



COMMUNIQUE

17th Annual Workshop and Conference of the West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA)

**Held at the West Africa College of Physicians (WACOP) Hotel
and Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria**

11–14 May 2026

The West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA) held its 17th Annual Workshop and Conference from 11–14 May 2026 at the West African College of Physicians Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria, under the theme “Compliance = Quality Research.”

The Programme commenced with professional training workshops on 11 May 2026 and continued with the main conference sessions beginning on 14 May 2026. The workshops focused on Research Operations and Project Management, Impact Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation, Horizon Europe Framework Programme, Strategic Leadership and Career Development, and Good Financial Grant Practices.

The conference attracted researchers, research managers, administrators, academics, development partners, innovation professionals, and policy stakeholders from across Africa and beyond. Sister associations including SARIMA, CARIMA, EARIMA, and NARIMA participated in the conference, reflecting growing continental cooperation in strengthening research and innovation management systems in Africa.

The keynote presentations emphasized strengthening Africa’s research ecosystem through international collaboration, regulatory compliance, innovation governance, intellectual property protection, and research capacity development. Discussions focused particularly on the European Union–Africa initiative for advancing Africa’s research capacity and the role of WIPO in promoting compliance and integrity within Africa’s research ecosystem.

Observations

Participants observed that compliance is essential for research quality, institutional credibility, ethical integrity, financial accountability, donor confidence, and global competitiveness in African research systems. The conference emphasized that compliance should be treated as a

strategic requirement for building sustainable and impactful research institutions across Africa.

The conference recognized the importance of regional and global collaboration platforms such as World Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organizations (WAITRO) in promoting technology transfer, institutional partnerships, and cross-border research collaboration within the emerging PAN-RIMA framework.

Participants noted persistent challenges including weak compliance systems, inadequate due diligence mechanisms, poor economic management structures, limited support for research administration, and insufficient investment in research governance systems. Concerns were also raised regarding tensions between global research ethics standards and African socio-cultural realities.

The conference further observed the growing relevance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research ecosystems and stressed the need for African-driven governance frameworks to address ethical accountability, data protection, and responsible innovation.

Participants acknowledged the importance of mentorship, professional development, and institutional learning systems in building sustainable cultures of compliance and research excellence across African institutions.

Resolutions and Recommendations

After extensive deliberations, participants resolved that:

1. African governments, universities, research institutes, and funding agencies should strengthen institutional compliance systems to promote transparency, accountability, ethical integrity, and quality assurance.
2. Research institutions should institutionalize sustainable compliance cultures through effective governance systems, professional training, monitoring frameworks, and standard operating procedures.
3. African universities and research organizations should prioritize the professionalization and certification of research management and administration.
4. African Research and Innovation Management Associations (RIMAs) should strengthen continental collaboration through the emerging PAN-RIMA framework to support coordination, policy harmonization, advocacy, and capacity building.
5. African institutions and development partners should promote equitable and Africa-led research partnerships while strengthening ethics review systems and contextualized compliance mechanisms.
6. African countries should establish governance frameworks for Artificial Intelligence and deploy innovative digital systems to improve grant management, financial accountability, and compliance administration.
7. WARIMA, governments, and development partners should invest in mentorship, research infrastructure, innovation ecosystems, and institutional capacity development across Africa.

Demands on ECOWAS and the African Union

The conference called on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) to:

1. Harmonize regional and continental frameworks on research compliance, ethics, AI governance, data protection, and quality assurance.
2. Support PAN-RIMA and African Research and Innovation Management Associations as platforms for coordination, professionalization, advocacy, and cross-border collaboration.
3. Establish sustainable funding and capacity-building mechanisms for African-led research, innovation systems, and digital compliance infrastructure.
4. Strengthen partnerships among governments, universities, private sector actors, development partners, regional institutions, and civil society groups to advance Africa's research sovereignty and global competitiveness.

Election of National Executive Council

The WARIMA Congress resolved to return the entire Executive Committee to office for another two-year term in recognition of its leadership and contributions to the growth of the Association.

The re-elected Executive Committee members are:

1. Mr. Dembo Bakary Kentha – President
2. Prof. Patricia Lar – Vice President (Anglophone)
3. Prof. Safiatou Niare Doumbo – Vice President (Francophone)
4. Prof. Eme Owoaje – Secretary
5. Prof. Nana Oye AKuffo – Assistant Secretary
6. Dr. Jean Pierre K. N'Guessan – Public Relations Officer
7. Mrs Comfort Ukim– Treasurer
8. Dr Elizabeth Stanley Batchilly – Financial Secretary
9. Prof. Labode Popoola – Ex-Officio Member

In addition, Prof. Dung Pam Sha was appointed as the Editor-in-Chief of WARIMA Publications.

Appreciation

The conference expressed profound appreciation to the leadership of the West African College of Physicians for approving and providing excellent facilities for the successful hosting of WARIMA 2026. Participants also appreciated the support of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund Nigeria), development partners, sponsors, keynote speakers, facilitators, collaborating institutions, and all participants whose contributions ensured the success of the conference.

Mr Dembo Bakary Kentha
President WARIMA

Date:



PRESS STATEMENT

COMMUNIQUE

17th Annual Workshop and Conference of the West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA 2026) Abuja, Nigeria, 11–14 May 2026

The West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA) successfully held its 17th Annual Workshop and Conference from 11–14 May 2026 at the West African College of Physicians Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria, under the theme “Compliance = Quality Research.”

The conference brought together researchers, research managers, academics, innovation professionals, policymakers, development partners, and institutional leaders from across Africa and beyond to deliberate on the growing importance of compliance, ethics, accountability, and quality assurance in strengthening Africa’s research ecosystem. Sister associations including SARIMA, CARIMA, EARIMA, and NARIMA participated in the conference, demonstrating increasing continental cooperation in research and innovation management.

Prior to the conference, participants undertook intensive professional development workshops covering Research Operations and Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Horizon Europe Framework opportunities, Strategic Leadership and Career Development, and Good Financial Grant Practices.

The conference observed that compliance has become essential to ensuring research credibility, ethical integrity, donor confidence, financial accountability, and global competitiveness. Participants emphasized that compliance should not be viewed merely as a bureaucratic requirement, but as a strategic foundation for achieving quality and impactful research outcomes in Africa.

Participants expressed concern over persistent challenges facing African research institutions, including weak compliance systems, inadequate due diligence structures, poor research governance frameworks, insufficient support for research administration, and the growing ethical risks associated with emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI). The conference stressed the urgent need for stronger institutional systems, harmonized regulatory frameworks, and investment in professional research management across the continent.

The conference further highlighted the importance of continental and international collaboration in advancing Africa’s research agenda. Discussions emphasized the strategic

role of platforms such as World Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organizations (WAITRO) and the emerging PAN-RIMA framework in promoting technology transfer, equitable partnerships, regulatory harmonization, and cross-border research cooperation.

At the end of the conference, participants resolved that African governments, universities, research institutions, and development partners should strengthen compliance systems, institutionalize research integrity frameworks, invest in mentorship and professional development for research managers, and promote equitable and Africa-led research partnerships. The conference also called for proactive governance frameworks on AI, digital ethics, and data protection across African countries.

WARIMA called on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) to support the harmonization of research compliance and ethics systems across Africa, strengthen African Research and Innovation Management Associations through the PAN-RIMA platform, establish sustainable regional funding mechanisms for research and innovation management, and promote stronger partnerships to enhance Africa's research sovereignty and global competitiveness.

The conference expressed profound appreciation to the leadership of the West African College of Physicians for providing excellent facilities for the hosting of WARIMA 2026. Participants also appreciated the support of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund Nigeria), development partners, sponsors, keynote speakers, facilitators, and collaborating institutions whose contributions ensured the success of the conference.

WARIMA reaffirmed its commitment to advancing research excellence, strengthening innovation management systems, and promoting a culture where compliance serves as a pathway to ethical, credible, impactful, and globally competitive research in Africa.

The WARIMA Congress resolved to return the entire Executive Committee to office for another two-year term in recognition of its leadership and contributions to the growth of the Association.

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Mr Dembo Kanteh, President WARIMA