**Maasai Mara Science and Development Initiative: Approval of projects**

The role of the Scientific Board (SB) is to approve all project proposals for MMSDI, checking that they are aligned to the overall MMSDI goal. The SB is responsible for keeping an overview of all project proposals to avoid duplication or overlap of research. The SB are responsible for connecting such similar/related projects and the associated partners to encourage collaboration, i.e., to encourage project leaders to contact potential collaborators identified by the SB.

As a procedure for the project approvals, it was decided that two members of the SB – appointed by the SB chair – should review the proposal and check that it is suitable for the overall goal of MMSDI and for the specific sub-goals, providing their assessments within 2 weeks.

*Criteria for approval:*

* Projects should be aligned to the overall MMSDI goal and selected sub-goals
* Projects should include non-academic stakeholders, where relevant
* Projects should commit to provide access to the results at the end of the project – the Maasai Mara Information Facility should ideally be used for this purpose (once it has been developed and implemented)
* Projects commit to provide a ½-1 page broadly intelligible presentation of the findings to be posted on MMSDI web-page/MMIF, at the end of the project
* Projects should commit to provide access to the publications arising from the project:
  + Publications arising from the projects should be published with open access (e.g., Green Open Access) if the target journal provide this option. Authors should provide a link to where each publication is openly accessible
  + If no open access is available the project leader sends each of the four partnering MMSDI institutions a copy of the publication.

As it is our GOAL to “contribute to preserving the Maasai Mara ecosystem, its rich wildlife and culture through interdisciplinary research and development initiatives” it is also important that each project describes the development initiatives linked to the research project. Clear aims of the project and a description of how the “contribution to preserving” will be measures and monitored will also be required.