



21st June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

**INVITATION TO ACT AS A MENTOR: SCIENCE ADVICE SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (SASDP)**

INGSA-Africa, a regional chapter of the International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA), in its aim to build the capacity of early career African scientists across Africa for effective science advice, has developed a mentorship programme – the Science Advice Skills Development Programme.

The objective of the programme is to support mid-career African scientists and researchers in strengthening their skills to communicate their research results and viewpoints as science advice to their identified audiences, thereby influencing policymaking and implementation.

We are inviting experienced professionals, policy-active scientists/researchers/policy makers, preferably in a field connected to climate change (Health, Water, Energy, Food Security), with the capacity to voluntarily provide one-on-one mentorship to talented early career African scientists interested in learning about, and contributing to, science advice.

Eligible mentors are from organizations that include continental, regional, or national agencies or national science academies anywhere in the world that have a well-developed science advice portfolio and substantial familiarity with the science policy landscape in Africa. Expertise related to climate change vis a vis evidence-informed policymaking in Africa will be advantageous. Bilingual French-English mentors are encouraged to apply.

1. Introduction

Science advice is gaining momentum around the world. The COVID-19 crisis demonstrated the value of evidence-based decision making in almost every country around the globe. The crisis has highlighted the cooperation between scientists and policy makers and emphasized the need for evidence-based policy and decision making in the health sector. It is more likely to expand to other sectors.

Science advice relies, on one hand, on having a solid evidence-based scientific knowledge and expertise and, on the other hand, on the ability to effectively communicate this knowledge and the scientific evidence in a proper way to the intended audience. The way scientific evidence is communicated sometimes represents a stumbling stone against its endorsement.

Science advice is an area for science capacity development in Africa. It has the potential to create notable contributions to developing research and innovation in Africa. The scientific community in the African continent is engaged in a range of scientific research in different areas to address the continent's many problems. The employment of relevant local scientific research in decision making must be emphasized as this is important for society. There is a deep need for effective communication to connect scientists and policymakers. There is also a responsibility for scientist to convey their knowledge to policy makers, and to the public.

The means and channels for providing science advice are varied. For example, different types of documents (such as policy papers, policy briefs, reports, statements etc) can be used to communicate scientific information to policymakers. It is important for scientists to understand the differences between these forms, as well as their uses and peculiarities, to better communicate their science.

2. Overview of Programme

- The Science Advice Skills Development Programme is established by INGSA-Africa to tackle the need to build African capacity in the area of communicating science advice effectively.
- The programme will engage 20 mid-career scientists and researchers from African countries.
- Mentees will be nominated by their organizations, which are active in science communication and advice.
- The programme will run over a period of 3 months.
- It will start with a contact phase in the form of a virtual workshop delivered over 1 day/or 2 half days, followed by a one-to-one mentoring phase with a science advice practitioner, for up to 3 months.
- During the workshop, mentees will be introduced to their mentors and will learn, through presentations, about different effective ways of delivering science advice.
- During the mentoring phase, mentees will work together with their respective mentors to develop science advice documents for their organizations.
- Focus Areas of the SASDP - Climate Change in Africa (Health, Water, Energy, Food Security)
- Closing virtual workshop to present findings and outputs of mentoring Programme (1 day/or 2 half days)

3. Guidelines for mentors

Each mentor will participate in the introductory workshop and will provide, over a period of 3 months, their mentee with insight, training and experience in bringing science to bear on policymaking (from the perspectives of providers and users of science advice) that could be fruitfully applied in the context of the mentee's organization or country. The mentees will ultimately be responsible for the development of the science advice document with the support of the mentor and to communicate same to the identified audience in the chosen format.

4. Timeline, input, and what is expected from the mentor

Prospective mentors would:

- Be leading experts in their respective scientific fields

- Have 10 or more years of experience in the field of science advice at national, continental, or international level as well as being experts in communication.
- Have extensive experience in supervision or mentorship of post-graduate students to support them to communicate their science findings.
- Be willing to participate in the selection of the cohort of mentees from the pool of shortlisted early career African scientists applicants in collaboration with INGSA-Africa (late-July 2022)
- Be available to participate or contribute to the introductory virtual workshop (1 day/or 2 half days) in mid-August 2022
- Be willing and available to provide one-to-one virtual mentorship to mid-career African scientists/researchers over a period of 3 months (August to November 2022) to develop a science advice document (policy papers, white papers, policy briefs, reports, statements) related to the field of climate change (Health, Water, Energy, Food Security), in English or French;
- Be available to participate or contribute to the wrapping up virtual workshop (1 day/ or 2 half days) in November 2022

5. Proposed outcome

5.1. Introductory Virtual Workshop (1 day/or 2 half days)

General objective: Mentor-mentee meet and greet

Programme proposals for workshop talks - Invited speakers/mentors

- Introduction to tools for transformative policy advice and experiences
- Balancing political realities and scientific advice
- Role of science in addressing climate change in the African continent

The objectives of the workshop

- Learn how to effectively create political impact from your research on climate change
- Identify relevant communication strategies and channels

5.2. Mentoring Programme – 3 months

Format: One-to- one virtual mentorship

Responsibilities of Mentors

- a) To participate in the introductory workshop.
- b) To design, in collaboration with the mentee, the virtual mentoring programme, with identified outcomes and outputs, and agreed timeline for meetings etc.
- c) To engage fully with mentees, to dedicate sufficient time to ensure that the mentees are supported in meeting the outcome of the programme,
- d) To support the mentees in preparing the final document for science advice (policy papers, policy briefs, reports, statements).

Responsibilities of Mentees

- a) To participate in the virtual introductory and closing workshops.

- b) To fully engage with the Mentors in the designing of the virtual mentoring programme
- c) To attend scheduled mentoring meetings
- d) To achieve the identified outcomes
- e) To prepare the final document for science advice to be presented at the closing workshop.
- f) Organise a dissemination event at their organisation to share their experiences and findings with their peers

5.3. Closing Virtual Workshop (1 day/or 2 half days)

Mentor-mentee pairs will be invited to share their experience and present the output of their collaboration, i.e., a science advice document at the closing workshop (date to be decided).

Programme

- Presentation of findings/outputs by mentees
- Lessons learned from scientific advice mentorship programme

Objectives

Mentees will

- Reflect on their experiences in science policy advice in a group of peers and with mentors
- Gain an overview on tools and methods for transformative policy advice used during the mentorship

Please confirm your availability to Dr Richard L.K. Glover (richkwame@yahoo.com) at the Secretariat of INGSA-Africa, with Dr Shaheen Motala-Timol (smotalatimol@gmail.com) in copy, by 15 July 2022.

Sincerely yours,



M.O. Odubanjo
(Chair, INGSA-Africa)