



## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

### Preamble

The Bureau of Market Research (Pty) Ltd at the University of South Africa (Unisa) operate as a professional research service provider in South Africa since 1960. The BMR underscores the research values of integrity, excellence, professionalism, truth, freedom, responsibility, collaboration, social justice, fairness and quality. These values influence the way in which we engage with research clients while concurrently respecting market research ethics that fosters dynamic, respectful relationships between researchers, interviewers, respondents, communities and other stakeholders. We have a long history of shaping research and transforming society through applied market research and are committed to conduct our research activities in a manner that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders. Our leadership on corporate social responsibility and sustainability excellence is driven by a bold and influential approach that encompasses:

- (i) High ethical standards when conducting market research. The BMR (Pty) maintains a formal constituted Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC) which serves as watchdog to protect humans involved in the research process. Likewise, the BMR is a signed-up member of the Southern African Market Research Association (SAMRA).
- (ii) Respect for privacy of researchers, respondents, research clients, community and other stakeholders.
- (iii) The promotion of a work environment of equal opportunity.
- (iv) The commitment to employ a diverse interviewer corps.
- (v) To maintain a safe and healthy research environment.
- (vi) Efficient human and financial resource expenditure.

The elements of our statement highlighted below cover our approach in working with our clients, interviewers, respondents, stakeholders and communities with dignity and respect.

- **Corporate Governance**

- A formal Service Level Agreement is signed with the research client.
- A steering committee is established to oversee the project.
- Project monitoring and evaluation is conducted through the entire project.



- **Human rights and Labour Standards**

- All humans are treated with dignity and respect.
- Formal contracts are signed with interviewers.
- Interviewers are fairly compensated according to performance
- Interviewers and respondents can withdraw from the project without any intimidation.
- Central and field editing procedures are used to verify quality of work.
- Creation and maintenance of documents and records ensure good compliance with company regulations
- The company endorses confidentiality to protect privacy of interviewers and respondents.
- Comprehensive fieldwork training to equip interviewers with the necessary interviewing skills to secure quality data collection.
- The BMR does not make use of child labour in executing its interviewing tasks.
- The BMR commits to the development and training of interviewers to enhance future employment opportunities.
- The BMR is supportive of prior engagements with community leaders before starting the actual interviews.

#### **Health and safety**

The BMR (Pty) Ltd recognises a safe environment for researchers and interviewers, with specific emphases placed on the safety of interviewers, especially female interviewers who are more vulnerable after dark. Risk assessment and mitigation strategies are secured to respond to unexpected environmental changes (protest actions, off-line technology systems). Interviewers are also provided with identification cards and introduction letters, which presents a good platform for conducting interviews in a safe environment. Likewise, the BMR applies paired interviewing approached whereby interviewers work closely in teams under the supervision of a fieldwork manager. Interviewers are also taught to respect the right of respondents to opt-out at any stage of the interview or to decline an invitation to be interviewed. We recruit, train and monitor locals to act as interviewers, which contributes to safer interviewing and higher participation rates due to local interviewers' language and cultural knowledge and ability to undertake interviews in the language of choice.

#### **Fair operating practices**

The BMR (Pty) Ltd have a zero tolerance toward cheating by interviewers. If errors occurs during the execution of a research project, we will acknowledge it and pursue corrective measures in place to address the root cause and minimize the likelihood of problems repeating.

Furthermore, intellectual property rights are respected by the BMR (Pty) Ltd and transfer of technology and know-how is done in a matter that protects these rights.

The BMR (Pty) Ltd is also committed to protect the reasonable privacy expectations of personal information of all stakeholders involved in the research. The BMR complies



with the POPI Act when personal information are collected, stored, processed and shared.

The BMR actively solicits and uses client feedback for continuous improvement.

### **Open communication and freedom of association**

Open communication and direct engagement between the BMR and clients are regarded as the most effective and constructive way to resolve issues. The BMR has an open-door policy that allows clients, interviewers and respondents to communicate discretely and openly with the BMR. We hold our researchers and interviewers accountable for producing quality data and reporting any challenges immediately.

### **Environmental issues**

Care of the environment is one of our key responsibilities despite the fact that our business does not inherently have an environmental impact. We do however take consideration of environmental issues in the professional research services we provide and endeavour to reduce our environmental impact to an absolute minimum. We strive to ensure that the BMR (Pty) Ltd reduces its environmental impact through the design of online survey platforms, which concurrently reduces the unnecessary production of paper-based questionnaires. Furthermore, the BMR's recruitment practices targets the use of local citizens as interviewers, which reduces long-distance travelling and air pollution. In cases where survey questionnaires are printed, the BMR support the optimizing of printing in black colour and supports double sided printing. When meeting the legal requirements of the number of year required to store questionnaires, the BMR supports recycling programmes including paper shredding.

### **Research client issues**

The BMR (Pty) Ltd recognizes the importance of understanding the needs and expectations of our clients. We want to ensure that the client's expectations are met and exceeded. Our process for monitoring client satisfaction encompasses regular and frequent communication with the client. For this purposes the BMR regularly schedules meetings with client. Any dissatisfaction issues require an investigation and a corrective action. We take any client feedback and complaints seriously and encourages open communication to minimize failures. When a complaint occurs, it is addressed immediately.

### **Community Involvement**

The BMR recognizes the importance of community involvement in the research. Our research business is dependent upon our communities for clients and our communities are dependent on our business for employment opportunities and for our research services. Consequently, the BMR is active in community participation and encourages community participation in the pre- during and post-interviewing phases. For interviewer recruitment, the BMR supports preferential treatment of vulnerable groups in communities (i.e. youth (18 – 35 years) and females).



### **Summary**

The research operations and ultimate responsibility for the commitment to our corporate social and environmental sustainability principles lies with every employee of the BMR. In executing research, the BMR is committed to conduct our research activities in a manner that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders.

### **Pledge**

We pledge to continually improve our performance by instilling and maintaining a culture that is respectful of this statement.

CEO: Bureau of Market Research  
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