

# THE GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

## RESPONSE PROTOCOL

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This protocol emanates from a workshop of the council of the GSSA held on 31 October 1996 in the J.D. Scott room, Department Range and Forage Resources, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

### OBJECTIVE

Provide a protocol for mobilising resources through the GSSA to make a meaningful contribution to policies, land-use practices and environmental issues to advance the science and practice of sustainable use of range and pastures for the social and economic well-being of the people of southern Africa.

### MANDATE

The GSSA is an independent society operating within the mission and objectives determined by its members. The mandate for this response protocol initiative emanates from striving to achieve the following values stemming from the objectives of the society:

1. Encourage practitioners to participate in the activities of the society;
2. Require the highest standards of professional objectivity, excellence and integrity from its members;
3. Create public awareness of range and pasture science;
4. Engender a conservation ethic in society;
5. Promote the equitable, efficient and sustainable use of natural resources;
6. Seek to serve through its membership and activities, the broad spectrum of southern African society.

### JUSTIFICATION

The GSSA comprises members involved and concerned with the science and practice of range and pasture management. This broad field involves primarily the use and conservation of natural resources. It encompasses extensive fields such as livestock production, wildlife management, nature conservation, water catchment management and range and mine-dump rehabilitation. The disciplines involved include, amongst others, ecology botany, zoology, range and pasture science, animal science, soil science and genetics. The society has a multi-disciplinary base and has the interactive capacity between environmental sciences, economics and agricultural sciences. Members of the society comprise independent practitioners, scientists and students and those employed by a wide range of institutions including government, universities, development agencies and agricultural, wildlife and related concerns. These more than 600 members are mostly from South Africa with an increasing number from other African regions, Americas, Europe and Australia. The GSSA is the regional society with probably the broadest base relating to the

integrity and use of the region's rich range and pasture resources. These resources comprise over 85% of the surface area of southern Africa and are of immense value to agriculture, ecotourism and stable rural development. The GSSA is seen as potentially one of the most important agents or watchdogs for the optimum use and conservation of these resources. The society, through its administration, professional affairs committee and trust, has the organisational infrastructure to fulfil this role.

## PROTOCOL

A flow chart setting out the steps for the functioning of this protocol can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: GSSA response protocol

<b>Identify Issue</b>	Any environmental, rangeland or policy issue that a member feels the GSSA should corporately repond to is identified.
<b>Inform GSSA Council</b>	GSSA Council to be informed of the issue by the member/group concerned. All communication to be sent to administrator.
<b>Decide on action</b> <b>Yes Communicate</b> <b>No no response</b>	The PAC, as the appointed subcommittee decides on whether GSSA should respond and what action should be taken.
<b>Register intent to repond:</b> <b>1. to initiator</b> <b>2. sensitise membership</b> <b>via - Bulletin</b> <b>- Flier</b> <b>- Internet</b>	Communicate the proposed response to the initiator and/or membership.
<b>Formalise tender</b>	PAC formalises and puts out a tender document with all the regulations and conditions (legal and financial) and simultaneously secures funding from the Trust or other sources.
<b>Secure funding</b>	
<b>Allocate tender</b>	The successful applicant is informed by PAC
<b>Tenderer or appointee carries out work</b>	Nature of work dictated by each issue. Usually involves compiling and producing a written response on behalf of the society.
<b>Circularise to members for volunteered response or inputs</b>	Time permitting, this step may or may not be included.
<b>Incorporate Admendments</b>	Tenderer/appointee.
<b>Circularise the final response on document to Council Members for approval</b>	Council, representing GSSA membership, has the final responsibility for the response document.
<b>Submit and market the final response</b>	Submit the document to appropriate agencies/institutions. The GSSA should be seen as an active stakeholder in rangeland or environmental issues, and the media should be used as a vehicle to market such responses.

<b>Finalise outstanding matters</b>	Payment of appointee, or any other condition that has to be met.
<b>Archive response</b>	The GSSA Administrator archives all responses for future reference.