

Utilizing African Professionals in Consulting

Study Report

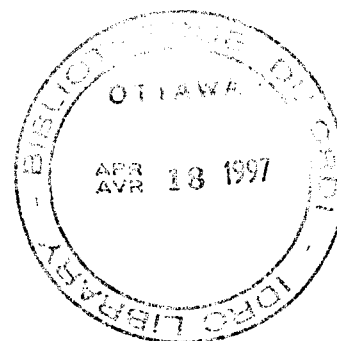
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Section 1: Background

This report comprises an analysis of the consulting industry in Africa¹ with particular reference to

- the participation of African professionals, and within this larger group
- increased involvement by those engaged in teaching and research at institutions of research and higher education

The study has been prompted by two principal considerations:

- A major aim of donors and African governments is to strengthen management in both the public and private sectors. In this broader context, greater African participation in consulting could complement current efforts to reform public administration, re-engineer key government functions, and generally promote the private sector as the principal source in future of sustained economic growth.
- Many Africans professionals engaged in teaching and research are already heavily involved in various activities, broadly categorized as consulting in order to supplement inadequate incomes. Likewise because of severe financial constraints, many of the institutions employing them have been establishing consulting units. Such activities in turn raise four issues.

In the case of individual professionals:

- To what extent does involvement in consulting detract from their teaching and research?
- In a more positive vein, how can better scheduled and more carefully selected consulting assignments contribute to their teaching and research through exposure to new issues; an expanded set of contacts; and periodic updating of skills and knowledge?
- Also in a more positive context, how can consulting assignments best serve to apply the findings from more academically oriented research to the design of policies and projects?

¹ *Africa denotes Sub-Saharan Africa.*

In the case of institutions:

- What types of consulting activities would best serve to strengthen them in organizational as well as financial terms?

Section 2: Conceptual Framework

In preceding studies, the consulting industry has been treated as homogeneous.² However, consulting is a distinct profession that combines *domain knowledge*, i.e. formal learning associated with one or more disciplines, with *consulting skills* which deal with the analysis and solution of issues and problems and are typically acquired through on the job experience. Secondly, consulting also involves *leverage*, insofar as the value of the consultant's contribution may far exceed the actual cost of services rendered to the client. Correspondingly, the cost of failure is often very considerable and may even place at risk the client's organization, not to mention his own career. Hence, treatment of the profession as a black box, wherein professionals with knowledge of a particular domain or sector are automatically presumed capable of performing a broad set of consulting tasks, inevitably lead to simplistic or even misleading characterization and consequently, to erroneous recommendations.

In recognizing these distinctive features of consulting, the current study comprises a significant departure from earlier treatments of the industry. We introduce a conceptual framework that captures the distinctive domain knowledge, risk and leverage aspects of consulting in terms of the different *roles* played by the consultant; the types of *services* rendered to the client; and the various *sectors* in which these roles and services are provided. Subsequently, this conceptual framework forms the basis for a model that enables us to map African participation and draw inferences concerning how best to achieve higher levels of involvement and more meaningful involvement career patterns.

2.1 Roles

Consultants engage in a wide variety of roles. These may be gradated according to ascending levels of experience of the consulting process, risk and leverage, from a working level, requiring close supervision to mentorship. They can be defined in highly aggregated categories or broken down to reflect the activities under consideration, *i.e.*

- working level
- task supervision
- overall management
- task design
- expert
- mentor

² See for example: Karuga, James G., *Strengthening the Use of Local Consultants in Eastern Africa*, Report submitted to the World Bank and the African Capacity Building Foundation. Nairobi, Kenya, March 1994.

2.2 Services

Consultants also offer a range of project and non-project related services. Project related services offered to the public sector can be categorized according to the various stages of the project cycle from fact finding through to completion and evaluation. Each service is associated with an intrinsic level of risk and leverage. As in the case of roles, service categories can be broken down further to suit actual circumstances. Other non-project related services, such as sector and policy reviews, can also be included. For the private sector, the list of services can be adjusted to include some not always found in public sector projects, *e.g.* marketing and commercial feasibility studies, or to replace others, *e.g.* lessons learned instead of evaluation. The types of services used in this study are:

- fact finding
- pre-feasibility
- feasibility
- project design
- implementation
- monitoring
- evaluation
- non-project studies

2.3 Sectors

Roles and services are provided in various sectors. These can be demarcated flexibly to suit the purpose of the analysis. Our own study looks at four sectors: management information, economic management, health, and rural development. As illustrated in figure 1, for a given sector, the potential demand for consulting services is the combination of all roles and services.

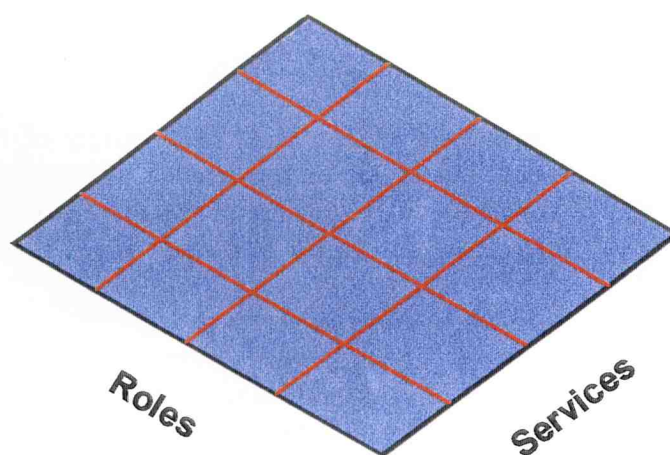


Figure 1 Consulting roles and services.

2.4 The Market for Consulting

The combination of roles, services, and sectors constitutes the market for consulting in a given economy. In practice, the market will not correspond to the cube shape presented in figure 2, insofar as not all roles and services will be found in all sectors. Nonetheless, this conceptual framework can be used as the basis for a meaningful mapping of the industry, with particular reference to the participation of African professionals.

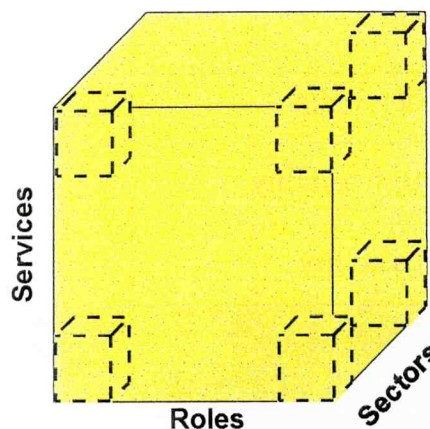


Figure 2 The consulting market

2.5 Risk Management

As stated at the outset, a distinguishing feature of consulting is the presence of *risk* and *leverage*, insofar as the potential benefit or damage associated with the consultant's work may be considerably greater than the fee actually paid by the client.³ Leverage creates risk that the client attempts to manage. Since leverage and the degree of risk associated with it will vary across roles, services and sectors, the various cells comprising the consulting market portrayed in figure 3 can be differentiated in terms of the degree of risk and hence the need for risk management faced by the prospective client.

In the case of *roles*, high leverage is generally associated with task design and process management, since poor performance can prove extremely costly and very difficult to rectify. Similarly, key services include feasibility, design, implementation and evaluation, insofar as any shortcomings at these stages of the project cycle could prove very costly to the client because of their impact on subsequent phases or new undertakings.

Figure 3 highlights these key roles and services, as well as their points of intersection. The latter may be regarded as critical cells in terms of the very high leverage and hence the engagement of a consultant is a high risk decision for the client. One would therefore posit that clients looking to retain the services of consultants in these key and critical cells look for firms, teams or individuals who, in addition to possessing the necessary domain knowledge, have the appropriate expertise, experience and track record. In short, they look for someone with credibility.

Since employing a consultant, especially in the key and critical cells, poses risk for the prospective client, the latter seeks to manage it through the following:

³ The term consultant as used in this study, would therefore not apply to individuals who are engaged on a short term or non-permanent basis to handle more routine tasks.

	Working	Supervise	Manage	Design	Expert	Mentor
Fact finding			Key	Key		
Pre-feasibility			Key	Key		
Feasibility			Key	Key		
Project design	Key	Key	Critical	Critical	Key	Key
Implementation	Key	Key	Critical	Critical	Key	Key
Monitoring			Key	Key		
Evaluation	Key	Key	Critical	Critical	Key	Key
Non-project			Key	Key		

Figure 3 Key roles and services and critical cells.

2.5.1 Vetted Information

The more data available concerning the consultant's expertise, experience, and credibility, the lower the risk confronting the client. However, data *per se* are not particularly useful unless they have been *vetted*, either by sources trusted by the client, or through the latter's own personal knowledge. Simply increasing the flow of raw information, *e.g.* by compiling and updating a data bank of prospective consultants, will not reduce the level of risk faced by the client.

2.5.2 Improved Communications

In responding to a request for a proposal, a consulting firm typically relies on rapid access, in advance of its competitors, to known expertise, especially for those professionals who would be assigned critical roles and services. African professionals may well find themselves at a disadvantage because of poor communications. For those at universities and research institutes, such difficulties are compounded by limited availability due to their teaching and research obligations.

2.5.3 Reduced Transactions Costs

For both the prospective client and the firm responding to a request for proposal, the lack of vetted information and absence of reliable and inexpensive communications raise transactions costs, inasmuch as the time and effort need to confirm the availability of a professional can vary considerably from one individual to another. Transactions costs may be further increased if the consultant requires close on-going monitoring because of the lack of experience or expertise. Since time is a precious commodity for most clients and project managers, this consideration may well become the determining factor in the choice of a consultant.

2.5.4 Risk and Managed Risk

The relationship between risk and managed risk is portrayed in figure 4. Risk is reduced through vetted information and improved communications, resulting in lower transactions costs.

A higher degree of managed risk should result in an increased volume of business.

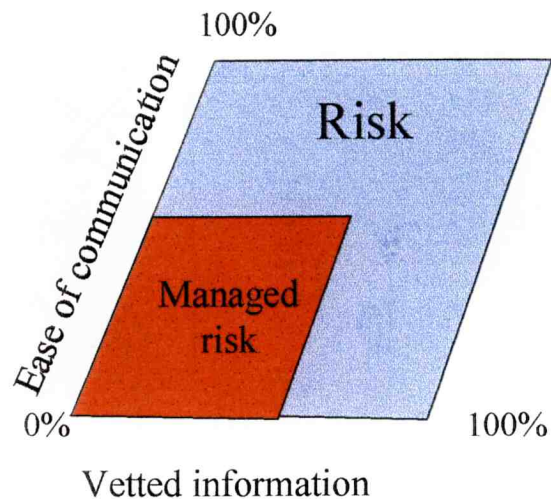


Figure 4 Risk Management

2.6 Professional Mobility and Career Advancement

Thus far, we have considered those factors that increase the demand for consulting services for a given cell, defined in terms of a specific role, service and sector. As in any profession, consulting entails a progressive movement over time to higher leverage and more remunerative roles and services. Such movement *across* cells will depend on a close correspondence between desired and actual expertise, experience and track record.

In terms of our model of the consulting market, a consultant's career path will typically involve a combination of lateral and upward movements, as suggested by figure 5.

Commencing as junior professionals, in low leverage working level roles and fact finding services, competent consultants will progress to higher leverage roles and more responsible services in an expanding number of sectors. Eventually the most accomplished will

assume mentoring roles in the most critical services in a range of sectors. The salient factors affecting such movement over a professional life time are:

- Opportunities to obtain access to higher leverage roles and services. Such mobility depends on the client or purchaser's perception of the degree of risk entailed in employing the consultant in specific roles and services. Such risk is reduced where the consultant has been able to achieve credibility by demonstrating relevant expertise, experience and competence in earlier assignments.

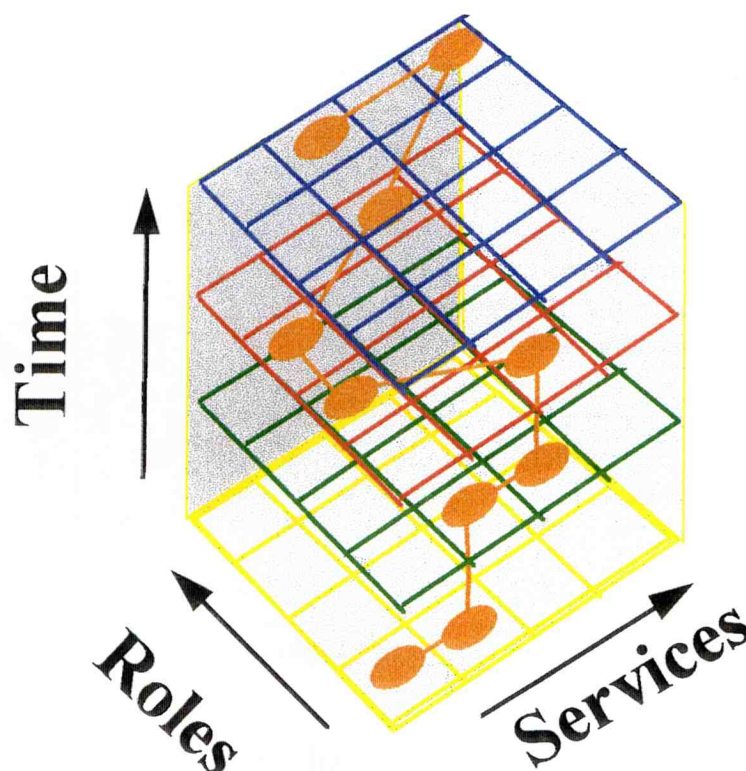


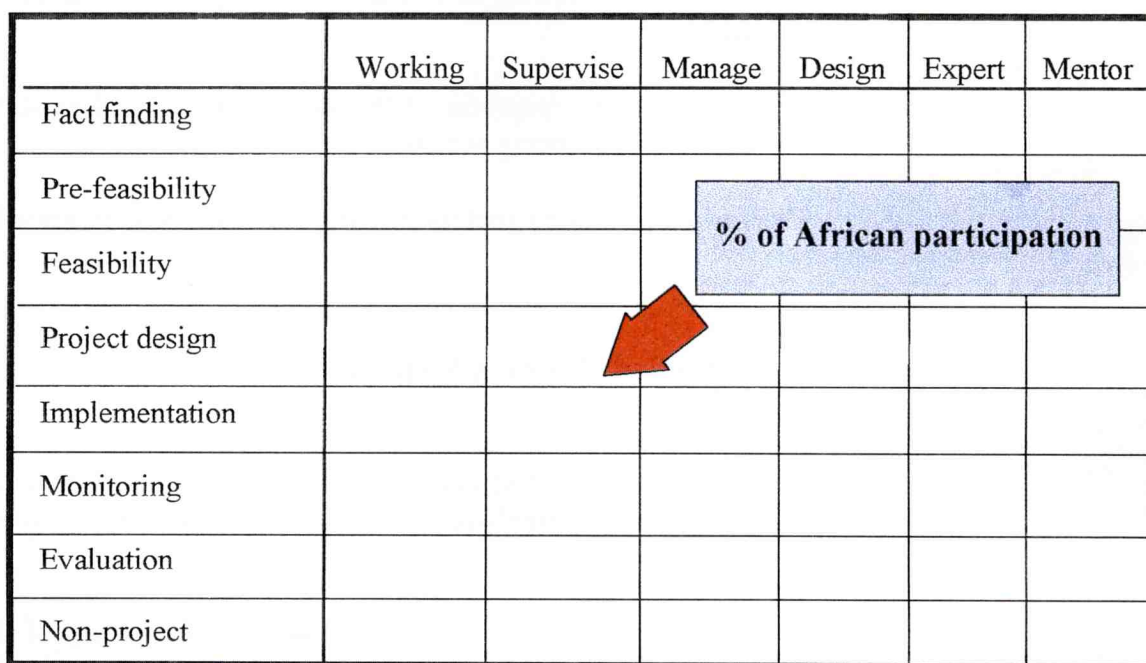
Figure 5 Model of career path.

- Most consulting skills are acquired through on the job training and experience. Career advancement is often facilitated where the consultant can be guided by an experienced mentor, an opportunity seldom available outside of large established consulting firms.

Section 3: The Study

3.1 Defining and Estimating African Participation

This conceptual framework provides the basis for an informed analysis of the involvement of African professionals in consulting. *Meaningful* participation by Africans can be estimated with reference to two principal indicators. The first is the extent of their involvement in what we have previously identified as the key and critical *cells* of the consulting market, namely those associated with a high degree of leverage. The second is whether Africans have been able to pursue a continuous career path that leads to progressively greater participation in the more senior roles and services in a growing number of sectors.



	Working	Supervise	Manage	Design	Expert	Mentor
Fact finding						
Pre-feasibility						
Feasibility						
Project design						
Implementation						
Monitoring						
Evaluation						
Non-project						

Figure 6 Matrix completed by respondents.

The necessary information was obtained by asking knowledgeable informants, drawn from African and non-African professionals as well as clients, to estimate for a given sector the relative involvement of Africans and non-Africans by role and service. The principal survey instrument was a matrix, presented in figure 6, that was completed by each informant. The matrix's rows (roles) and columns (services) were adjusted as necessary

to conform to the sector in question. For example, in certain instances, various steps in the project cycle, such as feasibility and design, could be combined into one phase.

3.2 Coverage

Limitations of time and funds necessitated a prior selection of both sectors and markets.

3.2.1 Sectors

Four sectors were selected, namely economic management, management information, rural development and health, based on the following criteria:

- Significant investment, through education and training, in Africans
- Growing demand by donors and African governments for consulting services
- Familiarity by members of the study team as well as staff of the agencies sponsoring the study
- Variations among sectors in terms of basic domain knowledge

3.2.2 Markets

Three markets were selected, namely Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa, on the basis of the following criteria:

- Overall size and structure of the economy, viz. South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe in descending order of magnitude and diversity
- Extent of investment in the education and training of Africans, namely South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya in ascending order
- Interest on the part of governments and donor agencies in raising the participation of African professionals in consulting

As a group, these three markets will probably typify most others where meaningful African involvement in consulting is possible.

3.2.3 Working Hypotheses

Data were used to test two hypotheses concerning African participation in consulting.

Hypothesis No. 1

For critical roles and services, associated with a high degree of leverage, local Africans were posited to represent a much higher level of risk, relative to managed risk, in comparison to expatriates. As portrayed in figure 7, the salient causes are relatively lower flows of vetted information concerning expertise, experience and track record, and greater problems of communication, that together entail higher transaction costs for the would-be prime contractor or client.

In Zimbabwe, Africans were defined by the respondents as local consultants not working for a firm affiliated to a large international group. In South Africa, participation was first disaggregated into foreign and domestic and the latter subsequently broken down further into white and black South Africans.⁴

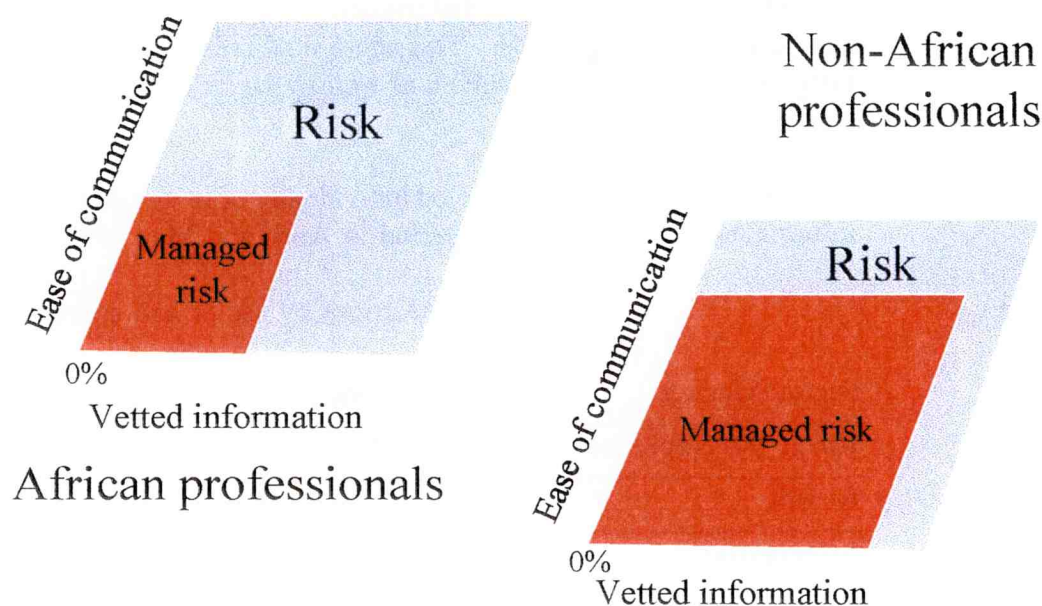


Figure 7 Risk perception: African and non-African consultants.

⁴ Because of the country's isolation and the relative overall strength of its consulting industry, foreign participation per se did not prove significant, never exceeding 20% in any of the cells of the matrix in any particular sector.

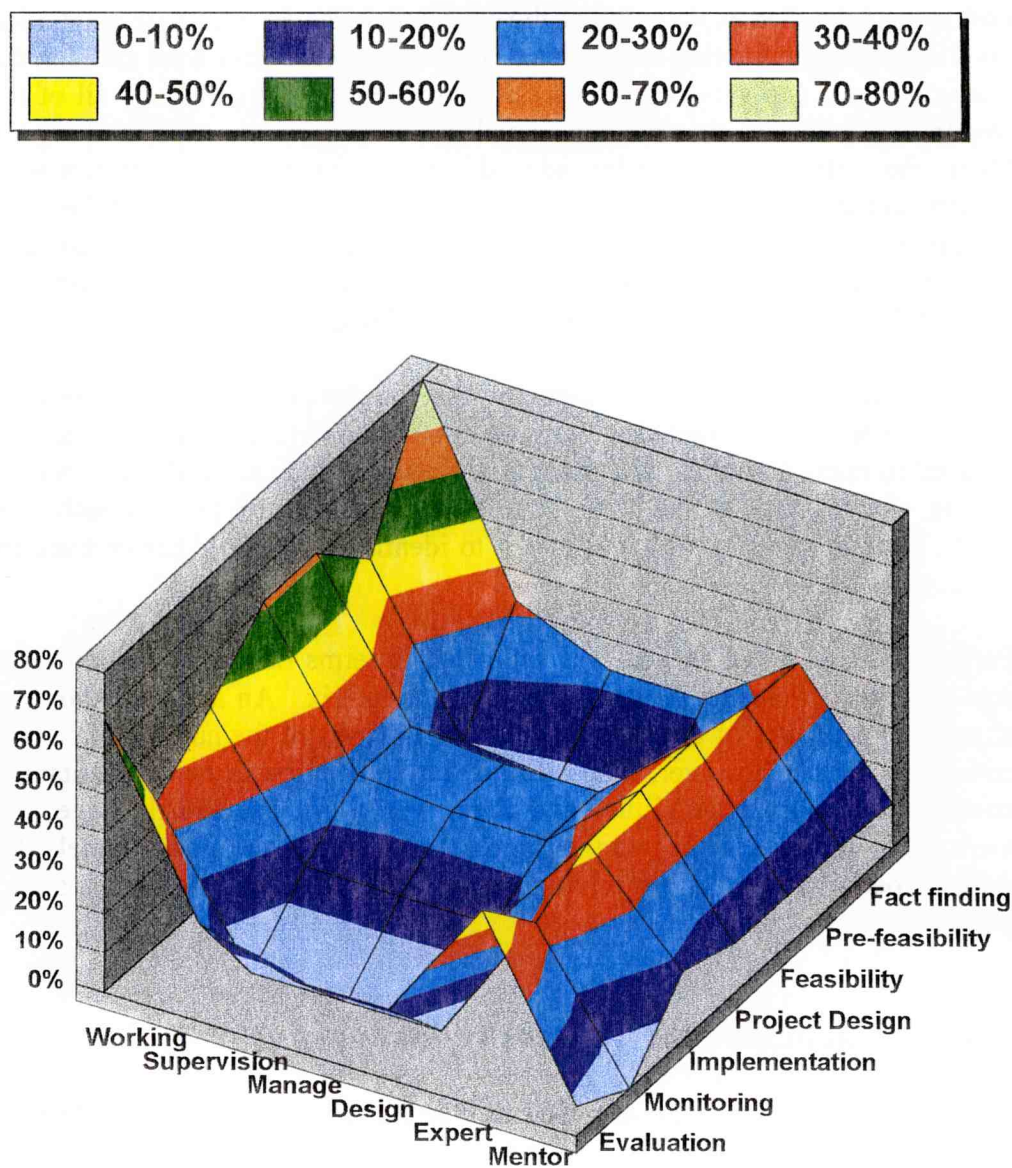


Figure 8 Local consultant participation density map for Kenya.

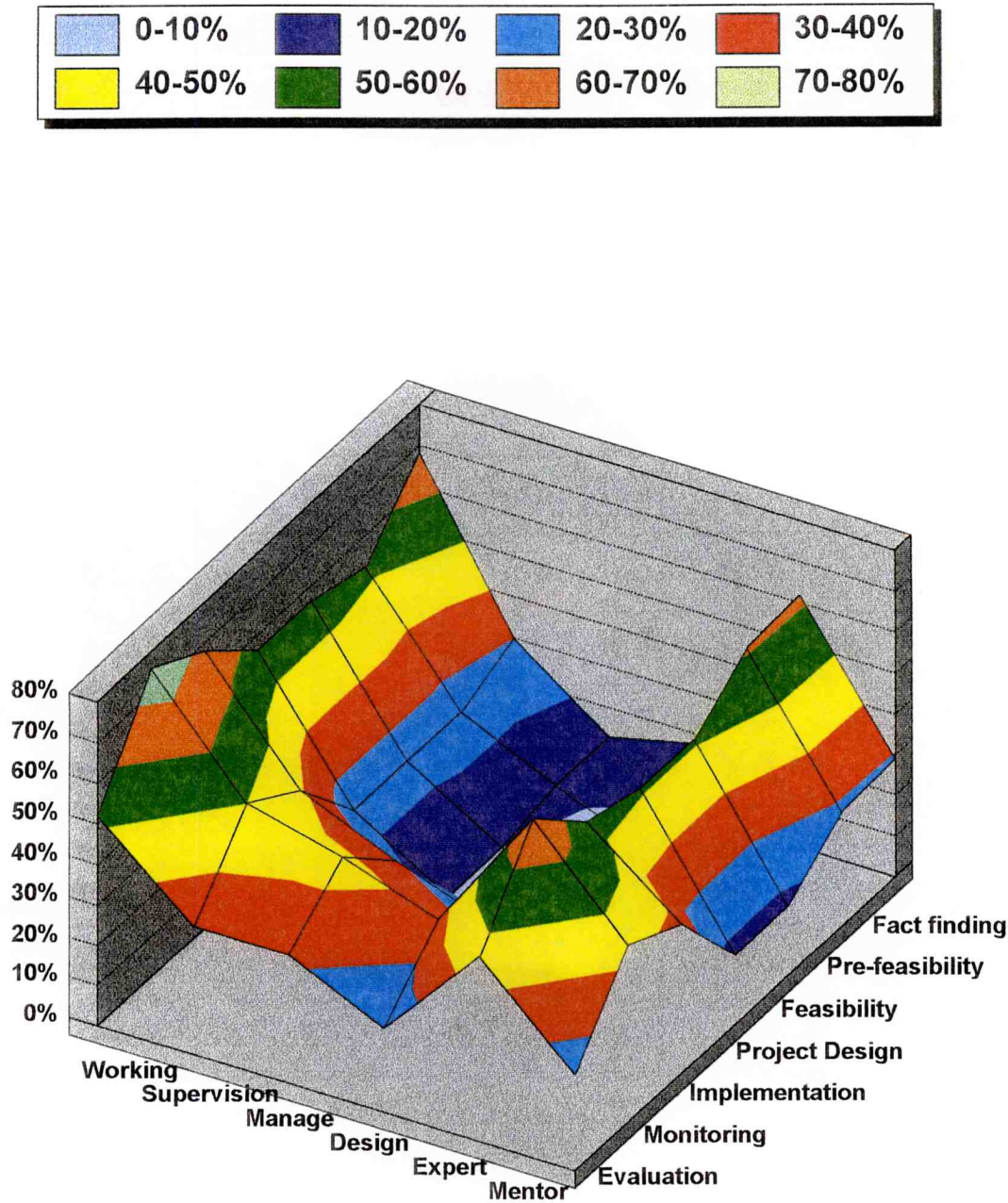


Figure 9 Local consultant participation density map for Zimbabwe.

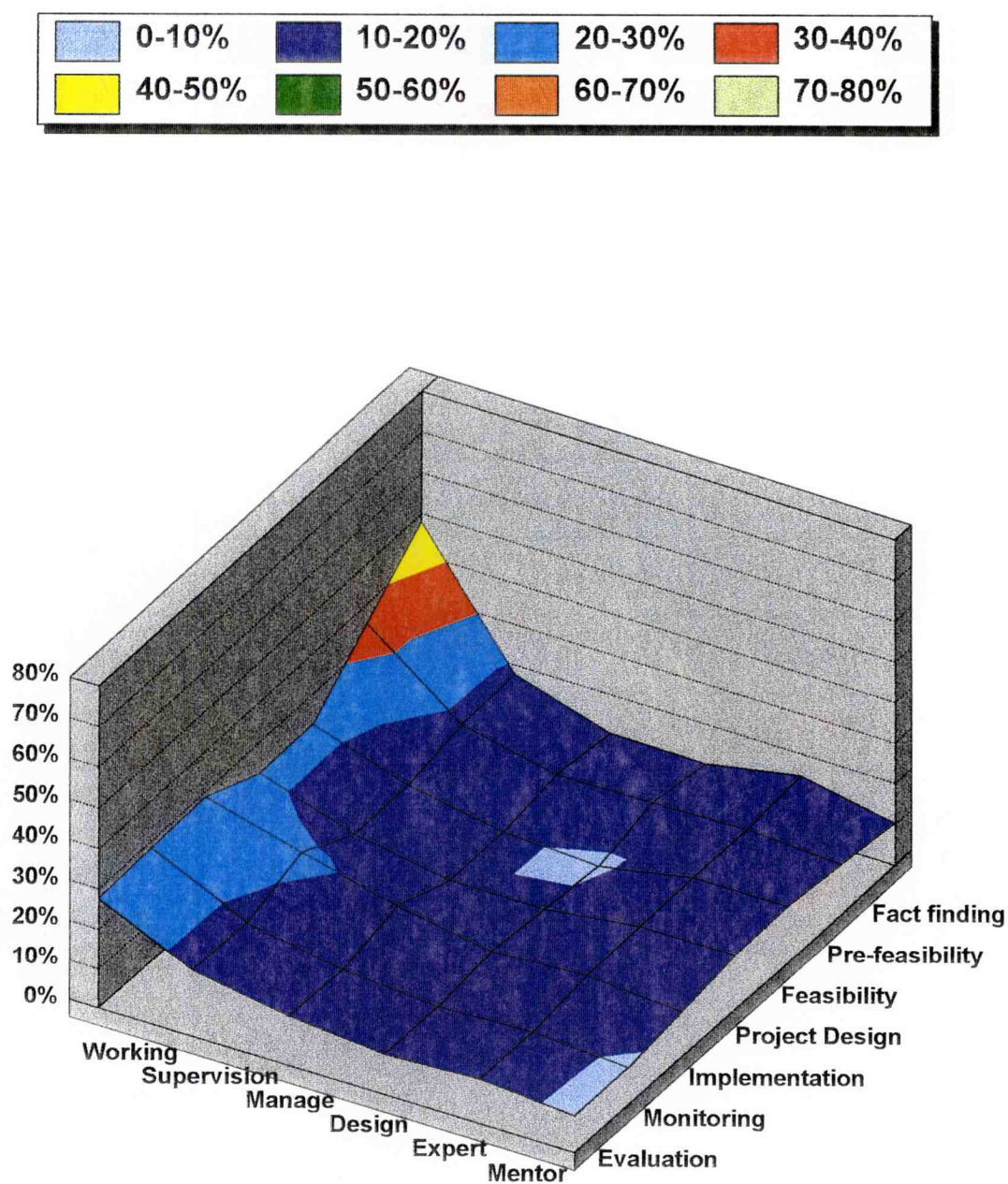


Figure 10 Black consultant participation density map in South Africa.

Hypothesis No. 2

Aside from being concentrated disproportionately in the more critical cells, we hypothesize that non-African professionals have followed a continuous career track marked by upward movement to the more senior and responsible roles and services. In contrast, the careers of Africans will have been confined, over the same period, to a much more limited number of cells, in many instances at a more junior level. This pattern can be anticipated in South Africa, because of the very limited opportunities open to Africans due to institutionalized racism and under investment in education and training. Such constraints, however, should not apply to Kenya and Zimbabwe, where independent governments have exercised power for about 30 and 15 years respectively and have made significant investments in education and training.

3.2.4 Data Collection

Whilst completing the aforementioned matrix (figure 6), following a detailed exposition of the conceptual framework and model, respondents were asked to comment upon both the reasons for the proportion of African participation they had estimated and what remedial measures they would suggest, in order to rectify any perceived shortcomings. This more qualitative information provided further insights into the current situation, as well as the utility of various interventions for ameliorating it.

Fourteen matrices were completed individually or in groups by 50 respondents and informants over a three week period in April and May 1995.

Table 1. Matrices by sector and country.

Sector\Market	Kenya	Zimbabwe	South Africa
Rural Development	2	4	2
Health	1	1	
Information	1		1
Economic Management		1	1

Additional information concerning the consulting industry was collected from officials of local consulting associations, donor agencies and governments.

Section 4: Principal Findings

4.1 Validation of the Conceptual Framework

Following a detailed explanation of the conceptual framework, those respondents directly involved in the contracting or provision of consulting services were asked to complete the matrix of roles and services. Successful completion of this task by all of the qualified respondents indicates that the conceptual framework can be used to study the industry. More, the matrix proved readily adaptable to the particular circumstances of different sectors and markets. The project cycle could be revised to reflect differing features of the private sector and various stages could be refined or collapsed to correspond to the realities of a given sector. Completing the matrix also prompted an informed discussion of consulting functions specific to particular roles and services.

As a generic tool for mapping capacity, the conceptual framework appears superior to other methods. It distinguishes between domain knowledge, *e.g.* in economics, that can be used in many activities, and other qualifications, such as working experience and expertise, characteristic of the profession itself. Furthermore, the approach incorporates a fourth dimension, time, which allows it to identify a plausible career track for different professions.

Participation, as noted earlier, was estimated in terms of the proportion of African and non-African participants in various cells of the matrix. An apparent shortcoming is the absence of estimates of absolute magnitudes, in terms of the number of consultants or of consulting days.⁶ However, such information, in addition to being unobtainable without considerably more expenditure and time, would not necessarily have yielded commensurably greater insight into the principal concerns of the study, namely the *degree* of African participation, its underlying causes, and effective interventions for rectifying perceived shortcomings.

4.2 African Participation: A Density Mapping

Information in the matrices was used to map African participation in three dimensions: by role, service and sector. Since the pattern proved surprisingly similar across the four sectors included in the field study, our principal findings are set out in three density maps, namely one for each of the three markets.

⁶ Some donors, *e.g.* GTZ, provide information at a highly aggregated level on the purchase of consulting services from national and foreign sources. However, there is no further breakdown by region.

- In all three markets, African participation is relatively high in the most junior roles and services. In the case of roles, these are the working and supervisory levels, and in services they are fact finding and to a lesser extent, monitoring.
- In Zimbabwe and Kenya, African participation is also relatively high in expert roles where there is a need for domain and area specific knowledge. In all likelihood, this pattern reflects the considerable investment in African education and training in both countries.
- The most significant, albeit disconcerting finding is the very low proportion of African participation in the more critical cells associated with high leverage. In the case of roles, these are management and task design. In services they comprise the feasibility, design and evaluation stages of the project cycle.
- Overall the maps display what may be termed a *rift valley*, marked at each extremity by high African participation in the more junior and less essential roles and services, and in the middle by very low representation in the most critical cells. This pattern is similar for Zimbabwe and Kenya. In the case of South Africa, there is an understandably low representation of black professionals in all cells.

Our findings are consistent with the first hypothesis, namely that African participation is disproportionately low in those roles and services with the greatest leverage. These critical cells are exactly those who demand a high degree of risk management on the part of the client and a correspondingly high credibility on the part of the consultant.

4.3 Career Discontinuity

The map of career paths, together with the qualitative information supplied by respondents, also highlight significant differences in the career tracks of African and non-African professionals engaged in consulting. The higher proportion of non-African participation in the key cells is directly associated with movement by individual consultants from more junior to more responsible roles and services. Conversely, low African participation points to a career track marked by a much more limited number of roles and services. Where the latter are not junior, they are linked to those roles requiring domain and area specific knowledge. Further discussion with African respondents suggests that limited access to more critical roles and services together with economic necessity may force them to undertake assignments for which they are not qualified. Lack of consistency in performance can then lead to a loss of credibility, further impeding an individual's advancement. Because reliable vetted information is not available, clients

tend to perceive all African professionals as subject to occasional failure. This has led to a loss of credibility and limited career advancement for all African professionals.

This pattern, as illustrated in figure 11, contrasting the typical career tracks of African and non-African consultants, may be self-reinforcing. Without access to the more critical roles, African professionals lack high visibility. Similarly, in not offering such key services as project design and evaluation, they cannot use such opportunities to extend their involvement in a particular project and any subsequent phases. In the current situation, most African professionals cannot advance to such roles and services because of the high risk perceived by prospective clients. On the other hand, such risk persists because of their inability to fashion an appropriate track record. More investment in education and training will not solve this impasse. In the absence of appropriate strategic interventions, directly aimed at reducing the risk perceived by prospective clients, the current pattern of participation may be self-perpetuating.

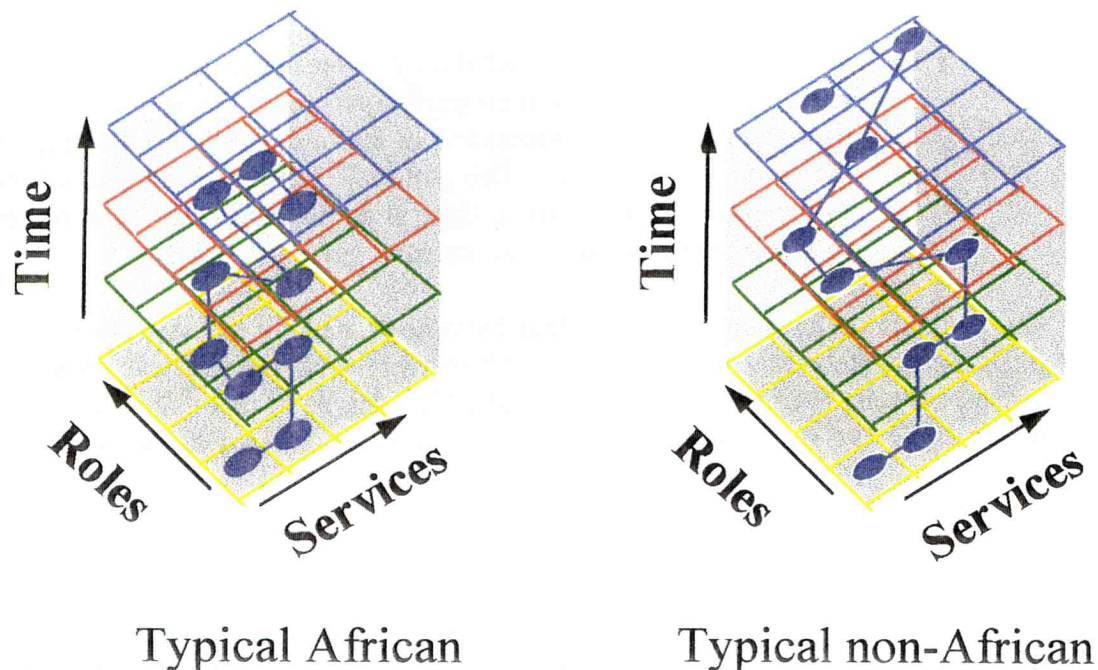


Figure 11 Typical career paths.

To conclude, our findings appear consistent with the second working hypothesis, namely that African consultants, relative to non-Africans, are generally not upwardly mobile in terms of their career paths.

Section 5: Interpretations

5.1 Importance of Risk Management

Confirmation of our two working hypotheses would indeed indicate that significant under representation of African professionals in key roles and services can be traced to two principal causes. First, these roles and services are associated with high leverage, posing a very high level of risk for the would be client or purchaser. Secondly, African professionals cannot pursue a continuous career track that provides access to higher leverage roles and services. Such mobility, as demonstrated by their non-African counterparts, requires the ability to reduce the client's perceived risk, a task that may lie beyond the reach of individual professionals and is best dealt with through an industry wide intervention aimed at reducing the systemic differential in transactions costs between Africans and non-Africans.

5.2 Other Possible Explanations

Before considering strategic interventions aimed at risk management, we first look at some other possible explanations of our findings, since they would imply different responses. Most of these explanations, it should be stressed, are based on a highly aggregated and non-differentiated treatment of the many varied activities falling under the rubric of consulting.

5.2.1 Tied Aid

Limited African participation is often attributed to tied aid, which either formally or in practice reserves the key assignments to firms and professionals of the donor country. This constraint may hold true for certain services, in particular those associated with financial management, where the donor may demand more direct accountability.

Our own study, however, would conclude that tied aid *per se* cannot explain the overall pattern of African participation, both over time and across sectors. During the detailed interviews, none of the respondents attributed the low participation of Africans in the key roles and services to tied aid. Tied aid often allows for participation by recipient country nationals as well as professionals from other developing countries. Furthermore, tied aid does not apply to the 50% or so of activity financed by multilateral agencies. Finally, although tied aid may limit participation to firms of the donor country, it normally does not extend to the engagement of individual professionals or the letting of subcontracts by such firms.

5.2.2 Market Size

Because of the small size of most African markets, both in terms of the volume and range of consulting activity, African professionals, it has been suggested, are at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to non-Africans, in particular those in larger firms that have ready more ready access to regional and international markets. To some extent this explanation may in fact reflect the problem of communication mentioned in our earlier discussion of managed risk. However, from our own study, we have concluded that a small market *per se* should not inhibit the participation of Africans to the extent revealed by our mapping. Indeed many of the firms and professionals based in Nairobi and Harare work throughout Eastern and Southern Africa. To the extent that African professionals lack continuity and upward mobility in their career, they are also less mobile in geographical terms.

5.2.3 Market Structure

African firms, it is contended, are unable to compete with multinational firms who allegedly favour the employment of non-Africans in key roles and services. From our own observations, which included a sample of respondents from multinational firms, we would question this explanation for the low participation of Africans. Multinational firms typically employ professionals from many nationalities and backgrounds. Multinational consulting companies do not discriminate on the basis of race or colour, but do so on the basis of perceived risks. In short, their behaviour is motivated by perception that African consultants pose a higher degree of risk in comparison to non-Africans.

By internalizing the problem of quality assurance and risk management, larger multinational firms can facilitate the advancement of African professionals in ways not available to smaller companies or individual providers, including those in academia and research institutes. By virtue of their size and scale of operations, some of these multinationals can reduce such risk. They attempt to reassure the prospective client that their consultants will be supported through supervision and mentorship and that where necessary, appropriate corrective action will be taken to deliver the agreed product. They also assume responsibility for vetting individual professionals. In some instances, we were informed, professionals also receive training in appropriate skills either on the job or in formal courses.

5.2.4 Lack of Infrastructure

African firms and professionals, it has been argued, are constrained by inadequate infrastructure, in particular the absence of telephones, computers and trained support staff. Another problem is inadequate communication: of pending projects to African consultants and of qualified Africans to prospective clients. The

African Capacity Building Foundation plans to assist national consultant associations in addressing such perceived shortcomings. Consultant associations are considering the establishment of *Consulting Resource Centres* that would maintain a regularly updated roster of consultants; disseminate a timely listing of upcoming projects to their members; provide facilities, equipment and staff to assist in the preparation of bids; and offer periodic professional courses. Other well-intentioned measures would try to encourage greater African participation by reserving certain activities for them.

Promoting African Consultants in Kenya

The World Bank has been attempting to promote the use of African consultants through its own projects, as part of a more general emphasis on capacity building. Recently the Bank solicited bids from African consultants for 21 studies, that would provide background information for two education sector loans. Extensive local publicity resulted in over 100 submissions, that were reviewed by a committee of three Bank and three Kenyan government officials over a six week period.

Using our conceptual framework to assess this well-intentioned initiative, we observed the following:

- African involvement is being encouraged at the fact finding stage of the project cycle and at the working and supervisory levels, *roles* and *services* where local participation, as revealed by our density mapping, is relatively high.
- The task is being managed by non-African consultants.
- Transaction costs, both in time and funds, are substantial. Hence this exercise cannot be replicated across a large number of projects.

Such efforts, we would contend, are unlikely to increase African participation in any meaningful sense, namely in terms of significantly raising their involvement in the key roles and services or in addressing the discontinuity in career path facing promising young professionals. They do not address the more fundamental issue of effective risk management. Indeed, some of these activities, insofar as they raise the transactions costs of would-be clients, may actually inhibit more meaningful African participation.

5.2.5 Unrealistic Time Horizon

The phenomenon of the *rift valley*, apparent from our density mapping of the consulting industry, denoting the absence of African professionals in the key roles

and services may, it has been suggested, simply reflect a budding industry at an early stage in its development. Visible competence takes time. One such example, presented to us over the course of the study, is Eastern and Central Europe, where there is a dearth of qualified local professionals in key roles and services.

We would question this explanation on two grounds. First, the *rift valley*, in addition to highlighting the low representation of Africans in key roles and services, also signifies the absence of a continuous *career track*. The evidence suggests that the current situation is not transitional but rather self-perpetuating. Secondly, the comparison with Eastern and Central Europe is misleading. Consulting in the latter region, as a privately organised activity operating in a market economy and drawing on professionals equipped with tested managerial skills and experience, is a relatively new industry and indeed, is much younger than its African counterpart.

The situation is not one of the previous absence of a market for consulting, but rather of limited participation in a substantial and long established one.

5.2.6 Choice of Sectors

Our results, it may be contended, are biased because of the choice of sectors for the field study. Although differing in content, they are relatively undifferentiated since they focus on public sector clients and draw heavily on domain knowledge in the social sciences and management. Inclusion of sectors drawing extensively on *reserved field of practice* professions might have yielded a more encouraging picture. This possibility was perceived over the course of the field study. However, limitations of time and funds did not allow for inclusion of such sectors for comparative purposes. Discussion with some well-informed consultants (e.g. civil engineers in Kenya) suggest that the prevailing pattern of African under-representation in those roles and services with the highest leverage still prevails. Even if this were not the case, the inference to be drawn would actually be consistent with our more general conclusion concerning the centrality of risk management. Among the distinguishing features of reserved professions is professional certification; professional insurance; and regular upgrading of knowledge and skills, all of which help reduce risk and enhance credibility.

The choice of sectors for our field study also reflects the predominating demand for consulting services by donors and African governments. Growth in private demand would entail a redefinition of some consulting services and inclusion of additional sectors of activity. Such modifications, as noted earlier, can be readily accommodated within our conceptual framework and methodology. More importantly, the very high priority assigned by the private sector to *leverage, risk management*, quality and timeliness is fully consistent with our conclusion

concerning the centrality of risk management. Hence, quality assurance would be even more essential in order for African professionals to respond successfully to an emerging private sector market for consulting services.

Section 6: A Strategic Response

6.1 Guiding Principles

In order to achieve the objective of increasing the participation of African professionals in consulting, proposed interventions should focus on changing the environment in which the consulting industry operates by:

- Lowering the overall transaction cost involved in purchasing and managing consulting services across the board; and
- Narrowing or eliminating the transactions cost differential that currently exists between African and non-African consultants.

To achieve these aims, proposed interventions should incorporate two guiding principles directly derived from our findings, namely:

- Risk reduction through vetted information; and
- Risk management through the externalisation of the quality assurance function.

To facilitate adoption by all stakeholders (individual consultants, small and large consulting firms, local and expatriate consultants, donors, purchasers of consulting services, managers of consulting services, clients, etc.) and to ensure long term sustainability, the proposed interventions should also be voluntary, gradual, supra-national, world-class, impartial, and self-supporting.

We consider each attribute in turn.

Voluntary

Participation should be voluntary. Proposed interventions should not be dependent on legislation or other forms of regulations establishing a *closed shop* environment.

Gradual

The proposed intervention's success must not be predicated on an immediate adoption, voluntary or otherwise, by all concerned. On the contrary, the intervention should be designed in such a way that it can initially focus on a few critical cells such as project management and project implementation.

Supra-national

Proposed interventions should not be country based. At the very least, proposed interventions should encompass the Sub-Saharan Africa. Supra-nationality is a prerequisite to avoid the encroachment of legislation and political pressures and to ensure that participants are perceived as world class.

World class

Resource mobility is extremely high in the consulting industry. African professionals compete with expatriates from all over the world. To be competitive, they themselves must be perceived as world class.

Impartial

Proposed interventions must be impartial. They should result in the consulting market being controlled by suppliers, clients or purchasers of consulting goods.

Self-supporting

Although proposed interventions may require start-up funds, long term success should depend on the intervention being self-supporting.

6.2 The Case for a New Approach

The conventional approach towards capacity building has concentrated on supply, through qualitative and quantitative improvements in training and education. It has also tried to increase demand through affirmative action, as typified by the World Bank's recent effort in Kenya.

Because the consulting business places more emphasis on credibility and process expertise than on domain knowledge, a conventional *push* approach does not seem to have brought about the desired results. Field work results show that neither time, investments in higher education, nor the absence of discrimination have had a significant effect on African participation in the key and critical consulting roles and services.

Credibility as a consultant, as opposed to credibility as an academic, cannot be achieved through training, education and knowledge alone. Credibility as a consultant can only be attained through a proven, sustained track record of increasingly high leverage and successful problem solving. The longer the record, the tougher the problems, the more comparable the situations, the higher the resulting credibility.

Because of the determinant role of leverage factor in consulting, affirmative action programs cannot build the appropriate track records. Time and time again, clients and consulting firm managers have stated to us that when forced to use African solely because of affirmative action, they have *put them on the payroll, but not on the critical path*. Indeed, affirmative action programs may have had a negative impact on those they intended to help, inasmuch as such well-intentioned initiatives cast doubt on the true value of information regarding track record information in the resumes of African consultants.

The need to build up the credibility of African consultants and reduce their transactions cost differential, as opposed to simply enhanced knowledge, underscores the need for a new approach. It would feature two complementary interventions, namely a professional insurance program and an integrated professional accreditation mechanism.

6.3 Insuring Consulting Professionals

It is proposed that an international consortium of donors establish a professional insurance program for consultants working in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Professional insurance for consultants would consist of a *Quality Assurance* guaranty offered by the program to the purchasers of consulting services provided by participating consultants. The insurance policy would include the reimbursement of professional fees and expenses or a commitment by the insurer to satisfy the contractual arrangements agreed upon between the client and the consultant. Insured consulting contracts would provide for mandatory mediation. If necessary, this would be followed by an intervention on the part of the insurer who would either reimburse the client or bring in the necessary resources to complete the assignment to the client's satisfaction. In all cases, there would be a cap on the insurer's exposure.

By externalising the quality assurance function currently provided internally by large and multinational consulting firms, this procedure would reduce and eventually eliminate the risk and hence the transaction cost differential that currently penalises small African firms and professionals. This longer term trend would induce greater African participation.

To be viable, such an intervention should be voluntary, gradual, supra-national, world-class, impartial and self-supporting:

- The insurance program would operate on a sound actuarial basis with participants bearing all the on-going costs — as opposed to the development and set-up costs.
- It would cover a broad regional area and be open to all who qualify. Qualification should be based on actuarial principles, rather than political or geographical ones and would apply equally to African and non-Africans.

- Premiums would take into account the volume of business (exposure). This measure would encourage the participation of part-time academics as well as full-time professionals.
- Individual professionals would be insurable only for those roles, services and sectors for which they hold a valid certificate of insurability.
- Individual insurance premiums should vary according to an actuarial determination of risk. Premiums would be lower for consultants with a good track record (no claim bonus). This feature would encourage participants to acquire the knowledge, training, experience and certificates necessary to reduce their premiums and gain access to new areas of professional insurability. Flexible rates based on individual insurability for specific roles, services, and sectors lie at the heart of the *pull* strategy embodied in this approach.
- To reduce exposure, the certification program might require participants entering the profession to undergo a period of internship with an accredited mentor before they qualify for insurance.
- To further reduce exposure and to eliminate the need for the insurer to review all consulting contracts, the program could require that all certified members moving into designated high leverage cells (roles, services and sectors) for which they are not certified undergo a period of mentorship. As professionals who already possess some consulting experience, they would secure, for a fee, supervision by an accredited mentor who would assume responsibility for quality assurance vis-à-vis the client.

Professional liability insurance is not a new concept since it exists in most *reserved* professions such as medicine, engineering and accounting in order to protect the public from malpractice. What is new is the proactive use of professional insurance to build credibility. Another innovation is to link insurability to a rigorous process of certification. Finally, the proposed intervention departs from established approaches to professional liability insurance by tying premiums to actual per diems earned in order not to discourage the participation of part-time consultants.

Managers of consulting teams and purchasers of consulting services consistently indicated that by putting its own money on the line in the form of professional insurance, such a program would have much more credibility in supplying vetted information on consultants than any alternative form of certification. Because it would be run as an international non-profit professional insurance fund, possibly managed by an established insurance organization, the program would require little or no permanent infrastructure of its own, thus reducing greatly its long term operating costs.

Although participation in the program would be fully voluntary, it is expected that major donors would rapidly make insurability a prerequisite. As stated by one of the respondent, *I can see myself three years from now face to face with our auditor, trying to explain why I used a non-insured, non-certified consultant for a project that bombed.* Expanding coverage would ensure the program's longer term viability.

Quality assurance will be equally necessary if African professionals are to respond to an emerging demand for consulting services by the private sector. In view of the priority that private companies assign to *leverage*, quality and timeliness, and hence to the credibility of the consulting individual or firm, risk management becomes a central consideration in their selection among competing *providers of consulting services*. In this context, insurability of risk, backed by tangible financial guarantees and managed along objective and non-political lines, comprises a strategic and cost-effective instrument for helping African consultants to break into this emerging market.

6.4 Certification of Consulting Professionals

The main objective of the certification process is to ensure the viability of the professional liability insurance program. The certification process will use actuarial based criteria to determine insurability and premiums. There is no intention to replicate the monopoly of universities on the granting of diplomas.

The certification scheme would recognize that consulting pertains to problem solving that requires domain knowledge as well as consulting process knowledge. The certification process will accept recognised university degrees as proof of domain knowledge and focus instead on those factors relevant to the consulting process itself, namely experience, expertise and track record.

With the assistance of professional actuaries and of an international committee of experts on the consulting industry, a simple, fair and reliable certification mechanism applicable to the critical roles and services should prove feasible.

6.5 Implications for Universities and Research Institutes

Our more general findings and recommendations also cover those professionals in academia and research institutes, a separate focus of the study. In comparison with expatriates, they are also perceived as associated with a higher degree of risk in critical roles and services that have a high leverage. Hence, many remain confined to low leverage roles at the working and domain knowledge levels, usually under the supervision of a non-African task manager.

As part-time consultants, they confront additional difficulties. One is scheduling, since consulting must be coordinated with prior obligations in teaching and research. A second, for national universities and research institutes, is poor access and communications: often the institutions in which they are located are outside business centres and lack proper telephone, fax and e-mail links, both in-country and internationally. A third is a lack of consulting specific skills. As part-timers, this group of professionals may not have the time and opportunity to acquire relevant expertise and experience. Moreover, many may not feel inclined to make the necessary investment, since they would prefer to limit their own involvement to activities drawing on domain knowledge. Hence, a continuous, upward career track in consulting is not a feasible option for most African professionals in this sub-group.

Insurance and certification could greatly assist both this group of professionals as well as their institutions.

- Insurance and certification would highlight the essentially complementary relationship between research, in terms of quality, timeliness and relevance and success in consulting. World class research, when blended with the right consulting skills through sub-contractual and partnership agreements, reduces the risk posed to the potential client or purchaser. Mediocrity, on the other hand, will be indicated by a decline in offers. Thus, in addition to generating additional income, consulting would offer external validation of the quality and relevance of research programs supported by the institution.
- The proposed interventions would motivate institutions to define their areas of competence more precisely and to eschew others where they could not compete with consulting firms. Our own study suggests that they can carve out appropriate niches that maximize their domain knowledge in problem solving and minimise their shortcomings in consulting skills.
- The interventions would provide a framework within which institutions could more easily identify and recognize individual competence in consulting. They could also be used to make the institutions more competitive by eliminating unnecessary personnel and administrative costs.
- Inexpensive, impartial and comprehensive risk management would prove beneficial to all parties: to the institute in identifying professionals competent to undertake major assignments; to the client in allaying misgivings about using researchers; and to potential partners by offering further reassurance concerning expertise and credibility.

- By offering their services on a non-exclusive basis to consulting firms competing for larger scale contracts, these institutions could overcome their lack of consulting specific skills and knowledge.

The International Council for Research in Agro-Forestry (ICRAF)

According to one of its senior officials, ICRAF is examining the possibility of offering commercial consulting services. Its dynamic, world class research program is stimulating demands that cannot be accommodated through funds received from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and program specific activities. Prospective revenues are expected to peak at their current level.

Involvement in consulting has aroused misgivings among some of ICRAF's backers. Can ICRAF compete effectively? Will consulting detract from its research?

Having used the matrix (figure 6) to map ICRAF's capabilities, the senior official concluded that ICRAF should consider other approaches.

- ICRAF should confine its involvement to those *cells* in which it possesses an international reputation for excellence. External corroboration of its reputation is evidenced by the current practice by one of its backers of referring all agro-forestry proposals to ICRAF for prior vetting of their technical soundness.
- By offering its services, in the appropriate *cells*, on a non-exclusive basis to firms submitting bids for larger scale contracts, ICRAF can forge partnerships that effectively blend its own domain knowledge with consulting skills and experience.

This strategy highlights the complementary relationship between excellence in research and success in consulting. Failure to maintain a world class research program would render ICRAF less attractive to consulting firms preparing bids for projects with an agro-forestry component. Conversely, greater experience in problem solving for an expanding set of clients will strengthen ICRAF's research activities.

Insurance and certification cannot offset institutional impediments that will prevent universities from launching a successful consulting operations. Such impediments are discussed separately in appendix B. Nonetheless, they will assist this particular group of African professionals and in doing so, indirectly strengthen their institutions through the retention of good staff; by helping staff to upgrade their domain knowledge through problem solving; and by establishing a more positive profile through the involvement of their staff in important decisions and projects.

6.6 Accelerating the Process

Within this broader strategic approach involving insurance and certification, donors can take other actions to accelerate the greater participation by Africans in consulting. These could involve the subsidising of mentorship, certification and even insurance premiums, possibly targeted more precisely toward specific groups of professionals, such as those in academia and research institutes. In contrast to existing forms of affirmative action, such measures, within this broader strategic approach, would be consistent with the overriding aim of reducing the differential in risk between African and non-African professionals. They would help promote the credibility of Africans without tampering or appearing to tamper with professional standards or the impartiality of the market place.

Section 7: The Next Step

The current concern with increasing African participation in consulting is well placed, not only in terms of strengthening the industry, but more generally because of its positive impact on capacity building in both the public and private sectors. The proposed intervention comprises a significant departure from more conventional approaches.

- Firstly, it directly addresses the central issue of reducing risk and enhancing the credibility of African professionals.
- Secondly, certification and insurance entail a market-oriented approach that, in addition to meeting the needs of clients and consultants, would also be financially self-sustaining over the longer term.

Initial responses in Africa to the proposed intervention have been favourable. African professionals in particular see insurance and certification as impartial mechanisms that, in addition to reducing the risk currently associated with their employment, would maintain and disseminate credible information concerning their performance and track record. The intervention would quickly enhance the credibility and raise the profiles of committed African professionals. Furthermore, the intervention would induce more self-investment in training, since the latter would then be linked to credible certification that, in conjunction with insurance, would lead to upward mobility through expanded access to more senior roles and more demanding types of services. Finally, in promoting more meaningful participation by local professionals, the intervention will create opportunities for professionals in African universities and research institutes.

Response to the analysis and proposed intervention by donors has also been positive⁷. All of them have already assigned high priority to increased participation by African consultants in their development programs and projects. Their stance coincides with similar prioritization at the regional level by the African Capacity Building Foundation and at the international level by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The proposed intervention holds the promise of a cost effective response that would simultaneously meet the donors' own aims of strengthening African capacity in a key field and of improving the quality of consulting services for their own development projects. Donors

⁷ *Aside from the sponsors of this study, the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation (SAREC), the World Bank (IBRD), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), the European Union Development Directorate General VIII (EU), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were consulted, both at head office and in the field (see Appendix A).*

met also generally concur that the proposed intervention, entailing a coordinated multilateral effort, would raise the effectiveness of other actions targeted toward agency specific needs.

Finally, insurance specialists consulted informally indicated that professional insurance, linked to certification, is technically feasible. Several questions remain unanswered and a considerable number of technical, administrative, legal and financial details need to be resolved before any implementation can begin. The following list, by no means comprehensive or complete, sets out the principal issues (see also Figure 12).

Validation of the transactions cost hypothesis

The study covers three markets and four sectors. Before proceeding with the proposed strategic intervention, further validation of its conclusions regarding the differential in transactions costs between Africans and non-Africans would require extension of the analysis to other markets and sectors.

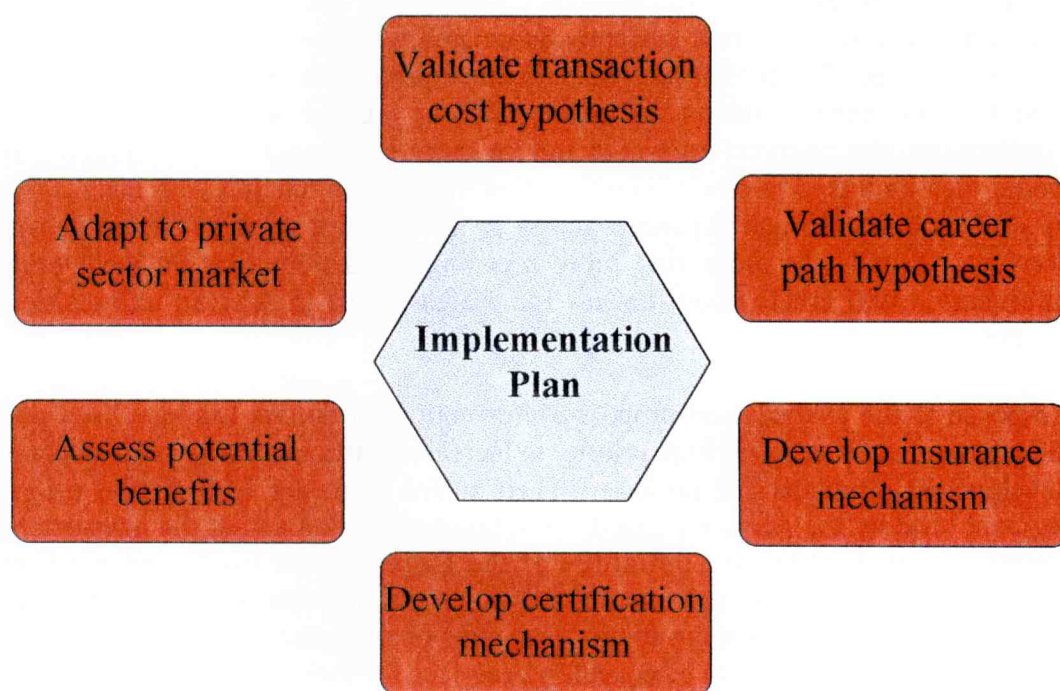


Figure 12 Tasks for feasibility study.

Validation of the career path hypothesis

For similar reasons, further validation of the hypothesis that career path development closely correlates with risk perception is warranted. Career path information could be collected from samples of Africans and expatriates, using the career path cube display/analysis tool, and be compared in terms of risk perception.

The insurance mechanism

Insurance, together with certification, lies at the heart of the proposed strategic intervention. There are many operational questions that require in-depth analysis: actuarial features, management and financing over the short and longer term.

The certification mechanism

Similarly, in the case of certification there are many operational issues that warrant in-depth analysis: close integration with insurance and how it would be managed. A feasibility study would focus on the most critical cells for which it would develop criteria and processes for regional certification.

Potential benefits

Criteria should be developed for assessing the benefits of the intervention for the principal stakeholders including, in addition to donors, consulting firms and professionals both within and outside Africa, as well as African governments and the private sector.

Whilst professionals from universities and research institutes should benefit from the strategic intervention, there are questions concerning how it can best be exploited to their advantage, and in ways that will strengthen the quality of teaching and research.

Adaptation to the private sector

The pilot study reflects the current reality of a *donor-driven* market for consulting. Design of the intervention should anticipate a growing demand by the private sector for consulting services.

In-depth review of the above set of issues would allow preparation of a detailed implementation plan comprising detailed activities, phasing and start-up costs associated.

We have concluded that an intervention based on the principles of certification and insurance possesses the essential ingredients which should allow it to achieve the objectives of increasing the participation of African professionals in consulting and of contributing to capacity-building in the region. In view of its prospective benefits, detailed study of its feasibility is both timely and justified.

Appendix A — Persons Met

Kenya

Dr. Eva Rathgeber, Regional Director	IDRC
Dr. Serge Dubé, Senior Programme Specialist	IDRC
Dr. Luis Navarro, Senior Programme Officer	IDRC
Mr. Sarwat Salem, Regional Controller	IDRC
Ms. Sandra Baldwin, Program Assistant	IDRC
Mr. Bruce Scott, Deputy Director	ICRAF
Dr. François Gasengayire, Director	Natural Product Network
Mr. Oswald Schmidt	AGREF
Mr. Marcel Werner	Telecommunications Foundation for Africa
Dr. Carlos Zulberti	UNEP
Dr. David Court, Representative	Rockefeller Foundation
Dr. Cheikh Mbacke	Rockefeller Foundation
Dr. A. T. Rodrigues, Professor	University of Nairobi
Mr. N. Gathinji	Bellhouse Mwangi and Partners
Mr. K. Gatere	Ernst and Young
Dr. J. Maitha	African Development Consultants
Dr. James Karuga	Consultant
Dr. R. Schwartz	Development Solutions for Africa
Dr. B. R. Steenstrup	Price Waterhouse

Mr. D. Burgess	Price Waterhouse
Dr. John O. A. Davies-Cole	Management Development Assistance for Health and Population (MDAHP)
Dr. Cathy J. Toroitich	MDAHP
Dr. A. W. Inambao	MDAHP
Mr. Egal Elfazwaty	Three Point Ostrich Farm
Mr. G. Pathmanathan	World Bank

Zimbabwe

Mr. Jan Olsson, Counsellor (Development)	SIDA
Mr. Pierre-Paul Perron, First Secretary	CIDA
Mr. Louchlan Munro, Programme Officer (Planning & Monitoring)	UNICEF
Mr. Heinz Hoellman, Coordinator	Advisory Service for Private Business Promotion
Dr. Erwin Shütz, Consultant	Idem
Dr. Stephen K. Chandiwana, Director	Blair Research Institute
Dr. Paul Taylor, Executive Director	Institute of Water & Sanitation Development (University of Zimbabwe)
Mssrs. T. Rukuni & Mr J. Ascough	Development Technology Centre University of Zimbabwe
Mr. Bob Gibbins, Executive Director	Canadian Association for the Private Sector
Dr. Peter Mazikana, President Mr. A. Masiyiwa, Administrator	Assoc. of Zimbabwe Consultants (AZIC)

South Africa

Mr. Grant Hawes, Counsellor (Development)	Canadian High Commission
Ms. Susan Stewart Hawes	Private Consultant
Mr. Faizel Ismail, Consultant: Multilateral Trade Relations	Dept. of Trade and Industry
Mr. Mfundo C. Nkhulu, Consultant: Southern African Trade Relations	Dept. of Trade and Industry
Mr. Marc van Ameringen, Regional Director	IDRC
Mr. Nigel Motts, Deputy Director	IDRC
Dr. John Gerhart, Representative for South Africa and Namibia	Ford Foundation
Mr. David Dison	Media & Broadcast Consultants (Pty) Ltd.
Dr. Mark Orkin, Director	CASE
Dr. Fred Kruger, Director	CSIR-Forestek
Mr. Thabo Chipane, Marketing and Promotions	CSIR-Forestek
Ms. Rosalind H. Thomas, Senior Policy Analyst: International Economic Relations & Cooperation, Centre for Policy Analysis	Development Bank of Southern Africa
Mr. Benny Mokaba, Divisional Manager: Social Development Policy & Information	Development Bank of Southern Africa
Mr. C. Heymans, Manager: Policy Coordination	Development Bank of Southern Africa
Ms. Rhodah Seperepere, Policy Analyst: International Economic Relations & Cooperation	Development Bank of Southern Africa

Sweden

Dr. Tom Alberts, Head of Section, Social Sciences and Humanities	SAREC
Ms. Lena Kövamees, Programme Officer, Division for Public Administration and Management	SIDA
Mr. Thomas Kjellson, Programme Officer, Division for Public Administration and Management	SIDA
Dr. Dag Ehrenpreis, Director, Division of Social Sciences	SIDA

Canada

Mr. Wayne Primeau, Senior Development Officer Pan-Africa Program Africa and Middle-East Branch	CIDA
Ms. Heather Baser, Senior Advisor Technical Cooperation/Capacity Development Policy Branch	CIDA
Ms. Barbara Levine, Senior Policy Coordinator External Relations Policy Branch	CIDA
Mr. Hunter McGill, Director External Relations Policy Branch	CIDA
Ms. Nicole Bouchard, Development Officer Pan-Africa Program Africa and Middle-East Branch	CIDA
Dr. Caroline Pestieau, Director-General Social Sciences Division	IDRC
Mr. John Hardie, Director Policy and Planning Unit	IDRC

Mr. Gérald Bourrier, Regional Director West and Central Africa Regional Office	IDRC
Dr. Saïdou Koala, Senior Programme Officer Environment and Natural Resources Division	IDRC
Mr. Roger Finan, Director Internal Audit Unit	IDRC
Dr. Lynn Thurston, Special Advisor IDRC Services, Finance and Administration	IDRC
Dr. Z. Mikolajuk, Senior Program Specialist Information Sciences and Systems Division	IDRC

Germany

Dr. Rolf Sülzer, Chief of Division 403 Organization, Communication and Management Consultancy	GTZ
Dr. Michael Lutterbeck Central Contracts Division	GTZ
Mr. Gerhard Friedrich, Chief of Group Organization, Communication and Management Consultancy	GTZ
Mr. C. Schnurre Planning and Development Department	GTZ
Ms. H. Krahel Strategic Corporate Development	GTZ
Mr. W.R. Scheffer-Boichorst D.E. 403	GTZ

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Directorate General VIII — Development

M. van de Castelle
Directorate General VIII — Development

Mr. Anthony Crasner, Actions de formation, Coopération culturelle
Directorate General VIII — Development

Mr. Digby Swift, Expert détaché
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Mr. Giuseppe Napoli, Administrateur principal
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Department of Development
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Jarle Haisted, Head
Evaluation Division
Bilateral Department

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

United States of America

Mr. Stephen Weissman, Division Chief
Energy and Infrastructure Operations Division
Eastern Africa Department

World Bank

Dr. Peter Miovic, Lead Economist
Economic Development Institute

World Bank

Dr. Peter Thurman

USAID

Mr. Jerome Wolgin

USAID

Appendix B — African Academic and Research Professionals

As has been well-documented elsewhere, many African universities, aside from suffering from under financing, which has in turn forced them to turn to consulting as a source of additional income, face other serious problems. These include a decline in the quality of teaching and research because of under staffing and poor quality staff; the lack of basic equipment, books and materials; and a heavy teaching load. University administration is often inefficient and corrupt. There are frequent strikes by staff and students and forced closures by government.

Establishment of a consulting unit by many universities has not circumvented these problems. Frequently the units have been manned by administrators, with no experience of operating a competitive business. Moreover, the units usually lack autonomy and are expected to adhere to cumbersome and inappropriate university regulations and decision making processes. They also lack the necessary equipment and facilities since the university itself does not have the funds for such initial expenditures.

There is little motivation for competent university professionals to work through such consulting units. At present, income from consulting is often not recorded or goes unreported for tax purposes. Breaches of university regulations, regarding the amount of time that can be devoted to consulting and the proportion of fees that must be remitted to the university as overhead are rarely observed. University administrators are reluctant to enforce them since they recognise the inadequacy of staff salaries and benefits and fear the consequences, in terms of the departure of their more qualified and competent academics, were they to do so. Staff who are successfully engaged in consulting perceive no potential benefit from the university's consulting unit. Aside from taxing their income, the unit may actually constrain their to clients with whom they have been cultivating their own contacts.

Conceivably voluntary insurance and certification could prompt some national universities to reconsider their current approach to consulting. Such changes would include:

- A more precise definition of those niches that maximise advantages in domain knowledge.
- A streamlining of their consulting operations and their management along commercial lines.
- Revision of current priorities and regulations in order to offer greater value-added to potential staff adherents.

In many universities, these changes may not prove feasible and their staff will continue to undertake consulting assignments on a free lance basis. Two other modalities — beyond the scope of the current study — may also emerge in future. The first is independent institutes that undertake research and participate in consulting through sub-contracting and partnership agreements. Such bodies are more common in Latin America, where universities are encumbered with bureaucratic, managerial and financial difficulties not dissimilar to those found in Africa. The second is networks of professionals centred about established associations or research networks.

Whether consulting through national universities, on a freelance basis, or through one of these other modalities, the meaningful participation of this sub-group of African professionals in consulting will be assisted through certification and insurance. Furthermore, as noted elsewhere in our more general conclusion, more meaningful participation will in turn strengthen research institutes and universities in the region.

