and project monitoring mechanisms.

5. Conduct capacity-building workshops and training sessions for staff members to ensure efficient and effective fund management. Launch a call for research proposals in priority areas identified, including agriculture, health, energy, environment, education, and ICT.
6. Establish an independent review panel to evaluate proposals based on eligibility criteria, relevance to national priorities, and potential for impact.

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