

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020–2022

The AAUN is the only consortium of universities between Australia and Africa, established to inject teamwork, vigour and innovation in research, education and mobility, while addressing mutual challenges through equal partnerships and governance. AAUN flies between the lowering layers of geopolitics and the rising layers of bureaucracy, establishing effective diplomacy and friendship in higher education and research.

This strategic plan covers and sets targets for the next three years to our tenth year since launch in 2012. The Network, in consultation with its Councils in Australia and Africa, has identified five focus areas of 'Security':

- **Environment, agriculture, food and nutrition**
- **Public health in non-communicable disease**
- **Higher education and research capacity**
- **Sustainability in mining and extractive communities**
- **Public sector, employment and economic development**

The AAUN has learned over the past seven years to overcome many of the intellectual, communications, practical and logistical obstacles in working together, building teams with capacity to innovate and impact, and to enable the ambitions of established and early career researchers. Based on our capacity and intercontinental reach, we will drive further development and success with:

- **Relevance to international policy frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–30), the Africa Agenda (2015–63) and the Australian International and Indo-Pacific Strategies (2015–30). We work closely with our knowledge partners and sponsors (DFAT, ACIAR, NRF-SA, International Agencies WHO, OECD)**
- **Finding solutions to the challenges of communications and IT, distance and mobility, resources.**
- **Building alliances and critical mass with cognate networks and groups including ARUA, IORA, RUFORUM, NGO's, Alumni and African diasporas.**
- **Forming strategic research and education links with a few, selected global Universities with mutual objectives and benefits.**



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD



Curtin University



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS



Murdoch
UNIVERSITY



VISION

Strategic higher education and research partnerships achieving distinct, innovative and sustainable solutions to challenges facing Australia and Africa.

MISSION

To strengthen and enhance targeted Australia-Africa partnerships through a network of collaborative research and education initiatives. AAUN will improve capacity and connectivity of academic talent across the two continents. By working with universities and research institutions, business and government, AAUN will contribute sustainable solutions to mutual challenges.

VALUES

Innovation

Grow and support a culture of discovery and innovation.

Collaboration

Foster open and supportive teamwork for global benefit.

Equity

Promote equal, inclusive partnerships in education and research.

Sustainability

Deliver evidence-based options for policy development.



OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

SCALE UP AUSTRALIA AFRICA INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Partners – expand carefully from 10 to 15 on each continent and a few (5) global partners for mutual benefit in capacity, exchange, impact and resources.

Program – build sustainable teams and programs from 53 –70. Hold 2 major annual Fora (Australia and Africa) each year, and up to ten project workshops.

People – develop individuals and teams to lead innovation and impact.

Research – build new capacity and reach in climate change, blue economy.

Resources – attract further investment to the Partnership Research and Development Fund from governments and international agencies.

STRENGTHEN THE ACADEMIC AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITY OF AAUN PARTNERS

Mobility – expand two-way mobility to build capacity and opportunity.

Scholarships – enable the Australian Awards, support returning scholars, and engage alumni groups.

Leadership – assist with university development in academic leadership and exchange, focusing on research leaders and early career researchers.

Gender – ensure fair access, inclusion and advancement at all levels.

Assessment – establish regular monitoring and support for quantitative and qualitative measures that assist individuals and teams to achieve objectives.

BRING AN EVIDENCE-BASED, INFLUENTIAL VOICE FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Develop – policy briefs and options in key areas of expertise. Study global policy frameworks and events that are relevant to AAUN development.

Engage – with industry, government and civil society through joint events and actions to meet Australia Africa challenges. Implement a significantly enhanced communications, media and social media program.

PROVIDE AN INTELLIGENCE AND ADVISORY PORTAL FOR EXPERTISE ON AUSTRALIA AFRICA ISSUES

Establish – a prominent voice in intelligence, information, communications and media, with briefs as an advisory portal for sectoral developments.

Mentor – set up a portal to connect mentors and students in facilitating mobility and sustained success between participating individuals and institutions.

AAUN FUTURE DIRECTIONS ACTION PLAN 2020

Each year we bring our annual report for the past year, current strategic plan and future directions for the next year to the AAUN Council and community. This is essential consultation in bringing together ideas and innovation from our research and education teams. The actions here were approved at the AGM on 2 September 2019. These actions focus on 2020 in implementing the Strategic Plan 2020–22.

1. PARTNERSHIP (1)

AAUN will expand its partnership from 10 to 15 members on each continent by 2022, providing greater reach, capacity and talent for our research and education programs. The criteria for membership must be formally signed, including payment of subscription, commitment for 5 years in first instance and 1-year notice of withdrawal. Commitment to engage is essential, including a representative member of Council, an on-campus coordinator, participation in Fora and workshops, promotion on campus within and between partners, enabling mobility and experience for staff and students – aligned with partner university international strategies.

2. PARTNERSHIP (2)

At AGM 2018, it was agreed to explore carefully the proposal to invite up to five global partners, who could bring new and relevant education and research capacity to AAUN. The two-way benefits must be clear and include the above criteria. Facilitation is required in joint proposals to agencies such as the EU, GRFUK, Development agencies, Foundations and Philanthropy. Any such initiative must not dilute or distract from the Australia Africa brand and distinction of AAUN.





3. GOVERNANCE

The AAUN has worked from the start as an equal partnership of leading research Universities, with mirror-image steering groups and small, part time secretariats based in Sydney and Pretoria. As there has been a 2019 leadership change in Pretoria, and funding to 2021 has been achieved in both Africa and Australia, we propose to leave the arrangements until AGM 2021 when further change may be considered. More importantly, with legal and accountant advice, we will register in Australia as a not-for-profit higher education association. This would allow a bank account with complete transparency, control and economic efficiency. Our Steering Groups would become AAUN Councils.

4. RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

AAUN has adopted a set of programs and topics since 2012 that reflects only a small part of the expertise of its members and is related to the areas of funding and the priority interests of government and agencies. We can establish a small working group to (i) review progress and impact of the existing 53 programs initiated by the PRDF; (ii) conduct a high level survey of the strengths and ambitions of our partners; (iii) determine the maximum areas of benefit to established and emerging researchers; and (iv) take a reality check on the appropriate levels of engagement with policy frameworks including the SDGs, Belt and Road Initiative, Africa Agenda 2063, Australian International and Indo Pacific policies. The realities of funding must be considered in keeping ambitions achievable.

5. ASSESSMENT

As a prelude/adjunct to the above review, we will carry out an assessment of AAUN activities and impact 2013–19 (7 years), using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The conventional quantitative approaches are easier – albeit requiring careful management of variables in membership, participation and leadership. The qualitative assessment, which again needs to be appropriate to research impact with Australia-Africa characteristics, can be a survey that elicits the past experience, benefits and obstacles, and the future aspirations and priorities of AAUN. Both assessments will provide a structure for simplifying annual reporting from research programs.