



ACADEMY OF SCIENCE OF SOUTH AFRICA (ASSAf)  
SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING PROGRAMME

Presentation to SEMINAR ON RESEARCH UPTAKE AND UTILISATION:

**"A Consensus Model for Research  
Dissemination and Uptake"**

14 Sept 2009

*Applying scientific thinking  
in the service of society*  
**W Gevers, Chairperson: ASSAf's Committee on  
Scholarly Publishing in South Africa**

# OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The ASSAf Scholarly Publishing Programme is conceptualised as a concerted intervention into the country's national system of Innovation (NSI), aligned with the Ten-Year Innovation Plan of the DST, and focused on the enhancement of the quality, quantity and worldwide visibility of original, peer-reviewed publications produced by researchers in the public sector, the fostering of a new generation of highly competent and productive scientists and scholars, and enhancement of research uptake and utilisation. It is based on approaches typical of Academy activities (evidence-based, peer review, etc)

## ASSAf REPORT 2006: JOURNAL-BASED PUBLICATIONS

- Strong indigenous journal system essential
- Code of best practice in editing and peer review needed
- Cyclical peer review of journals by ASSAf panels proposed
- Suggests accreditation of research outputs by govt. should be based on peer review-QA system as next phase of incentivising quality in Higher Educ. Instits.

## ASSAf REPORT(CONTIN.)

- National platform required for open access through high-quality, free-online journals AND institutional repositories – govt. backing needed, mechanisms to be explored
- Information system to be set up, plus citation indexing and valid bibliometric methods
- Translation/uptake/utilisation of scholarly content needed for public benefit – esp. education, innovation, development
- International : efforts to promote public sector, level-playing field, freely accessible indexing system

# ASSAf REPORT: PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS 1,3 AND 5

- National Scholarly Editors' Forum established - terms of reference agreed- consensus "National Code of best practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review" published – database of journals/editors nearly ready – blog being established - three annual meetings held with good attendance and participation
- Mandate given for discipline-grouped peer review of S A scholarly journals – criteria and process guidelines approved – first two Consensus Peer Review Panels nearly finished (Social Sciences et al, Agriculture/Basic Life Sci et al) – reports will be open domain and multi-purpose for policy-makers, system analysts, publishers, contributors and readers – next four groups of journals underway

## ASSAf REPORT: PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATION 4

- Negotiations pending for inclusion of best-practice guidelines in CHE/HEQC QA systems for higher education institutions, science councils
- Working toward free-online, 4-tiered course system in scientific writing for postgraduates and young staff - consultative expert workshop expressed strong support

## RECOMMENDATION 2 (contin.)

- Discipline-grouped consensus peer review of S A journals by ASSAf Panels will provide strong inputs into future accreditation models/policy for research outputs (plus Scholarly Books study now released)
- There will be a tightening up of the validity of S&T indicator analyses
- There will be normative effects on whole NSI through better training, best practice, competition for excellence

## ASSAf REPORT: Progress on Recommendation 6 (Open Access)

Vision of increasingly visible, highly cited/high-impact, collaboration-inviting, locally published journals in SA:

- Task Team on (possible) “national platform for publication of high-quality, open access (“Gold Route”) scholarly journals”
- Examination of SABINET; AJOL; Hindawi (Cairo); SciELO (S. America, ex Brazil)
- Institutional repositories (“Green Route”) encouraged (cooperation with NRF, HEI’s, etc)



# CONSULTATION TODAY: possible adoption of SciELO model for SA

- **WG “opinion piece” in *SciDev.Net* and recent *Science* Editorial: : the case for regional journal systems; many supporting voices**
  - **Merits of SciELO model considerable:**
    - **exportable system to new countries, but remains common system, interoperable, basic “rule-book” (Brazil office core to whole system)**
    - **now extends to other South/Central American countries**
    - **quality threshold for inclusion (national representative-type committee); monitored**
    - **full open-access publishing platform, full-text free online, fully indexed for citations, + other info.= informative +++**
- BUT:**
- **all print publishing, journal editing, etc. is outside system**

## ? SciELO SOUTH AFRICA

- c.550 journals in SciELO, 180 in Brazil (ex 1000+ overall published)
- Citation analysis shows “international group” and “regional group”
- Negotiations currently with Thomson Scientific on linking with ISI:Web of Science
- Core Brazilian operation funded by BIREME/PAHO and Sao Paulo “NRF” at c. R6-7 million per annum - for hardware and technical /management staff
- Software, training, start-up support available ex Brazil

## “SciELO SA”: The way-to-go?

- “SciELO SA” seen as possible “nucleus” for extension to other African countries, ultimately “developing country web-of-sci”
- ASSAf has journal peer review model for quality threshold, multi-benefits of quality improvement
- Retro-digitisation feasible, partnership with Sabinet/Carnegie
- Appt. of newly identified f/t SPU Director, Susan Veldsman, to drive project with chairperson of CSPiSA
- Start-up in early 2009, soon 8+ pilot journals in SciELO SA, budgets adjusted, staff being recruited, hardware/software acquired.

# Model for uptake and utilisation

- Local journals encourage coherence in local research community
- Outcomes/implications noticed, taken up better
- Integration of developing and mature scholars into communities of practice
- Rigorous quality assurance enhances confidence, participation in system
- Better indicators, better monitoring
- Intellectual property protection: implementation assisted