

SAMEA

STRATEGIC PLAN DOCUMENT 2021-2023



CURRENT SAMEA BOARD MEMBERS



1st draft 1 January 2021

2nd draft 1 February 2021

3rd draft 15 February 2021

Final version 9 March 2021

OFFICIAL SIGN OFF

It is hereby certified that the 2021 SAMEA Board developed this Strategic Plan document.

Mokgophana Ramasobana (Chairperson)



Cara Hartley (Deputy Chair)



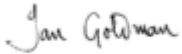
Ayanda Mtanyana (Treasurer)



Babette Rabie



Ian Goldman



Dez Jason



Kemedi Kgaphola



Tikwiza Silubonde



Takunda Chirau



Eleanor Hazell



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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

CLEAR AA	Centre for Learning and Evaluation and Results for Anglophone Africa
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
EE	Emerging Evaluators
JET EDUCATION	Joint Education Trust
NASCEE	National Association of Social Change Entities in Education
PCO	Professional Conference Organiser
POPI	Protection of Personal Information
PDG	Palmer Development Group
SAMEA	South African Monitoring & Evaluation Association
SRD	Social Relief of Distress
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VOPE	Voluntary Organisation of Professional Evaluators
WFP	World Food Programme

CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

I am pleased to share with you the SAMEA Strategic Plan for the period 2021-2023. This strategic planning document articulates our mandate, vision, expected outcomes, impact, risk areas and various portfolios' activities.

This strategy's development occurred within the context of COVID-19 pandemic, which has ravaged the world, and South Africa could not be spared. As a response, the South African government introduced socio economic programmes geared to mitigate this pandemic's scourge. More relevant to our profession, questions probing the relevance and possibility of contributing to building an equal and just society continue to be posed. These include interrogating the timeliness and availability of evidence for decision-making processes from the M&E discipline. Cognisant of these critical questions, and as an agile organisation, SAMEA spent the two-day sessions and developed a strategic roadmap fitted and adaptable to the current political economy evidenced in the region.

Three critical strategic highlights emerged from this session. Firstly, a re-emphasis and reawakening that SAMEA exists to serve its constituencies categorised as individuals and institutional memberships. Thus, the organisation continually strives to champion a hybrid of interventions geared to build or enhance its membership's professional skills and knowledge domains. Secondly, it was further noted adapting our tools of the trade in the delivery of our programme of action to our members remains essential. Hence, financial resources towards new and innovative delivery platforms (virtual or online) have been invested. This is envisaged to contribute to improving SAMEA's value proposition to its members.

Lastly, collaboration with financial and non-financial partners continues to be one of the key ingredients responsible for the success and sustainability of SAMEA. As part of strengthening existing and prospective partnerships, SAMEA invited a group of its financial and non-financial partners, including the legacy board members to participate during the session.

An analysis of both the internal and external factors and their implication on the organisation was presented and discussed. Flowing from the combination of the situational analysis coupled with the enthusiasm and the camaraderie from all participants, a theory of change (TOC) spelling out the impact and outcome statements was drafted. The more comprehensive impact statement that SAMEA and its broader membership aspire to contribute to is *"development creating a positive future"*.

Having crafted the TOC, four different portfolios, namely Capacity Building; Research, Learning & Partnerships; Membership Services, Communication & Advocacy; Governance, Finance and Administration operationalised their work plans according to the TOC. For validation and identification of synergies, all portfolios presented their work plans to the plenary. It is important to note that in the current year, a myriad of capacity-building initiatives using interactive delivery modalities will be implemented by SAMEA throughout 2021 and beyond. This approach will make use of co-creation models as opposed to academic and traditional conference delivery mode.

Government introduced measures such as social distancing, limited public gatherings and wearing of masks to control the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic. This therefore means that for now it is no longer feasible for SAMEA to implement activities that would require its members to meet face to face. It is for this reason that the SAMEA board decided to postpone the biennial conference (one of

the important activities on the calendar of the organisation) to the year 2022. Despite this, we are planning an exciting programme over the year, including webinars, capacity development workshops in June, developing a research agenda etc with some surprises to come in place of the conference. We will also be exploring ways of providing additional services to support the M&E profession to make a bigger difference in addressing the challenges which face us

The strategic plan will allow SAMEA to achieve its mission, vision and implementation plans for the 2021-2023 period.

Mokgophana Ramasobana

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) held its two-day virtual strategic planning session 22 and 23 January 2021 with the 10 board members, two outgoing board members, the secretariat, and invited key stakeholders (see Agenda). The aim was to reflect on the current and past performance and provide a point of departure for the strategic direction for the next three (3) years 2021 to 2023. The Chairperson, Mr Ramasobana, opened the session and outlined the vision, mission, values and setting the scene by discussing the key challenges, achievements, innovation and lessons learnt from the previous years. The methodology of the strategic planning session included document review, development of a draft theory of change, and engagements with key stakeholders.

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process involved:

- Establishing a Technical working group to plan the 2-day session and finalise the Strategic Planning Document for the Board's approval as well as the 2021 Work Plans; and
- Document review of all pertinent documents in preparation for the strategic session such as the 2020 AGM Chairpersons' Report and Mid Term Performance Reviews of the different Portfolios related to their outputs and targets.
- Confirmation of the portfolios and members for the year
- Subsequent to the strategic planning session, refinement of plans for portfolios.

3. SETTING THE SCENE: by Chairperson, Mr Mokgophana Ramasobana

3.1 VISION of SAMEA

Monitoring and evaluation are widely recognised in South Africa as a profession and discipline essential to developing and practiced and used to add significant value to effective, sustainable development in South Africa.

3.2 MISSION of SAMEA

SAMEA will cultivate a vibrant community that supports, guides and strengthens the development of monitoring and evaluation in South Africa as an important discipline, profession and instrument for empowerment and accountability.

3.3 VALUES of SAMEA

- **Integrity:** To act ethically, honestly, in good faith and best interest of the organisation;
- **Competence:** To make informed decisions based on evidence, knowledge and skill, due care and diligence;
- **Responsibility:** To take collective responsibility to provide strategic direction and manage the implementation of the programmes;
- **Accountability:** To be answerable for the execution of their responsibility to the Board and the membership;
- **Fairness:** To take a fair and inclusive approach to address issues of equity and social justice, consciously act against any form of social prejudice and discrimination; and
- **Transparency:** To be open and transparent in exercising their duties.

4. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: EXTERNAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1 EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

As a country we are faced with the COVID-19 pandemic and the state implemented various response mechanisms like lockdown regulations to reduce the rate of infections and implemented social protection measures to protect the poor & vulnerable e.g., Economic Employment Stimulus packages, food parcels and the Covid-19 SRD R350 Grant. The pandemic highlighted the structural poverty, inequality, unemployment, gender-based violence, food poverty & hunger and the mental health challenges experienced. Limited evidence about the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and governments accountability and citizen participation, big data for decision making on health and socio-economic data as well as lack of the utilisation of technology for decision making like real-time monitoring systems to improve services, and the limited knowledge around responsible data in the POPI Act to protect personal information and data and ME.

4.2 ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

There are 2 part-time employees at SAMEA. One is the Administrator who works four days a week and the other is the Coordinator who currently works 2 days a week. Since the 2020 Elections, the SAMEA Board now comprises 10 Board Members who offer their time and services on a voluntary basis. Board Meetings are held every 8 weeks in a Workshop year and every 6 weeks in a Conference Year.

SAMEA has a number of policies that govern how the Board operates namely the Board Charter, draft Membership policy, draft Communications policy, draft Financial Management policy, draft Knowledge & Information Management policy, draft Chapters Guidelines and so forth.

As at October 2020, SAMEA has **519** members in good standing, comprising 53% individual members, 16 (30%) Institutional memberships, and 15% of student membership. Most of the members come from Gauteng 57.8% followed by Western Cape 22.6%, KZN 5.9%, Eastern Cape 5%, Limpopo 2%, North West and Mpumalanga 1.7%, Northern Cape 0.9%, Free State 0.7% and 1% living abroad.

SAMEA has a budget that derives primarily from past event income, sponsorship and membership fees. More information can be found later on in this report under the Financial Update.

4.3 ACHIEVEMENTS

Below follows a list of the milestones that SAMEA registered.

- The 7th (2019) Biennial Conference in partnership with our financial sponsors was delivered successfully.
- SAMEA Evaluators Competencies Framework was published.
- Special Conference Edition in the African Evaluation Journal of 11 Peer-reviewed articles penned by emerging authors presented at the Conference was published.
- The 2020 Online Capacity Building Workshops, which consisted of **14 sessions** premised on the skills and knowledge needed and attended by SAMEA and Non-SAME members, was delivered virtually. World-renowned M&E scholars and practitioners facilitated these sessions on a pro bono principle.
- Some of the financial sponsors included UNICEF, Zenex followed by Twende Mbele, CLEAR AA, PDG, Southern Hemisphere, Khulisa and Data Innovator as non-financial partners. The financial sponsorship enabled the participation of 4 emerging evaluators.
- Five (**5**) annual webinars covering different topics in response to the feedback from the membership were delivered successfully from (April to November 2020).
- Emerging evaluators' activities were achieved and will be continued in the current terms of office.

4.4 INNOVATIONS INVOLVING STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

SAMEA applied adaptive management principles in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As an illustration, an infrastructure digital technology investment was set up and pursued by SAMEA. These platforms were used to deliver the 2019 workshops and webinars. Another critical point to note is that the pandemic affected the financial model and questioned its sustainability. A strengthened partnership between the organisation and its financial and non-financial sponsors was instrumental in introducing the cost recovery model used to drive the strategic goals. The cost recovery model enabled SAMEA to offer a hybrid of subsidised and non-fee programmes to benefit the broader membership. This approach contributed to enhancing SAMEA's Value proposition. Most importantly, cost-saving mechanisms such as insourcing of the workshop coordination instead of PCO's traditional use were explored. Strides to take advantage of digital technology in advancing the M&E profession are currently underway.

4.5 LESSONS LEARNT

There are three key lessons that were registered which covers: **(i) self-efficacy. (ii) sustainability of the organisation (iii) governance.** Determination and the individual and collective excellence (hard work) of the team are some of the key ingredients responsible for driving SAMEA's agenda. To a very large extent, these features were the driving force behind all the achievements which were registered

by the board. It is recommended that the incumbent and successive boards should be cognisant of the importance of self-efficacy characteristics in recruiting new board members.

This teamwork was used to steer the discussion on the sustainability of SAMEA. New innovative approaches (new ways of doing things) and processes such as virtual platforms and learning management systems (LMS) have been introduced and in a process of being improved. This is intended to avail opportunities to reduce administrative and operating cost as well as form part of the income-generating mechanism which ultimately contribute towards the sustainability of the organisation

At a strategic level and as mandated by the members, the board of SAMEA continues to drive decisions. Terms of references guiding the work of each of the portfolios were introduced and institutionalised. As part of measuring performance, mid-term reviews were introduced to compliment the 4 board meetings held annually. These reviews are then collated and presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Having outlined some initiatives to enforce governance principles, there were areas of improvements that were highlighted. To address this important issue, an advisory committee guided by clear terms of reference was established. In addition, a compulsory induction programme for all Board members to strengthen governance will be developed and coordinated on an annual basis. This project will make use of the expertise and experiences of the legacy board members and advisory committee and friends of the organisation.

4.6 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Strategic Planning Financial Report

22 January 2021

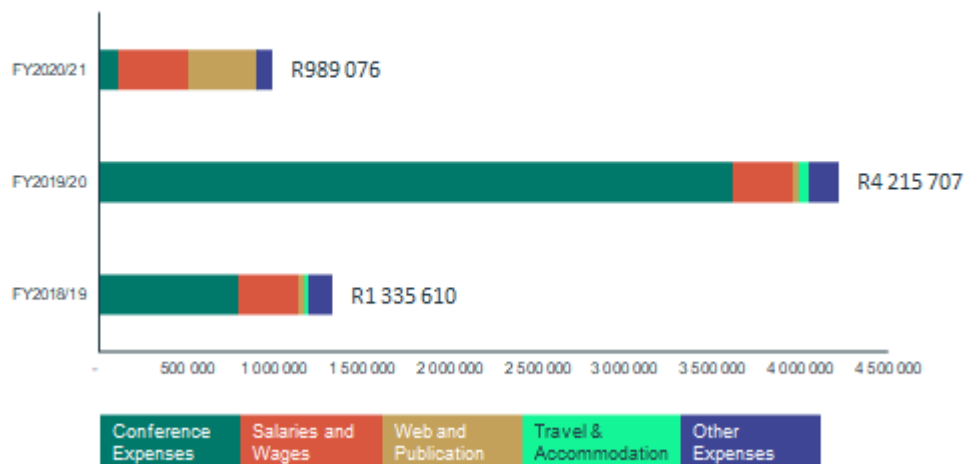
Summary: Profit and Loss



Income Distribution



Expenses Distribution



Bank Balance

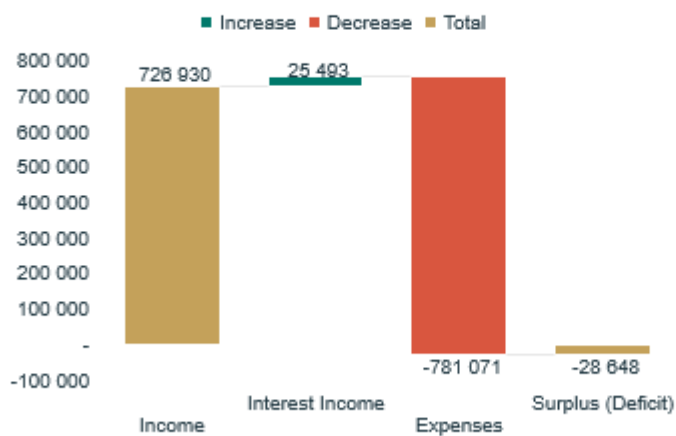
December '19

R1 467 104

December '20

R1 933 024

Summary: Profit and Loss



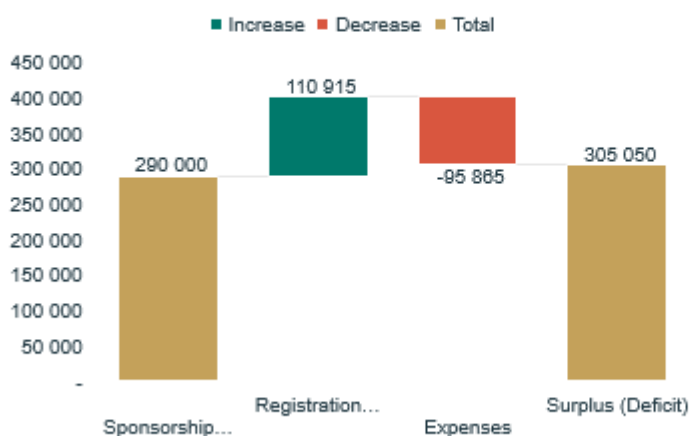
- Given that this is a non-conference year, we anticipate a deficit from operating activities
- However, the deficit will be significantly less than other non-conference years due to the virtual workshop performance
- Our deficit was about R500k in 2019

Virtual Workshops Bookings & Collections



- We have received R101 010 in the conference account and R8 600 in our savings account
- We still need to reconcile the bookings with attendance
- As as, we need to follow up on the outstanding amount of R39 385

Virtual Workshops Profit and Loss



- Our sponsors paid timely, so that we were not out of pocket for the conference
- Expenses includes an estimate for Zoom and LMS costs

1. Expenses are estimated and will be confirmed in the coming months

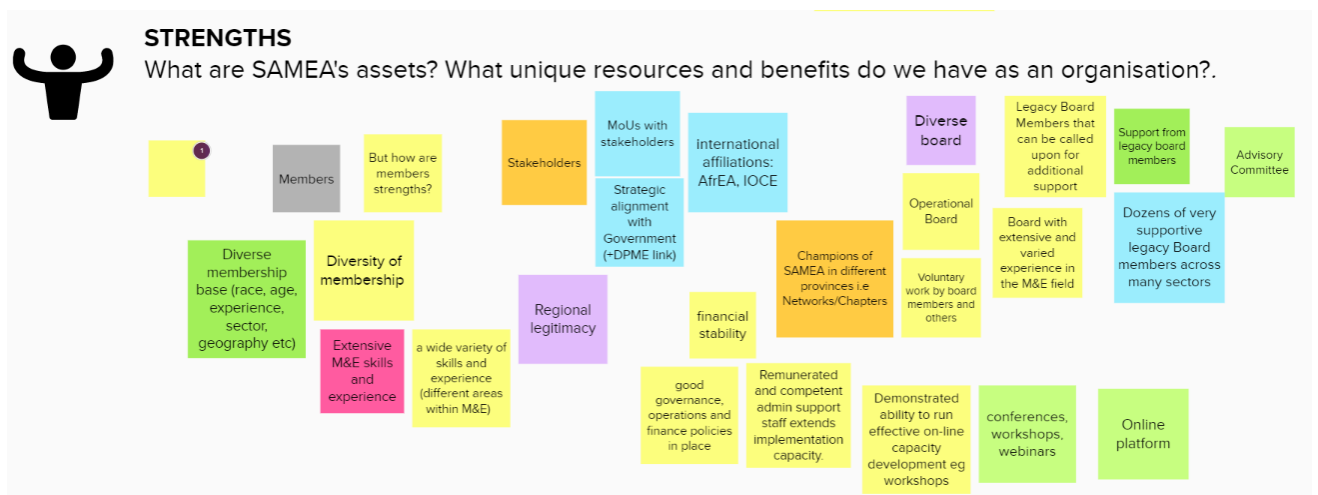
5. ORGANISATIONAL ANALYSIS

5.1 SWOT Analysis

As part of the strategic planning session, the Board conducted a SWOT-PEST analysis. This is an analysis of the environment – both internal and external – using eight factors as a framework: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, Political factors, Economic factors, Social/Socio-Cultural factors and Technological factors. Board members all had the opportunity to contribute, before and during the session, and then discussed the key insights they were getting from it. These insights then shaped the Board’s strategic planning, as will be apparent in the portfolio plans (see later sections of the document).

The identified strengths were clustered around a few key themes, as shown on the diagram.

- **Membership** – a diverse and skilled body of members on which to draw and with whom to work
- **Partnerships**
- **Board, legacy board, and other SAMEA champions** who volunteer their time and advocate for SAMEA
- **Organisational strengths**, particularly in terms of the secretariat and operational systems
- **Online platform** including the website and LMS.



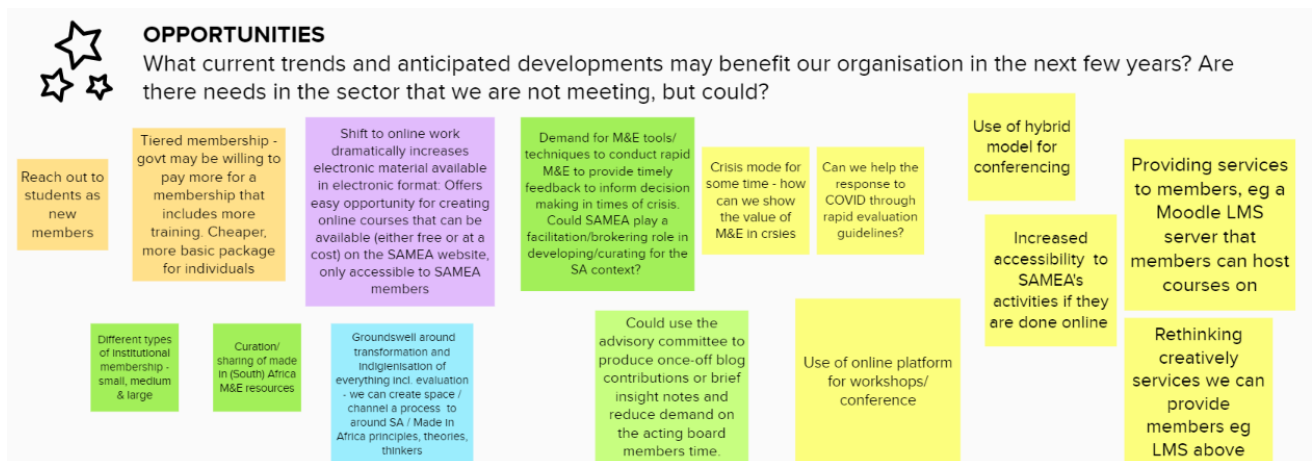
The weaknesses were clustered around the following themes:

- **Membership** – particularly questioning the value that we offer them, which is linked to active memberships and membership fees.
- **Addressing a diversity of needs, stakeholder groups and interests** – linked to the point above, several of the Board members flagged topics and stakeholder groups that are not as well covered by SAMEA’s main activities and offerings.
- **Dominance of the biennial conference** in our financial model and workload allocation.



The opportunities clustered around the following themes:

- **Going virtual** – with our events and materials – mainly to increase accessibility and engagement
- **Addressing topics and developing tools** in response to the changes in priorities and values. Notably, playing a leading role in the drive for Made in Africa Evaluation (and related shifts) and supporting new approaches to M&E in crises and/or constrained resource environments.



The main threats clustered around the following themes:

- **Constrained fiscal environment**, potentially impacting on membership, participation and sponsorship.
- **Board member continuity** – driven by our constitutionally limited three-year term as well as factors causing board members to resign
- **Complacency and a lack of innovation** in our approach



5.2 PEST Analysis

As discussed above, both a SWOT and PEST exercise were conducted. The following themes emerged from the analysis of political factors:

- **Weak / disrupted leadership** in key entities in the public sector M&E space, including DPME
- Also, in the public sector, a **compliance-driven and risk-averse approach** which stifles M&E from reaching its potential as a tool for learning, and accountability for what really matters
- **Shifts in political interest / demand for M&E**, such as the focus on the SDGs; rapid as opposed to full, traditional evaluation; and decentralised pockets of demand in specific entities, rather than a centralised drive and demand.



The overarching economic outlook is clearly negative in light of COVID-19. Themes clustered around the impact of economic downturn on:

- **Employment** for M&E practitioners;
- **Budgets** for monitoring, evaluation, professional development and professional membership
- Also, **opportunities** posed by the goal of a just transition (and the opportunity in this regard to “build back better” in the wake of COVID-19 disruptions).

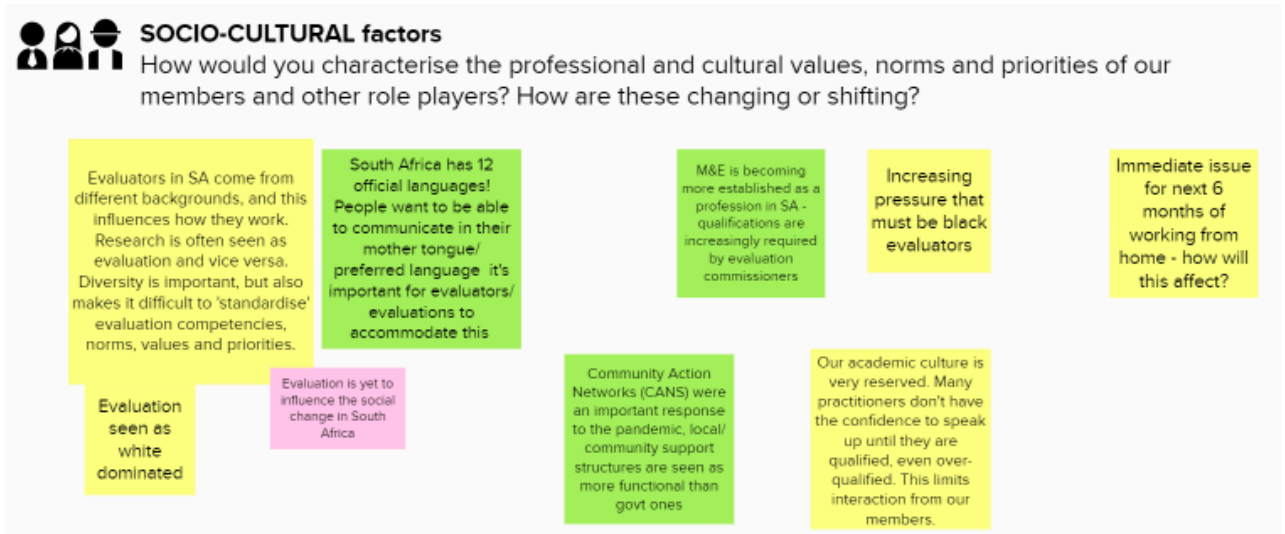
The combination of load shedding with working from home was also noted.



The socio-cultural factors clustered around the following:

- **Diversity of the profession and drive to transform it further**, given the diversity of our population and context. Linked to this, concerns of exclusion esp. based on race.

- **A variety of organisational insights:** Commissioners pushing for qualified M&E practitioners; CANs demonstrating the power of civil organisation; and a reserved academic culture.



The technological factors clustered around the following themes:

- **New technologies being used to do M&E** – with capacity building needs, opportunities for the profession to serve inclusive development, as well as risks associated
- Considerations about **remote work, virtual events and qualifications**, with particular implications for SAMEA's workshops and conferences
- **Personal data** – opportunities to strengthen and integrate beneficiary data, but also the risks posed by the handling of personal data by organisations.



6. PRIORITIES

Portfolio	Strategic Focus Areas	Strategic Risk	Mitigation
Capacity building portfolio	Improve M&E practice and M&E evidence use domestically and regionally; Provide a networking platform for M&E practitioners; and Develop knowledge, skills and capabilities of members	Member attendance; and Financial implications	Develop and implement an effective advocacy plan; Adopt a calculated costed model; and Engage possible sponsors
Emerging Evaluators (EE's)	Facilitate active and meaningful participation of EEs in policy and evaluation discourse; Promote inclusion of EE's; and Support EE's to become competent, experienced & well-networked professionals	Exclusion of EE's from SAMEA activities due to cost; challenges finalising the terms and conditions around the internship programme.	Use existing platforms/systems and focus on organisations that have expressed an interest in partnering with SAMEA; Use previous lessons learnt to inform the EE internship process; source sponsorship for EE participation
Webinars	Increased capacity and professionalisation to practice M&E and use M&E evidence	Identifying facilitators that can provide pro-bono services; Zoom fatigue;	Ensure facilitators are aware of the value add of working with SAMEA; Identify a pool of facilitators with similar skills; and Use engaging facilitation techniques
Governance, finance and administration portfolio	Strengthen strategic governance; improve sustainability of finances, staffing, operations and board leadership	Capacity constraints (board + secretariat)	Ensure effective recruitment & onboarding for coordinator position; ensure delegation to secretariat; involve legacy board members
Membership services, communication and advocacy portfolio	Enhance the value proposition of SAMEA membership; increased engagement with members; strengthen relationships with regional chapters and networks; facilitate, timely, topical communication; demonstrate the value of M&E	Reduced budgets affect membership income; membership dips in the non-conference year	Tiered membership packages/different types of institutional memberships; Provide additional value-add services i.e., workshops, webinars, hackathon, LMS; Reach out to potential new members,

Research and Learning Portfolio	Establish interest in a shared M&E research agenda amongst M&E stakeholders	Lack of interest, time to create momentum, limited financial incentive to engage on a shared agenda among competing priorities	Work through existing networks to initiate discussions, discussions with NRF on possible funding instruments
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7. MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE UTILISING A RESULTS BASED MANAGEMENT

APPROACH: draft THEORY OF CHANGE

During the Strategic planning session, the board developed a draft theory of change, outlining the organisation strategic intent for the coming 3 years. This will be beneficial to the organisation in measuring performance against outcomes. The various Portfolios will outline their outcomes and outputs. The Theory of Change is reflected in the table below. It is also presented as a diagram in the appendix.

Theory of Change - table format (diagram appears on the last page of this document)

Wider impact	Development creating positive futures						
SAMEA Impact	(South) African M&E theory and practice recognized & influencing international practice "we are thought leaders internationally"			M&E influencing theory and practice of sustainable and equitable development (services, programmes, policies etc.) in SA "we make a difference locally"			
Medium Term Outcomes	M&E recognized by gov & civil society as a discipline, profession & instrument	Improved M&E culture for learning & adaptive management	Improved M&E practice		M&E more systematized as a standard part of programme management	SA M&E experience being sought in teaching research & in practice	
Short Term Outcomes (changes systems & capacity)	Increased capacity & professionalism to practice M&E & use evidence	Increase awareness & demand for M&E as a discipline & the product of M&E evidence	Broad diverse group of M&E practitioners (emerging evaluators)	Sense of M&E & SAMEA as a professional community	Relevant methodologies & models being provided e.g., rapid data evidence to inform decision making	Steering the agenda for future M&E research	Effective partnerships among diverse organizations to support M&E work

8. BOARD PORTFOLIOS

SAMEA will have 4 portfolios for the coming year. They are as follows.

Portfolio title	Members
Governance, Finance and Administration	Cara , Ayanda, Mokgophana
Membership Services, Advocacy and Communication	Eleanor , Ian, Kemedi
Research, Learning & Partnerships	Babette , Ian, Eleanor
Capacity Building <i>Capacity building has been unpacked into the most important aspects for the year.</i>	<u>Virtual co-creation event:</u> Ian , Takunda, Eleanor <u>Conference:</u> Takunda , Ayanda, Babette, Mokgophana <u>Capacity building workshops:</u> Dez , Cara, Babette, (Tikwiza) <u>EEs and webinars:</u> Tikwiza , Kemedi <u>Professionalisation / Competencies Champion:</u> Mokgophana (Dez and others to input as needed)

Together these portfolios will contribute to all the *short-term outcomes* on the SAMEA theory of change. Each of them has the following documentation, which should be read in conjunction with this document. (The Capacity Building portfolio had a TOR and Mid-term review for the portfolio as a whole.)

1. A Portfolio Terms of Reference; and
2. A mid-term Review Report from 2020

ANNEXURE

1. Final Agenda SAMEA Strategic Planning Session 22 & 23 January 2021

Purpose of the 2021 Strat Plan Session

To agree on an overall strategic vision for SAMEA over the next three years (2021-2023) and the development of the 2021 Work-plan.

Day 1: Friday, 22 January 2021			Actions
09:30- 09:45	Welcome and purpose of meeting Adoption of the agenda	MR	MN to share screen with the Agenda
09:45-12:30	Setting the scene by reflecting on the previous 3 years (30 mins) • <i>Discussion</i>	DJ	Share presentation on the achievements, innovations & challenges aligned to KPAs
	Financial update (20 mins)	AM	Share a brief presentation
	SWOT/PEST methodology (30 mins) • <i>Presentation & discussion; Mitigating Risks</i>	CH/DJ	DJ to share her presentation
	Vision, Mission, Impact & Outcome Statements (1hr25 mins)	DJ/MR	DJ to share her presentation
12:30 -13:30	LUNCH BREAK		
13:30-15:00	Portfolios • <i>Taking stock of current portfolios & possible revision or creation of new portfolios</i> • <i>Legacy board members briefly summarise the past emphasis of the portfolios; Q&A</i> • <i>After looking at the Doodle poll, BMs to choose their portfolios</i>	MR/CH	KM to collate portfolio info into the 2021 Workplan
	Guiding Notes: Conference Committee Chair will present conference logistics on Day 2 (this will be from the 14 Dec Special Conf meeting).	TC/IG	TC/IG to share notes
15:00-15:15	COMFORT BREAK		
15:15-16:15	Continue with discussion on the various Portfolios • <i>Selection of Portfolio Leads</i>	MR	KM to continue collating info for the 2021 Workplan
16:15	Certificates of Appreciation to 2x Outgoing Board Members & Chair	TS/KK/EH	TK/KK/EH to share their screens
16:30	Closing of Day 1 and outlines Day 2 process	CH	

Day 2: Saturday, 23 January 2021			Actions
09:30-10:00	Opening, Purpose and Welcoming participants of Day 2: includes invited Stakeholders and Legacy Board Members	MR	Welcoming & outline Day 2 proceedings
10:00-10:20	Reflections from Day 1	IG	
10:20-11:00	Portfolio discussion related to the Workplan for the next 3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Breakaway Rooms for Portfolios to discuss</i> 	Portfolio Leads facilitated by CH	KM to share the Workplan EH to assist with Breakaway Rooms
11:00-12:30	Report back <i>Workplan over next 3 years</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Board members and stakeholders to discuss and give input on workplan</i> • <i>Reporting template to be used</i> 	Portfolio Leads	KM to update the Workplan;
12:30-13:00	Potential Partner Collaborations & Messages of Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Partners</i> • <i>Chapters</i> • <i>Legacy Board Members</i> 	MR/CH	
13:00-13:30	LUNCH BREAK		
13:30-14:30	Key Decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Next steps (consolidation of workplan for 2021)</i> 	MR/CH	KM to share the Workplan
	Summary of Day 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflections for the year ahead</i> 	Outgoing board member (MA/MR)	
	Confirmation of 2021 Board Meeting dates	all Board Members/Secretariat	MN to share the dates on the White Board
14:30	Way forward Vote of thanks and closure	CH	

Diagram of draft Theory of Change

