

Agenda: GSSA Strategic Planning meeting 24 April 2007 at Clansthal

1. Welcome

2. Present and apologies

3. Review Vision and Mission

Vision

- Develop/foster/promote development of a dynamic and inclusive forum for scientists and practitioners in range and forage science.
- For the GSSA and its members to advance the science and practice of sustainable use of range and forage resources for the social and economic wellbeing of the people of southern Africa.

Mission

The GSSA aims to advance the science and practice of sustainable use of range and forage resources for the social and economic wellbeing of the people of southern Africa.

4. Review strategic objectives

4.1 Objective 1: To inform key role players in the environmental field of the GSSA

4.1.1 *Successes*

4.1.2 *Activities*

4.1.3 *Responsibilities*

4.2 Objective 2: To ensure that congress adopts a relevant theme each year through which it can promote the society to a broader audience.

4.2.1 *Successes*

4.2.2 *Activities*

4.2.3 *Responsibilities*

4.3 Objective 3: To promote GSSA Congresses by ensuring that congress announcements reach the broadest possible audience.

4.3.1 *Successes*

4.3.2 *Activities*

4.3.3 *Responsibilities*

4.4 Objective 4: To ensure the translation of technical and scientific information into articles accessible to the public.

4.4.1 *Successes*

4.4.2 *Activities*

4.4.3 *Responsibilities*

4.5 Objective 5: Promote the discipline through providing links from the discipline to relevant radio and television media.

4.5.1 *Successes*

4.5.2 *Activities*

4.5.3 *Responsibilities*

4.6 Objective 6: Develop a protocol to promote the Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) to the broader environment.

4.6.1 *Successes*

4.6.2 *Activities*

4.6.3 *Responsibilities*

4.7 Objective 7: Promote partnerships between the GSSA, SADC and researchers in other African countries

4.7.1 *Successes*

4.7.2 *Activities*

4.7.3 *Responsibilities*

4.8 Objective 8: To get ISI rating for the journal.

4.8.1 *Successes*

4.8.2 *Activities*

4.8.3 *Responsibilities*

4.9 Objective 9: To develop a new three-year contract with NISC.

4.9.1 *Successes*

4.9.2 *Activities*

4.9.3 *Responsibilities*

4.10 Objective 10: To develop an advertising/advertorial strategy for Grassroots

4.10.1 *Successes*

4.10.2 *Activities*

4.10.3 *Responsibilities*

4.11 Objective 11: Determine the portfolio of additional members

4.11.1 *Successes*

4.11.2 *Activities*

4.11.3 *Responsibilities*

4.12 Objective 12: To ensure that key administrative responsibilities are executed timously and effectively

4.12.1 *Successes*

4.12.2 *Activities*

4.12.3 *Responsibilities*

4.13 Objective 13: Ensure that if constitutional changes are necessary they are tabled at the April meeting for timeous circulation to the membership

4.13.1 *Successes*

4.13.2 *Activities*

4.13.3 *Responsibilities*

4.14 Objective 14: Review the strategic plan at regular intervals

4.14.1 *Successes*

4.14.2 *Activities*

4.14.3 *Responsibilities*

5. Review financial situation of the GSSA

6. Action plans

7. Matters arising from Council meeting 18 January 2007

7.1 GSSA language policy and related issues

7.2 PRO portfolio

7.3 Liaison between institutions and organizations

8. Conclusions / summary

8. Closure

Minutes GSSA Strategic Planning meeting 24 April 2007 at Clansthal – KZN South Coast

1. Welcome

MH welcomed everybody and thanked them for attending this meeting. MH thanked FdT for arranging the venue.

2. Present and apologies

Present: Mark Hardy (MH), Freyni du Toit (FdT), Luthando Dziba (LD), Rina Grant (RG), Alan Short (ASh), Loraine van den Berg (LvdB), Annelene Swanepoel (AS), Susi Vetter (SV), Jorrie Jordaan (JJ), Khanyisile Mbatha (KM), Justin du Toit (JdT), Peter Scogings (PS)

Apologies: Winston Trollope (WT) and Leslie Brown (LB)

3. Review Vision and Mission

MH outlined the procedure and objectives of the Annual Strategic Plan review meeting as follows:

- Review the Society's Vision and Mission statements
- Review progress of achieving the 2006 Objectives
- List successes of 2006/07
- Define activities and allocate responsibilities towards achieving stated Objectives during 2007/2008

MH stressed that Council must ensure that the responsibilities allocated to various Council portfolios and listed in these minutes must be provided to new Council members as soon as possible after their election.

After lengthy deliberations Council unanimously agreed on revising the Vision and Mission statements to read as follows:

Vision

Advancing rangeland ecology and pasture management in Africa

Mission

- To be a dynamic and inclusive forum for scientists and practitioners in rangeland ecology and pasture management
- To champion the sustainable use of rangelands and pastures for the benefit of people and the environment

4. Review strategic objectives

4.1 Objective 1: To inform key role players in the environmental field of the GSSA

In previous meetings it was suggested that one of the ways to ensure that the GSSA could be recognized as a key role-player in the environmental field was to provide meaningful inputs to proposed environmental legislation and to comment on issues affecting rangeland ecology and pasture management. Despite the potential difficulties of ensuring consensus opinion from the GSSA on environmental issues due to our diverse membership, Council resolved that it was important that the GSSA should provide inputs to environmental legislation and other environmental issues, in line with the GSSA's stated Vision and Mission.

Response to these issues is the responsibility of PAC as guided by the Society's Response Protocol. However, at present, the PAC does not have the capacity to apply the Response Protocol. A decision needs to be made about who (Ordinary or Professional members) in the

Society should make comments on legislation or if specific people should be appointed to make such comment even if they are not members. ASH indicated that the best solution would be to make comments during the drafting process of legislation.

The Response Protocol was briefly reviewed and it was decided that it puts a lot of pressure on individual people as there is no PAC to run this. MH suggested that the PAC (or another committee or consultant) should be given the responsibility of responding to proposed environmental legislation and to comment on issues affecting rangeland ecology and pasture management (using the Protocol), but also provided with funding and the necessary means to have meetings etc. SV suggested that the responses should be circulated to the Ordinary members for comments before final submission to the relevant body.

4.1.1 *Successes*

At the previous meeting LD offered to provide the link with the national DoA, and he reported that it is happening, although very slowly. To keep the link active we should have continuous communication and reporting. ASH suggested that key people or positions should be kept on the database. LD asked whether this link should be at Provincial level as well and Council agreed.

There is still a gap in the communication and links with other organizations and institutes. SV asked how these organizations and institutes should be approached and made aware of the GSSA and its activities – invites to congress, journal, etc. JdT remarked that the vision and mission of the GSSA is to be a forum that attracts interested people and roleplayers – the rest will happen by itself. JJ remarked that a shift of the GSSA activities among Provinces might well stimulate interest while the activity is in the particular Province, but that such interest could diminish when the activity (such as our Annual Congress) moves on to another Province. This results in fewer, or a different group of people, attending the next congress. Identifying roleplayers and sending them pre-approved memberships might increase membership and the activity of high positioned people and organizations (FdT). The Constitution would have to be consulted and probably amended to allow for such “pre-approved” membership.

MH asked how it is possible that the GSSA is not formally involved in other important grassland initiatives. JdT indicated that the GSSA does not have the resources, like other companies, to be involved in all these other initiatives. ASH suggested that we can and do provide the opportunity for involvement through the Annual Congress. PS stated that an individual can represent more than one company and organization at one meeting. FdT suggested that maybe individuals already attending these meetings should be asked to formally represent the GSSA, but ASH felt that it is difficult to wear two hats at the same time. FdT said that even though individuals aren't wearing the GSSA hat at the meeting, those individuals can report back to the GSSA, maybe through the Grassroots.

RG indicated that it is clear that we are acting as forum and if people attend these meetings they have a broader perspective and this is a very important role of the GSSA. MH indicated that if people and institutions are aware of the GSSA, and are members of the organization, we are successfully implementing objective one.

In addition to the above the involvement of the following organizations in GSSA activities and *vice versa* indicates a positive trend in achieving Objective 1.

- Grassland Biodiversity Initiative (SANBI)
- SAEON
- SANParks
- KZN Wildlife
- Limpopo Provincial Government
- EWT (Endangered Wildlife Trust)
- Maluti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Project
- Have members who are part of various conservation organizations
- Represented at the Eskom Young Scientists Expo
- Connections with the KZN Crane Foundation

- GSSA website
- ARC - LBD
- Poster is almost developed. MH, FdT, LD decided that the banner will be made into A3 posters with the current mission.

How do we measure the successes: Attendance, sponsorship

4.1.2 *Activities*

- Send pre-approved membership to organizations for specific positions and not individuals. FdT indicated that she needs contact details, position, postal addresses etc. NB for Council's approval before the organizations are approached. (This activity, along with other options, is aimed at raising the profile of the Society with Government Departments and NGOs.) RG indicated that the GSSA could also make a difference in the rest of Africa.
- Council to assist PAC chairman with re-constitution of his committee and the development of PAC protocols and activities.

4.1.3 *Responsibilities*

Vice President (pre-approved membership procedures)
President & Council (PAC)

4.2 Objective 2: To ensure that Congress adopts a relevant theme each year through which it can promote the Society to a broader audience

4.2.1 *Successes*

- Congress 42 is building on the successes of the previous Congress.
- A number of stakeholders are using Congress 42 as platform.
- The link and interaction with Thicket Forum is working well.
- The involvement of the GSSA Administrator is hugely contributing to the success of Congress.
- People spent more time networking as they were concentrated in one accommodation venue during Congress 41 – providing a central congregation point is crucial.

Failures/Challenges:

- Linkage with SAWSS during Congress 41 did not go as planned.
- Poster sessions were a problem. Posters were not in the same venue, making it a bit problematic.
- Members involved in cultivated pasture research and management have not been well served during past Congresses (for a whole host of reasons).

4.2.2 *Activities*

- Incoming Vice President will run with the congress bid for 2009.
- Further promote symposia at Congresses.
- When feasible, organize high-powered specialist symposia for which an extra entrance fee can be charged - prior to or after the congress.
- Ensure well-known opening speakers for Congress.
- Make members aware of the opportunity of running symposia during Congress.
- Address/promote the needs of members (researchers and practitioners) involved in cultivated pasture management.

4.2.3 *Responsibilities*

Vice President
Congress Organizing Committee

4.3 Objective 3: To promote GSSA Congresses by ensuring that Congress announcements reach the broadest possible audience.

4.3.1 *Successes*

- Have developed a broad mailing list outside the membership.
- The Congress is continuing to grow each year. More registrations than the same time last year.
- Consolidating advertising material, making it easier to send out.
- Web page-link very user-friendly.

4.3.2 *Activities*

- Further broaden the mailing list by using existing lists and by including the following: Study groups, Provincial DoA, agricultural colleges, conservation groups, farmers associations, conservation colleges, other organizations and societies. The Administrator will have access to a contact-person database compiled by Craig Morris which could be expanded to include the rest of Africa. Trust will be approached to fund this activity.
- AS, PS and RG will also send new contacts. Database will be updated by inputs from all Council members (coordinated by Administrator).
- Sponsorship, including relating sponsorship options to specific symposia.
- Organize focused agricultural symposia at congresses aimed at farmers.
- Funds dedicated to advertising the Annual Congress in media publications such as Farmers Weekly and Landbou Weekblad will be included in the future congress budgets.

4.3.3 *Responsibilities*

- Administrator
- All Council members
- Congress Organizing Committee

4.4 Objective 4: To ensure the translation of technical and scientific information into articles accessible to the public.

JdT submitted public friendly articles to Farmers Weekly in the past, but the response was not very positive.

PS indicated that it would probably not be feasible to change scientific articles into public friendly articles. ASH indicated that scientific articles are very case and study specific and it would be difficult to translate scientific publications into public friendly articles.

In short, activities as listed in the minutes of the previous Strategic Plan review were not achieved and, on reflection, are unlikely to be achieved.

FdT suggested that instead of publishing in other popular sources, we should rather improve our own popular production (Grassroots).

RG suggested that it would be best to appoint an individual person with journalism experience to liaise between the scientific side and the popular side. The Grassroots is currently using this system for sourcing advertising and sponsorship funding, but the person approached has been too busy to actively pursue this. A solution maybe to approach Trust to provide money to fund this venture.

4.4.1 *Successes*

- GSSA promoted through Grassroots. Surplus Grassroots newsletters have been circulated among farmers.

4.4.2 *Activities*

- Approach Trust to provide funding for individual to be a journalist and advertising salesperson for GSSA. Trust could approach charitable connection with *Ewing McKeown Inc Trust*. Write a motivation to Trust to justify the funding.
- Develop a mechanism whereby individuals can subscribe only to the Grassroots.
- Ensure that surplus (at least 10) copies of Grassroots are sent to key individuals involved in range and forage science and practice in SA and beyond.

4.4.3 *Responsibilities*

- Administrator
- Grassroots Editor
- Vice-President

4.5 Objective 5: Promote the discipline through providing links from the discipline to relevant radio and television media.

RG suggested that the same person mentioned in Objective 4 should be involved in this Objective.

ASh suggested that the media should be made aware that they can come to the GSSA if they need comments on any matter relating to rangelands and pastures in Africa.

FdT felt that we should go out and try different things in the upcoming year and then come back next year and refine it. The suggestion is supported by LD.

4.5.1 *Successes*

- Ten media passes have been made available for Congress 42.

4.5.2 *Activities*

- Combine objectives 4 and 5.
- Promote the GSSA through print as well as TV and radio media sources, as and when the opportunities arise especially with regard to radio and TV as these are more difficult to use.
- Test and try different approaches and come back next year and revise the whole process.

4.5.3 *Responsibilities*

- Administrator
- PRO
- Grassroots Editor
- Vice President

4.6 Objective 6: Develop a protocol to promote the Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) to the broader environment.

The PAC requires active inputs and support from Council to ensure that it can operate effectively and to the advantage of Professional members of the GSSA and the Society at large. In particular Council must ensure that suitable individuals are appointed to serve as committee members and provide support for the current PAC chairman (LB)

SACNASP is still a major area of concern for the PAC (refer to attached PAC report). Other organizations experience similar problems concerning SACNASP. ASh suggested that representative people from various organizations should meet to discuss this.

4.6.1 *Successes*

- Information was obtained concerning SACNASP and suggestions and recommendations on the way forward were made. Refer to relevant section/s in attached PAC report.

Failure/Challenge:

Needs analysis questionnaire was sent out to all Professional members of the Society but the response was very low.

4.6.2 *Activities*

- Update the Professional Register.
- Nominate 5/6 people to serve on PAC committee – people should preferably be from the Gauteng area. MH suggests that knowledgeable people should be nominated to facilitate this process.
- Compile an information brochure concerning the PAC.
- Revise the Professional code of conduct.
- Advertise the Professional members on the GSSA website.
- Encourage Professional members to advertise in Grassroots.
- Contact people and organizations experiencing similar SACNASP problems.

4.6.3 *Responsibilities*

- PAC Chairman
- President
- All Council members

4.7 Objective 7: Promote partnerships between the GSSA, SADC and researchers in other African countries

JdT felt that the interactions take place between individuals and not between the GSSA as an organization and individuals or other institutions. Maybe providing individuals from other African countries with subsidies to attend Congress would positively contribute to the partnerships, but care should be taken not to take funds away from individuals from South Africa.

SV indicated that promoting the Journal and continuous advertising at Congress would increase membership to the GSSA. Members can then apply to Trust funds for subsidies, support etc.

4.7.1 *Successes*

- Maintaining the number of articles submitted for publication in our Journal from elsewhere in Africa.
- At least 3 students from other African countries attended Congress 41.

4.7.2 *Activities*

- Communication (information) with societies and universities in Africa, including UNISA.
- Try and get students/young scientists from other African countries to attend Congress.
- Link with Objective 3.
- Update database of members of other African countries.
- Suggest to Trust that they advertise more widely that funds are available for these purposes, but a policy should be formalized for various aspects, such as eligibility for funds and funds available per person. Suggest a set amount per year for Objective 7.
- Write pro-forma proposal for external funding from other organizations for funding students/young scientists from other African countries to attend congress.
- Encourage GSSA members attending congresses in other countries to take along poster, fliers etc. to promote the GSSA (inform Administrator/PRO about intended congress

- attendance).
- Monitor Congress attendance from other African countries.

4.7.3 *Responsibilities*

- RG/Administrator to write pro-forma proposal for external funding.
- All Council members.
- Trust

4.8 Objective 8: To get ISI rating for the journal.

An answer will be available at the end of this year concerning ISI rating.

NISC in process of developing an online submission service.

The journal is on SCOPUS database from Elsevier publishers.

4.8.1 *Successes*

- The Journal is advertised and promoted on the GSSA website with links to Ingenta and NISC.
- NISC submitted proposal for ISI rating.

4.8.2 *Activities*

- Maintain contact with NISC concerning ISI rating.
- Publicise ISI rating on the website.

4.8.3 *Responsibilities*

- Scientific Editor

4.9 Objective 9: Maintain current contract with NISC.

Old contract was not altered, but a process of mutual agreement was adopted.

4.9.1 *Successes*

- Written confirmation/record of pricing and payment agreements and structures.
- Relationship with NISC has improved since the beginning of last year.
- They have electronically backdated the journal up to approximately Vol. 16. By the end of June the titles and abstracts of volumes prior to Vol. 16 will be available. From end of July all full articles will be available.
- Paid the agreed amount of invoice towards 2007 by the due date.

4.9.2 *Activities*

- Maintain communication and good relations with NISC.
- Ensure communication record is maintained and handed over from President to President.
- Maintain communication with NISC concerning electronic publishing of previous volumes and proceedings.

4.9.3 *Responsibilities*

- President
- Vice President
- Immediate Past President

4.10 Objective 10: Implement the advertising/advertorial strategy for Grassroots

Link with Objectives 4 and 5.

4.10.1 *Successes*

- A strategy was developed for Grassroots advertising.
- Compiled a database of possible advertisers.
- Appointed person on commission basis to source advertising.

4.10.2 *Activities*

- Implement strategy (Link to Objective 4).
- Contact publisher of SAEON's newsletter and get a quote.

4.10.3 *Responsibilities*

- Administrator
- Grassroots Editor

4.11 Objective 11: Determine the portfolio of additional members

Additional Council members could be used to support the PRO and the Publication Editor portfolios.

The importance of maintaining an up-to-date and efficient Web Site cannot be underestimated. It was suggested that a new portfolio should be created on Council – that of Web Site Editor/Coordinator

4.11.1 *Successes*

- Grassroots has become a function of the Publication Editor portfolio on Council. The current Editor of Grassroots has appointed to the Publications Editor portfolio on Council.
- The management of the website is very good, with the support from the Administrator.

4.11.2 *Activities*

- Develop a job description and portfolio for the Website Editor/Coordinator (by October 2007).
- Identify the role of Additional Council members in supporting the PRO and Publications Editor portfolios (by next Council meeting).

4.11.3 *Responsibilities*

- Administrator
- KM
- All Council members

4.12 Objective 12: To ensure that key administrative responsibilities are executed timeously and effectively (e.g. maintenance of membership lists, collection of subscriptions, maintenance of records such as award winners, etc)

4.12.1 *Successes*

- The GSSA has maintained the services of the current Administrator.
- There is an increase in the number of membership subscriptions that are paid by the due date.
- The payment to NISC was made by the due date.
- The improved financial status of the GSSA.

- Smooth transfer of secretarial position.

4.12.2 *Activities*

- All Council members to support Administrator to ensure efficient management of Society
- Maintain Treasurer's current financial planning model.
- Review the Administrator's contract at the October Council meeting.

4.12.3 *Responsibilities*

- President with Council

4.13 Objective 13: Ensure that if constitutional changes are necessary they are tabled at the April meeting for timeous circulation to the membership

No constitutional changes have been submitted for the April Council meeting. The following potential changes/adjustments to the Constitution were discussed:

Provide for a Website Coordinator portfolio on Council (EXCO position?) (Objective 11).

Joint Allocation Committee members to be included in constitution.

4.13.1 *Successes*

- AGM agreed that changes must be made to the constitution to enable the Society to register as a non-profit organization.

4.13.2 *Activities*

- Council to ensure that constitutional changes relating to the JAC and Website Coordinator are prepared timeously.
- Discuss any prospective changes at the April Council meeting of each year (2008).
- Continually review the constitution in a changing environment.
- Check numbering of constitution clauses annually.
- Send revised copy of constitution to Department of Social Development for certification.

4.13.3 *Responsibilities*

- JdT (wording)
- All Council members

4.14 Objective 14: Review the strategic plan at regular intervals

4.14.1 *Successes*

- Had successful mini-reviews.

4.14.2 *Activities*

- New members of Council must be made aware of their responsibilities and tasks as outlined in the Strategic Plan.
- Compile an information package for each new Council member to be handed out after the appointment of new members.
- FdT will send formal portfolio description (end of April) to each Council member, but each member should add whatever is necessary (end of May to FdT). A document has been compiled by Annelie de Beer and the decision was made to build and expand on that document.

- Renew the plan at least every 5 years.
- Evaluate the need for a full review in 2008.

4.14.3 *Responsibilities*

- All Council members

5. Review financial situation of the GSSA

Will be held over to the Council meeting.

6. Action plans

Has been covered under the discussions of each Objective.

7. Matters arising from Council meeting 18 January 2007

7.1 GSSA language policy and related issues

MH felt there should be a place for contributions in other languages. The general consensus, however, was that the Society does not have the capacity or the expertise to accommodate multilingualism in its publications, congresses and meetings. Currently ASh edits contributions for the Grassroots. He suggested that editors and Congress facilitators should be aware that many members will be communicating in their second (or even third) language and should, where possible, provide support for specific English language issues.

After a review of the current language policy at the next Council meeting FdT will circulate the policy to all members of the GSSA, and publish the policy in the Journal and Grassroots.

Part of the policy could be that submissions from foreign language speakers should first be edited by someone in their own country who is fluent in English. Include in instructions to referees to keep in mind that some manuscripts are written by people who use English as their second language.

7.2 PRO portfolio

ASh suggested that a communication committee is formed including all portfolios dealing with communication between the GSSA and the public.

Will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

7.3 Liaison between institutions and organizations

There should be continuous communications between the GSSA and other organizations (Dealt with under Objectives 1, 3 and 7).

8. Closure

MH thanked everybody for their attendance and their inputs in the Strategic Planning meeting. MH adjourned the meeting.

President _____

Secretary _____

Date _____

Date _____

**GSSA Strategic Planning Meeting 24 April 2007
ACTION LIST**

No.	Agenda Item	Objective	ACTION	Responsible
1.	3.	n/a	Ensure all responsibilities allocated to various Council positions provided to new Council members as soon as possible after election	FdT
2.	4.1	1	Implement the Response Protocol	PAC
3.	4.1	1	Circulate responses to environmental legislation, etc. to membership prior to final submission	PAC, FdT
4.	4.1.1	1	Maintain and enhance links with national and provincial DoA	PRO, FdT
5.	4.1.1	13	Consult Constitution re validity of pre-approved membership invitations and possibly amend if necessary	FdT, Vice President, JdT
6.	4.1.1	1	Identify members involved at various relevant meetings/organisations on annual basis and request feedback to GSSA via Grassroots	FdT, All
7.	4.1.1	1	Maintain and enhance links with previously contacted organisations	PRO, All
8.	4.1.2	1	Send pre-approved membership invitations to organizations (specific positions) and not individuals	FdT, Vice President
9.	4.1.2	1	Send contact details to FdT of organizations to send these pre-approved membership invitations to.	All
10.	4.1.2	1	Council to support PAC portfolio: provide necessary funding and other resources for fully functional PAC	President, Treasurer, All
11.	4.2.2	2	Run with bid for Congress 44 2009	Incoming VP
12.	4.2.2	2	Promote symposia at Congress	All, Congress Organizing Committee
13.	4.2.2	2	Ensure well-known keynote/opening speakers for Congress	Congress Organizing Committee
14.	4.2.2	2	Promote cultivated pasture symposia and sessions at Congress	All, Congress Organizing Committee
15.	4.3.2	3	Broaden mailing list, update name and contact detail database	All, FdT
16.	4.3.2	3	Approach Trust to fund Craig Morris database activities	FdT
17.	4.3.2	3	Provide focused sessions for farmers/practitioners at Congress	All, Congress Organizing Committee
18.	4.3.2	3	Try to arrange for sponsorship in support of Congress and special sessions in particular	Congress Organizing Committee
19.	4.3.2	3	Include dedicated advertising funding in Congress budget	Congress Organizing Committee
20.	4.4	4	Improve Grassroots, by submitting articles	All
21.	4.4.2	4	Approach Trust with a proposal motivating funding the employment of someone with journalism experience to be a journalist and advertising salesperson for GSSA	Pub Ed, Vice Pres, FdT
22.	4.4.2	4	Develop mechanism to allow for subscription to only Grassroots	Pub Ed, FdT
23.	4.4.2	4	Ensure surplus Grassroots are sent to key individuals	Pub Ed, FdT, All
24.	4.5.2	5	Promote GSSA to and through print and other media sources	All
25.	4.5.2	5	Test and try different approaches regarding media contributions	All
26.	4.6.2	6	Update the Professional Register	PAC, FdT
27.	4.6.2	6	Nominate 5/6 people to serve on PAC committee at next Council meeting	All
28.	4.6.2	6	Compile an information brochure concerning PAC	PAC
29.	4.6.2	6	Revise the Professional code of conduct	PAC

No.	Agenda Item	Objective	ACTION	Responsible
30.	4.6.2	6	Advertise the Professional members on the website	FdT, Web Ed
31.	4.6.2	6	Encourage Professional members to advertise in Grassroots	PAC, Pub Ed
32.	4.6.2	6	Contact people and organizations experiencing similar SACNASP problems and attempt to resolve the issues as a group	PAC
33.	4.7.2	7	Communication with societies and universities in Africa concerning GSSA	All
34.	4.7.2	7	Update database to include individuals and organisations in other African countries	FdT
35.	4.7.2	7	Write proforma proposal for external funding from other organizations for funding students/young scientists from other African countries to attend Congress	FdT, Vice Pres
36.	4.7.2	7	Ask Trust to advertise availability of funding support, and formulate a policy for aspects around this funding	President
37.	4.7.2	7	Take GSSA advertorial package to congresses in other countries	All
38.	4.7.2	7	Monitor attendance of other African countries at GSSA Annual Congress	FdT
39.	4.8.2	8	Monitor contact with NISC concerning ISI rating	Sci Ed
40.	4.9.2	9	Maintain communication and good relationship with NISC	President
41.	4.9.2	9	Maintain communications record and hand to incoming President	President, FdT
42.	4.9.2	9	Monitor availability of past volumes of Journal and Proceedings on NISC websites	President, All
43.	4.10.2	10	Contact publisher of SAEON newsletter for a quote	Pub Ed, FdT
44.	4.11.2	11	Develop job description and portfolio for Website Editor by October 2007	Web Co-ord, FdT
45.	4.11.2	11	Identify role of additional Council members in supporting PRO and Publications Editor	All
46.	4.12.2	12	Review Administrator's contract (October)	Pres & All
47.	4.13.2	13	Discuss prospective changes to GSSA Constitution at April Council meeting annually	All
48.	4.13.2	13	Continuously review the GSSA Constitution	All
49.	4.13.2	13	Check the numbering of the current Constitution on annual basis	JdT
50.	4.13.2	13	Prepare constitutional changes w.r.t. JAC and Website Editor	JdT, All
51.	4.14.2	14	Compile information package for each new Council member	All
52.	4.14.2	14	Send formal portfolio description (end of April 2007) to each Council member	FdT
53.	4.14.2	14	Review portfolio description and add what is necessary (end of May 2007)	All
54.	4.14.2	14	Evaluate the need for a full review in 2008	All
55.	5		Review and renew financial management strategy for next 2 to 5 years including determining a suitable financial buffer amount	Treasurer
56.	7.1		Send language policy to all Council members	FdT
57.	7.1		Review language policy at Council meeting	All
58.	7.1		Send language policy plus review report to GSSA members	FdT
59.	7.2		Create a Communications Committee at next Council meeting	All

**REPORT: PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
GSSA Strategic Planning Meeting 24 April 2007**

I apologise for not being able to attend the strategic planning, but do however submit the following report for discussion and comments:

1. NEW APPLICATIONS

I am pleased to report that the PAC has received a number of new applicants to be registered as new members. Three applications have been processed of which the following two were accepted:

- Dr LE Dziba
- Mr AM Grenfell

The application of Ms MM Mojapelo was rejected due to not enough experience and qualification.

Letters were sent to these members notifying them of the results.

2. PROCEDURE FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PROFESSIONAL REGISTER

After reading through the above procedure, I have the following comments for discussion:

a) Composition of PAC: According to the above procedure, the PAC should consist of four members, one who will serve as chairperson. Thus in its current composition we do not meet the requirements. Council therefore need to decide on whether we will change the procedure or whether we will elect another three members. I am prepared to continue as is, but do not want us to be incorrectly constituted. As will be seen in the next point below, there will however have to be more specific and clear guidelines on various processes within the PAC.

b) Processing applications: The process for handling applications is not sufficiently dealt with in the procedure:

- It is not stated anywhere on how many referees should evaluate new applicants.
- No guidelines are provided on the process if an evaluator rejects an application.
- No mention or guidelines are given regarding an appeal process.

I was hoping to have some suggestions on the procedure, but am at the moment busy to find similar documents from other organisations from where I would submit recommendations to this regard. From documents seen so far it seems as though two referees should evaluate an application and if one rejects it, it could either be sent to a third referee or be referred to the PAC chairman to make the final decision. If Council members have any suggestions, it would be appreciated.

c) Criteria for admission as a Professional Member: The current criteria are sufficient, but if an agreement is reached with SACNASP it might have to change. Until such time I recommend that the *staus quo* is maintained. In the meantime I intend to find out what the criteria for other “voluntary organisations” are.

3. SACNASP

As stated previously a large number of GSSA members are not eligible to register with SACNASP. According to the new Act (Act 23 of 2003), any person in an “advisory” capacity must be registered as a Professional member with SACNASP. This is a problem not only for GSSA Professional members but also Ordinary members since various qualifications (listed in box below) are not recognised for registration purposes.

B.A. degrees.
 3-year B.Agric. degree, if Mathematics I, Chemistry I, Physics I or Biology I did not form part of the curriculum.
 B.Agric. Management
 B.Inst.Agrar. following on a 3-year B.Sc. in Agriculture or B.Agric.
 All undergraduate qualifications not based on the level-I basic science subjects (Chemistry I; Physics I; Mathematics I; Biology I).
 N.H.Dip : Community Nursing
 N.Dip. : Community Extension
 N.H.Dip. & B.Tech: Environmental Health
 N.H.Dip: Nature Conservation: Environmental Education
 N.H.Dip: Nature Conservation: Veld and Game Management
 N.H.Dip: Nature Conservation: Coastal & Marine Management
 N.H.Dip.: Nature Conservation: Fresh-water Management
 B.Tech. & N.H.Dip.: Chemical Engineering
 Masters degrees: Following on B.Sc. degrees, that would not fulfil the 4-year level requirement. (Masters in Environmental Management, UFS; Masters in Sustainable Development)
 M.Phil.: Wildlife Management University of Pretoria (following on a 3-year B.Sc. or other 3-year qualifications, e.g. N.Dip.)

I had a discussion with the registrar of SACNASP at the end of March this year and explained that this requirement poses a problem to many of our members who due to their work (e.g. extension officers; nature conservationists etc.) provide people with “advice”, but do not meet the requirements of SACNASP. Thus technically these people could be taken to court for practicing without registration. The registrar suggested that we first send a letter to the president of SACNASP explaining the situation and giving arguments why the requirements should be changed. This is a task that I would not be able to do on my own since I do not have all the necessary info on the different qualifications. I have therefore sent a letter via Freyni to all Professional members requesting assistance and comments to help me draft such a letter. Once that is received I will attempt to draft a letter that would be sent for comments to all Council and Professional members. At that stage we could follow two different paths:

1. Send the final letter directly to SACNASP and enter into negotiations with them.
2. Send the letter to other “voluntary organisations” and the identified tertiary institutions offering these courses for their input and support.

Another view some GSSA members have is that this is a matter that should be handled by the tertiary institutions and not us. I do not support it for various reasons, but have to mention it to get Council’s input.

I am of the opinion that the second option would be the better, but will take longer. I am not sure which other “voluntary” organisations have similar problems. However, I definitely feel that we must involve the tertiary institutions. The different tertiary institutions would also be in a better position to provide us with all the HEQC requirements in terms of articulation between the different courses and old Technikon and University qualifications. That might help us to prove our point.

I suggest that we take a decision on the way forward so that I can start on this. At this stage I think that between Freyni and I, we would be able to do the ground work, but we might need a small sub-committee at some stage.

One positive aspect from my discussion with SACNASP is that they have appointed a person from TUT to investigate possible collaboration between “voluntary organisations” and SACNASP. Such a collaboration/agreement could lead to all **Professional members** of the different organisations automatically being accepted for registration by SACNASP. That will however require that we institute more detailed guidelines for registering as a Professional member. I will make contact with her to find out where the process is and what their requirements are. If we can get to some sort of an agreement with SACNASP on this, it would already solve a large part of our problem.

Regards

Leslie Brown