

Update on Fundraising Activities - AfAS Business Meeting



Takalani Nemaungani

**AfAS 2026 Conference in Kasane,
Botswana**

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Takalani.Nemaungani@dsti.gov.za



**science
& technology**

Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

AfAS
African Astronomical Society

- Representative of the DSTI on the AfAS EXCO:



Takalani Nemaungani
Chief-Director: Astronomy (DSTI)

- Chairing the AfAS Fundraising Committee

Context and Rationale

- The DSI requested AfAS to develop a long-term funding strategy to ensure its future operational sustainability. AfAS EXCO then, during its process of establishing several sub-committees, also established the Fund-raising Committee
- ToR and strategy were developed and approved – this was presented to the DSTI EXCO as part of the contract renewal
- Committee merged with AERAP to become one

Strategic Approach / Key Pillars of the Strategy

- 1) Resourcing AfAS
- 2) Engaging key African stakeholders (AU - African Space Agency, Governments and Science Ministries, etc)
- 3) Engaging the funding/donor agencies
- 4) Engaging the EU (AERAP)
- 5) Leveraging on Partnerships (SKAO, SRAO/SAAO, DARA, Breakthrough Listen, AAS, EAS, etc)
- 6) Membership fees (Individual, institutional and country level)

Resourcing the AfAS Secretariat and Activities

- Renewed longer-term contract for financial stability and certainty to staff members (6-years)
- Research indicates that other similar bodies (EAS, AAS, IAU, etc) have permanent locations/headquarters with conferences rotating amongst member countries
- Facilitated two SARA Young Graduates Professionals who have been placed at AfAS (3years and renewable)
- Secondments will need to be explored on needs basis
- Continued engagements with African governments

Leveraging host country partners (SA) to also support and partner with AfAS

- OAD, SAAO and SARA0 working closely with AfAS
- DARA (Hackathons, big data schools/workshops, etc) which emerged from SA-UK partnership
- SETI / Breakthrough Listen – has become a partner/sponsor partnership
- SKA Observatory (SKAO) – started as an exhibitor and now sponsor for the next 5 years – MOU signed with AfAS at IAU-GA in 2024
- SA universities – approached UNISA, Rhodes, Stellenbosch, etc – and more engagements to follow to increase their participation in AfAS

Engaging Key African Stakeholders

- Continued engagements with African governments (Science departments) and institutions/universities - Morocco, Botswana, Ethiopia, etc
- Continue to improve the annual conference hosting bidding process - letters of support for bidding to host AfAS should ideally be at Executive level of conference host institution /Government level – a bidding committee needs to be established
- Engagement required with the African Space Agency of the AU which is based in Cairo – engagements underway

Engaging funding/donor agencies

- A list of funding/donor agencies has been developed – Declan will touch more on this engagements
- AfAS has developed a value-proposition document, brochure and list of projects – this is useful in our engagements with donors

Engaging the European Union/Commission

- There was a session during this conference that focussed on this
- There is a need for someone within the Secretariat to have a dedicated focus on following up on EU/EC opportunities – resource dependant
- South African/DSI experience/lessons/success has been on investing resources in this area through dedicated directorate, seed-funding, NCP network, University admin offices, AERAP, Brussels Office and SA-EU Strategic Annual Bilateral Meetings

Closing Remarks

- Our SA experience with MeerKAT - you need to build a strong community and the partners/funding will come – and they have done so....
- Let' s build a strong AfAS and African astronomy community
Much more work to be done but this is a normal component of my performance agreement at the DSTI to build African astronomy
- Having brought AfAS to South Africa, it remains my top priority to ensure AfAS is well resourced into the future....



Thank you

Contact us:



<http://africanastronomicalsociety.org>



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Takalani.Nemaungani@dsti.gov.za