

## Minutes: GSSA Strategic Planning Review meeting 25 January 2011, Desert Inn, Middelburg, EC

**1. Welcome** SD

SD welcomed all to the Strategic Planning Review meeting and thanked everybody for attending. He said the purpose of the meeting is to see where we are coming from and where we are going to. The next major review will be in 2013. MP will facilitate the current session.

**2. Present and apologies**

Present - Chris Dannhauser (CD), Cobus Botha (CB), Freyni du Toit (FdT), Ian Rushworth (IR), Justin du Toit (JdT), Lisa Hebbelmann (LH), Loraine van den Berg (LvdB), Mike Peel (MP), Sikhhalazo Dube (SD), Wayne Truter (WT), Nelmarie Saayman (NS).

Apologies - Leslie Brown (LB), Igshaan Samuels (IS), Susi Vetter (SV), Julius Tjelele (JT), Vhalinavho Khavhagali (VK), Anuschka Barac (AB)

**3. Planned Review Process** MP  
All

MP said that one needs to review a strategic plan, as it is not a fixed document. You have to see what you are doing correct and what needs to be worked on. He used his presentation during his report on the Strategic Plan given at the opening of the GSSA Congress 45 as background.

The first strategic plan for the GSSA was developed in 1998, it was reviewed in 2008, where the vision and mission was changed and they looked at the core values.

2010 Annual review : The performance regarding different Strategic Objectives could be divided into three groups:

Poor	Mediocre	Good/Excellent
Translate information Media PAC Partners	Inform key role players ISI rating Grassroots Additional members portfolio Publish excellent science	Theme at Congress Promote Congress NISC Administration of GSSA Constitution Review of strategic plan

MP said that with regard to publishing excellent science, the theme at Congress could decrease this objective somewhat, because it is sometimes exclusive, but the theme is now the same as the vision and thus is inclusive.

Additional issues that need discussion include:

- Communication between Council and Members
- SADC, Africa and International Community
- Communal vs Commercial Farming
- Revitalise planted pastures
- Fund raising.

JdT said he thinks the communication is good; looking at the last AGM which was packed and during which people raised many questions.

JdT said that the Communal vs Commercial issue is much larger than just that. It is two different things in a big area. It was where we came from, but is now integrated. MP said we must realise that we have to go back to basics; work done in agriculture is also of ecological importance. MP asked JdT to write an article on how these themes are merging for Grassroots.

Planted pastures:

SD – planted pastures are dying, we have to look at it.

JdT – the number of papers submitted to the Journal are growing

WT – most research is applied science, due to a shortage of skills.

CD – there is a generation gap, the young scientist has no experience they therefore need mentors.

SADC:

CD – Is on SANSOR forum, will give feedback at Trust.

Fund raising:

JdT – We are successful in fund raising for congress, but not in advertising and with farmer's days. Our fund raising should be more globally focused. Our target should be grassland related projects that are globally of more interest e.g. ecologically. Can use Long Term trials – it is usefull globally.

FdT – fund raising document with projects (LvdB has worked on this document). Use it in applications for funding.

SD – suggested that we fund other people through the GSSA.

FdT support it. GSSA can act as administrator of Funds and get the projects reports in, getting paid for the service.

MP – GSSA to leverage some funds from people using the long term data.

JdT – Get funding through GSSA for LT Trials.

JdT – To move to the next level of funds we have to employ more people.

MP – we have to publish about the long term trials, especially those 'dying', in that way one might get the interest of students.

MP - We should make the following part of the strategic objects and discuss it during the meeting.

- SADC, Africa and International Community
- Communication between council and members.

### 3.1. Vision and Mission

MP  
All

JdT suggested changing the vision: Proposal: Advancing rangeland ecology and pasture management in a changing Africa.

MP said changing could mean different things, e.g. social, environment, etc.

FdT suggest that we put the 'changing' in the Mission instead of the Vision, with a view of changing the vision in future due to the logistics of altering our corporate image.

MP suggested that we think about the vision and change it if necessary before the end of the day.

It was decided that the Vision should stay the same and the Mission was changed. (See attached).

Name of the GSSA:

IR asked about the name of the GSSA, as the Vision says Africa but name is Southern Africa.

The idea was discussed previously, but did not get much support from members

SD said before the name can change it would have to go to a referendum.

It was decided to raise the matter at the next AGM for debate, but not necessarily for a final decision.

### 3.2 Strategic objectives

MP

There are no specific objectivess. In 2004 there were 14 strategic objectives, they were used in the questionnaire and was divided in poor, mediocre and good. They then got distilled down to eight.

FdT said that we have to look at the dendrograms (see attached) and decide where we are and add issues. The dendrograms have to be fleshed out.

MP  
All

IR suggested that we include the strategic objectives in the agenda for Council meetings to guide us in decisions. This was approved.

(See end of document for ingredient lists compiled for each Strategic Objective in 2008)

### 3.2.1 **Running successful meetings especially Congress** (See p10 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

#### **1. Congresses**

FdT said we need a proper congress document that can be passed on to organisers to use in their planning.

CD proposed a session during congress specifically for proposals for research. FdT said that maybe it should only be a poster session, no presenting. JdT propose putting a comment box at these posters where people can put in comments on the proposals. FdT said there should also be a hard copy of the proposal which people interested can take away and give feedback at a later stage. SD proposed that appointed mentors should give a presentation on chosen proposals describing why they are good proposals. The best proposal presented gets some funding from the GSSA. JdT did not support the motion, but WT said that financial support can come from the Trust. The funding should be for a young scientist. SD suggested a panel to look at the proposals that might get funding. FdT said that they get half of the money for the proposal and the other half after successful publication from the proposal. SD to draft a proposal regarding the winning research proposal by young scientists.

CD – AGM to be included in the ingredients list

WT – International perspective to be included in the ingredients list.

JdT said that feedback regarding the Congresses is good.

FdT – Perception on cost – people don't realise how much goes into organising a Congress.

IR asked we give out a 1-pager on why it is important to attend the GSSA Congress. FdT suggested that they just make the Letter of Invitation more comprehensive, as this is what most people need. SD asked that this letter be out earlier.

JdT said that it is important that the graveyard session is a plenary session.

Emphasize on science into practise

- Farmer session

CB said we should make it more relevant in order to get farmers to attend.

JdT- it should not be a paper with scientific results, but a general popular paper.

FdT – Farmer session at Kimberley was not as good, mainly due to DAFF not doing their bit. At the Johannesburg Congress a lot of farmers attend on the Saturday and it was very practical.

FdT will write a congress manual. Congress organising committee need some guidelines.

Crosslink with Journal

FdT – there is already a document on how, but it is not really getting there. Will have to look into it.

Consider a variety of disciplines

- Doing well

MP/WT – Addressing farmer issues – need a special session on applied science.

FdT to write up tasks for all the above and circulate.

#### **2. Satellite functions**

JdT – try to keep it low cost, one has to plan clearly and have a specific target group. Those giving the presentations should attend for free.

FdT – so far it worked well. She has a document on how to do it. Research Skills Workshop worked well, having the correct speakers draw the people, has over 100 entries for both RSW held to date.

MP  
All

Grass ID course – FdT will ask Fritz van Oudtshoorn to run one at congress.

MP said that the satellite functions document should be part of the congress document.

### 3.2.2 Publish good quality research

(See p11 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

FdT – We're doing well

- SV getting appointed as Editor-in-Chief
- Have an ISI rating, will be out by the middle of the year
- Submission rate has increased, more than 50 submissions in 2010.
- Exploiting congress – have to work on it, also special issues.
- Slow turn around, but is better now with the online submission process.
- All of these are getting attention

FdT – SV to report back on how they are doing, what has been achieved and things addressed.

Dendrogram:

1 – were done

1.1 Ongoing

1.2 Under constant review

1.3 Have positive results – ongoing

1.4 Not working so well

- Need someone at congress to ask good paper presenters to submit it as a paper to the Journal. Editor or anyone else.

1.5 Only special editor, sometimes a problem

1.6 Fixed – SV can write how

1.7 Waiting for ISI rating to come out.

2.1 Reason we started RSW. It is not only design, also stats, writing etc.

2.2 Have a service – Language services at NISC for checking the language. It is the author's responsibility. Authors need to pay for the service.

IR suggested as many African countries speak French, maybe we should have the abstracts also available in French. CD supported it. MP said we have to look into it.

3.1 Nothing done, needs to be looked at.

4.1 Was done

4.2 Remain aware of other alternatives

5. Maintain the rating. Write down how it was done.

1.1.1 – take Klaus Kellner and President out. Editor to do it.

MP  
All

SV to look at the notes and write a report.

### 3.2.3 Revitalize the planted pasture component of GSSA

(See p12 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

FdT said nothing really has been done, except specific sessions at Congress.

WT said he and CD will take ownership of this objective and contact the relevant people.

LH said there is not a support system for pasture scientists. CD said he and WT will identify experienced people out of the private sector to act as mentors for young scientists.

1. CD and WT will do it.
- 1.1 Take Dirk Roux out, put CD and WT in.
- 1.2 Take out.
- 1.3 WT and CD will do.
- 1.4 Dedicated session at Congress – is done  
Dedicated Farmer's days.

WT – funders want market related research not real science. May contact Department of Science and Technology for funding.

CB – suggested they highlight the importance of the industry in the report.

Scope the role of the industry.

- Make link with industry to get funding.

Between 2 and 3 add a new box namely 'Scarce skills'.

IR – suggested someone go through Tropical Grassland Journal and contact all authors that have published with them in the last 10 years and invite them to publish with us.

FdT – Barbara Stayn can compile the list.

CD and WT together with SV to draft a letter and send out to all on the list.

3. CB – commission recently retired experts/mentors to look at their and other Planted Pasture research data and the science of it and publish in in the Journal. MP  
CD to talk with them and ask to publish their data. All

WT and CD will look into strategic objectives. Update the boxes and fill in text.

### 3.2.4 Clarify role of PAC

(See p13 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

1. SD proposed that SACNASP fall under PRO, therefore PAC fall away.  
MP - do not agree  
SD – we need to find out how many of GSSA members are registered at SACNASP but not professional members of the GSSA.  
It was resolved during the Council meeting that LH would include this query in the Expertise Database update questionnaire.

FdT – PAC is a council appointed position, can decide on council to change the person.

SD – we need to nominate a person to sit in the position and not to just assist.

MP is willing to take the role over.

FdT – important for GSSA to keep in contact with SACNASP, but it has to be more progressive. MP

SD – we need to lobby with SACNASP to get grassland science as one of the categories. All

MP – will get feedback from LB for where we stand with the negotiations with SACNASP

FdT – MP to take the job on, she will send him the info he needed.

### 3.2.5 Increased capacity building

(See p14 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

Bring more scientists into grassland science.

- 1 Happened – new poster sessions with presentation  
1.2 – Need more info on where one can study grassland science
2. LH suggested that the proposal session forms part of this special session (refer to 3.2.1)  
IR – look into funding for students  
FdT – suggested that GSSA apply to NRF for funding for congress. Asked SD on how to

do it.

CD – will talk to Clare Botha on funding from NRF.

3. Listed as scarce skills – refer to 3.2.3

4. WT already encourages post graduates to publish.

CB – it happens at some institutions, but not at all of them, we need to catch those.

Have to identify the people that submitted abstracts, but that are not at standard.

FdT – they can be included in the mentorship programme. Those that need help can ask for help.

CD – have to take MSc students through the process. Start with popular articles in Grassroots and progress to the Journal.

MP – we need to clarify the role of Grassroots to the editors.

FdT – change practise writing skills to Mentorship. Look at SV report/suggestions and expand the box.

5. FdT struggle to get entries related to Grassland. Eskom Expo – children want stuff, not just a certificate as we currently give.

FdT – maybe we should look at other options as well.

MP – try and tag on to SAEON outreaches to schools.

LH – Grass ID course for children – tag on with SAEON

IR – will speak to Sue van Rensburg on liaison with SAEON

CB – Agricultural shows have sections for children. GSSA can link to it.

WT/CB – will contact Agricultural schools.

FdT – other possibilities to explore :

Science unlimited expo

Scifest at Grahamstown

IR – Kids in Parks

KZN have kids clubs – different people are involved – can look into more ecological stuff. MP

MP – maybe we're targeting the wrong market, we should target younger children. All

FdT – Target primary schools.

IR – partner with current actions.

Resolved that WT would approach University of Pretoria to put forward a scholarship to study in the pasture science stream (it is only a postgraduate qualification) to award to the winner of the GSSA award at the Eskom Expo and the Society would add R5000 to this.

Change Strategic objective to: 'Raising grassland awareness'

LH to write up strategic objective.

### 3.2.6 Soft stuff

(See p15 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

Change strategic objective to: 'Growing the Society'

1.1 FdT ensure that congress stuff is part of the congress manual.

FdT – important to keep awards maintained/upgraded and relevant, e.g. a book as a gift.

Looking into giving a book for the Expo award as well.

Scrap 1 – move to 3.2.1 – Congress

Only 2

2.1 Add VIP mailing list as one of the bullets.

CB – we're not doing enough on new member recruitment – include a strategy on how to recruit landowners as new members. MP

FdT – Farmer's Weekly is publishing papers from Congress and acknowledge it is coming All

from GSSA.

MP – Include bullet: Land-user – researcher interface

CB – research should be relevant for land users.

SD – publish this research in Journal. Land-users to get opportunity to give research needs.

CB and SD to write up strategic objective.

### 3.2.7 Grassroots

(See p16 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

FdT – keep as own objective – all agreed.

1.1 Is good

1.2 Was done, but have to look into it again

1.3 Not happening

JdT – we need to make it clear what Grassroots is and what for.

FdT – look into scheduling Grassroots publishing

FdT – have a look at the format of the Grassroots Template and send it to JT and IR.

- JT need to send draft copy to IR on time

MP

All

JdT to write up vision and mission and the strategic objective, with assistance from JT and IR.

A short brain storming exercise was done around what the Grassroots should be – see attached. It will be sent to JT to assist with writing the vision and mission for the Grassroots.

### 3.2.8 Administration

(See p17 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

1. Very necessary. Somebody needs to learn the ropes.

FdT – will have a manual of procedures of administrative duties by next Congress.

Personality of the people involved is important.

MP

1.1 Make place for another person to come into administration

MP

WT – what about tools necessary to do the job?

All

CB – and storage needed?

2. Administrative duties and procedures

3. Competence skills.

FdT to write up strategic objective

MP

### 3.2.9 Others

All

#### 3.2.9.1 Communication between council and members

FdT – instead of just council news in Grassroots, every member of council have to give feedback on what they have done since the previous edition.

Available Council member positions to be advertised in Grassroots well in advanced.

FdT to write up strategic objective.

#### 3.2.9.2 SADC, Africa and International Liaison

SANSOR – Forum to promote rangeland ecology and pasture management in Africa

CD – SANSOR wants to collaborate with GSSA

MP – CD to discuss with them the details on what they are planning and need from us and find out about the phrase (above) which is essentially the vision of our Society,

**4. Closure**

MP

MP thanked everybody for their contributions and inputs. Meeting adjourned at 16h15.

President \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**GSSA Strategic Plan Review 25 January 2011  
ACTION LIST**

	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
1.	3	Write an article for Grassroots on how communal vv commercial debate is now defunct	JdT
2.	3.1	Put forward debate around the name of the Society for AGM	IR
3.	3.2.1	Draft proposal regarding the winning research proposal at Congress	SD
4.	3.2.1	Compile Congress manual for Organising Committee and Administrator, and circulate for comment	FdT
5.	3.2.1	Include satellite function document with Congress Manual	FdT
6.	3.2.2	Write report on achievement (what and how) of strategic plan goals for Publishing Good Quality Research based on dendrogram	SV
7.	3.2.2	Investigate the translation of AJRFS abstracts into French	SV
8.	3.2.3	Update and draft formal strategic plan to Revitalise the Planted Pastures Component of the Society, including relevant contacts, potential mentors, funding opportunities, creating links with industry, and send out for comment	WT, CD
9.	3.2.3	Draft letter for Tropical Grasslands authors to publish in AJRFS	SV, WT, CD
10.	3.2.3	Invite recently retired experts/mentors to look at their and other planted pasture research data and the science of it and publish in in the AJRFS	CD
11.	3.2.4	Investigate role of PAC, current duties, SACNASP issue and report back	MP
12.	3.2.4	Send all PAC info to MP	FdT
13.	3.2.5	Write up strategic objective on Increased Capacity Building	LH
14.	3.2.5	Speak to Clare Botha about NRF funding for students	CD
15.	3.2.6	Write up strategic objective for Growing the Society (previously Soft Stuff)	CB, SD
16.	3.2.7	Write up vision, mission and strategic objective for Grassroots along with overview and instructions to authors	JT, IR, VK, JdT
17.	3.2.7	Write up vision, mission and strategic objective for Grassroots along with overview and instructions to authors	JT, IR, VK, JdT
18.	3.2.8	Think of ways to fund employing a second fulltime administrator	All
19.	3.2.8	Compile manual of Administrative Duties and Procedures by Congress 46	FdT
20.	3.2.8	Think of ways to fund employing a second fulltime administrator	All
21.	3.2.9.1	Write up strategic objective for Communication between Council and Membership	FdT
22.	3.2.9.2	Give feedback on proposed SANSOR SADC forum	CD

GSSA

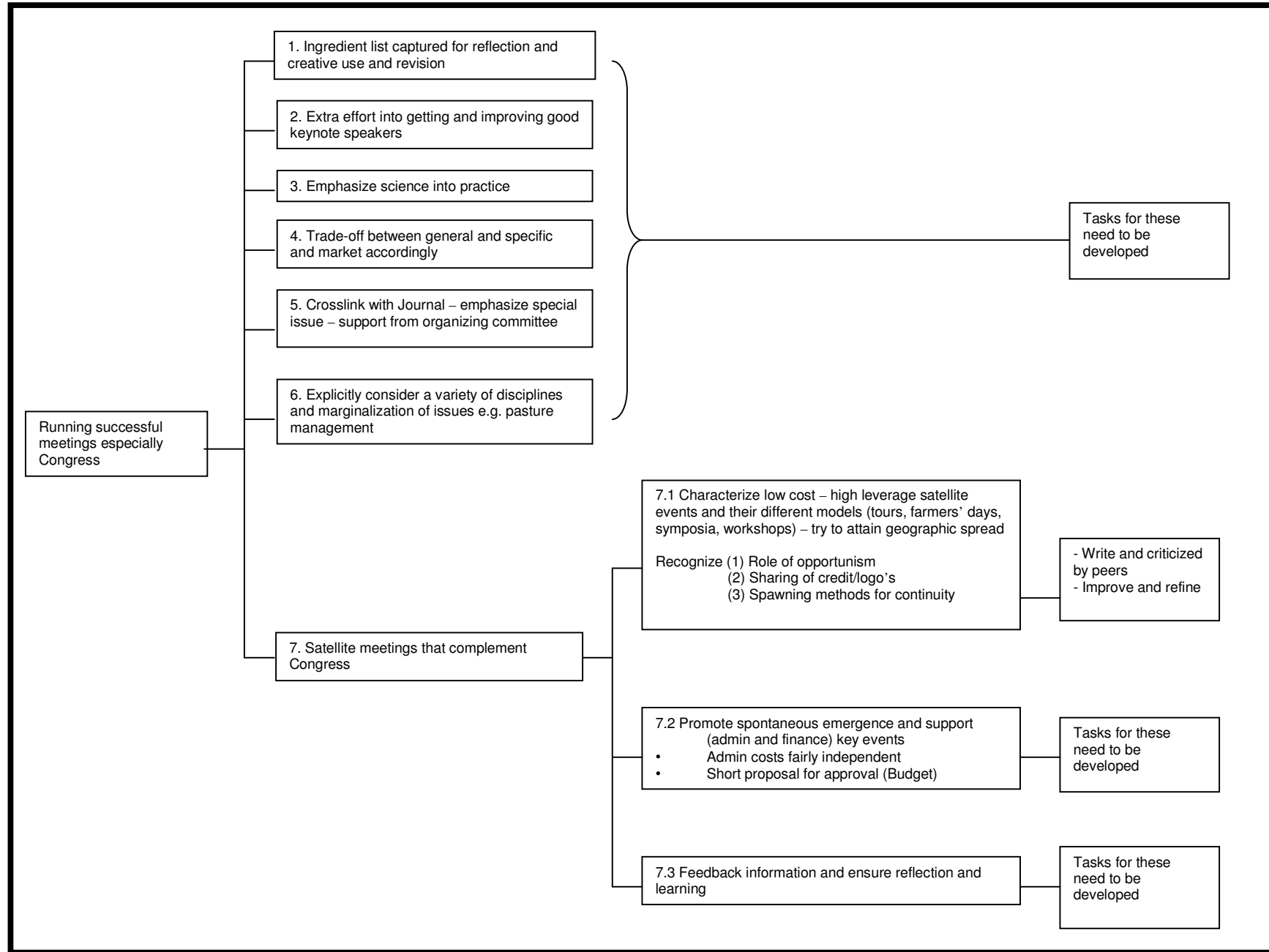
**Vision**

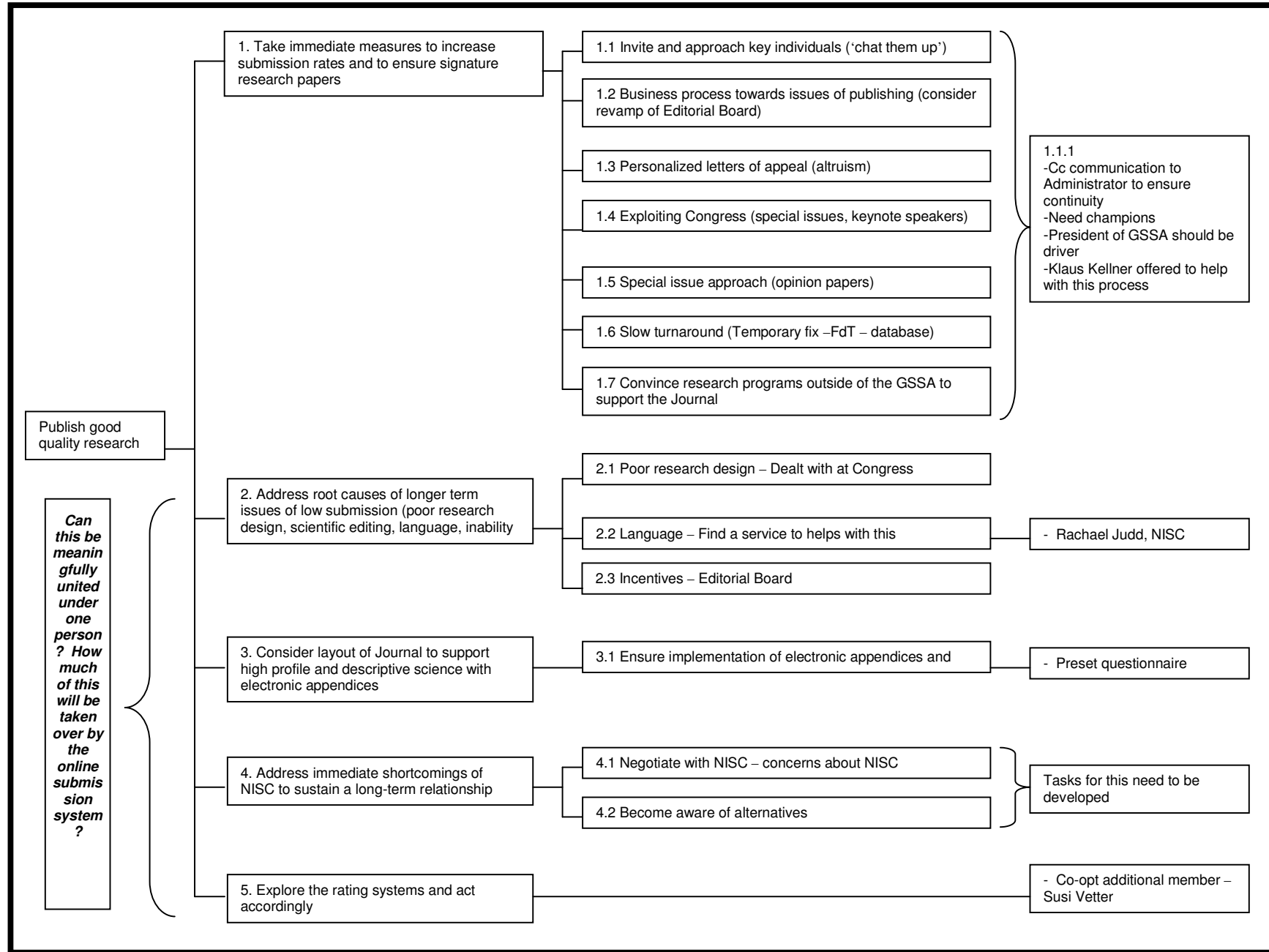
Advancing rangeland ecology and pasture management in Africa

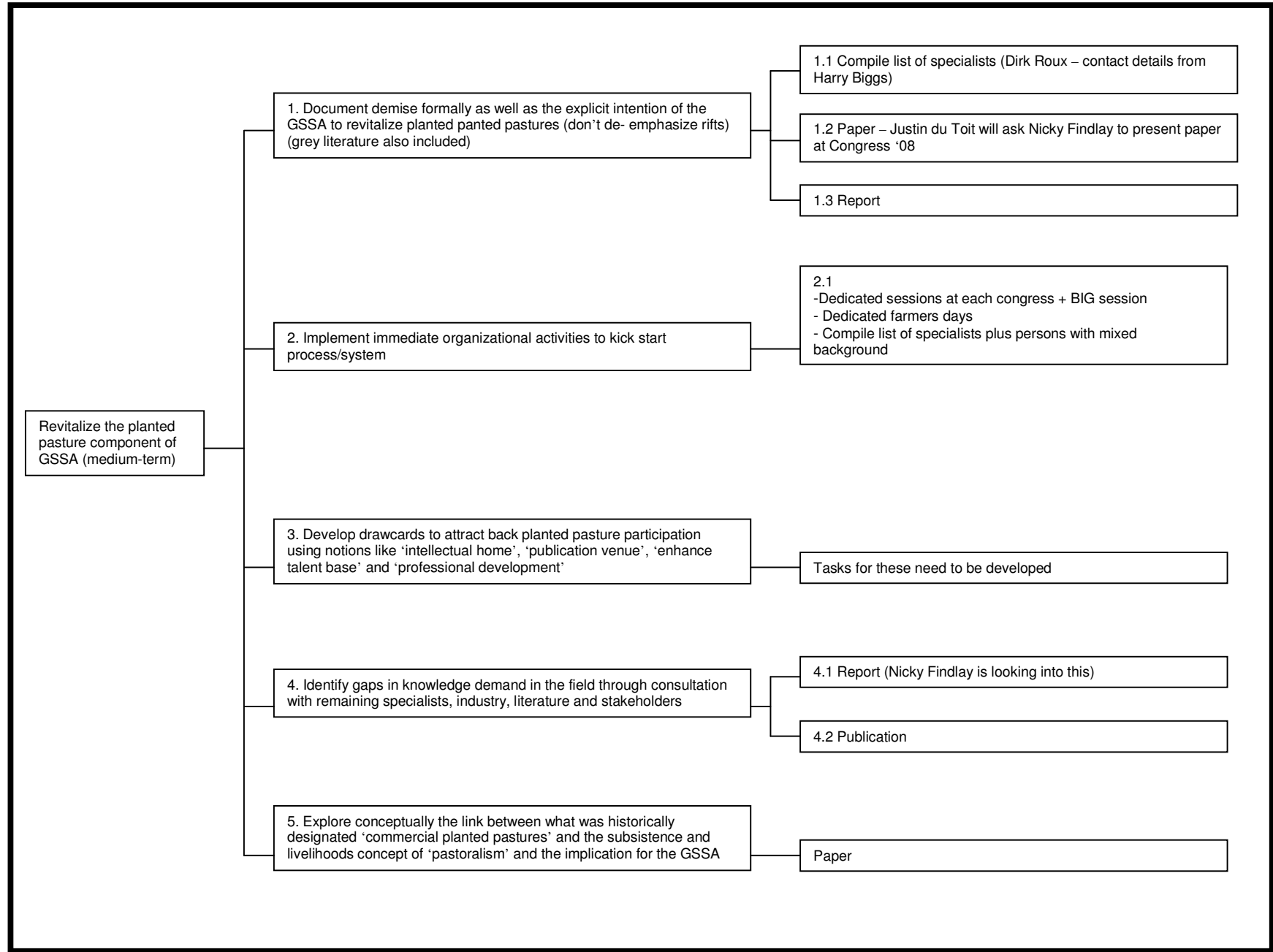
**Mission**

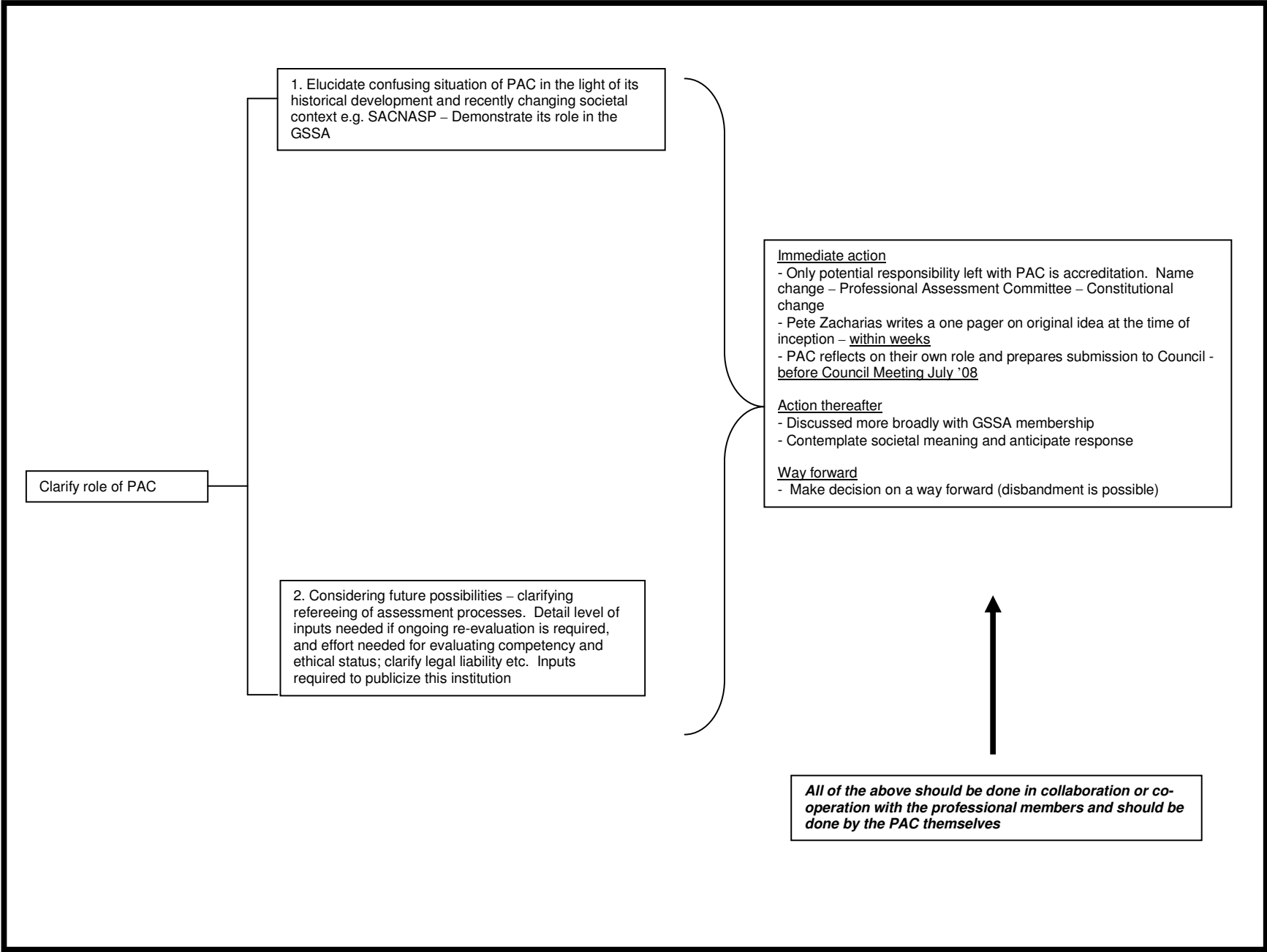
Advancing ecology and management of African rangelands and pastures in a changing world by:

- Publishing relevant high quality research
- Providing a dynamic and professional annual congress at which scientifically rigorous papers are presented
- Facilitating the translation of science into policy and practice
- Developing human capacity to study and manage rangelands and pastures
- Providing a forum for trans-disciplinary debate, particularly between fields of production systems, biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services
- Assisting decision makers to understand the links between ecosystem services, global change, sustainability and human wellbeing









Clarify role of PAC

1. Elucidate confusing situation of PAC in the light of its historical development and recently changing societal context e.g. SACNASP – Demonstrate its role in the GSSA

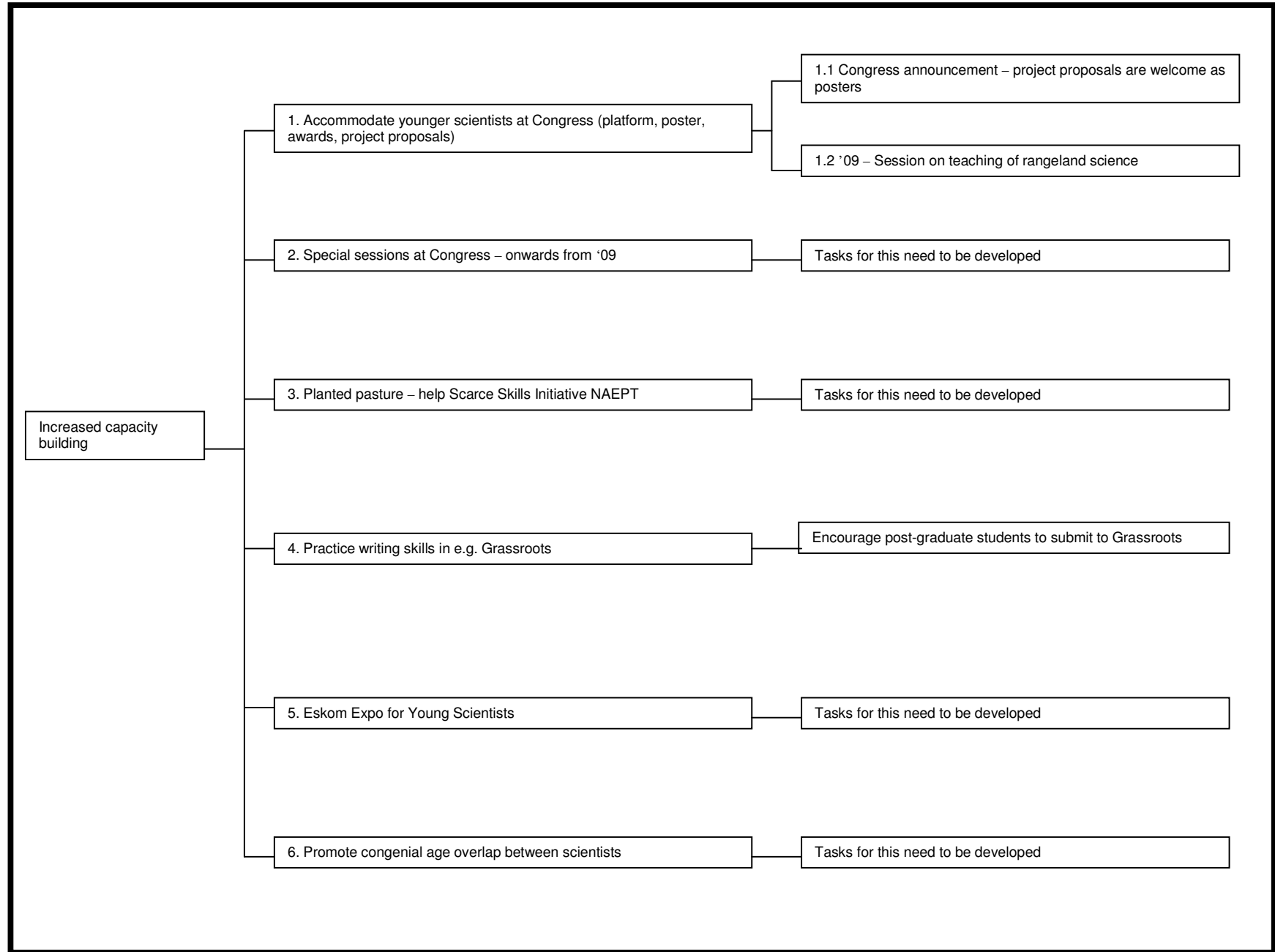
2. Considering future possibilities – clarifying refereeing of assessment processes. Detail level of inputs needed if ongoing re-evaluation is required, and effort needed for evaluating competency and ethical status; clarify legal liability etc. Inputs required to publicize this institution

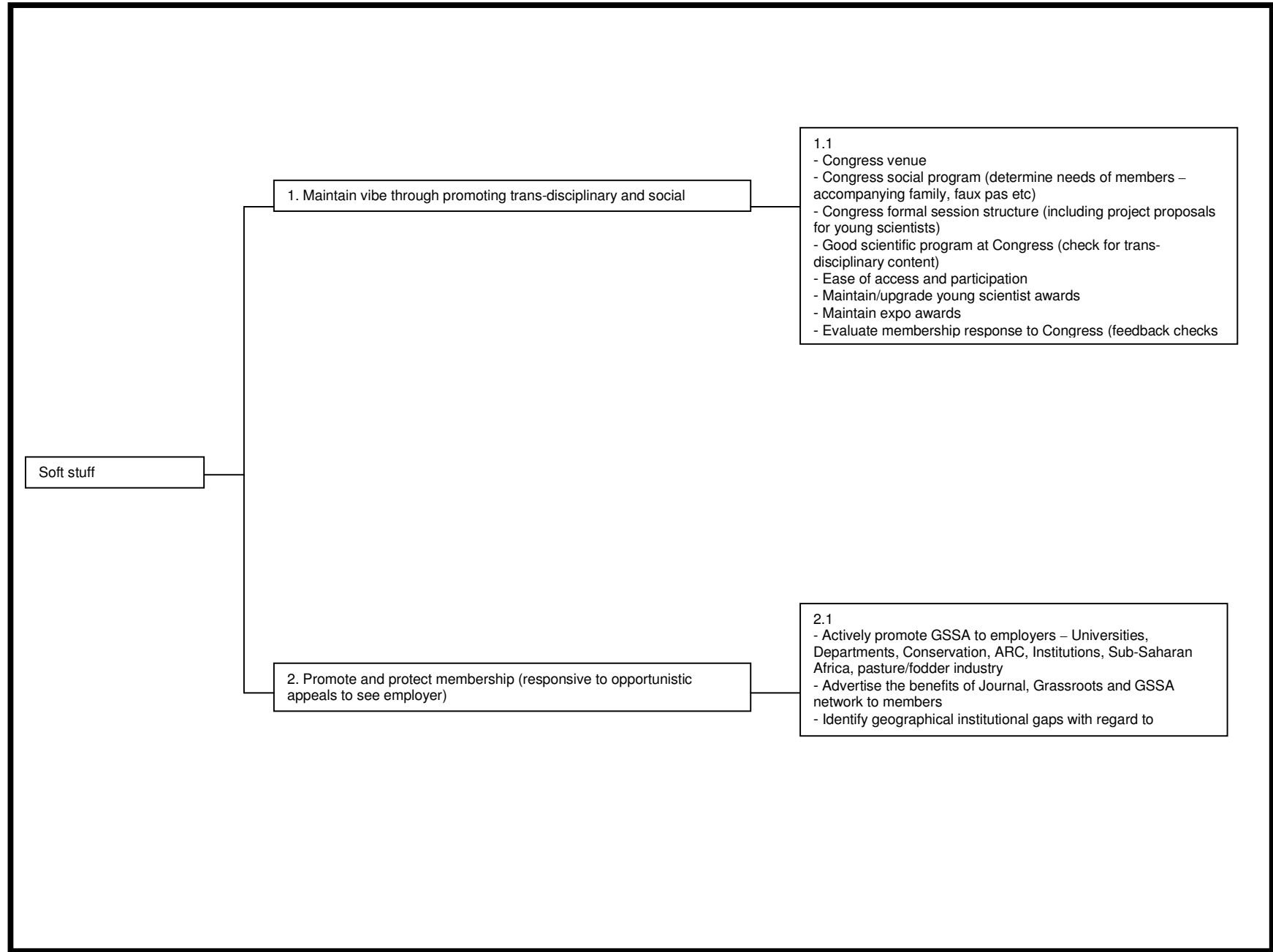
Immediate action  
- Only potential responsibility left with PAC is accreditation. Name change – Professional Assessment Committee – Constitutional change  
- Pete Zacharias writes a one pager on original idea at the time of inception – within weeks  
- PAC reflects on their own role and prepares submission to Council - before Council Meeting July '08

Action thereafter  
- Discussed more broadly with GSSA membership  
- Contemplate societal meaning and anticipate response

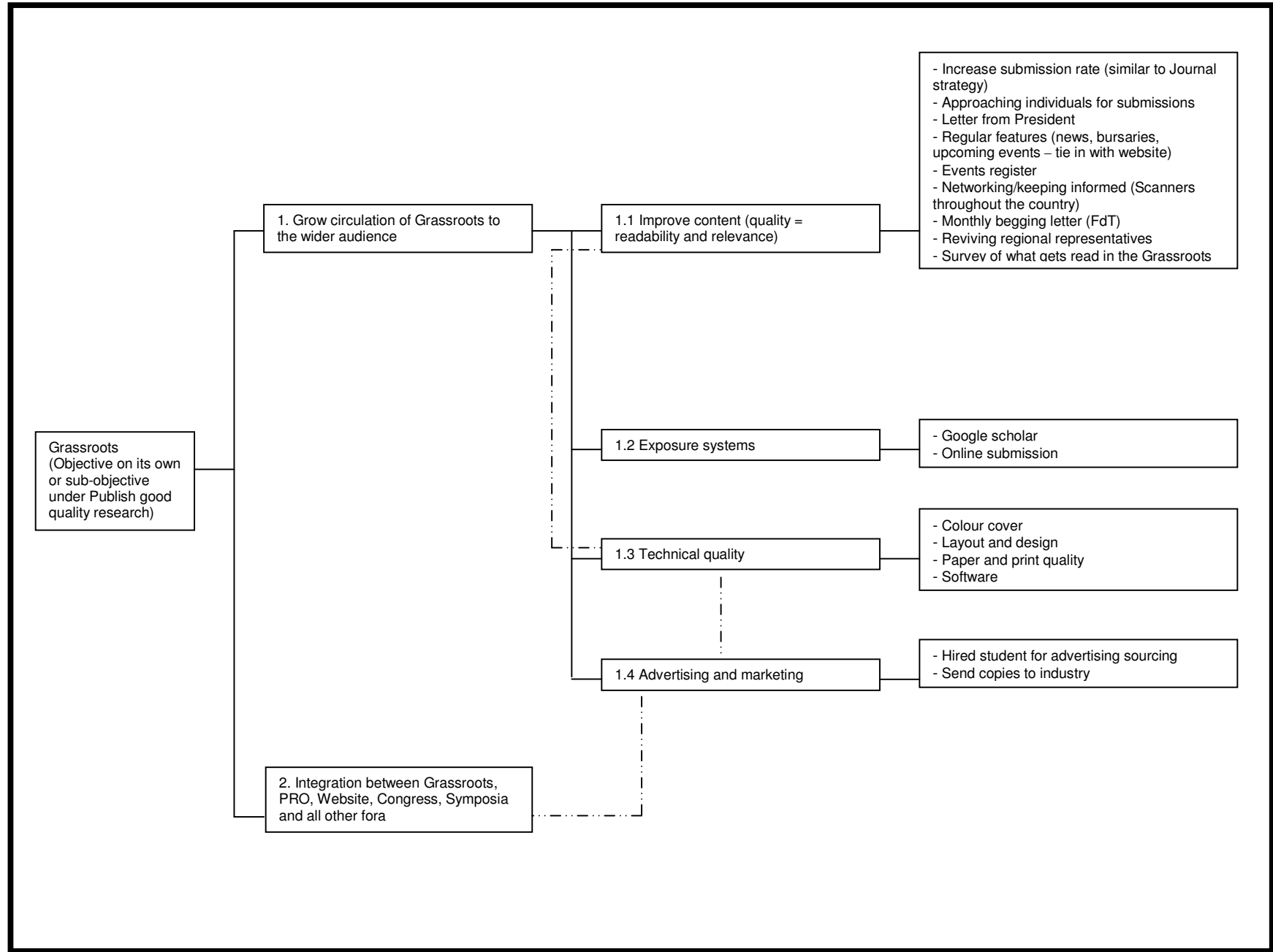
Way forward  
- Make decision on a way forward (disbandment is possible)

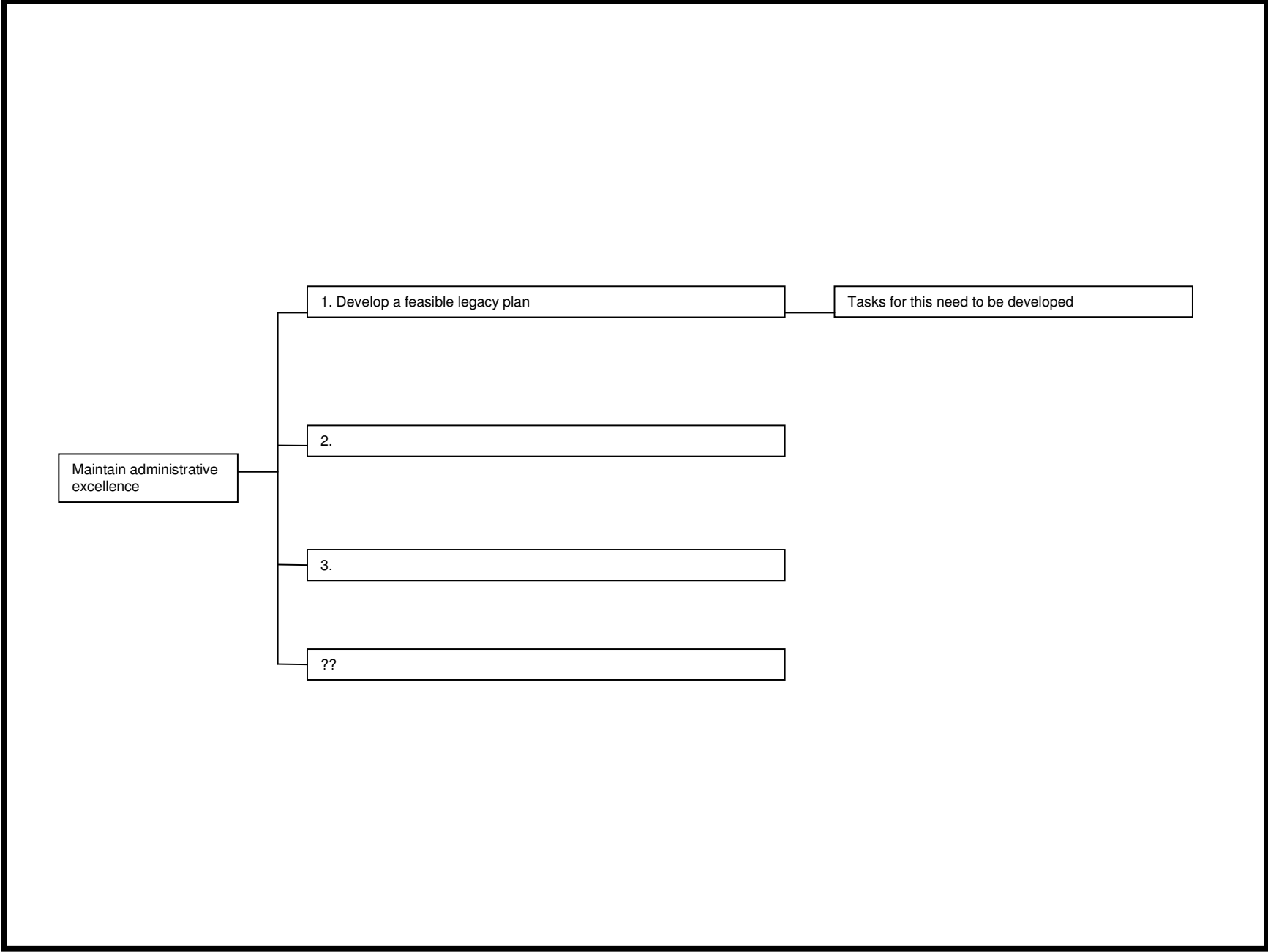
***All of the above should be done in collaboration or co-operation with the professional members and should be done by the PAC themselves***











**Ingredient lists for different Strategic objectives, as was decided on during Strategic Planning session in March 2008.**

**5.3 Phase III**

**5.3.1 Running successful meetings (especially Congress) – Ingredient list**

HB  
All

- Faux Pas award
- Continuity
- Professionalism
- Provide freedom for participants to organize own sessions
- Access to key speakers
- Ensure high quality papers
- Ensure inter alia opportunities for students to present
- Awards
- Crosslink with wine, dine and business
- Sexy venue and local support
- Emphasize science into practice
- Trade-off between general and specific content
- Tours are affordable
- Don't marginalize any sector
- Perception of cost
- Think of time constraint
- Sexy graveyard shift
- Proposal session for research projects
- Monitor feedback

**5.3.2 Publish good quality research – Ingredient list**

HB  
All

- Doing quality research (funding, capacity)
- Research/management policies
- Choosing this Journal
- Becoming attractive to convince submission (ISI, key speaker)
- Professionalism and capacity
- Work at personal level ('chatting them up')
- Link with building capacity (hurdle – language) – provide service to review language. Provide service to review language of submitted manuscripts. Currently Rachael Judd is providing such as service, but it has never been used.
- Could have workshop for students to help with planning of research projects – must have a screening process.
- Need a way to increase short-term submissions, with the focus on high profile researchers and manuscripts.
- Short turn around
- Editor pay

**5.3.3 Revitalize planted pasture component of GSSA (medium-term) – Ingredient list**

PC  
HB  
All

Ingredient list:

- Dedicated farmers days
- Congress
- Specialists
- Role of industry
- Attract back planted pasture participation
- Government structures supporting these goals (NAEPT)

- Retraining
- Link between commercial and pastoralism

**5.3.4 Clarify role of PAC – Ingredient list**

HB  
All

- Historical development and recent changing context
- Considering future possibilities
- Clarifying refereeing process
- In GSSA mission this fits into the science into practice

**5.3.5 Increased capacity development – Ingredient list**

HB  
All

- Young scientists
- Awards (at Congress)
- Writing skills
- Eskom Expo for Young Scientists
- Age overlap between scientists

**5.3.6 Soft stuff – Ingredient list**

HB  
All

- Tolerance
- Small discipline
- Young scientists
- Fun vibe
- Altruism
- Wine, dine and chat about business