

BAKENG SE AFRIKA – VIRTUAL INTERIM MEETING II REPORT

The *Bakeng se Afrika* Interim Meeting II was hosted by Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) from 11-13 November 2020.

On March 11, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). This resulted in numerous countries reverting to “lockdown” restrictions in an attempt to curb the spread of the virus. South Africa subsequently declared a National State of Disaster on 23 March 2020 and this, with other global controls led to severe restrictions on local and international travel, amongst other things.

Due to the severity of the pandemic, it was evident that the impending Interim Meeting II would have to be hosted as a virtual event. The organisers at the host institution, SMU, considered all existing resources and support and were able to plan and deliver a successful virtual interim meeting II as 2020 neared its end, despite the challenges that the pandemic conditions presented.

With 102 registrations for the event (including presenters and participants), the *Bakeng se Afrika* Interim Meeting II aimed to provide a platform for members of the consortium and non-members alike to learn more about the *Bakeng se Afrika* project, the progress thus far, dissemination strategies and plans for sustainability. It also offered an opportunity for researchers to showcase their current work and research outputs. The team from SMU also incorporated workshops for students and researchers to learn or develop research and writing skills over the three days that the meeting was hosted.

Day 1 revolved around progress reports, and consortium members were presented the opportunity to provide feedback on their different research endeavours. Topics such as the

progression of scanning and the development of the associated Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), and the project management plan for the *Bakeng se Afrika* digital repository server, were discussed. Participants also heard feedback from representatives of Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (NECSA), SMU, University of Pretoria, University of Bordeaux, Stellenbosch University, and the University of Coimbra. Workshops that were offered concurrently included an introduction to biostatistics, basic concepts of the R programme and basic statistical concepts by SPSS.

On Day 2 of the event Katholieke Universiteit Leuven also had the opportunity to provide feedback on their research activities. Further discussions revolved around the ethical issues around obtaining data from digitalised remains and plans to sustain the *Bakeng se Afrika* skeletal repository. The ethics topics that were discussed included: Ethics of imaging for a digital repository i.e. imaging ethically; Ethical aspects for accessing scans, and; Ethics, anatomy and 3D printing – PhD topic. These topics were also registered as 'Continuing Professional Development' events which allowed attendees to collect CPD-points where applicable. The *Bakeng se Afrika* Business plan was also presented to all participants. This plan addressed matters around the sustainability of the *Bakeng se Afrika* digital repository. All attendees participated in a feedback session that included a poll to establish the best form of governance for the *Bakeng se Afrika* business plan moving forward. The workshop sessions offered were: How to use the repository metadata spreadsheet; Mevislab: Image extraction, segmentation & erase parts; Mevislab: Reslicing for 2D landmarking & 2D landmarking; Mevislab: 3D landmarking and; Geometric morphometric analysis (Measurement errors (dispersion), Statistical models/prediction errors, Automatic landmarking).

The third and final day included a half-day session to provide information to the consortium on Admin, Finance and Quality Assurance of *Bakeng se Afrika*, Dissemination strategies, and the eventual launch of Bakeng se Afrika - planned for 2021. The session concluded with an

opportunity for participants to participate in a Question-and-Answer session and for the consortium to discuss any outstanding matters before concluding the *Bakeng se Afrika* Virtual Interim Meeting II. Workshop topics included sessions presented on Working with word and excel and Figure Editing.

Overall, the *Bakeng se Afrika* Virtual Interim Meeting II concluded successfully with additional participation from University of Cape Town, University of Kent - UK, University of the Witwatersrand, University of South Africa, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University – Nigeria, Durban University of Technology, Western Sydney University and Charles University – Prague.