

# **Strategic Action Agenda 2008–2010**

**Network of African  
Science Academies  
(NASAC)**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NASAC  
Strategic Action  
Agenda  
(2008–2010)

## NASAC's Mission

As at 2008, the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) membership consisted of thirteen science academies and its mission statement defined as follows:

*The Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) believes that science is essential to the economic, social and cultural development of Africa. Acting from this belief NASAC has set itself two overarching aims: to assist the NASAC member academies with making the voice of African science heard with African decision-makers and decision-makers worldwide; and to support the NASAC member academies with contributing to science and technology capacity building in all African countries.*

## Interactive process

This is NASAC's first Strategic Action Agenda ever. It has been developed through an intensive interactive process involving all NASAC member academies. Visits to the US National Academy of Sciences (2003), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (2006) and the Royal Society of London (2006) have greatly facilitated this process. Staff from the Royal Netherlands Academy have supported the NASAC Secretariat with drafting the plan.

## Overall guidelines

The following considerations have guided the selection of the 10 specific Action Items that are the core of this Strategic Action Agenda.

First, NASAC is not a purpose in itself, implying that each and every Action Item must produce benefits for African science and/or the NASAC member Academies.

Second, NASAC is a young organisation and so are most of its members, implying that each and every Action Item must be do-able with limited resources.

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Third, the above two considerations explain why in this first Strategic Action Agenda there is much emphasis on strengthening NASAC member academies.

Fourth, rather than defining new activities, the Strategic Action Agenda must set concrete priorities within the framework of ongoing activities.

## **Action Items 2007–2009**

These considerations have resulted in the NASAC member academies endorsing the following 10 Action Items for the period 2007–2009.

1. Help create new academies and support existing members with developing strategic plans and concrete work plans.
2. Organise for member academies a series of workshops on best practices for merit-based science academies.
3. Develop, and share with member academies, expertise on funding opportunities for research in Africa.
4. Request a study on re-vitalising African universities and research institutions in national innovation systems from the InterAcademy Council (IAC).
5. Develop a website to inform the general public of NASAC and its activities and to facilitate information exchange among NASAC member academies.
6. Stimulate scientific networking and research collaboration between African and non-African scientists.
7. Support member academies with undertaking a fore-sighting exercise designed to a set research priorities at the national level.
8. Continue to organise scientific conferences and ministerial roundtables on topics crucial to Africa.
9. Position NASAC as an attractive partner in matters of Africa-wide policy making and collaboration.
10. Support initiatives to develop concrete plans and proposals for the creation of national science foundations.

## **Management**

The NASAC Executive Committee is in charge of implementation, while an expert group consisting of four to six independent experts prepares and implements the decision of the executive committee. Organisations supporting NASAC with the implementation of the plan are represented in an advisory board chaired by an African scientist or decision-maker of the highest international reputation.

In terms of staff there will be a dedicated project coordinator supported by a (part-time) scientific officer and a (part time) Management Assistant.

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## Implementation and budget

Annexed to the Strategic Action Agenda is a detailed implementation plan outlining for each of the above 10 action items the concrete deliverable(s) to be produced, the activities that need to be carried out to produce these deliverables and the costs of these activities.

Altogether the costs of realising the 10 action items as defined in the implementation plan amount to US\$ 1,408,000. An additional US\$ 288,000 is needed for project management, bringing the total costs of implementing the Strategic Action Agenda to US\$ 1,696,000.

This amount does not include the in-kind contributions of NASAC member academies (estimated at US\$ 250,000), nor does it include the support received from the ASADI Project of the US National Academy of Sciences.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Mission

The Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) believes that science is essential to the economic, social and cultural development of Africa. Acting from this belief NASAC has two overarching aims: to assist the NASAC member academies with making the voice of African science heard with African decision-makers and decision-makers worldwide; and to support the NASAC member academies with contributing to science and technology capacity building in all African countries.

## 2. Membership

At the initiative of the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) and under sponsorship of the InterAcademy Panel (IAP), the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) was formed on December 13, 2001 with the following founding member academies:

1. African Academy of Sciences;
2. Cameroon Academy of Sciences;
3. Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences;
4. Kenya National Academy of Sciences;
5. Madagascar's National Academy of Arts, Letters and Sciences;
6. Nigerian Academy of Sciences;
7. Académie des Sciences et Techniques du Sénégal;
8. Uganda National Academy of Sciences; and
9. Academy of Science of South Africa.

The AAS, having initiated the process of forming the Network, agreed also to host the NASAC Secretariat. NASAC membership in 2008 stands at 13 member academies with the following four academies as additional members:

10. Tanzania Academy of Sciences;
11. Zambia Academy of Sciences;
12. Zimbabwe Academy of Sciences; and
13. Sudanese National Academy of Sciences.

## 3. Objectives

Reflecting its mission, the overall objective of the NASAC is to: *act as an independent African forum that brings together Academies of Science in the continent to discuss the scientific aspects of problems of common concern,*

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*to make common statements on major issues relevant to Africa and to provide mutual support to member academies.* In pursuing this objective the network collaborates with other academies inside and outside the continent as well as with regional and international organisations concerned with African problems.

More specifically, NASAC undertakes the following activities:

- Facilitate the provision of advice to governments and regional organisations on scientific aspects of issues of importance to Africa's development;
- Promote cooperation between academies in Africa by exchanging information on programmes and experiences, and sharing common visions;
- Assist in building the capacities of academies in Africa to improve their role as independent expert advisors to governments and to strengthen their national, regional and international functions;
- Assist science communities in Africa to set up national independent academies where such bodies do not exist; and to
- Organise conferences, workshops and symposia, and issue statements or reports on topics of major African concern.

The NASAC membership is drawn from African countries and member academies are independent, non-governmental, non-political and non-profit scientific organisations, but above all, are merit-based and national in the scope of their operations. NASAC is governed by a General Assembly, which consists of the presidents of all member academies, and an Executive Committee consisting of the President, three Vice- Presidents and the Secretary-General.

#### **4. Visits and consultations**

Between 2001 and 2006 NASAC has grown in terms of the number of member academies, but also with respect to its activities. Significantly contributing to the development of those activities were three working visits of the presidents (or their designated substitutes) of NASAC member academies and NASAC staff to, respectively, the US National Academies of Sciences (US NAS) in April 2003; the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) in February 2006; and the Royal Society of London in October 2006.

The US NAS-visit culminated in the African Science Academy Development Initiative (ASADI), which is funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Under this initiative, all nine founding NASAC members receive support to strengthen their strategic planning capacities, while three academies (Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda) are more intensively supported for purposes of capacity building.

At the end of the visit to the KNAW—with all 13 members participating—participants formulated a number of action items for possible follow-up and requested the KNAW to support NASAC in developing these ideas into a “NASAC Strategic Action Agenda”<sup>1</sup>. This was followed by consultations among the NASAC President, the NASAC Secretariat and the KNAW team that organised the February visit.



*Consultations at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)*

A first draft of a possible action agenda was circulated to the NASAC member academies in June 2006 for comment. Comments so received were included in a new version and this version was extensively discussed at a series in mid-July consultations in Pretoria, South Africa. Important feedback on the draft also came from the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology and the ICSU Regional Office.

NASAC members reviewed the draft action agenda again during the visit to the Royal Society in October 2006. That visit enriched the agenda with new ideas and inputs.

A last round of discussion and consultations took place at the IAP General Conference in Alexandria, Egypt, in December 2006.

## **5. Endorsement and implementation**

Chapter II of this document is the outcome of the consultative process just outlined and it incorporates the ideas and changes suggested by member academies during that process. As a result, the NASAC member academies have endorsed in principle the concrete actions set forth in Chapter II. On that basis it also became possible to add a Chapter III on project management, as well as an annex outlining an implementation plan and budget.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the ideas developed during the visit became reality very quickly: (1) by letter of 12 May 2006 – that is: within three months after the visit—Dr. John Mugabe, Head of the NEPAD office of Science and Technology, was able to invite NASAC to participate as an observer in the meetings of the African Ministerial Council of Science and Technology; and (2) also acting most expeditiously, the European Science Foundation gave its support to yet another idea that emerged during the visit: to organise a series of scientific workshops for eminent African and European scientists.

## II. STRATEGIC ACTION ITEMS

### 1. Overall considerations and focus

The “NASAC Strategic Action Agenda” presented below is not so much aimed at NASAC itself, as it is aimed at the NASAC member academies. It is true that NASAC will drive the implementation of the agenda, but the 10 concrete action items listed in the agenda are not primarily designed to be of benefit to NASAC as such. Rather, their aim is to strengthen the thirteen national academies of science that are members of NASAC, both in terms of their relevance to science and scientists and in terms of impact on decision-makers and society. And beyond this to contribute, through the NASAC academies, to the development of African science and Africa.

There is great deal of variety among NASAC member academies and for this reason there is not a single best way to support them in becoming more effective. Some NASAC member academies are established organisations with strong ties to active scientists and government—others are still very young and have a long way to go. For this reason, it is essential to adopt some overarching guidelines for the selection and definition of concrete Action Items, as well as for the implementation of the Agenda as a whole.

- First, an academy of science should not be seen as a purpose in itself. An academy should be more than a honorific society: it should also be active in strengthening science and in advising decision-makers.
- Second, an academy can achieve these expectations only if it makes sure its membership is of the highest quality and includes scientists who are actively involved in cutting edge research.
- Third, an academy and the larger science community are mutually dependent: an Academy needs a high quality science community from which to recruit members and a science community needs an academy to enhance its visibility and impact.

One implication of these considerations is that the most effective way to strengthen an academy may well be to invest in the quality and quantity of the science being carried out in a country or region: better science requires better scientists and this would allow an Academy more choice in selecting members. Yet, this is not the approach taken in this first NASAC Strategic Action Agenda. Rather, it opts for a more modest approach—also financially—by focusing on the question of what specific actions can help NASAC member Academies to become more effective in helping to improve the quality of science in their country or region (“policy for science”) and in advising decision-makers and society at large on the scientific aspects of societal issues (“science for policy”).

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One consequence of this choice is that most, if not all, Action Items on the Strategic Action Agenda relate to the functions, practices, organisation and resources of NASAC member academies—and not to science and scientists as such. This approach is of course also wholly consistent with the very nature of NASAC: as a network of science Academies—NASAC’s core mission is to support its members so that they may address issues of science and/or science cooperation within their own country. Or at the regional level in organisations like International Council for Science (ICSU) and the ICSU Regional Office for Africa, the African Union or the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology.

## 2. Priorities and timeline

As a network of academies, NASAC would not be NASAC if it was not involved in the following activities:

- Supporting the scientific leadership in countries with no national academies of science to create new academies.
- Strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of existing academies in Africa, both individually and collectively.
- Developing effective and appropriate links with other African and non-African science organisations or initiatives.
- Supporting member academies with efforts to enhance public awareness of the potential of science for national development.
- Serving as a platform for the exchange of information on best practices in respect to the core functions of academies.

However, each of the above activities is quite broad and long-term, implying that more specific priorities must be set in the context of an action agenda. This is indeed precisely what the NASAC Strategic Action Agenda is all about: the setting of priorities within the overall framework of the categories of activities that were just mentioned. The agenda identifies a set of priority-actions that are do-able with limited resources and that can be completed within a relatively short period of time.

The setting of priorities also implies the need to set a timeline. As this is the first ever NASAC Strategic Action Agenda it is wise to adopt a flexible schedule. It is therefore proposed to adopt the following procedures:

- As soon as an adequate level of funding has been secured, the NASAC Executive Committee decides on the actions to be initiated without any delay.
- At its regular meetings the NASAC General Assembly reviews the progress made so far and decides on the timeline of actions not yet completed.

Accordingly, some actions may be taken up almost immediately, but most will take place in the short- or medium-term future—with the possibility that some action items may require a long-term perspective and involvement.

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### 3. Ten Action Items

Within the above overall framework 10 (ten) action items have been defined as the heart of the NASAC Strategic Action Agenda 2008–2010.

**1. Help create new academies and support existing members with developing strategic plans and concrete work plans**

NASAC will develop special mechanisms to assist in creating new academies in countries where none exist. As an initial step potential members may be admitted to NASAC as observers, while NASAC may then assist these observers with the development of statutes and strategic planning processes. In addition, for members that do not participate in ASADI, NASAC will provide special support so that they too can develop a strategic plan. This not only for their own benefit, but also as NASAC and its members can only move ahead in a coordinated manner if all NASAC member academies have a strategic plan. For this reason NASAC will also support member academies that do not yet have such a plan to develop a concrete work plan that indicates the specific steps to be taken by the academy for the purpose of implementing that academy's strategic plan.

**2. Organise for member academies a series of workshops on best practices for merit-based science academies**

Each academy is unique. Even so, much can be gained by sharing experiences and insights. For this reason NASAC will organise a series of multi-day workshops on best practices in areas like: membership election and mobilisation, fundraising and resource mobilisation, reporting and advisory functions, outreach to the general public, relations with the press and other media, participation in international science cooperation, sharing of strategic plans, etc. A first workshop may focus especially on the roles of presidents and other elected officers, while subsequent workshops will focus on the tasks of academy executive officials and other members of staff<sup>2</sup>. A limited number of outside experts may participate, but the core agenda of each workshop is to stimulate discussion among the participants themselves.

**3. Develop, and share with member academies, expertise on funding opportunities for research in Africa**

One of the greatest challenges facing African scientists is to obtain adequate funding, both from sources within their respective countries and from worldwide donor organisations. NASAC member academies are well placed to help address that challenge in their own country, but NASAC can complement their efforts by making available to its

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<sup>2</sup> Not only here, but also for the other action items, it is essential to ensure a balance between workshops in English and workshops in French. Hence, the proposal to have two workshops for staff so that it is possible to conduct one of them in French.

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members special expertise that is required if an academy or (a group of) African scientists seek funding from non-African sources. The European Union (EU) is a key actor here, especially as its framework programmes are also open to African scientists. NASAC will mobilise expertise to tap into the EU funding system and make that expertise available to its member academies so that they may support African scientists whose research qualifies for EU funding.

**4. Request a study on re-vitalising African universities and research institutions in national innovation systems from the InterAcademy Council**

The InterAcademy Council (IAC) is exploring the feasibility of a study on the question of how to re-vitalise African universities and research institutions so that they can better contribute to national innovation and development. Representing all African academies of science, NASAC is ideally positioned to act as the requesting organisation for such a study. NASAC will also approach the African Union (AU) and the Association of African Universities (AAU) requesting them to express their support for the IAC study. As with previous IAC studies, the study will most likely have much international visibility, while the outcome of the study will be of particular interest to all NASAC member academies, their governments and the international donor community. As the requesting organisation, NASAC and its members will take the lead in defining follow-up initiatives. IAC itself will generate the funding that is required for the study.

**5. Develop a website to inform the general public of NASAC and its activities and to facilitate information exchange among NASAC member academies**

NASAC will develop as soon as possible a high-quality website with up-to-date information on NASAC and its activities. The website will also provide information on member academies that do not yet have a website of their own, while the NASAC site provides links to the sites of academies that already have a site. Part of the website will be accessible to NASAC members only. Initially, this members-only-section of the site will be an archive where members can find information that should not be available to the public at large (for example, on plans and initiatives under consideration). At a later stage the members-only-section may evolve into a virtual office allowing member academies to work together with less physical travel.

**6. Stimulate scientific networking and research collaboration between African and non-African scientists**

Excellent science is performed in Africa. NASAC will support its member academies to make this visible, both in Africa and elsewhere. An important way of increasing the visibility of science in Africa is to stimulate scientific networking and research publishing, exposing

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scientists from Africa and the rest of the world to each other's work. More specifically, NASAC will collaborate with the European Science Foundation (ESF) and other partners to organise a series of Europe-Africa research conferences on selected areas of research that are of interest both to Africa and European scientists. In these networking activities NASAC will ensure that there is a balance of benefits between African and non-African science. It will also take the initiative to identify structural criteria or best practices that are essential to secure such a balance of benefits and it will bring these criteria and practices to the attention of its member academies and donor organisations.

**7. Support member academies with undertaking a fore-sighting exercise designed to a set research priorities at the national level**

In many countries fore-sighting is an important instrument in determining research agendas and priorities. The outcomes of fore-sighting are used not only by the scientific community itself, but also by governments and donor organisations. NASAC will support interested member academies in initiating a national fore-sighting exercise, both for the purpose of developing expertise and experience with the methodologies of fore-sighting and for the purpose of defining research priorities in consultation with the science community, government and, where appropriate, the private sector and other stakeholders. NASAC will ensure that the lessons learned in these fore-sighting exercises are available to all NASAC member academies.

**8. Continue to organise scientific conferences and ministerial roundtables on topics crucial to Africa**

NASAC has so far held two scientific conferences and two ministerial roundtable meetings<sup>3</sup>. The scientific conferences provide a platform for exchange of experiences amongst NASAC members and the scientific community, both from within and outside of Africa. The ministerial roundtables provide an interface between scientists and decision-makers, especially if the panellists are drawn from Ministries of Education and/or Science and Technology. NASAC will undertake to hold at least one scientific conference and one ministerial roundtable every two years on themes that are pertinent to the continent as a whole. These events will be organised as collaborative projects involving a broad range of partners, such as funding agencies and/or local governments. Individual NASAC academies will contribute by organising and hosting conferences and roundtables, while other members will serve on organising committees.

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<sup>3</sup> *Topics of discussion at the ministerial roundtables are usually derived from the main theme of a conference. Two themes were covered so far: HIV/AIDS Pandemic, its implication on human development in the continent and the critical issue in its control (September 2004); and "Energy situation in AFRICA. What contributions can Africans scientists and engineers make towards resolving the energy issues in the continent?" (December 2005). Future topics could relate to: water resources and management, sustainable energy systems, surveillance and detection of infectious diseases and African universities.*

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**9. Position NASAC as an attractive partner in matters of Africa-wide policy making and collaboration**

Once (most of) the above action items have been successfully completed—and not any sooner—NASAC may be in a position to become the first port of call for institutions outside Africa that are looking for a partner on Africa-wide science and technology issues. Such a role for NASAC must complement and support the role of NASAC member academies. Of special importance is the development of cooperative relationships with the EU, the global science donor community and organisations like the InterAcademy Panel, the InterAcademy Council, the US National Academy of Sciences, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Royal Society of London, the Association of African Universities, and the International Council for Science. Within Africa NASAC will seek to establish strong and constructive links with the ICSU and TWAS regional offices and with bodies like NEPAD and the AU.

**10. Support initiatives to develop concrete plans and proposals for the creation of national science foundations**

Building African science foundations is a major undertaking that cannot be driven by any organisation on its own. For this reason NASAC and the NASAC member academies will seek to support efforts to launch such foundations, recognising that the most critical factor for a foundation's success will be its ability to generate structural financial support from African sources. In this process NASAC and the NASAC members can represent the voice of the science community—nationally and regionally—especially by mobilising the voice of active African scientists that work at the cutting edge of their respective disciplines. The effort to establish African science foundations should be in line with NEPAD's African Science and Innovation Fund (ASIF) to ensure complementarity.



### III. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

#### 1. NASAC and AAS

Implementing the 10 action items of the previous chapter requires the creation of a “project management structure” to make clear who is in charge of what. In setting up such a structure there is one formal aspect that needs special consideration: the relationship between the AAS and NASAC.

The AAS functions as NASAC’s host academy and, for that reason, NASAC as such does not have legal capacity to enter into contracts or to employ staff. This implies that in all formal matters the AAS acts as NASAC’s legal custodian, while in matters of policy or content NASAC is autonomous, governed by its own bodies—in which AAS is no more, and no less, than one of the member academies. This implies that the project management structure must ensure a clear distinction between, on the one hand, AAS and its staff acting on behalf of the AAS to implement AAS policies and AAS decisions and, on the other hand, AAS and its staff acting on behalf of NASAC to implement NASAC policies and NASAC decisions<sup>4</sup>.

The following paragraphs will outline the main features of a management structure that reflects the particular situation of NASAC being substantially in charge, but lacking formal authority in legal matters.

#### 2. Governance

The governance structure must meet the following requirements: (1) be in accordance with NASAC decision-making mechanisms; (2) ensure that all *substantive* decisions are made within the framework of NASAC; (3) even so, permit AAS and its executive director to discharge their *formal* responsibilities as the legal custodian of NASAC.

The following structure will meet these requirements:

- The NASAC Executive Committee is in charge of the implementation of the Strategic Action Agenda and this committee therefore takes all decisions of principle or policy. As there are not yet any specific provisions in the NASAC Statutes, the Executive Committee adopts a set of ad hoc rules on the convening of meetings and on decision-making.

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<sup>4</sup> While this was (and still is) the initial operational arrangement between the AAS and NASAC, it is perhaps appropriate that NASAC should aspire to become at some point a legal entity on its own.

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- There is an Expert Group consisting of four to six independent experts to prepare and implement the decisions of the Executive Committee and to ensure that these decisions and actions are based on merit-based expert knowledge. The Expert Group is appointed by the Executive Committee with the consent of the Advisory Board.
  - There is an Advisory Board chaired by an African scientist or decision-maker of the highest international reputation and consisting of representatives of all organisations that support the project. The Executive Committee and the Advisory Board meet once a year in a joint session to review project progress.

This structure ensures that through its Executive Committee NASAC is substantially in charge of implementation, while the preparatory role of the Expert Group and the monitor and review role of the Advisory Board minimise the risk that, in that role, members of the Executive Committee will be confronted with potential conflicts of interest, or the appearance thereof, for example when NASAC provides financial support to that member's academy.

### **3. Staffing**

The number of activities to be carried out in a relatively short period, as well as the complexity of most of these activities indicate the need to appoint a dedicated Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator must have proven project management experience and skills, including financial, resource and office management. He or she must have also an affinity with science and international science cooperation and must have the ability to represent the project to the outside world.

The Project Coordinator's formal position will be guided by the following principles:

- He or she is charged with preparing and implementing the decisions of the Executive Committee. In preparing an Executive Committee decision on programmatic issues the Project Coordinator will always consult the Expert Group.
- The Project Coordinator prepares and attends the meetings of the Advisory Board. For each meeting of the Board he or she prepares a report on the progress of the project and on the decisions taken by him or her and/or by the Executive Board.
- The Project Coordinator keeps the AAS Executive Director informed of the progress of the project. He or she consults the AAS Executive Director before taking any decision with financial implications.
- Any authorisation to transfer project funds from an account held by the AAS will be signed by the Project Coordinator and co-signed by the AAS Executive Director before any such funds are transferred.
- Project staff is appointed or discharged by the AAS Executive Director on the basis of a proposal of the Project Coordinator.

- The NASAC Executive Committee, and ultimately the NASAC General Assembly, decide in case of a conflict between the Project Coordinator and the AAS Executive Director.

It follows from the above that the Project Coordinator is the linking pin between NASAC's Executive Committee—substantially responsible for implementation—and the AAS and its Executive Director—formally responsible for implementation, including the financial aspects. He or she carries out the decisions of the Executive Committee unless the AAS Executive Director disagrees on formal grounds. This also indicates why the AAS Executive Director must be kept informed at all times and why funds can only be transferred with his co-signature<sup>5</sup>.

As to other project staff, based on experience with other AAS projects—especially the African Forest Research Network (AFORNET)—two more dedicated positions will be required: a part-time Scientific Officer to support the Project Coordinator in respect of programmatic aspects and a part-time Management Assistant to support the Project Coordinator in respect of administrative and financial matters. If these two positions are filled on a full-time basis, the Project Coordinator can have a 50 percent part time appointment. This would make it possible to combine the position of Project Coordinator with another part time position, either at the AAS secretariat or elsewhere<sup>6</sup>.



*NASAC President and the AAS Executive Director signed an MOU*

<sup>5</sup> All this is perhaps not the most simple arrangement imaginable, but the above principles ensure that NASAC activities are actually controlled by NASAC, while they also guarantee that AAS and the AAS Executive Director can discharge their formal responsibilities. Needless to say that the latter is also of crucial importance to ensure accountability in relation to organisations that fund the implementation of the Strategic Action Agenda.

<sup>6</sup> Which may attract qualified candidates that are reluctant to consider a position that is essentially limited to a three year period.

## IV. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

As was said before, this is NASAC's first Strategic Action Agenda ever. Although the agenda places great emphasis on do-ability and realism, fact is that for organisations as young as NASAC and (most of) its member academies the agenda sets high standards and ambitions. Good governance and good project management as suggested in Chapter III are essential, but they provide no guarantees for success. Commitment and political will are by far more important.

The challenges ahead rest not only with NASAC as such, but also with its member academies—perhaps even more so. Some of these member academies seem well-equipped to move forward—others may need all the help they can get from NASAC and from the more experienced NASAC members.

However, once the Strategic Action Agenda will have been implemented successfully, NASAC and its member academies will have accomplished a great deal. They will have gained much relevant practical experience with joint activities, while they will also have made significant progress in developing their organisational functions and practices. Perhaps most importantly, they have shown the world what they can do.

It is therefore on good grounds that this Strategic Action Agenda focuses on the NASAC member academies, but the ultimate test of success lies beyond NASAC and its members: to what extent did the implementation of the agenda contribute to enhancing the quality of science in Africa and, through science, to the economic and social development of the African people?

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND BUDGET

## 1. Introduction

If the 10 (ten) action items outlined in the Chapter II are to have any real and measurable results, an Implementation Plan is required that identifies, for each action item, the deliverable or deliverables to be produced, the activities to be undertaken to produce each of the deliverables, as well as the funding that is required for carrying out these activities.

Although the sequence “deliverable(s) → activities → funding” appears to have an inherent and compelling logic, fact is that the sequence involves many subjective choices. It is therefore essential that decision-makers do not perceive the implementation plan as just a more detailed representation of the Action Items of Chapter II: it is as much a policy document as Chapter II.

The implementation plan is of special importance to (potential) funding organisations, not only in deciding to fund the project, but also in monitoring and reviewing the progress of the project.

## 2. Deliverables, activities and funding

**Action Item 1: Help create new academies and support strategic plans and work plans<sup>7</sup>**

### Deliverables to be produced

1. Four strategic plans of NASAC members not supported by ASADI
2. Up to 13 work plans to implement strategic plans

### Activities to be carried out

NASAC will organise five workshops. Potential new academies, participating in NASAC as observers, will be invited to participate in all workshops. The first workshop will involve all thirteen NASAC members and will review experience and expertise gained so far by the “ASADI Academies” in developing strategic plans. Discussions will also focus on the contents of the plans as they stand at that time. Four subsequent workshops will be organised at each non-ASADI academy to assist in developing content for the strategic plan of that Academy. Experts from a NASAC member academy that has already completed its strategic plan will facilitate each of these workshops.

<sup>7</sup> The cost estimates given for the various action items are based on the following assumptions: (1) hotel and breakfast: US\$ 100 per participant per day; (2) meeting room, coffee, lunch and tea: US\$ 40 per participant per day; (3) per diem dinner and local transportation: US\$ 60 per participant per day; (4) travel within Africa: US\$ 1250 per participant; (5) travel from other countries to Africa: US\$ 3000 per participant; (6) average cost NASAC staff: US\$ 2000 per month; and (7) overhead to cover costs of communication, housing and consumables: 20 percent of direct cost.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 134,500**

Workshop 1: 30 participants, 2 days, travel costs	US\$ 55,000
Workshops 2, 3, 4, 5: 20 participants each, 3 days, travel costs	50,000
Staff time NASAC secretariat: 3,5 months	7,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	22,500

**Action Item 2: Organise workshops on best practices****Deliverables to be produced**

1. Three interactive workshops for all NASAC members
2. One overall report on the outcomes of the workshops

**Activities to be carried out**

Involving all NASAC member academies, as well as selected non-African Academies, three workshops will be organised on best practices for merit-based science Academies in Africa. As there never will be a single best solution for all situations, the workshops will be highly interactive, providing ample opportunity for discussion and debate. Subject to further programmatic discussion, the first workshop may focus on presidents and other elected officers, while participants of the second and third workshop will be drawn mostly from executive officers and other academy staff. After the last workshop a report will be produced for distribution among NASAC members and other interested parties.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 229,000**

Workshops 1, 2, 3: 35 participants each, 2 days, travel costs	US\$ 165,000
Report preparation and dissemination	20,000
Staff time NASAC Secretariat: 3 months	6,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	38,000

**Action Item 3: Develop and share expertise on funding opportunities****Deliverables to be produced**

1. A sustainable base of knowledge and expertise on EU funding opportunities.

**Activities to be carried out**

The aim of Science and Technology—Europe Africa Project (ST-EAP), recently approved by the European Commission, is to strengthen cooperation between African scientists and between African and European scientists. Partners in ST-EAP are the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, South Africa, and the AAS on behalf of NASAC. ST-EAP also aims at developing and sharing expertise among African scientist on the EU Framework Programmes. Therefore, some of the ST-EAP deliverables coincide in essence with deliverables of Action Item 3. However, additional training of the staff of NASAC and member academies will be undertaken to ensure the sustainability of the ST-EAP results beyond the limited life-cycle of ST-EAP. Part of that training is to strengthen networking with and in Brussels.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 91,000**

Training staff NASAC and NASAC members, travel costs	US\$ 68,000
Staff time NASAC secretariat and member Academies: 3 months	6,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	17,000

#### **Action item 4: Request study on African universities from IAC**

##### **Deliverables to be produced**

1. Thirteen reports by NASAC members on implementation of IAC report
2. One NASAC report to IAP on implementation of IAC report by members
3. MOU between AAU and NASAC on implementation of IAC report

##### **Activities to be carried out**

The costs of the study will be covered by the IAC. However, as the requesting organisation, NASAC must take the lead in defining and implementing follow-up activities and initiatives. Although NASAC itself also has a role to play, most follow-up activities and initiatives will be undertaken by NASAC member Academies. Therefore, NASAC will focus on supporting its members, also financially. NASAC itself will report to the IAP on the results achieved. As the Association of African Universities (AAU) has a critical role to play in the implementation of the IAC report, NASAC will negotiate a MOU with the AAU on follow-up activities and initiatives.

##### **Estimated costs: US\$ 83,000**

Support NASAC member Academies (US\$ 5,000 each)	US\$ 65,000
Staff time NASAC secretariat: 2 months	4,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	14,000

#### **Action Item 5: Develop a NASAC website**

##### **Deliverables to be produced**

1. Contact points at each NASAC member academy
2. Internet connectivity for NASAC academies
3. Website open to the general public with a members-only-area

##### **Activities to be carried out**

The NASAC website will be useful to users only if it provides high-quality and up-to-date information. For this reason, a special contact person will be appointed at each NASAC member academy, both to feed information into the website and to distribute relevant information from the site among that academy's membership. When necessary, NASAC will also support member academies with achieving Internet-connectivity. Construction and technical maintenance of the website will be handled by a third party. The NASAC staff will handle content management.

##### **Estimated costs: US\$ 134,000**

Staff time contact points all NASAC members	US\$ 39,000
Support Internet-connectivity selected member Academies	25,000
Construction and technical maintenance website	30,000
Staff time NASAC Secretariat: 9 months	18,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	22,000

#### **Action Item 6: Stimulate scientific networking and research collaboration**

##### **Deliverables to be produced**

1. Six ESF research conferences
2. Report on criteria and best practices to achieve balance of benefits

**Activities to be carried out**

As was the case for Action Item 3, some of the ST-EAP deliverables are relevant to Action Item 6. This is also true for the ESF initiative to organise six conferences between African and European scientists. If NASAC and its members are to be an equal partner in this initiative—as they should be—additional resources are needed on the African side. A theme to be addressed at each of these conferences—and in other settings—is how to achieve a balance of benefits for African and for non-African science. NASAC will set up a mechanism to prepare a report on criteria and best practices found in actual science cooperative projects that are essential in securing a balance of benefits.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 253,000**

Contributions NASAC to ESF workshops	US\$ 150,000
Preparation report best practices balance benefits	60,000
Staff time NASAC Secretariat: 3 months	6,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	37,000

**Action Item 7: Undertake fore-sighting exercises****Deliverables to be produced**

1. Four to six national fore-sighting reports

**Activities to be carried out**

In consultation with outside experts, NASAC will define an overall format for fore-sighting exercises that are suitable within the context of African science academies. This format will be distributed among the NASAC membership and NASAC member academies will be invited to respond by submitting a specific proposal. NASAC will support interested academies, also financially. For planning purposes it is assumed that at most six NASAC members will be able to carry out a fore-sighting exercise in the next three years. The results will be made available to all NASAC member academies.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 217,000**

Support member Academies	US\$ 150,000
Consultancy	25,000
Staff time NASAC Secretariat: 3 months	6,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	36,000

**Action Item 8: Organise scientific conferences and ministerial roundtables****Deliverables to be produced**

1. One scientific conference and one ministerial roundtable
2. Publications of outcomes on NASAC website

**Activities to be carried out**

In cooperation with partner organisations NASAC will organise a scientific conference on a theme of interest to Africa as a whole, as well as to scientists and scientific organisations worldwide. The theme will be determined by the 2007 NASAC General Assembly so that the conference can take place at the end of 2008 or in early 2009. A ministerial roundtable will be organised in conjunction with the conference. The outcomes of the conference and the roundtable will be published on the NASAC website and, possibly, through other media.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 74,500**

Support organising committee	US\$ 45,000
Dissemination of outcomes	15,000
Staff time NASAC Secretariat: 1 month	2,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	12,500

**Action Item 9: Position NASAC as an attractive partner****Deliverables to be produced**

[To be determined by 2008 General Assembly]

**Activities to be carried out**

The various Action Items of the Strategic Action Agenda must come together at the end of the present planning period in an event or initiative that draws global attention to NASAC and its member academies and that consolidates them as important actors on the stage of African science cooperation and policy-making. Although the precise nature and timing of the event will be determined by the NASAC General Assembly at its 2008 regular meeting, a base-level amount of funding must be reserved now.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 129,500**

Costs of event	US\$ 100,000
Staff time NASAC Secretariat: 4 months	8,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	21,500

**Action Item 10: Support creation of African science foundations****Deliverables to be produced**

[To be determined by 2008 General Assembly]

**Activities to be carried out**

NASAC and member academies must contribute actively to ongoing initiatives to create a African science foundations. However, at the moment the precise nature of that contribution can not yet be determined. For this reason, NASAC will continue to monitor developments, indicating a positive interest. The 2008 NASAC General Assembly will assess the situation and decide on the specific deliverable that NASAC and its member academies can contribute to the process of creating foundations.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 62,500**

Costs of deliverable	US\$ 50,000
Staff time NASAC Secretariat: 2 months	2,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	10,500

**3. Project management and project staff**

The costs of NASAC staff time, as well as the salary of the Scientific Officer and the costs of running a project office have already been budgeted as part of the costs of producing the deliverables. What remains are the costs of the meetings of the Expert Group, the Advisory Board and the salaries of special

project staff insofar as they are charged with project management tasks, that is the (part time) Project Coordinator and the full time Management Assistant.

**Estimated costs: US\$ 288,000 (for three years)**

Expert Group: 2 meetings per year, 6 participants, travel costs	US\$ 60,000
Advisory Board: 1 meeting per year, 15 participants, travel costs	75,000
Salaries for Project Coordinator and Management Assistant	105,000
Overhead: 20 percent flat rate of direct costs	48,000

#### 4. Overall budget requirements

The costs of producing the deliverables defined in the previous paragraph come in total to US\$ 1,408,000. This amount can be broken down as follows:

Action Item	Programmatic activities	NASAC secretariat	Flat rate overhead	Total amount
1	105.000	7.000	22.500	134.500
2	185.000	6.000	38.000	229.000
3	68.000	6.000	17.000	91.000
4	65.000	4.000	14.000	83.000
5	94.000	18.000	22.000	134.000
6	210.000	6.000	37.000	253.000
7	175.000	6.000	36.000	217.000
8	60.000	2.000	12.500	74.500
9	100.000	8.000	21.500	129.500
10	50.000	2.000	10.500	62.500
Total	1.112.000	65.000	231.000	1.408.000

As the table shows, of total project costs about 70 percent is used on programmatic activities that are of direct benefit to NASAC member academies and/or science, while about 30 percent is spent on project management, NASAC staff time and overhead.

In addition to the amount of US\$ 1,408,000 for producing the various deliverables, US\$ 288,000 is needed for project management and special project staff. Altogether, the project will therefore require US\$ 1,696,000 from external sources of funding.

Not included in this amount are the contributions in kind that are needed, and expected, from NASAC member academies. These contributions include the time invested by academy leaders and staff for the benefit of the project, as

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well as logistical support provided for workshops and other meetings. Actual figures may vary, but a reasonable assumption would be that on average each academy will spend about two months per year on the project. For a three-year period this amounts to US\$ 156,000<sup>8</sup> for all 13 NASAC member academies. If logistical support is included, the total contribution of NASAC member academies will fall in the range of US\$ 200,000 to US\$ 250,000.

Not included are also the contributions from ASADI. First of all, the above 10 action items essentially build upon foundations created by ASADI and, accordingly, on the investments ASADI has made so far in African science academies. Secondly and more specifically, ASADI makes it possible for the NASAC member academies to meet at least once a year. This has already greatly assisted in developing this Strategic Action Agenda, while it will also be an essential contribution towards the implementation of this plan.

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<sup>8</sup> Calculated at the same rate as for staff time in relation to the deliverables of the preceding paragraph.



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