



**AESA
Independent
Strategic &
Scientific
Advisory Board
Meeting**

**MEETING
MINUTES**

17 & 18th March 2016

Venue: African Academy of Sciences, Olusegun Obasanjo Boardroom

Present

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Abdallah Daar | ISSAB Chair |
| 2. Aida Opoku-Mensah | ISSAB Vice Chair |
| 3. Akissa Bahri | ISSAB Member |
| 4. Christian Borgemeister | ISSAB Member |
| 5. Fil Randazzo | ISSAB Member (attending electronically) |
| 6. Francisca Mutapi | ISSAB Member (attending electronically) |
| 7. Paul Sagnia | ISSAB Member |
| 8. Tom Kariuki | Convener |
| 9. Susan Gichoga | taking minutes |

Attending by Invitation

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Anne Kimari | Chief Operating Officer |
| 2. Benjamin Gyampoh | Programme Manager |
| 3. Deborah-Fay Ndlovu | Communication Manager |
| 4. Evelyn Gitau | Programme Manager |
| 5. Hannah Ngugi | Finance & Administration Manager |
| 6. Josephine Karuri | M&E Programme Manager |
| 7. Michael Kilpatrick | AAS Senior Advisor |
| 8. Nidhee Jadeja | AESA Change Manager |

Absent with Apology

Charles Mgone ISSAB Member

Meeting Management

Quorum

The Chair noted that as per Clause 4 (f) in the Terms of Reference (TOR's), the meeting had adequate quorum of five members and was fit to proceed.

Election of Vice Chair

The first order of business was to elect a Vice Chair. The Chair suggested the following guidelines to advance this agenda:

- a) Gender balance
- b) If there is more than one candidate for election, voting will be by acclamation

Aida Opoku-Mensah was nominated by Akissa Bahri and thereafter unanimously endorsed by the ISSAB members present.

Attendees

The ISSAB Chair invited AESA programme staff to sit in on all sessions of the ISSAB meeting.

Min/ISSAB/01 Introductory Comments by AESA Director

Tom Kariuki offered apologies of absence from Berhanu Abegaz, AAS Executive Director (ED). Abegaz was in Kasane, Botswana preparing for the AAS General Assembly meeting to be convened on 20th – 23rd June. The AESA Director noted that:-

- a) The ED was delighted to have the inaugural ISSAB meeting taking place at the AAS,
- b) AAS/AESA is thankful to ISSAB members for acceding to serve on the Board despite their busy schedules,
- c) The ISSAB has a range of roles and AESA will work with the ISSAB in the next three years to fulfil these roles

- d) AESA will in the current ISSAB meeting venture to share more information about:-
- AESA activities for the first year
 - AESA capacities, structure and programmes over the next five years
 - Highlight of key findings by the independent review conducted last November to assess how AESA has been set up for the big job ahead.
 - The AESA forward look; present early ideas of the business plan.

Min/ISSAB/02 Introduction of ISSAB Members

ISSAB members and AAS staff in attendance did self-introduction.

Min/ISSAB/03 Discussion and Endorsement of ISSAB Terms of Reference

The TORs were ratified 'as is', with no amendments.

Min/ISSAB/04 Presentations about AAS and AESA

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Summary | AAS staff presented ongoing programmes being implemented under AESA, how AAS operationally supports these programmes, results emanating from the most recent Funders Review and information from the latest business plan draft currently under development. |
| Advisory notes | <p>AESA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AESA should support all fields and disciplines including social sciences. • AESA needs to place equal emphasis on the STEM areas when communicating externally to position favourably for funding. • Identify what areas need to be reworked further to maintain AESA's independence within the general confines of the NEPAD/AU endorsement. • World Bank programmes in the African continent are a good fit for AESA, and synergy should be created between the two institutions. <p><u>Suggested Actions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The African Development Bank (AfDB) is a critical partner, thus AESA should seek partnership discussions with highest levels in AfDB's governance and attend its annual science and innovation forums. b) Do a scoping study to identify organizations that fund Science, Technology & Innovation (STI), and create a simple multipurpose database. UNESCO and UNECA also do these type of studies. c) Develop a key messages guideline to enable AESA's stakeholders to engage in publicity on behalf of AESA. d) For all AESA programmes, define what success looks like, scale up what is most likely to be successful and impactful, and then build a business case to attract more funding. <p>Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training and Science (DELTAS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DELTAS has impressive funding and a long term horizon, which is an advantage that AESA should capitalize on to build a critical mass of researchers in Africa. <p><u>Suggested Actions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) AESA should build the capacity of institutions hosting DELTAS to strengthen financial administration of large grants. b) AESA should work to obtain institutional and political buy-in into DELTAS to facilitate percolation of research benefits and attract co-financing for scale up. |

- c) Spread geographical scope of DELTAS across Africa by leveraging more funding from different funders.
- d) Balance long term goals against rapid results; large funding for consortia is good but seed money for innovation is also required.
- e) Midterm review is a critical opportunity to make necessary adjustments to the programme.
- f) Thoroughly evaluate the impact of this training on policies and number of people impacted; check progress towards critical mass.

Grand Challenges Africa (GCA)

- Partnership building should be a collective effort for staff at senior and middle level management in AESA and could include but not be limited to:
 - Ambassadors armed with a key message and vision statement
 - Identification of influential persons to advocate on AESA's behalf
 - Approach governments and the private sector

Suggested Actions:

- a) Follow-up e-market place prospects with personalized follow-up and invest in improving innovators soft skills in fundraising.
- b) Consider hosting interns to support Programme Managers with auxiliary functions thus enable Managers to focus on the bigger picture.
- c) Push success stories into public discourse and write case studies. For example, link up the success of Kenyan energy start-up M-Kopa, with the Harvard Business School for case writing.
- d) Consider taking action to integrate mental health at the national level in Africa's Ministries of Health.
- e) AESA Think tank activities could begin to do analysis of budgets that African governments provide to R&D, and what the implications are.

Good Financial Grants Practice (GFGP)

- GFGP is a good tool for engagement because it is a new concept that addresses a crucial need among funders and recipients.

Suggested Action:

- a) GFGP needs to be positioned as a key selling point for AAS/AESA because it holds promise for gaining widespread support.

Climate Impact Research Capacity & Leadership Enhancement (CIRCLE)

- Although CIRCLE is functionally under AESA, in the larger context, decisions need to be made about the full integration of CIRCLE into AESA.

Suggested Actions:

- a) Monitor CIRCLE Fellows (CVFs) to determine their impact viz-a-viz the funding made towards their training.
- b) AESA can drive agenda so that priorities for climate change for Africa are done from the continent.
- c) The debate on climate adaptation is very important and it needs to be done from an African position. AAS can take a leadership role on this.

Operations

- Charging 8% for administration costs seems lean. AESA can consider profiling funders and charging overheads on a sliding scale depending on the capability of the funder.
- There is no need to draw down on endowment funds if AAS can subsidize or offset costs from other sources of funds.

- Consider income generating activities to strengthen institutional financial base without jeopardising the tax exempt status with government of Kenya.
- Aggressively pursue endowment funds from African governments. AAS/AESA can start with the governments where Presidents are amenable to investing in STI and intensify efforts. If a government has formulated a long-term strategic vision, it is more likely to be receptive to support investments in R&D.
- AAS should reach out and work with STI champions such as Presidents Ameenah Gurib-Fakim (Mauritius), Paul Kagame (Rwanda), Macky Sall (Senegal) etc.

Think Tank, Advocacy and Partnerships

- The Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) has started the development of an African capacity building report and the next theme is STI Capacity. Aida will let ACBF know that they could consult with AESA.
- AESA should tap into the pulse of Africa and listen to the dialogues going on to ensure relevance and impact.
- AAS could attend the UNECA sponsored 3rd Africa Think Tank Conference on 8-9th April. Aida will request for invitations on AAS' behalf.

Suggested Actions:

- a) Explore models for developing influential position papers.
- b) AAS needs a science writer on board. This is a person who can pick the brains of existing AAS Fellows about ongoing relevant issues and amplify them in the public arena to increase the visibility of AAS.
- c) Presently there is no voice in Africa in scientific discourse. This gap provides an opportunity for AAS outreach.

Joint Funders Review

- In response to reviewer's inquiry, AESA has reiterated the importance of the ISSAB as an important advisory and thought partner towards our overall success. AESA's Charter already incorporates the ISSAB as a functional body and AESA intends to keep it that way.

Suggested Actions:

- a) When recruiting programme staff, AESA should think about language diversity.
- b) AAS needs to revisit expansion of the endowment fund. President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius can be a champion and ambassador in terms of identifying and approaching various countries for funds, including committing funds from her own country.
- c) The funders review report is well written. It is clear and concise and contains gems of information for further action.

AESA Business Plan

- AESA business plan has to be closely aligned and anchored in the AAS overall strategy and direction. AESA is a programmatic arm of AAS and the business plan derives/will derive its mandate from the AAS current and future Strategic Plans.
- AESA needs to consolidate current gains and deepen them. Strategize to see how current programmes tie up with what is proposed in the business plan.
- The ISSAB will try as much as possible to add value to the fundraising plans.
- The World Diabetes Foundation has a good footprint and experienced in long term and steady fundraising. Possibly Tom Kariuki and Evelyn Gitau

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| | <p>from AESA can visit this Board for learning purpose; Abdallah Daar will set up this link.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISSAB members considered the long term AESA business plan as ambitious but achievable. <p><u>Suggested Actions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Map funders who have a soft spot on health, look for a hook and strategize to approach them. Christian Borgemeister will provide more information on this especially with regard to Europe-AID. AESA can write a position paper on why philanthropy is not thriving in Africa and what can be done to unlock it. Important for both AAS and AESA to actively look for core funding. Currently more funders are interested in funding thematic issues specific to their mandate. Consider SIDA, CDC (Switzerland), the Japanese development agency, Canadian CIDA, Irish Aid, the Africa-Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Secretariat, Europaid, Sweden, Norway (Scandinavian countries), France, Austria, the private sector and banks. AESA has to explore and have a strategy to cultivate each and every donor, leveraging on the ISSAB's networks. AESA's status after Berhanu's retirement should be carefully thought through to ensure AESA remains an organizational priority. Carefully manage the hand over process. Increase the Governing Council's level of appreciation and sponsorship to speak on behalf of AESA in their areas of influence. Have regular interactions with the Governing Council for information saturation about AESA to imbue a moral buy-in. Study the IFS model which trains fellows using minimal funds. AESA may be able to do fellowships outside health working with the Carnegie Foundation. Develop a two minute video on AESA and its programmes which if done professionally, will be a valuable tool for disseminating messages about AESA's programmes and beneficiaries. |
| Resolution | Portfolio reviews should be one key responsibility for the ISSAB going forward. |

Min/ISSAB/05 Telecomm with Fil Randazzo

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Summary | <p>Tom Kariuki presented a summary of his telephone conversation with Fil Randazzo, an ISSAB member who was unable to attend the meeting in person. Highlights of proposals to the ISSAB and AESA were:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Balance between democratizing calls and creating important programmes that are highly focused on development needs. Translate ideas to impact people's lives. Need to look at a long term horizon and be patient because scaling up of successful ideas takes time. Short term guides policy makers and funders and the challenge for AESA is to focus on a number of transformational projects that are high risk and high reward. Think clearly about how to resource these projects. There is need for strong collaborations that can bring benefits. Programmes need good management. Principle Investigators must have the skills in research management. Where these skills are lacking, bridge this gap. Stay away from the drug of publicity. PR will fade away and it is not enough to sustain a programme |
|----------------|---|

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | 7. Focus on a handful of countries. Look at countries strategic plans and find out which ones have a focus on long term investments. Once identified, forge a strong collaboration and replication will follow. |
| Advisory notes | <p><u>Suggested Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ISSAB proposed countries that can yield rapid results based on the receptiveness of their governments to STI; Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda and South Africa. AESA can pick one safe bet from these countries and have one wild card, e.g. Liberia or Somalia and compare results. • In some countries the STI DNA may be lacking at the national level but strong institutions that can fit the bill may exist therein. AESA should sift through carefully. • Show results by having a robust measuring framework to and use these results to sustain funding interest. • <p><u>Suggested Partnerships:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acumen Foundation links up innovation for scale up with the private sector through a development process that has a medium to long term horizon. AESA can network with this Foundation and other like institutions. • African Angel Investors Association also taps into private sector organizations that fund innovation. AESA can leverage and bring interested parties together. • World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) (based in Harare) have programmes to develop and help more patents coming out of Africa. AESA can also be part of this effort. • The African Union has a local office at the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR) in Nairobi, which AESA can approach for collaboration. • The European Union has the biggest delegation based in Africa in Nairobi. AESA should find out more about how to access Europe-AID which is channelled through EU regional offices because accessing the EU thru Brussels in Belgium is always challenging. • AESA should start writing additional grants and approaching other funders, effectively diversifying the donor portfolio. |
| Resolution | <p>The ISSAB proposed to increase the number of ISSAB members from the current eight (8). Disciplines to consider incorporating into the ISSAB when recruiting the additional member are strategy, statistics, health and economics. The AESA Director will take action on this recommendation.</p> <p>A few names were proposed for this slot (list is not exhaustive or restrictive)-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Valeria da Costa 2. Khalila Homer |

Min/ISSAB/06 Identification of Strategic and scientific Areas of Advice to Be Provided to AESA in the Coming Year

Generally, the ISSAB will charge AESA with a few key issues for action and monitor these. The Chair working with the AESA Director will identify action points and build agreements from there. The priority issues identified were:-

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Communication and Branding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify AESA Ambassadors and charge them to promote AESA within their spheres of influence. • Craft a one page talking point document for joined up external communication. |
|-----------------------------------|---|

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize all ISSAB members in their area of competence. Use media outlets targeting certain regions more. ISSAB members can do talks about AESA in their institutions once the talking points have been disseminated. Scidev is influential currently. They have an office for the region in Nairobi which AESA can use to explore a working relationship. The Association of Foreign Correspondents based in Nairobi gives space for institutions/persons to give short talks monthly. AESA can request for an invitation. Brand the GCA 100k grants uniquely to capture media attention and confer a feeling of special achievement to the awardees, who in turn will market the programme naturally. AESA can consider awarding media fellowships to persons who will do a whole spread of coverage and beef up existing content. Invest in friendly media and build their capacity in science reporting. |
| Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISSAB members will recommend prospective funders and partners and pass them on to AESA for follow-up and follow-through. |

Min/ISSAB/07 OVERALL REFLECTIONS

1. A young organization like AESA needs to be nimble as it grows, and test ideas with forums such as the ISSAB.
2. The ISSAB input into AESA has been amazing and the Chair impressed by the calibre of the Boards' members. These members have been carefully selected and are a right fit.
3. The first ISSAB meeting is a learning exercise for the Board and enormously useful. The emphasis on the strategy and science remit of the ISSAB is intentional. The Chair will be focused on implementable action items emanating from the meeting.
4. AESA has a formidable team and on the right path. The staff constitution shows commendable gender balance and professionalism. There is lots still to be done and the ISSAB is with AESA all the way.
5. Berhanu Abegaz has transformed the Academy during his tenure of office. AAS should think carefully about his succession to keep the momentum and the AAS GC/General Assembly should keep AESA on their radar. There is a huge transformation going on in AAS and the momentum should be maintained and accelerated.
6. There is an impressive allocation of funds to research going on in the continent through AESA and partners such as the Wellcome Trust and Gates foundation.
7. The feedback of the analysis of the 200 funded GC projects in Africa provided by Evelyn Gitau is useful to build upon. This information should be shared on the ISSAB webpage hosted on the AAS website.
8. Is there an awareness on the threat posed to AESA within the macro environment in Kenya where corruption scandals are often reported in the press? AAS/AESA is minimizing this risk through emphasis on building world class systems and encourage funders to conduct their independent review of AAS capacity to manage funds. AAS/AESA internal control environments anticipates scenarios and proactively crafts response measures. The GFGP is a good image building initiative that builds up AAS/AESA's image as an accountable institution that also wants to spread good practices across the continent. The introduction of the role of the internal auditor is an indicator of the growth of AAS/AESA.
9. ISSAB members will pursue private sector linkages, connections between AESA and activities in the Continental landscape and make introductions to funders. The African Union and NEPAD presents good platforms for AESA's growth and development.

10. AESA should get in touch with Commissioner Ikounga and have conversation with NEPAD about AESA's role in conducting research related to major infrastructural/engineering projects on the continent. Training, capacity building and technology transfer should be an integral part of these huge projects if they are to benefit the continent over the long term.
11. Within the continent and as a start, AESA can work with the Obasanjo Foundation as a leverage to get noticed by other foundations
10. AESA scenario planning is needed maybe in the next one year. Growth in staffing should be well thought out in advance so that the timing is right. There is need for AESA to ensure that it does not depict an image that it is a shell for donor funding.
11. AESA should strike a fine balance in a bid to maintain strategic focus and future financial sustainability and not stretch too thin. AESA has made a good start and is in a good place.
12. The AESA Director and staff registered gratitude for the support received from the ISSAB during this meeting. Lots of learning has taken place during the ISSAB meeting and the Boards' importance to AESA cannot be under rated.

Closing Remarks:

Julia Kemp, the Chair of the Partners Group (PG) sent her apologies through Tom Kariuki for not being present to close the meeting as stated in the programme. The ISSAB report will be shared with the office of the ED/AAS and some of the discussions will also form part of the agenda for the next AESA Partners Group meeting in May 2016.

Tom Kariuki thanked the ISSAB for the time and sacrifice they had shown in the quest to offer advice and walk with AESA. AESA will now need to quicken the pace and 2016 will see some accelerated actions and engagements.

The handover of the DELTAS program and announcement of new calls for Grand Challenges Africa will be key events this year. If this happens successfully, AESA can look forward to achieving medium to long term goals due to the inspiration and confidence that comes with such a feat.

The ISSAB can also count on AESA to remain engaged and the frequency of communication will be discussed with the Chair. All action items will be followed through and updates provided.

On behalf of Berhanu Abegaz, Tom Kariuki reiterated the Executive Director's commitment to the ISSAB and its agenda, and wished the members bon voyage.

Next meeting:

The ISSAB explored two options:-

1. Latch on to major meetings and arrange to meet in the side lines
2. Check the calendars and decide on a date for the next mandatory meeting which will likely be around the same time in 2017.

ISSAB will explore both and rely on AESA to fix a calendar date for a two day meeting

There being no further item for discussion, the meeting ended at 2:45 pm (EAT) on 18th March 2016.

AESA ISSAB Members To Do List

| Task | Responsible | When |
|---|------------------------|------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invite AAS representatives to the UNECA sponsored 3 rd Africa Think Tank Conference | Aida Opoku-Mensah | April 2016 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Link AAS up with the Africa Capacity Building Foundation team writing the African STI Capacity report. | Aida Opoku-Mensah | TBD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Link the Tom Kariuki and Evelyn Gitau with the World Diabetes Foundation for exposure in long term and steady fundraising. | Abdallah Daar | TBD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide information to AESA on international funders with a focus on health. | Christian Borgemeister | TBD |
| Forward information about potential funders and partners to AESA for consideration and follow-up. | All AESA ISSAB members | Always |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase the number of ISSAB members from the current eight. | Tom Kariuki | TBD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suggest dates for the next ISSAB meeting | Tom Kariuki | TBD |

Approved for circulation:
 By: The AESA ISSAB Chair
 On: 19 May 2016