

SAAB 42nd AGM



Minutes (Draft)
Wednesday 13 January 2016
16h30 – 18h00
The EBW Conference Complex
University of the Free State

1. The members present were welcomed by the President at 16h35
2. Attendance
 - 2.1. Present: DM Richardson, Paula Watt, Kevin Balkwill, G Potgieter, BE Van Wyk, Stephen Boatwright, Anthony Magee, Kobus Eloff, Lintle Mohase, Botma Visser, Johann du Preez, Barnabas Daru, Aarifan Jakoet, Jaimie Poovan, Salome Mahlo, Tandiwe Nkonki, Lyndy McGaw, Sandy-Lynn Steenhuisen, Alpheus Zobolo, Paul Hills, Marnie Light, J van Staden, HA Abdelgadir, Ashwell Ndhlala, K. Magwede, MQ Seloana, MP Tshisikawe, L. Joubert, Robyn Powell, Isaac Ramovha, Janice Williamson, Michelle vd Bank, Annah Moteetee, Helen Long, SP Bester, GV Goodman-Cron, KL Glennon, N Nombewu, Danielle Descoteaux (Elsevier), Komotso Maboka, Ramshamba Mashudu, C Magoswana, Nomkululeko Swelankomo, Ambrose Okem, P Mokwala and Dennis Komape.
 - 2.2. Apologies were received from: Quenton Kritzinger, Karen Esler, Ted Botha, Pat Tilney, Norman Pammenter, Coert Geldenhuys, Richard Cowling, Mariette Jackson and Jolanda Roux
3. Minutes of the 41st AGM were approved without corrections.
4. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.
5. President's report
The President summarized some of the achievements of the year, including having copies of the South African Journal of Botany back to 1995 put up as pdf's on the Elsevier website. He also listed the planned venues for future congresses. He expressed his appreciation to the various groups and individuals who assisted him during the year. The President's report is attached as Appendix 1 and will be available on the website.
6. Treasurer's report
The Annual Financial Statement was received from our auditor, Liz Williamson of the firm CATZ, and was signed by both the President and Treasurer. The Treasurer pointed out

that the state of the SAAB finances is healthy, with savings reaching R1.5M. However, he recommended that SAAB remain strict with spending for at least another four to five years; i.e. until such time that SAAB is in a position to exist on the interest from our savings and membership fees alone. Currently this situation would not be possible should Elsevier decided to withdraw their annual editing payment (although they have not indicated any intention to do so). Report attached as Appendix 2.

It was noted that payment to the SAJB editorial project shall be increased by 12% in 2016. The money does not go to the Editor-in-Chief but is used towards the cost of the time that his personal assistant spends on journal activities.

7. SAJB report by J van Staden (Editor-in-Chief)

- 7.1 The Impact Factor has dropped to 0.978 mainly due to the number of cites staying constant, but the number of papers increasing over the two-year period for which the IF was calculated.
- 7.2 The Editor-in-Chief appealed to our academics who publish in other journals to cite recent relevant SAJB articles to assist in increasing SAJB impact factor.
- 7.3 The SAJB is ranked 5th in the top 100 African journals.
- 7.4 Downloads continue to increase.
- 7.5 The new EVISE system is now being used for submission and editorial services.
- 7.6 The Editor-in-Chief rejects some papers while some papers are rejected by the Editorial Board members (currently 57 in total)
- 7.7 There are three special issues planned for 2016.

8. Constitution changes

8.1 A motion was put forward by Kevin Balkwill and seconded by Marnie Light asking for approval for a total revision of the Constitution. Principles to guide the rearrangement and rewriting of the Constitution (Appendix 3) were presented to the membership for approval. All principles other than 3c were proposed and seconded for approval and carried by a large majority. There was discussion around Principle 3c, including the view of a student that she did not think that students knew enough about SAAB to vote wisely. It was proposed and seconded that Principle 3c should be rejected and this rejection was carried by a majority vote

8.2 The council will bring a new draft of the Constitution to the next AGM for approval.

9. Leadership of SAAB from 2016

- 9.1 A motion regarding acceptance of a new Vice President was put forward by Kevin Balkwill and seconded by Marnie Light:
The current Vice-President has accepted employment overseas and so is unable to take up the Presidency as planned. The Vice-President is elected by the Council from amongst its members. Section 3.2.2 of the Constitution specifies that only the elected members of Council, and not the Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary, are eligible to be nominated as Vice-President. Council is convinced that Dr Paul Hills who is the current Honorary Treasurer (not an elected member) is the most appropriate and a very suitable candidate to be the next Vice-President. Dr Hills has been a member of Council for four years. He has participated in the functioning of Council as if he was a full member of Council and has concerned himself with the full range of issues that are of strategic importance to the future of SAAB. The Council of

SAAB, therefore, requested the membership of SAAB to approve an exception to the requirements of Section 3.2.2. to allow Dr Hills to be appointed as the next Vice-President of SAAB, with immediate effect. The motion was approved unanimously.

- 9.2 The current President indicated that he was willing to stand for another year if necessary and Council accepted this offer. A member indicated that it would be consistent with the Constitution to regard him as being the Acting President for this year.
10. A motion to establish a dedicated SAAB conference bank account was put forward by Glynis Goodman-Cron and seconded by A. Moteetee.
 - 10.1 PROPOSAL: To create a dedicated SAAB Congress account that would receive conference fees each year instead of the hosting university. This would facilitate payment as this account could be loaded on the various universities vendor systems once and used each year. It could also prevent confusion in payments to the SAAB general account (as occurred frequently in 2015). Conference fees could then be transferred as lump sums to the hosting university. The motion was approved by a majority, with the details to be determined by the incoming Vice-President and the Permanent Secretary and to be approved by Council. Care must be taken in naming the account, so that it will not be confused with the main SAAB account into which membership subscription fees are paid.
11. The meeting closed at 18h15.

Appendix 1

SAAB President's Report — 2015

2015 has been an interesting year for SAAB, in which we have seen completion of some important tasks.

1. Council

During 2015, the SAAB council comprised:

Prof K. Balkwill (President); Dr M. Light (Vice-President); Dr P. Hills (Treasurer); Prof J. Van Staden (Editor in Chief); Prof G. Smith (SANBI Nominee); Dr D. Thompson; Dr L. McGaw; Prof P. Watt; Prof A. Ellis; Prof M. Meyer & Dr Q. Kritzinger. Mr M. Scott is the Permanent Secretary. Student Council office bearers have been Genevieve Theron (President), Andrea Rautenbach (Vice-President) and Emma Mostert (Secretary).

We held a mid-year meeting in Pietermaritzburg, which once again was very constructive in helping us to achieve the goals for the year. Thank you to those who attended and those who hosted us. I am very grateful to the Vice-President for ongoing support and involvement throughout the year.

Prof Ellis was a nominated member when the SAAB secretariat functioned in Stellenbosch. He has resigned. Prof Gideon Smith retired from SANBI and so he resigned from council. We are having discussions with Dr Sebola, his successor at SANBI about the future relationship between SAAB and SANBI and that will determine whether we will retain having a SANBI nominee on Council. Dr Light is to take up an employment opportunity abroad and so will be unable to take up the role of President as was planned. Prof Balkwill will continue as President for an additional year and will hand over to whoever is nominated as Vice-President in January 2017. Dr Light will remain on Council.

2. Student Council

SAAB student membership numbers have grown again and the Student Council has been active through the year.

3. Constitution

The Constitution requires a major overhaul and reorganisation. Principles to guide this process will be presented to the 2016 AGM for approval, so that they can guide the process in 2016. A new constitution will be presented for approval at the 2017 AGM.

4. Conferences

The 2015 Congress at Venda was a wonderful success. It was well and widely attended by botanists from across the disciplines represented in SAAB. The venue worked well and conferences in a resort provide wonderful opportunities for informal liaison between SAAB members. The LoC did a wonderful job of organising all aspects of the conference and we are most grateful to our members at the University of Venda, under the chairmanship of Prof Peter Tshisikhawe, for their sterling work. University of the Free State is hosting the 2016 congress and organisation has gone very smoothly from our side. The University of the Western Cape will organise the 2017 congress and University of Pretoria have offered to organise the 2018 congress. I have approached our members at a number of other institutions asking them to consider hosting the congress in 2019, but have not yet had any positive responses.

5. SAABNET

SAABNET has continued to be an extremely useful resource to communicate with members, to advertise posts and to receive adverts of posts that have been on offer, amongst other things. We are extremely grateful to those that manage it, ensuring that we never receive SPAM or inappropriate communication from that source. The membership of SAABNET is far greater than the membership of SAAB. We have decided to use that as a marketing tool by inviting members of the list to become members of SAAB, rather than removing all non-members.

6. South African Journal of Botany

We are once again extremely grateful to the Editor in Chief for his extremely efficient and effective management of the journal. In 2013, 172 articles were published, a further increase from 142 articles in 2012 and 105 in 2011. This represents a huge amount of work on the part of the Editor in Chief, his secretarial staff, the editorial board, the referees and the publishers. Our journal enjoyed its highest impact factor of 1.659 in 2011. In 2012, the impact factor was 1.409 and in 2013 it was 1.340. Sadly in 2014 it has dropped to 0.978. This is largely a function of the increased number of papers being published and a slight drop in the number of citations, despite the increased number of articles. One way of reversing this trend is for members of SAAB to cite recent articles in SA J Bot when they publish either in SA J Bot or other journals. We have been circulating the Table of Contents of new issues of SA J Bot to encourage and facilitate this.

Having come to an agreement with NISC around copyright ownership of earlier issues of the journal, we were in a position to negotiate where to house pdf's of papers that were published before our journal was published by Elsevier. We dealt with this in three phases — Phase 1 included those published by NISC for which they had provided pdf's. Phase 2 was those for which we had only hard copy, going back to 1995. This year was a cut-off in legal agreements and it would not have required subscribing institutions to pay additional fees to access the databases going back to 1995. Phase 3 was the articles published from the inception of the journal and up to and including 1994. Elsevier agreed to host all material from 1995 onwards free of charge and in addition to process the material free of charge. Phase 1 was completed by mid-year 2015. Phase 2 required obtaining hard copy of all the issues, separating them into free sheets, scanning them to TIF files and then delivering them electronically to Elsevier. Elsevier have then converted the TIF files into readable pdfs and put them up on their website. This was achieved in about November 2015. ResearchGate has advised me of my “new publications” and I have received communication from some readers, so we know that Phase 2 was successful. Phase 3 comprises 15 years worth of issues and Elsevier agreed to host these as OpenAccess to anyone. We have obtained all the issues and the scanning to TIF files has been achieved (3.5 Gigabytes in total). We have had some difficulty delivering these electronically to Elsevier and I will be handing a stick to Danielle Descoteaux at the conference. We should see these on the website within three to four months. I am most grateful to Elsevier for their cooperation, assistance and investment in this important project.

7. Website

The website is a special concern of the Permanent Secretary and is kept up to date with the assistance of Barnabus Daru.

8. Bursaries

Once again, the quality of applicants for the SAAB Honours bursary for 2015 was very high. There was a tie for third place, and because of the high calibre of the applicants, Council awarded four bursaries instead of the promised three.

9. Membership

We currently have 191 ordinary members, down from 235 in 2014 and 220 in 2013. Student membership has recovered to 145 from 25 in 2014 (due to arrangements at the 2014 congress) and 105 in 2013. Our total membership is at 378, about the same as in 2013, but we will need to ensure that we keep our numbers of ordinary members up.

10. Finances

The finances of the Association are in very good shape, largely due to the arrangement we have with Elsevier with regard to publishing our journal and the generosity of our Editor in Chief, who shoulders the lion's share of the costs of editing the journal by his personal input and the supplementation he provides from other sources. The high standards of management maintained by the Treasurer and Permanent Secretary also contribute to this positive situation. We would not be able to cover our annual running costs on our membership fees alone.

11. Awards

The SAAB Gold Medal and the SAAB Bronze Medal have been awarded in 2015 (and will be announced at the dinner). We are very grateful to the team at Wits who adjudicated the theses submitted for the SAAB Bronze Medal. This was quite an onerous task, due to the very high quality of the submissions, which made selecting just one winner a very challenging task, but one was just better than the others in all attributes considered. We are grateful to those who take the trouble to nominate candidates for our medals and encourage more members to do so. There were no nominations for the Silver Medal in both 2014 and 2015, despite there being many worthy candidates.

12. SACNASP

We nominated Prof George Bredenkamp to the council of SACNASP and were advised that our nomination was successful. Dave Thompson and Marnie Light have conducted a survey of SAAB membership to see how important SACNASP is to SAAB members and thus how much time Council should devote to their affairs.

13. Strategic Planning

We facilitated a strategic planning workshop at the 2015 conference. Largely members are happy with SAAB. The two functions of SAAB that are most appreciated are the Conferences and the Journal. SAABNET, the Honours bursaries and the Medals and Awards were also cited as being something a number of members appreciate. Some good ideas were provided for future developments, but in the context of "Don't fix what ain't broke".

14. Acknowledgements

I am grateful to fellow Council members for their support and input into the Society. I am grateful to the Permanent Secretary for giving me the necessary constant reminders, for his role in the website and SAABNET and his liaison with the Local Organising Committee, amongst others. I am grateful to the membership for their involvement and participation in SAAB. I am particularly grateful for all the support and assistance that I have received from the Vice-President during 2015 – I wish her well in her new endeavors.

Appendix 2 Treasurer's Report

SAAB FINANCIAL REPORT Period: 1 December 2014 – 30 November 2015

1. Financial statements:

Financial statements were compiled by Liz Williamson (C.A.T.S – Computerised Accounting & Training Services).

2. Balance sheet:

Closing balance: R1 531 235 (2014- R1 351 616)

R179 619 increase over the previous year.

3. Bank account information:

Current (cheque) account R26 916

SAAB Savings account (Money Market) R749 006

SAJB Savings account (Money market) R752 922

Bank fees for 2015 amounted to R3 896. Interest of R92 102 was received on the money market accounts.

4. Income and Expenditure statement:

A net profit of R194 049 was recorded for 2015. This represents a welcome increase in profitability over 2014 (R110 333).

Notes on Income:

- R279 637 from Elsevier (R40 000 set aside for bursaries).
- Interest received increased considerably from that received in 2014 (R92 102, compared with R71 895). This is mainly due to the accumulating capital in the Money Market accounts, and a slight increase in the interest rate. The Money Market accounts are an extremely valuable asset at the moment, and it will be extremely beneficial for the society to keep building these for the foreseeable future.
- R36 580 in membership fees and R10 400 in journal subscriptions were received.

Notes on Expenses:

- Bursaries – 4 x R10 000 to students (C Twala, H Khanyi, N Galuszynski and B Mutiti).

- A sum of R5 750 was given to the SAAB Junior Council (SJC) to allow them to have T-shirts printed. These shirts are sold to raise funds for the SJC. Sales from these shirts in 2015 amounted to R1 800..
- Miscellaneous Income and Expenditures were extremely high in 2015. A total of R11 100 was accidentally deposited into the SAAB bank account, and this was later reversed. Consequently, there was no net effect on the account. An addition expense of R2 025 was incurred to digitalise the back issues of SAJB which were recently purchased from NISC.

5. Projection:

Two scenarios of projected income (based on 2012 membership figures):

1. If all members' fees and journal subscription fees are paid.
2. If 50% of members' fees and journal subscription fees are paid.

6. Scenario 2:

An alternative scenario was included showing the effects that losing the income paid by Elsevier for publishing the South African Journal of Botany would have on the annual SAAB budget. This would result in the Association making a loss of over R100 000 per year. This emphasises how important it is that the SAAB community supports our journal.

I would like to convey my considerable thanks to Myke Scott for his invaluable assistance with the SAAB finances during 2015.

Dr PN Hills, Treasurer
5 January 2016

Appendix 3

MOTION -- Revision of the Constitution of SAAB

Purpose:

The Constitution of SAAB was appraised a number of years ago and we made several necessary changes. We have made additional amendments recently. In working with the Constitution, it has been found that it is repetitive and it is not easy to find the correct section that deals with an issue and sometimes issues are not explicit and a convoluted path has to be followed to find answers. We are thus of the view that the Constitution needs to be completely revised and reorganised, but would like SAAB to approve some principles to guide the revision. A number of principles are presented here.

Principle 1:

Background

An analysis has shown that the Constitution comprises two sections one regarded as the Constitution with subdivisions that are not defined (i.e. they are nowhere described as Sections, Rules, Provisions or Laws) and then a second section titled By-laws. Aspects of the same issues are dealt with under the main part of the Constitution and / or in the By-Laws. The major difference is that the Constitution can only be changed at a General Meeting of the Society, with a quorum of 25 and there must be a 65% vote in favour of any change, but By-laws can be changed by the Council, but must then be ratified at the next AGM by a majority vote.

It seems that over time, these sections have come to repeat each other or even contradict one another. Thus, it is suggested that we reorganise the Constitution in a similar way to the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, where one has the rules dealing with a topic followed immediately by recommendations pertinent to the particular rule. This is much easier to see the full picture on an issue.

Recommended Principle

The Constitution should comprise Rules and By-laws and the By-laws relevant to a particular Rule should follow immediately after that Rule.

Principle 2:

Background

Currently the constitution calls for Council members to appoint alternates to attend meetings in their stead if they are unable to attend personally. This is rather complicated, it is never done currently and it seems unnecessary in an electronic age with good, instant communication. In addition, at times this might have undesirable consequences.

Recommended Principle

The requirement for Council members to appoint alternates for Council meetings should be scrapped.

Principle 3:

Background

The association comprises a number of members, of which some are defined as corporate members who can vote. Affiliate members and student members are not regarded as corporate members and thus cannot vote. It seems rather strange to go to all the trouble of assessing someone's credentials and then declaring their knowledge and experience to be sufficient to qualify them for membership of the society as an affiliate member, but not allow them to vote. On the other hand, it might be problematic if the society is dominated by affiliate members. In our new more democratic South Africa, it seems inappropriate to encourage student members to attend the AGM, but to then not allow them to vote when they take the trouble to do so. And indeed, current practice would be to count student votes.

Recommended Principle 3a

Affiliate members should be eligible to vote at General Meetings of the Society and to participate in electronic voting.

Recommended Principle 3b

Affiliate members may only make up a maximum of 10% of the membership of the Society.

Recommended Principle 3c [This was not approved --- see Minutes of AGM]

Student members should be eligible to vote at General Meetings of the Society and to participate in electronic voting.

Principle 4

Background

Currently, one has to formally resign from the Association to have one's membership terminated, or alternately cases of members who are not in good standing (have not paid their subscriptions) must be considered individually by Council and council must cancel their membership. Unless this happens, the Constitution deems them to still be liable for unpaid subscription fees.

Recommended Principle

Anyone who has not paid subscriptions for two years and does not respond to two reminders should automatically cease to be a member of the society. Should they seek to become a member of the society again in the future, they will be required to pay a double membership fee for the first year of renewed membership.

Principle 5

Background

It seems that Regional Branches of the society have not been in operation for many years.

Recommended Principle

All references to Regional branches should be removed from the Constitution.

Principle 6

Background

The required notice period for motions to be considered at the AGM is 48 hours. With many conferences being only of three days duration, this seems a long period. A better arrangement may be to have a 24 hour notice period and a requirement for the matter to be circulated electronically with the 24 hour notice period.

Recommended Principle

Notice of Motions to be considered at the AGM during a conference must be posted on the society Notice Board and circulated by appropriate electronic means at least 24 hours before the AGM.

Principle 7

Background

The Constitution is silent on the appointment, role and duties of the Permanent Secretary.

Recommended Principle

The Constitution should include a section on the appointment, role and duties of the Permanent Secretary.

Principle 8

Background

We have not sat and reflected on how the Society's operations compare to the recommendation to the various King Reports.

Recommended Principle

The proposed revised constitution should be assessed in the light of the recommendations of the various King Reports and efforts should be made to ensure that our modus operandi is compliant.