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1.1 Background

The Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) was established in December 2001 with nine founding member academies. The overall aim of NASAC is “to serve as an independent African forum that brings together academies of science in the continent to discuss science-related issues of common concern, to make joint-statements on major issues relevant to Africa and to provide mutual support to member academies”.

In 2008, NASAC formulated its first Strategic Action Agenda for the period 2008 to 2010. During that period NASAC secured financial support from various funding partners. These included the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Inter Academy Partnership (IAP), the African Science Academies Development Initiative (ASADI) programme through the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), the Pfizer-academies programme through the Royal Society, and the NASAC-KNAW cooperation through the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences.

The second NASAC Strategic Plan, for the period 2011–2015, was a continuation of the first Strategic Action Plan and it focused on six strategic issues:

- To provide advice on the use of science, technology and innovation to address priority and thematic issues in Africa.
- To increase NASAC’s membership by facilitating the creation of new national academies in African countries where none exist and to strengthen existing member national academies.
- To enhance the visibility of NASAC through a modern interactive website and through other appropriate media.
- To promote capacity building of member academies, to strengthen their capabilities as advisers to their governments, and to encourage the participation of women and young scientists in the activities of academies.

• To ensure that NASAC represents a unified recognised voice for African academies in science, technology and innovation in order to influence policy development in Africa.
• To identify clear and precise sources of funding in order to ensure financial sustainability.

This is the third strategic document of NASAC. It builds on the successes of the previous strategic plans, seeks to find innovative means to mitigate challenges encountered, and also explore new opportunities to ensure that NASAC continues to be a relevant voice for the development policy advice on the continent.

This new strategic planning process must be viewed against the backdrop of the ASADI or Annual Meeting of African Science Academies (AMASA) meetings, ten of which were held with partners from the United States and European Academies. The end of the ASADI project initiated a new process of goal setting and strategic organisation that moves the African Academies onto a new framework of collaboration, partnership and effective and dynamic influence in Africa.

In 2014, NASAC through it General Assembly held in Nairobi, Kenya, revised and adopted a new Constitution. The new Constitution sought to strengthen the governance mechanisms of NASAC, clarify the different roles and responsibilities of its office-bearers, and reporting systems, as well as tighten and clarify its Objects and Purposes. The most important conceptual understanding of the revised Constitution is the establishment of NASAC as a pan-African organisation seeking to take its place alongside all other African knowledge institutions and scholarly initiatives to enhance policy development and application in Africa.

### 1.2 NASAC’s Philosophy

#### 1.2.1 Vision

As a Network of African Science Academies, NASAC seeks to enhance collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the members of the science community, and thereby, use evidence-based science and research to enhance the quality of African development policy in the domains of social, natural and economic sciences. NASAC sees a future Africa that
has developed a culture of science and scholarship and where all societies and individuals are able to attain their full potential in a sustainable way.

1.2.2 Mission

NASAC aspires to make science academies in the continent vehicles of positive change for African societies: to make science contribute to Africa’s full potential and sustainable development.

1.2.3 Goals

i. Enable and inter-connect African science academies to contribute to science, technology and innovation.

ii. Make the voice of science heard by African and global decision and policy makers.

iii. Establish a culture of science in Africa.

1.2.4 Core Values

The values that inspire NASAC and guide all of its operations and procedures include, among others: Institutional Independence, Mutual Dependence, Equity, Integrity and Respect for Diversity.

1.2.5 Objectives

NASAC is an independent organisation that serves to unite and strengthen African academies to address challenges on the African continent using scientific knowledge and innovative expertise. In specific terms, NASAC will:

- Provide advice to regional bodies and organisations on science-related issues of importance to Africa’s development through its membership.
- Assist in building the capacities of academies in Africa to improve their role as independent science advisors to governments and to strengthen their national, regional, and international functions.
- Assist scientific communities in Africa to set up national independent academies or associations of scientists where such bodies do not exist.
- Promote excellence in science and contribute to a culture of science in Africa.
- Serve as the authoritative voice of the science community in Africa.
1.3 Relevance

NASAC’s membership consists of duly established national science academies in Africa that are merit-based, independent, non-governmental, non-political and non-profit scientific organisations.

NASAC is only as strong as its members and would not be effective if it did not:

i. Facilitate, through financial or technical support, the formation of science academies in countries where none exist.

ii. Offer science academies a platform for interaction and collaboration with their counterparts’ worldwide.

iii. Link scientists and enhance their voice through their national academies.

iv. Strengthen existing academies through provision of capacity building and enhancement of resources. Enhance the operations of academies through provision of training to officials and staff members of their secretariats.

v. Champion or facilitate the effective networking of science academies by harnessing their collective strengths and to enhance their impact at a continental level.

While aspiring to remain globally relevant and locally responsive to change, NASAC will continue to provide:

i. Credible information and advice to decision and policymakers through serving as an archiving body with readily available information for different stakeholders.

ii. Evidence-informed advice on science curricula for science development.

iii. Science advice on economic, social, cultural and technical development for Africa.

iv. A voice for science through acquiring and synthesising the best information from the academies and making it available to other stakeholders.

v. A platform for sharing information between scientists, scientific institutions, and between countries in Africa and the world.
THE PREVIOUS STRATEGIC PLAN

In the 2011–2015 Strategic Plan, which was rolled-over to 2017, six strategic issues were set to enable NASAC to fulfill its mandate. In that period, a most significant outcome was the registration of NASAC as a legal entity in Kenya (as an International NGO in April 2012). Prior to that, NASAC operated under the umbrella of the African Academy of Science. The Inter Academy Partnership (IAP), however, had already recognised NASAC as the affiliate regional network in Africa in 2011. The six strategic issues were achieved to the extent described below.

2.1 Advisory Role

NASAC served as independent platform providing evidence-informed science advice to policymakers. The main output was the publication of four policymakers’ booklets dealing with various topics of global concern. These were:

i. **Health** – *Changing Disease Patterns in Africa;*


iii. **Agricultural Biotechnology** – *Harnessing Modern Agricultural Biotechnology for Africa’s Economic Development;* and

iv. **Climate Change** – *Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Africa.* In addition to publishing the policymakers’ booklets, attempts were made to communicate them to policymakers in various communication workshops in different regions of the continent.

2.2 Increased Membership

During the strategic period 2011–2017, NASAC experienced growth in membership as anticipated. At the end of 2010, NASAC had 17 members. By the end of 2017, the membership had increased to 24 member-academies. The creation of new academies in the western African region was facilitated by the Académie Nationale des Sciences et Techniques du Sénégal (ANSTS), serving as lead academy and supported by NASAC to host an awareness-creation workshop in 2012. NASAC also continued...
2.3 Enhanced Visibility

To enhance NASAC’s visibility during the past strategic planning period, multi-media avenues were utilised to effectively communicate outputs and outcomes of projects, events and/or activities. NASAC’s website was redesigned to become more interactive; Facebook and Twitter accounts were created to enhance social networking and communication with various stakeholders. NASAC’s communication strategy is still being improved and avenues for enhancement will continue to be sought.

2.4 Capacity Building

To strengthen member academies to develop their advisory capacity remained NASAC’s main priority. To this end, financial support was awarded through capacity building grants for the enhancement of facilities at the secretariats of some academies. Human resource capacity development was also fostered through training workshops for academy staff and officials, where resource mobilisation and working with committees were among topical issues. Additionally, academy-mentorship was also encouraged to promote sharing of experiences and acquisition of relevant operational skills. In a majority of the capacity building activities supported by NASAC, the involvement of women and young scientists was fostered.

2.5 Science Advocacy and Public Policy

In order to present a unified voice for policy development in science, technology and innovation, NASAC continued to hold conferences, workshops and seminars, in addition to the policymakers’ booklets published. The events tackled relevant scientific and developmental
themes and tapped into the rich pool of experts provided by member academies. In the past years, the themes covered included Water, Health, Agricultural Biotechnology and Climate Change Adaptation. During the period ending 2015, distinguished African experts and top scientists with global recognition were engaged to serve as committee members, conference panelists, and/or subject specialists. Dialogues between scientists and policymakers, or scientists and the private sector, or scientists and the society were organised to influence policy development in Africa. The Annual Meeting of African Science Academies (AMASA) was endorsed by member academies as a key NASAC event that networks individuals from academia, government, private and public sector institutions.

### 2.6 Continental and Regional Participation

NASAC continued to seek representation and a consultative status at African Union level and in all its respective agencies, as well as in all regional bodies of African governments, and in all other developmental organisations based in Africa. This required that NASAC became a critical player in inter-governmental affairs as a regional and/or sub-regional science advisor.

### 2.7 Financial Sustainability

To ensure that NASAC exists as a sustainable and independent institution, both short-term project and long-term institutional funding was sought. To this end, funds were secured to establish an Endowment Fund for NASAC. Several partnerships were forged to provide financial support for projects and programmes implemented by NASAC. Synergistic opportunities were also explored to leverage limited resources and raise corresponding activity-funding. Deliberations on the payment of subscription fees and giving donations by member-academies to the Network were also initiated during the period; however a decision is yet to be reached by the General Assembly of NASAC on this matter.
3.1 Regional Initiatives

The new Strategic Plan of NASAC aspires to set the stage to contribute to the implementation and achievement of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024. The primary objective is to build a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and people-driven sustainable development.

Moreover, the new Strategic Plan of NASAC aims to specifically respond to the following STISA 2024 strategic objectives:

- Enhance effectiveness of STI in addressing or implementing priority areas, including achieving food security and eradicating hunger, prevention and control of diseases, and protection of our environment.
- Improve technical competencies and institutional capacity for STI development.
- Facilitate STI policy reforms, harmonisation, science diplomacy, and resource mobilisation.

In addition to the foregoing, the priority activities of NASAC will also take into consideration other global initiatives such as the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the International Council for Science (ICSU) ten-year Future Earth Programme.
3.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

The following is a situational analysis of NASAC:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◆ The only Network of science academies on the continent that is recognised by the Inter Academy Partnership as the affiliate network for Africa.</td>
<td>◆ Limited recognition by regional bodies such as African Union or the Regional Economic Communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ NASAC is a united platform for facilitating provision of credible and independent science advice.</td>
<td>◆ Ad hoc communication mechanism of undertaken activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ NASAC has a well-established governance structure which meets regularly</td>
<td>◆ Limited capacity to nurture new academies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ NASAC has stable funding to support its operations in the medium-term.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ The Annual Meeting of African Science Academies, of which NASAC is a key partner, provides an important opportunity for national academies to convene key stakeholders on topical themes.</td>
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<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
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<td>◆ Collectively, the 24 science academies in Africa represent all disciplines of scientific inquiry and have members who are considered among the best experts of their nations. This expertise can be harnessed and marketed for international integrated or interdisciplinary studies.</td>
<td>◆ Dependency on project funding to support secretariat operations and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ There is increasing demand in Africa for collective science advice by international stakeholders.</td>
<td>◆ Lack of a permanent self-funded organizational headquarters.</td>
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4.1 STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Facilitate the establishment of new national science academies and strengthen existing ones in Africa

In order to strengthen NASAC, the capacities of existing national academies need to be enhanced and new science academies established in countries where there is scientific readiness for such organisations. A regionally-based approach is envisaged to facilitate the establishment of new science academies through the support of lead regional academies. The academies in Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda are proposed as lead regional academies in Northern, Western and Central, Southern, and Eastern Africa respectively.

It is observed that science academies on the continent are characterised by challenges ranging from lack of financial sustainability, small membership base, insufficient staff capacity, limited recognition as science advisors by their governments, and inadequate infrastructure to support their intended activities. NASAC will seek to mobilise funds for intra-networking-project activity support so as to better profile academies for local national recognition. Together with the above-mentioned regional academies, NASAC will endeavour to engage regional economic communities to champion support (economic and political) for science academies.

With a view to increase the number of science academies on the continent, NASAC’s publication titled *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening science academies* will be revised. As with existing academies, the new academies will be encouraged to address pertinent issues such as involving women scientists and the youth in their activities and governance processes.
4.2 STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Promote a scientific culture for social impact

4.2.1 SCIENCE FOR POLICY

One of the main objectives of science academies, and by extension NASAC, is to provide evidence-informed advice on issues of importance to Africa’s development. In the provision of such advice, NASAC will be guided by the principles of independence, objectivity, rigorous analysis of evidence, peer review, transparency and multidisciplinarity. Building on the experience gained through the publishing of the four policymakers booklets on water, climate change, nutrition and health, and agricultural biotechnology, NASAC will embark on the preparation of at least one such booklet per year on issues of major importance for Africa’s development.

Priority in identifying topics for the policymakers’ booklets will be given to emerging issues where cutting-edge science can provide insights. Also to be considered are issues of importance to multiple African countries. Furthermore, in order to foster science diplomacy, science academies through NASAC will play a key role in forging bilateral or multilateral relationships among African countries so as to leverage resources and provide joint science advice.

4.2.2 SCIENCE FOR SOCIETY

NASAC will encourage collaborative scientific activities among science academies, which will fulfill multiple social objectives, including human and material capacity development and forging linkages on a bilateral and multilateral basis with the public and the private sector. Mutual respect, equitable resource allocation and sound financial accountability will form the shared values upon which these collaborations will be founded. Furthermore, the nature of the collaborations will include consensus studies and convening activities aligned to Agenda 2063 and STISA 2024, with a strong focus on societal inclusivity.
4.3 STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Create strong partnerships regionally and internationally

In aligning to aspiration 7 of Agenda 2063 – “Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner” and the clear indication within STISA 2024 on the need to enhance international cooperation, NASAC envisions active engagement with related organisations within the continent, and academy networks and related organisations beyond Africa. Climate change adaptation and the blue economy are two of the key areas which stand to gain from active collaboration among African countries and deserve special attention.

There also exist regional structures within the continental and regional economic communities where the voice of science through science academies needs to be strengthened. Working with the framework of Agenda 2063 and STISA 2024, NASAC will seek to establish and strengthen relations with the African Union. NASAC will also seek to strengthen North-South and South-South partnerships.

4.4 STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Promote credible and effective science communication

NASAC will find a means to enable it serve as a repository for the reports and documents produced by African science academies as a result of their activities. This may also include a large number of operational documents that may become reference materials especially for young or new science academies on the continent. In order to maintain its currency and access to such a resource, the repository will be built and maintained as an online library by NASAC. A clear communication strategy showcasing the growth and development of science academies’ outputs, as well as their key activities and products, will be developed and circulated by NASAC as part of its branding and communication strategy.

Partnerships with regional science media and journalists’ associations will be developed, with an aim to effectively communicate science in a manner that non-scientists can comprehend. NASAC will also continue
to issue science advisory pieces using the best Africa scientists on the continent in the form of statements, policymakers’ booklets and articles in high-profile journals. Training to enhance science journalism on the continent will be pursued, and where possible hosting of science television programmes by various African media houses will be explored.

**4.5 STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: Enhance the financial sustainability of NASAC**

It is recognised that for NASAC to sustain and increase its activities, a resource mobilisation strategy should be developed, the current endowment fund increased, and the sources of income should be diversified. Sustainable funding will be identified to support NASAC Board meetings, annual general meetings and other essential *ad-hoc* meetings which are crucial for the proper functioning of the organisation. If NASAC remains a project-supported entity, its activities and influence will be limited, and therefore this strategy will find mechanisms to expand funding sources for NASAC.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As NASAC continues to grow and strengthen its networking function across Africa, it will need rigorous, vigorous, and credible independent evaluation so that its added value and gains are continuously tracked. That will enhance the confidence of its members, national governments, African continental bodies, and funders of NASAC’s ability to deliver against its stated vision, mission, and strategic objectives. Therefore, all efforts will be made by the NASAC Board, Secretariat, and membership to ensure that credible metrics and analytics are part of NASAC’s annual progress evaluation and reflection. It will be essential to present these data to each Annual General Assembly so that there is at least an opportunity for the entire NASAC membership to reflect on the network’s progress, lessons learned, and areas that need to be made more robust. The NASAC Board will continually monitor interim progress reports.
The Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) was established on 13th December 2001 in Nairobi, Kenya, and is currently the affiliate Network for Interacademy Partnership (IAP) in Africa.

NASAC is a consortium of merit-based science academies in Africa and aspires to make the “voice of science” heard by policy and decision makers within Africa and worldwide. NASAC is dedicated to enhancing the capacity of existing national science academies and champions the cause for creation of new academies where none exist.

As at November 2016, NASAC comprised of the following twenty-four members:

- Académie Nationale des Sciences et Technologies du Sénégal (ANSTS)
- Académie Nationale des Sciences du Burkina (ANSB)
- Académie Nationale des Sciences et Technologies du Congo (ANSTC)
- Académie Nationale des Sciences, Arts et Lettres du Benin (ANSALB)
- Académie Nationale des Sciences, Arts et Lettres du Togo (ANSALT)
- Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)
- Academy of Sciences of Mozambique (ASM)
- African Academy of Sciences (AAS)
- Algerian Academy of Science and Technology (AAST)
- Botswana Academy of Science (BAS)
- Cameroon Academy of Sciences (CAS)
- Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS)
- Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (GAAS)
- Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology, Morocco
- Kenya National Academy of Sciences (KNAS)
- Madagascar National Academy of Arts, Letters and Sciences
- Mauritius Academy of Science and Technology (MAST)
- National Academy of Coté d’Ivoire
- Nigerian Academy of Science (NAS)
- Sudanese National Academy of Science (SNAS)
- Tanzania Academy of Sciences (TAS)
- The Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS)
- Zambia Academy of Sciences (ZaAS)
- Zimbabwe Academy of Sciences (ZAS)

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