**Quality Assurance Policy**

Academic Quality Assurance Policy



**TOM MBOYA UNIVERSITY**

***KNOWLEDGE FOR SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION ENTERPRISE***

**ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY**

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| **VERSION NUMBER** |  |
| **REVISION NUMBER** |  |
| **DATE APPROVED** |  |
| **APPROVED BY** | COUNCIL |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE** |  |
| **DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE** | ACADEMICS, RESEARCH AND STUDENTS’ AFFAIRS |
| **DATE OF NEXT REVIEW**  | Every Three (3) Years |
| **SIGNED**  **--------------------------------------------- ---------------------------------------** **Prof. Charles O. Ochola, PhD Date**  **VC / Secretary to the Council** **--------------------------------------------- ---------------------------------------** **Dr. Augusta N. Abate, PhD Date**  **Chairman of the Council** |

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# BACK GROUND

PREAMBLE

The increasing demand for university education and the corresponding increase in the number of universities in Africa has raised questions on the quality of training offered in these institutions. For instance, whereas facilities have been stretched beyond their limits to accommodate more students, the small number of staff is inadequate to provide a personal supervision of learners. In response to these challenges that arise from the needs of society, it has become conventional that the university provide a policy framework that ensures its stakeholders that the quality of education and training will not just be maintained but constantly improved. Indeed, it has also become a requirement by the Commission for University Education that all universities establish a quality assurance mechanism. This policy is a response to these challenges and requirements. It is intended to enable the University not just to maintain its reputation as a recognized institution of higher learning providing quality education, but also ensure that it realizes its mission and vision. The policy addresses quality assurance in key areas such as curriculum development, accreditation and review; admission of students; evaluation of teaching; credit transfer; recruitment and promotion of academic staff; examinations, internal and external moderation of examinations; student internship and industrial attachments; staff and student research; and supervision of postgraduate students, among others.

# BACK GROUND

Tom Mboya University (TMU) was awarded its charter on 2nd August, 2022 and can be traced to the Maseno University Learning Centre that was set up in Homa Bay town on 7th September 2010. By mid-2014, the centre had grown to be Maseno University campus with 1,087 students.

Following a consultative meeting between Homa Bay County Government and Maseno University, an idea was presented to put up a university in the county with the objectives of increasing access to university education and taking education closer to the people. It was decided that the university would best be named after the late Honourable Thomas Joseph Mboya.

An ad hoc committee made up of officials from the Homa Bay County Government and Maseno University was set up on 2nd March 2015 to apply for the registration of Tom Mboya University through Maseno University as a mentoring institution. Tom Mboya University would be located on LR Kanyada/ Kanyango/4469 within the Homa Bay County. The land housed the Homa Bay Agricultural Training Centre at the time. The university would have its initial programmes anchored on those undertaken at the Maseno University Homa Bay Campus and those then offered at the Homa Bay Agricultural Training Centre (ATC) at diploma and degree levels.

All agreed that as much as possible, the emphasis in teaching would focus on both the acquisition of knowledge and its practical application based on more hours of contact, fieldwork, and industrial attachment as guided by the Commission for University Education (CUE). This would give students a holistic understanding of the environment upon which they will operate as professionals. In particular, this would ensure that the graduates from Tom Mboya University would be capable of self-employment and job creation rather than relying on the already scarce formal employment. It was specifically indicated that TMU would play a focused role towards attainment of goals of job creation and industrial growth through exploitation of national skills and resources articulated in the Kenya National Vision 2030.

Tom Mboya University was established through Legal Notice No. 55 in the Kenya Gazette Supplement No 45 of 8th April 2016. The mandate of the University by law provided for all the functions and objects of a university that are generally provided under the Universities Act 12

# VISION

To be a premier internationally recognized University distinguished for its teaching, research, and innovation.

# MISSION

To transform and sustainably contribute to society through teaching; research and innovation; knowledge creation, application and outreach.

# CORE VALUES

* Excellence in teaching, research and innovation
* Accountability;
* Efficiency;
* Integrity; and
* Sustainability.

# THE UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Tom Mboya University was established through Legal Notice No. 55 in the Kenya Gazette Supplement No 45 of 8th April 2016. The mandate of the University by law provided for all the functions and objects of a university that are generally provided under the Universities Act. It has various bodies for its effective management. These include: -

* Council
* The University Management Board
* The Academic Board
* Faculties and Departmental Boards

The roles and functions and the membership of these Boards are stipulated in the Statutes.

# The Council

The Council is the governing body of the University through which it can act, administer property and funds, receipt of monies, plant and equipment materials, gifts and grants for its use. The Council is also responsible for the welfare of employees and students and can enter into association with other universities and institutions within Kenya or otherwise as it may deem necessary and appropriate. The other function of the Council is to appoint employees and conduct disciplinary action against employees and students in consultation with relevant University organs.

# The University Management Board

The Management Board is responsible for implementing Council and Academic Board decisions. It is also responsible in providing directives and guidelines to the University subsystems for the enhancement of the efficient running of the University.

# The Academic Board

The Academic Board is the body responsible for academic matters in the University and the final authority on all such matters.

# Faculties, Institutes, Directorates, Centres and Departments

The Faculties, Institutes, Directorates, Centers and Departmental Boards play a major role in academic and administrative functions of the University. The functions of these Boards are clearly stipulated in the Maseno University Charter and TMU Statutes and they assist the Deans and Heads of Departments in the Management of their respective Faculties and Departments respectively.

# FUNCTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY

The functions of the university are to:

1. Provide, directly or in collaboration with other institutions of higher learning, facilities for university education (including technology, scientific and professional education), integration of teaching, and research and effective application of knowledge and skills to the life and work and welfare of the citizens of Kenya;
2. Participate in the discovery, transmission preservation and enhancement of knowledge, and stimulate the participation of students in the economic, social, scientific, technological and cultural development of Kenya;
3. Provide and advance university education and training to appropriately qualified candidates leading to the conferment of degrees and award of diplomas and certificates and such other qualifications as the Council and the senate shall from time to time determine and in so doing, contribute to the manpower needs;
4. Conduct examinations for such academic awards as may be provided in the statutes pertaining to the University;
5. Examine and make proposals for new faculties, schools, institutes, departments, resource and research centres, degree courses and subjects of study;
6. Play a leading role in the development and expansion of the opportunities for higher education and research;
7. Contribute to industrial and technological development though innovations and technology transfer;
8. Develop as an institution of excellence in teaching, training, scholarship, entrepreneurship, innovations, research, consultancy services;
9. Participate in commercial ventures and other activities for the benefit of the institution, the community and stakeholder;
10. Contribute to agriculture, industrial and technological development of Kenya in collaboration with industrial and other institutions through the transfer of appropriate technology;
11. Develop and provide educational, cultural, professional, technical and vocational services to the community and in particular foster corporate social responsible and the practical arts;
12. Provide programmes, products and services, in ways that reflect the principles of equity and social justice;
13. Facilitate student mobility between different programmes at different technical training institutions, Universities and industry; and foster the general welfare of all staff and students.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Academic Quality Assurance Policy provides the basis for internal processes of maintaining and enhancing academic quality in the University. It ensures that there is quality teaching, learning, research, innovation, creativity and community service provisions through the process of continuous improvement. The ultimate aim is to meet expectations of all stakeholders. To this end, the policy focuses on quality assurance in key areas such as: recruitment and promotion of academic staff; development and accreditation of programmes; admission of students; credit waivers and transfer; examinations, internal and external review of examinations; student internship and industrial attachments; staff and student research; evaluation of teaching effectiveness, among others. It is cognisant of the fact that academic quality assurance system for the university requires allocation of adequate resources and time by academic staff.

## 1.1 Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of the Academic Quality Assurance Policy are to:

1. Provide guidance in the development and implementation of internal and external academic quality assurance procedures and practices.
2. Ensure that the quality of academic programmes at the University meet standards expected by stakeholders.
3. Ensure that graduates who have undertaken academic programmes in the university have attained skills and knowledge that are valued by stakeholders.
4. Enable the University to assure itself, its stakeholders and the Commission for University Education (CUE) that the University’s polices, systems and processes for the development, maintenance and enhancement of quality in all its educational provisions are functioning effectively;
5. Facilitate development of a culture of continuous quality improvement in the university in order to achieve academic excellence.

## 1.2 Scope of the Policy

i). The academic quality assurance policy applies to all University’s staff, students and other stakeholders as well as to all undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes. The Policy shall apply to all units of the University through internal quality assurance mechanisms 9on a continuous basis and external quality assurance strategies which will be periodic.

(ii). The Internal Quality Assurance mechanisms shall focus on the quality of: programmes and courses; staff; teaching and learning experiences; staff/student performance assessment; support services; resources and facilities; and research.

# 2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Tom Mboya University shall;

1. Establish a quality assurance mechanism that shall enhance the monitoring the of admission, teaching, learning and performance of students in the University.
2. Admit certificate, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate students following an evaluation of their potential to succeed in their studies based on their performance in previous studies.
3. Recruit qualified and competent academic staff in accordance with the Harmonized Criteria and Guidelines for Appointment and Promotion of Academic Staff in Universities in Kenya, as developed by the Commission for University Education (CUE).
4. Ensure that academic activities take place in an enabling environment.
5. Make provision for curriculum development and review to enhance the quality of academic programmes.
6. Monitor and evaluate teaching to ensure quality learning.
7. Ensure that the duration of a semester and academic year is as prescribed by UCAB and the Commission for University Education.
8. Ensure that any breach of academic integrity is handled according to the University Rules and Regulations and TMU staff code of conduct.
9. Strive to address the long-term factors that would preserve the University’s reputation of offering high general quality programmes, particularly the employability and career success of its graduates.
10. Continuously improve the quality of its academic programmes in order to achieve academic excellence and meet the expectations of all of its stakeholders.

# 3.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this policy shall be vested in the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor AR&SA).

# 4.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

## 4.1 Recruitment and Admission of Students

1. Admission shall be based on the minimum requirement for admission to a certificate, diploma, degree or postgraduate programme as approved by the University Senate and the Commission for University Education (CUE).
2. Admission into undergraduate degree programmes for government sponsored students shall be undertaken by the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) based on the capacities declared by the Faculties of the University. The university shall also admit self-sponsored students who have attained minimum entry requirements.
3. The admission of undergraduate students shall be undertaken according to the university admission rules and regulations as contained in the admission policy.
4. The admission of postgraduate students into various postgraduate degree programmes shall be according to the university rules and regulations and academic procedures as guided by the postgraduate handbook.
5. The granting of credit transfers to applicants holding equivalent qualifications from institutions recognized by the University Senate shall be according to the university policy on credit transfer.
6. Members of staff of Tom Mboya University wishing to be enrolled for undergraduate studies in the university shall not be admitted to academic programmes offered in the departments in which they are stationed.

# 5.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Quality assurance in this area shall be considered in four dimensions as follows: (i) The “enabling environment” in which education is offered; (ii) the evaluation of academic programmes; (iii) the review of students’ academic performance and (iv) the evaluation of teaching.

## 5.1 The Enabling Environment

i). The enabling environment encompasses a full range of services, support activities and practices that facilitate good quality teaching and learning. This shall encompass the

university residences, lecture rooms and classrooms, information technology, other teaching technology, laboratories and studios, and library services.

ii). The university shall enable effective teaching and learning, through provision of health, counselling catering and accommodation services to students and chaplaincy services. The university shall strive to ensure quality of these wide ranges of provisions where applicable since this is important in view of increasing competition among the public and private universities in Kenya and as the government considers implementing the differentiated unit cost system.

iii). The university shall ensure appropriate student-to-book and student-to-class ratios according to the standards and guidelines of the Commission for University Education.

iv). The university shall undertake Teaching Quality Assessment, which includes ratings for the condition of classrooms and other features of the environment in a system for evaluation of teaching departments.

v). The university will also establish acceptable quality standards for supporting teaching and learning by relying on Service Level Agreements. Service Level Agreements shall define the support services that are required by the faculties, establish the level at which these services should be provided, and allocate appropriate budgets.

## 5.2 Evaluation of Academic Programmes

i). The University shall make provision for a range of controls over the quality of its academic programmes as provided in the Curriculum Development and Review Policy. These controls include:

1. Approval of academic programmes by the Departmental Boards, Faculty Boards, Deans Committee and the University Senate.
2. Evaluation of the programme by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.
3. External review of academic programmes by professionals and stakeholders in the field.
4. Accreditation of academic programmes by the Commission for University Education.
5. Where appropriate, interaction with, and accreditation by professional bodies and councils.
6. Continual oversight of programme structure and content by Faculty Boards.
7. Formal responsibility for the implementation of academic programmes shall rest with the Chairman of Department who shall report to the Dean of the Faculty in which the programme is housed.
8. The course units shall be the building blocks of academic programmes offered by university’s academic departments. The Chairman of Department shall have the responsibility for the delivery of a course unit.
9. The control of the quality of the curriculum at the course unit level shall be achieved by:
	1. Department level consideration of course design and content, through regular departmental board meetings.
	2. Motivation for new courses or for major changes in course content as directed by Departmental and/or Faculties Senate.
	3. Review and moderation of course curricula, examination papers and examination results by external examiners, who shall prepare and submit a report directly to the VC.
	4. The formal consideration of examination results by the Departmental and Faculty Senate and approval by Senate.
	5. Consideration of issues of policy in relation to curriculum by the Deans Committee and approval by Senate.
	6. Review of the curriculum after every cycle.
10. In order for the TMU’s system of programme evaluation to meet the requirements of an efficient academic quality assurance system, the following shall be undertaken:
	1. Establish a system for systematic review of Academic Programmes and departments. The university shall allocate resources for review. Reviews of academic programmes shall concentrate on management and delivery of curriculum while reviews of academic programmes shall focus on learning and teaching environment.
	2. Both Academic Departments and Academic programmes shall be reviewed in five-year cycles, organised so that reviews are staggered and distributed between faculties to ensure that individual workloads are appropriately spread.
	3. Each Faculty’s Academic Quality Assurance Committee shall submit to the Senate, an annual consolidated report on the implementation of approved academic programmes accredited by CUE.

* 1. The Deans Committee shall review the effectiveness of the system of external examination particularly its effectiveness as a system of academic quality assurance.
1. The Senate shall take account of more qualitative and quantitative information that indicates programme quality through student evaluations. The student evaluations shall focus on in-class performance of lecturers and the evaluation of tutorials, assignments and reading materials.
2. The student evaluations shall be the responsibility of Chairmen of academic Departments. The summaries on the analyses of student evaluations provided by the Directorate of Performance Contracting and Quality Assurance shall be tabled to the Senate.
3. The university shall promote a system for mentorship of students who shall be exposed to senior, experienced academic staff in order to motivate them and enhance their enthusiastic engagement with their disciplines. Where large classes are a feature of a programme, the university shall introduce small-group opportunities so as to ameliorate the alienation that can be experienced by many (especially first-year) undergraduate students.
4. Wherever possible, students at senior postgraduate levels should have the opportunity of engaging with practical and community-based issues as an integral part of their curriculum in ways that bring them into fruitful interaction with constituencies outside the university.

## 5.3 Student academic performance

i). The key agencies for student academic performance shall be the University Senate, Academic Departments and Faculties.

ii). The university shall establish a quality assurance body that shall have the responsibility of monitoring the performance of staff and students across Faculties. The process of continual oversight of student performance by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee shall be a key element in academic quality assurance system. Academic Quality Assurance Committee shall report regularly to Deans Committee and the Senate.

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| iii). | The Academic departments shall play a key role in the area of student academic performance |
|  | through assessment of coursework, setting and marking examinations and, recommending |
|  | consolidated results to Faculty Academic Boards and to the Academic board of Examiners. |
| iv). | The system of external examination shall be the principal means of quality assurance that |
|  | offers comprehensive mechanism of checks and balances. External Examiners shall be |
|  | required to evaluate the curriculum as a whole, making an important contribution to |
|  | programme evaluation and to moderate students’ academic performance by checking at least |
|  | 30% of work submitted. |
| v). | The university shall establish a requirement for a partnered approach to student |
|  | learning that is recognized formally in the university Under such a system, students |
|  | to varying degrees will receive teaching in order to learn, but progressively should learn to |
|  | learn for themselves. Students’ responsibilities in this regard shall be made explicit in the |
|  | Student’s handbook, to which students shall subscribe as a condition of admission to the |
|  | University. |

## 5.4 Appointment of academic staff and heads of academic units

1. The university shall establish system of academic staff recruitment, which requires external advertisement of vacant positions in all, and a selection process that requires a selection committee to shortlist candidates for interview by the University Appointments and Promotions Committee as established by the university statutes.
2. The University shall ensure that the positions of Chairmen of Departments, Deans of Faculties and Directors of Campuses and Institutes, are appointed as per the university statutes.
3. The university shall ensure that the newly appointed Chairmen of Departments, Deans of Faculties and Directors of Campuses and Institutes of the university are orientated on their functions, roles and expected performance contracting deliverables. The orientation exercise shall be carried out with one (1) month of their appointments.

## 5.5 Enhancing quality teaching

1. The University shall ensure that each academic programme shall be headed by a full-time appropriate and qualified Senior Lecturer and above with at least five (5) years university teaching experience, which shall hold a doctorate degree in the relevant field of study. Each academic programme shall be supported by at least two (2) other appropriate full-time academic staff members.
2. The recruitment of staff shall take into account constitutional requirements on gender parity and disability mainstreaming.
3. The university shall provide academic staff with optimal opportunities for professional development and career advancement. This shall be undertaken as follows:
	* 1. The academic staff member shall plan their activities with the Chairman of Department on an annual basis.
		2. The Chairman of Department shall review each year, a staff work portfolio or its equivalent and ensure this is consistent with the set performance targets of the department and the job descriptions for the academic staff members.
		3. The performance of all Chairmen of academic Departments shall be reviewed annually by the Deans of the Faculties and the performance of all Deans shall be reviewed annually by the Deputy VC (ASA).
		4. The academic staff performance appraisals shall cover the fields of teaching, research, administration and other activities. Areas of weakness shall be identified and developmental strategies to address these weaknesses shall be discussed with the concerned staff member.
		5. The outcomes of the academic staff performance appraisals/reviews shall be recorded so that expectations are clear both to the Chairman of Department and to the academic staff member.
	1. The annual performance appraisals/ reviews are important in their own right, and shall apply to all academic staff, whether or not they wish to be considered for promotion.
	2. The university shall make the creative and critical engagement with teaching and learning more visible in the institution, and shall acknowledge and reward such work more effectively.
4. The university shall implement a benchmark of basic acceptable teaching practice that shall include the following:
	1. The provision of clearly written course outlines/descriptions, setting out what is expected of students for the complete course. These shall be availed to the students well in advance at the beginning of the course, to allow students adequate time to prepare.
	2. Provision of a list of required and recommended reference materials for courses, at the beginning of the course, and the provision of this material either in the University Library (in adequate numbers of copies) or in local bookshops.
	3. A clear and well-designed system of assessment for the course, which sets out what is expected of a student, and the relative value of different coursework, continuous assessment tests and examination components.
	4. Provision to all students within the first week of the semester, of the proposed dates and schedule of continuous assessment tests (CATs).
	5. A fair and consistent approach to hearing requests for concessions and re-marking of examinations and assignments and for leave of absence from lectures, tutorials and other class sessions.
	6. Adherence to an agreed and published timetable for lectures, tutorials and other teaching sessions that respects the need of students to plan their class attendance and study time.
	7. Adherence to the scheduled times of classes, including prompt arrival, completing lectures on time, and cancelling a scheduled class only as a last resort.
	8. The availability of lecturers and other teaching staff to meet with students, with advertised office hours.
	9. Return of work submitted for assessment within a reasonable period of time, preferably within two (2) weeks, and with adequate and appropriate comments and other forms of evaluation.
	10. Adherence to time set for setting and moderating examination papers at departmental level.
	11. Consistent marking of examination papers and effective moderation of examination marking by the lecturer concerned.
	12. The University shall ensure that the above considerations are contained in academic procedures of the University

## 5.6 Monitoring of teaching at undergraduate level

1. The mechanisms of monitoring teaching shall include lecture audit forms that shall be signed by the lecturer and the class representative after each lesson. At the end of the semester, the class representative shall submit the signed lecture audit form to the Chairman of respective Department.
2. In addition, the students shall be required to sign a class attendance register at the end of every lecture that they attend. The signed lecture attendance register shall be submitted to the Chairman of Department at the end of the Semester.
3. The University shall set a minimum number of course units that a lecturer can teach in any given semester as per the teaching workload policy.
4. Lecturers who fail or refuse to teach a minimum number of course unit topics as indicated in the course unit descriptions/syllabus shall be subjected to a disciplinary process as guided by the terms and conditions of service*.*
5. Students who fail 2/3 of class attendance the lectures shall not be allowed to sit for end of semester examinations.

## 5.7 Duration of a semester

1. The minimum and maximum duration of a semester shall be consistent with the requirements of the Commission for University Education (CUE) as approved by the University Senate. The minimum and maximum duration of a semester shall therefore be 16 weeks, respectively.
2. In an academic year, the minimum and maximum number of semesters shall be two (2) and three (3), respectively. The normal number of semesters in an academic year shall be two (2) that shall be reviewed by the Senate as may be necessary
3. The Senate shall retain powers to amend the periods of semesters in an academic year but shall not reduce the duration of a semester below the minimum requirements set by the Commission for University Education.

## 5.8 Students Assessment and Examinations

1. The assessment and examination of students in the university shall be according to the university examination regulations.
2. The mode and process of student assessment shall be based on the Continuous Assessment Tests (CATS), ordinary university examinations at the end of every semester, special examinations, retake examinations and project or thesis examinations.

## 5.9 Administration of examinations

Examinations in the university shall be administered according to the university regulations and procedures as defined in the examination policy.

## 5.11 Supervision of Postgraduate Students

i). The university shall promote effective teaching and supervision of postgraduate students. Effective guidance at the postgraduate level shall focus not only on the intellectual input, but also on the “life skills” for successful research activity.

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| ii). | The university shall recognize the need for a focus on mentorship in general, and  |
|  | the enhancement of the ability of academic staff to provide such mentorship. |
| iii). | The postgraduate education at both Master’s and Doctoral levels shall involve  |
|  | coursework, examination, research and thesis or project. |
| iv). | The university shall establish a system of formal agreements between |
|  | postgraduate students and their supervisors. Such agreements shall set out expectations |
|  | of the supervisor (frequency of meetings, return time for draft work, levels of practical |
|  | support, intellectual property rights) and of the research student (commitment to the |
|  | research topic, participation in the life of the academic department, ethics and the |
|  | avoidance of plagiarism, acquisition of additional skills). Such agreements shall serve to |
|  | limit the general liability of a supervisor and of the university. |
|  |  |
| i). | 5.12 Postgraduate Examination and Assessment The postgraduate examinations and assessments shall be undertaken according to the |
|  | university examination rules and common regulations. |
| ii). | The assessments shall be carried in the form of: |

1. Continuous Assessment Tests (CATS) that shall be done throughout the first and second semester;
2. End of the Semester Examinations that shall be given at the end of every semester for each of the course units taught during the semester;
3. Supplementary examinations that shall be given to candidates who fails the end of semester examinations;
4. Special examinations that shall be given to students who fail to sit for ordinary end of semester examination due to reasons that are acceptable to the Faculty Academic Board and the University Academic board; and
5. Thesis that shall be examined at the end of the study period.

iii). The grading of the postgraduate course units shall be according to university examination regulations.

iv). The examination of thesis and research projects shall be according to university rules and regulations as expounded in the university postgraduate rules and regulations.

## 5.13 Beyond graduation

Systematic and regular tracer studies shall be undertaken to collect information about graduate careers and for feeding back on the emerging job market requirements.

# 6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The University shall put in place systems to assess the extent to which the policy objectives are realized. Such systems shall also assess the effectiveness of the policy guidelines. Relevant indicators shall be developed and be made available to enable stakeholders at all levels monitor and assess on a regular basis.

# 7.0 POLICY REVIEW

An evaluation of the outcomes of this policy will provide information on the extent to which the policy is being implemented and the progress being made in achieving Policy objectives. This policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years and from time to time when need arises.