



ACADEMY OF SCIENCE OF SOUTH AFRICA (ASSAf)

SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING PROGRAMME

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Publishing in South Africa (CSPiSA)**

*Applying scientific thinking
in the service of society*

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The ASSAf ‘Scholarly Publishing Programme’ (SPP) is conceptualised as:

- a concerted intervention into the country’s national system of Innovation (NSI), 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**

The SPP is based on approaches typical of Academy activities (evidence-based, peer review, etc). It is overseen by the Academy’s CSPiSA.

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 : best way to accredit research outputs for incentivising higher quality research in higher education institutions**

ASSAf REPORT (CONTIN.)

- **National platform required for open access through free-online journals and institutional repositories – govt. backing needed, mechanisms to be explored**
- **Translation of scholarly content needed for public benefit – especially for education, innovation, socio-economic development**
- **International : efforts to promote non-commercial, ‘level-playing field’, freely accessible indexing system**

NATIONAL SCHOLARLY EDITORS' FORUM

Forum established 2007:

- **terms of reference agreed**
- **consensus “National Code of best practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review” published**
- **five annual meetings held with good attendance/ participation**
- **study completed of editors/boards and production/ print publishing systems - recommendations for resource-sharing, involvement of university presses, harmonisation of e- and print-publishing technology**

Discipline-grouped peer review of scholarly journals

Mandate given for discipline-grouped peer review of S A scholarly journals – consensus criteria and process guidelines approved:

- **process-focused questionnaire for editors;**
- **multiple independent peer reviews focused on quality of content;**
- **face-to-face panel consensus;**
- **reports finalised by Committee on Scholarly Publishing in SA and ASSAf Council**
- **reports are in open domain and multi-purpose for policy-makers, system analysts, publishers, contributors and readers – next four groups of journals**

The first two Consensus Peer Review Panel Reports have been published (Social Sciences et al, Agriculture/Basic Life Sciences et al) – next four groups of journals underway (Law, Religious Studies, Health, half of Humanities)

Writing support for young scholars/scientists

Free-online, 4-tiered course system in scholarly scientific writing for postgraduates and young staff:

Tier 1: Selected resources, access details

Tier 2: Online, self-teaching 'lecture-exercises' course : 12 modules

Tier 3: Mentoring system - experienced retirees, etc

Tier 4: 'Block-type', face-to-face short courses

ASSAf SCHOLARLY BOOKS REPORT 2009

ASSAf Consensus Study on the 'Production, Use and Evaluation of Scholarly Books in South Africa' :

1. Strong support for publication of scholarly books/collected works = deep scholarship level
- National Scholarly Book Publishers' Forum proposed
 - Quality assurance system – improved peer review approaches, code of best practice
 - Support system for publishing of scholarly books needed – national scholarly books fund, consortia, infrastructure, policy alignments, etc
 - Open Access to be maximised, but sustainable business models

SCHOLARLY BOOKS REPORT (contin.)

2. Public policy to be improved (accreditation of research outputs):

- 'Local' treated as equal to 'international'
- PhD dissertations published as books only if they fit into proposed typology of scholarly books
- General/advanced textbooks : ditto
- Minimum length 60 000 words = substantial work
- Weighting in subsidy units increased (X2)

3. Point of departure for accreditation of conference proceedings

4. Encourage book reviews in SA journals

5. Increase use of books for educational purposes and teacher training

Adoption of subsidised SciELO e-publishing model for SA

- **WG “opinion piece” in *SciDev.Net* and Editorial in *Science*: the case for regional journal systems; other voices +++++; ISI/WoK expanded indexing of ‘regional journals’**
- **Merits of SciELO model considerable:**
 - **exportable system to new countries from original (Brazilian) home base, remains single system, interoperable, basic “rule-book”**
 - **quality threshold for inclusion; monitored**
 - **full open-access publishing platform, full-text free online, fully indexed for citations, + other info.= informative +++**
 - **all print publishing, journal editing, etc. is outside system**
 - **recent decision to link to ISI/WoK**

IMPROVED ACCESS TO HIGH-IMPACT COMMERCIAL JOURNALS ?

- Pathway so far in S. Africa all within commercial model : responded with library consortia, national consortium, SANLIC, bundled pay-to-subscribe licences; much of government funding absorbed in hyper-inflationary library budgets = profits ++ go overseas
- INASP-type donor-funded, free e-access schemes- only 'Least Developed Countries' (NOT S. Africa),
- World-wide trend to OA requirement for research grants (NIH; UK; Wellcome Trust; EU; soon S.Africa)

Access to high-impact commercial journals - ASSAf report

- **Details reviewed of Chile, Brazil, Pakistan models...savings ++, high-level negotiation, 'level playing field' for institutions, etc, but some differences**
- **CREST survey completed of current usage and likely best practice for SA**
- **Proposal for licensing made to DoHET, DST**

ASSAf's SPP Summary

- **Aimed at building vigorous, high-quality local publication system for scholarly journals and books**
- **Strengthen development/expansion of national researcher/infrastructure base**
- **Widen SA participation in international science : contributions, collaboration, translation into benefits**