

# **AfricaLics: Africa Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation and Competence Building Systems**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **1. Preamble**

AfricaLics is the acronym for the African Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence Building Systems. AfricaLics brings together scholars, researchers and policy analysts who study development, innovation, learning and competence building in an African context. It is currently not a legal entity. It is the African chapter of a global network of innovation and development scholars (the *Globelics* network).

The overall vision of AfricaLics is to facilitate the production and use of high-quality and frontier research at the intersection of innovation studies and development studies that promotes inclusive and sustainable development in African countries. Within the AfricaLics community, innovation is broadly defined as spanning from "new to the world inventions" to the diffusion and use of technology new to the user or context in which it is introduced and includes competence building among users of innovation. Technology here can mean both a physical product; a new process e.g. for manufacturing a product and new ways of organising. It includes studies and improved understandings of how learning and competence building systems contribute to development processes. It recognizes that innovation and development are value-laden concepts, and provides a space for exploring the consequences (positive and negative) of the choices made in the innovation process.

The AfricaLics perspective is systemic, socio-economic, institutional, evolutionary, and policy oriented. The network emphasizes interactive learning and promotes plurality in terms of research approach, methodology and theoretical perspectives. AfricaLics fosters a culture where serious research discussions take place in an open and friendly atmosphere. Its activities are based partly on time and resources allocated by members of the network on a voluntary basis and partly on contributions to specific activities from other sources such as universities, government institutions, development agencies and foundations.

Whilst AfricaLics is committed to the realisation of an integrated Africa, it also recognises that the continent of Africa is composed of five regions: Central Africa, Eastern Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa. To ensure that AfricaLics advances the integration of Africa, the operations and functions of AfricaLics must accommodate, where appropriate and possible, regional diversity, specificities, linguistics and equitable participation. This includes representation by gender and consideration of marginalised/ disadvantaged groups in society.

## **2. AfricaLics core activities**

AfricaLics core activities span over four key areas:

1. Research capacity building through PhD training academies; a visiting fellowship programme and mentorship.
2. Research support via seed funding; regular research conferences and support to build research training at post-graduate level
3. Research policy engagement that focuses on communication of research results by members to others in the network and external audiences
4. Research network support through institutionalization of network governance structures and procedures as well as partnership building.

## **3. Governance structure**

The AfricaLics network operates as a hub and spoke model with the following governance structure:

- The AfricaLics Scientific Board (ASB)
- The AfricaLics President and Vice-President
- The AfricaLics Secretary General
- The AfricaLics Secretariat (the Hub)
- AfricaLics Constitution Committee
- Spokes and National LICs

### **3.1 The AfricaLics Scientific Board (ASB)**

Membership of the ASB is personal, honorary and without payment.

The ASB consists of up to 15 members. The composition of the Board shall consider regional representation, gender balance and the profile of the different members of AfricaLics. Representation of all five regions on the African continent and of an equal number of female and male members is strived for. A country cannot have more than one member in the board. The AfricaLics Secretary General participates *ex-officio* and is a non-voting member of the Board.

The ASB will comprise up to 15 members made up of:

- a) 2 members (one male and one female) from each region of Africa (East, North, South, West, Central)
- b) The Secretary-General (*ex-officio*)
- c) Two additional members from the AfricaLics alumni fraternity (i.e. those who have attended an AfricaLics academy or been a participant in the AfricaLics Visiting Fellowship Programme in the five years prior to election); one male and one female.
- d) Two members from other regions of the world elected to provide additional balance to and competences on the board in terms of gender, research expertise and experience from outside Africa.

There will be a maximum of one member of the AfricaLics Scientific Board with affiliation in any specific country.

Members of the ASB will hold their post for a term of three years and can be re-elected for one additional term.

Contact-persons of national LICs of AfricaLics and approved spokes may participate as observers (i.e. non-voting members of the ASB).

The ASB is responsible for overseeing the organisation and functioning of AfricaLics. The functions of the ASB are to:

- Appoint the AfricaLics President and Vice-President;
- Appoint the AfricaLics Secretary General and decide on location of the Secretariat;
- Discuss and decide on the overall policies of AfricaLics;
- Assist and advise the AfricaLics Secretariat in strategic planning, fund-raising and other matters of importance for the future development of the network;
- Approve the work programme for the coming year including the location and programme of key events (AfricaLics Conferences every second year and AfricaLics Academies as often as funding permits);

- Approve the level of the AfricaLics conference/registration fee;
- Work with the AfricaLics Secretariat and local organisers to support proper planning and preparations for the biennial AfricaLics conferences;
- Take decisions concerning additional partnerships and activities in which AfricaLics should be involved and decide on the utilisation of the AfricaLics logo.
- The ASB may establish relevant committees/working groups if deemed necessary. Appointed committees/working groups may hold additional meetings to fulfil their duties.

The ASB will meet virtually on a regular basis (3-4 times per year) and with a main meeting preferably once every year. The annual meeting can be held in person or online. The face-to-face meeting will normally take place in conjunction with the AfricaLics Conferences where most ASB members are expected to participate. In the years where there are no AfricaLics conferences, the ASB may meet either back-to-back with the Globelics Conference or in conjunction with another major event. The quorum required for a valid meeting (virtual or physical) is eight members of the membership of the ASB including the President and/or the Vice-President and the Secretary General or his/her designate. All ASB meetings will be organised by the Secretariat.

The duties of the ASB's members are to:

- Participate in virtual meetings and the annual face-to-face or online board meeting;
- Participate actively in committees created by the ASB;
- Participate actively in the paper review process for AfricaLics Conferences and other activities related to the network;
- Participate actively in AfricaLics Conferences e.g. by chairing sessions, acting as discussants on papers or organising thematic panels following agreement between ASB and the local organisers;
- Assist in fundraising activities, both regarding funds for their own participation in AfricaLics activities and for implementation of network activities in a broader sense;
- Approve extraordinary membership to the network;
- Expel members in case of severe misbehaviour;
- Support the network activities e.g. by sharing information about activities in their own networks, informing the Secretariat about key events to which they contribute and act as ambassadors for the network.

Where a board member is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Board without justification or prior permission of the President, the position of the member on the Board shall be declared vacant by the Board.

There is a provision for Emeritus Board Members (EBM). The EBM position can be filled by a founding member of AfricaLics to add additional experience to the Board. The post is for three years maximum, non-voting and non-renewable.

### ***3.2 AfricaLics President and Vice President Positions***

The President and Vice President serve honorary functions (without payment).

The post of President and Vice-President is a three-year term, with possibility for re-election for one additional term. After a period of six years of service, the President cannot be re-elected during the following six years.

The functions of the Presidency team (President and Vice-President) are to:

- Act as representatives of AfricaLics;
- Carry out the policies and decisions of the ASB together with the *Secretary General*;
- Work closely with the *Secretary General* and ASB committees/working groups to prepare discussion documents for the ASB on matters of importance for AfricaLics;
- Prepare and present, together with the *Secretary General*, an Annual Report on AfricaLics activities to be presented to the ASB and shared with AfricaLics members through the website;
- Prepare, along with the *Secretary General* and the Constitutional Committee drafts of proposed changes to the Constitution, at the request of the ASB or by their own initiative, to be submitted to the ASB for consideration.

### ***3.3 AfricaLics Secretary General and Secretariat***

The position of *Secretary-General* is appointed by the ASB and is a voluntary position. It shall normally be compatible with the performance of other duties. Subject to availability of funding, the *Secretary-General* may however receive remuneration on a part time basis for her/his work on behalf of the network.

The AfricaLics *Secretary General* is the head of the AfricaLics Secretariat that administers AfricaLics. He/she serves a three-year term which is renewable on

agreement by the ASB. The Secretary General should preferably be able to document institutional support from his/her home institution for this period.

The Secretary-General shall uphold and protect the Constitution of AfricaLics; provide organisational leadership and direction to AfricaLics; represent AfricaLics in relevant fora; develop fund-raising strategy for AfricaLics for discussion with the ASB and help ensure sustainability of the organisation through multi-year planning of key-events and fundraising for these.

The Secretary General may accept and search for funding from various sources for the purpose of realising the AfricaLics vision and overall objectives in the name of AfricaLics with the approval of the ASB.

The Secretary General takes responsibility for all contractually bound activities of the Secretariat (e.g. receiving, administrating and reporting on use of funds received from funders for the purpose of AfricaLics activities).

In cases where other legal entities raise funds for AfricaLics activities approved by the ASB, the Secretariat may not be involved and, in such cases, will not take responsibility for contracts entered into by the legal entity in question.

The Secretariat acts as the Hub of the network. The functions of the Secretariat are to:

- Act as representatives of AfricaLics;
- Work together with the ASB and spokes of the network (see section 3.5) to raise funds for AfricaLics activities;
- Work closely with the AfricaLics President and Vice-President, Constitution Committee and chairs of respective working groups, including, but not limited to, preparing, minuting and following up on ASB, committee and working group meetings;
- Assure good communication with the AfricaLics community including dissemination of information on AfricaLics relevant events and funding opportunities across different media (website, social media, newsletter);
- Support local organisers in organizing and preparing the AfricaLics conferences and academies in collaboration with the ASB and relevant working groups;
- Keep the membership database updated and in line with data protection regulation;
- Facilitate and oversee elections to the ASB, working groups and other relevant fora;

- Recommend candidates to the ASB for the position/s of Emeritus Board Member (EBM);
- Maintain relationships with *Globelics*, other regional, national LICs and spokes;
- Coordinate as necessary with the hosting organization of the AfricaLics Secretariat.

### **3.4 Constitution committee**

In connection with adopting and implementing the constitution, the ASB appoints a Constitution Committee with the following tasks:

- a) Advising the AfricaLics Secretariat and the ASB on how to interpret and implement the constitution;
- b) Overseeing and advising on the election process for those positions that are vacant;
- c) Making decisions when there are complaints about voting procedures and outcomes or other forms of disagreement related to the constitution.

The constitution committee is a standing committee composed of 5 members: three appointees together with two *ex-officio* members (the AfricaLics President and the Secretary-General as secretary). .

Individuals appointed to the Constitution Committee should have substantial experience of AfricaLics activities and be generally trusted in the community; they cannot be members of the ASB and they should not be candidates for the Board in the next upcoming election.

The first Constitution Committee became functional in September 2022 after it was fully constituted. The members of the constitution committee serve for a period of five years which can be renewed for one additional term.

During a committee term, should a member step down, the ASB will appoint a replacement as soon as possible.

### **3.5 The spokes and National LICs**

Activities are conducted by a range of organisations across the network, with several acting as 'spokes' i.e. co-ordinating core activities. Spokes may be universities, research organisations (public and private), public sector organisations or non-governmental/ inter-governmental organisations. There is a

formal application process to become a spoke and approval must be granted by the ASB and a formal agreement signed before an organisation can call itself a 'spoke' of AfricaLics. All approved spokes will be required to submit a work plan and annual report of activities conducted in the name of AfricaLics to the ASB once a year.

In addition, at country level, voluntary and informal groups of AfricaLics members may get together and form a 'National LICs'. National LICs must apply to the ASB to use the name 'AfricaLics National LICs' through a formalised application process. As with spokes, an annual work plan and report must be submitted to the ASB once a year.

## **4. Elections**

### **4.1 Election of the ASB**

Election of the ASB takes place every three years. Members of the ASB are elected by members of the network through online voting. The election process is managed by the AfricaLics Secretariat. An ASB member can serve a maximum of two terms and must be re-elected to serve the second term.

#### **4.1.1 Creation of vacancy lists**

The Secretariat will call for nominations from all/any members of the AfricaLics network at least three months before the new ASB commences work. Existing ASB members who have served a single first term can be nominated along with new candidates who have not previously served on the ASB.

To create election outcomes that are diverse in terms of nationality and gender, the vacancies are advertised based on several lists. There are seven possible lists: five of these lists correspond to the regions where the person was born (Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, North Africa); the sixth list refers to the specific category of AfricaLics Alumni and; the last list refers to representatives from outside Africa.

#### **4.1.2 Nomination process**

All members of AfricaLics can nominate candidates for all vacancies across all lists.



To qualify to be nominated as a member of the ASB and to become a member of the ASB, an individual must **as a minimum**:

- Agree with the objectives of AfricaLics and its wider spirit of openness, tolerance and lively intellectual debate;
- Have organised or participated in at least one AfricaLics conference or academy and in one other event either in AfricaLics, Globelics or any of the affiliated regional and national LICs;
- Be active as a scholar/researcher and/or practitioner in the field of innovation and development;
- Have not served two terms on the ASB already;
- For those wishing to be nominated for an ASB alumni position, they must have attended an AfricaLics PhD Academy or the VFP programme in the last five years.

Before being confirmed on the final candidate voting list, all eligible nominated candidates are required to:

- a. Sign a declaration that he/she is willing to serve and take on the duties expected from the ASB;
- b. Present a brief CV (max. 5 pages) that can be used to present the candidate before the election;
- c. Specify on which list he/she will appear as a candidate. Those opting for a regional list (North, West, East, South, Central or outside Africa) must provide a brief statement as to how the individual can adequately represent the group they wish to represent e.g. born in or having been resident in the region for a period of time or the region/ a country in the chosen region being the core focus of the individual's research work.

#### **4.1.3 Creation of final candidate voting lists**

All finally recognized candidates will be inserted into one of the seven final candidate voting lists. As noted above, to secure geographical diversity and gender balance in AfricaLics Scientific Board every single candidate who runs for election will be on one, and only one, out of seven lists.

There should be at least twice as many candidates nominated for each list as the number to be elected from the respective list. If candidate numbers do not allow this, a partial list will be advertised, and it is possible that a position on the ASB will remain unfilled for a term.

#### **4.1.4 Voting procedure**

Vacancies on the ASB shall be filled by a simple majority decision of the Board from a list of alternates using an electronic voting system. Members will be sent a link to the voting system and given a mandated period to cast their vote. Members can vote for any of the candidates nominated and appearing on any one of the seven lists.

#### **4.1.5 Results procedure**

The basic principle to determine the results is that the candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected but under condition of gender and regional/national diversity and where there can only be one member from a specific country on the board. The addendum outlines the detailed procedure for selecting results where gender, geography need to be taken into consideration.

#### **4.1.6 First and subsequent elections under this constitution**

Under this Constitution, the first elections will take place in 2023 with the new ASB constituted by mid, 2023. Further elections will take place every three years, starting in early 2027.

### ***4.2 Election of the President and Vice President***

The President and Vice President of AfricaLics shall be elected by the ASB among its members and by a simple majority of members present and voting in the annual meeting. However, if the number of members present is not considered adequate for election of the President or Vice President, the election may be conducted through written procedure (e-mail and/or electronic voting). The President informs the AfricaLics community about the outcomes of the elections.

All members of the ASB can nominate candidates for the positions. The President and Vice President shall not come from the same country and should preferably also come from two different regions of Africa and ensure gender balance.

The election of the first President and Vice President under this constitution will take place at the first ASB meeting in 2023 occurring after elections have been conducted.

If the President or Vice President steps down or must be replaced due to health reasons, the ASB will elect replacements for these positions based on consultations and consensus through e-mail. If agreement cannot be reached, the AfricaLics Secretariat will organise the voting procedure. The Secretary-General shall on receipt of letter of resignation from the President immediately notify the AfricaLics Scientific Board and arrange for election of a new President.

### **4.3 Appointment of the Secretary General**

The AfricaLics Secretary General is chosen by the ASB. The board decides on the appointment of the Secretary General and the location of the AfricaLics Secretariat on the basis of invited proposals from suitable individuals with institutional backing.

The criteria for appointment of the AfricaLics Secretary General and location of Secretariat are as follows:

- The AfricaLics Secretary General must be a person with proven leadership, managerial and fund-raising capabilities;
- The Secretary General must be a respected scholar or practitioner in the field of Innovation and Development studies research and practice;
- The Secretary General should be supported by an organisation with a legal identity. The organisation should be in good standing and of relevance for the work of the AfricaLics network activities. It could be a university, a think-tank or other type of relevant organisation;
- Organisations offering to host the AfricaLics Secretariat must clarify what resources they are willing and able to make available to run the AfricaLics Secretariat. Such resources could be e.g. in the form of time made available for the Secretary General to work on behalf of the AfricaLics network; support staff for the Secretary General; ability to run the AfricaLics web-site and resources to help organise AfricaLics conferences and PhD academies among others;
- Proposals should include suggestions/plans for fundraising activities for financing core AfricaLics activities and costs related to running the secretariat.

If the Secretary-General steps down or must be replaced due to health reasons, the ASB will appoint a replacement based on consultations and consensus through e-mail and/or online discussions if no face-to-face meeting can be held.

## **5. Membership of AfricaLics**

Members of AfricaLics are expected to be supportive of the goals as they are set out in the preamble above and to act accordingly. They are also expected to take an active part in AfricaLics Conferences and - where relevant - in AfricaLics Academies and participate in other activities of the network.

Membership is individual or institutional.

An individual can become a member of AfricaLics on attending an AfricaLics event (conference or PhD academy) where they have presented a paper and/or participated in a thematic session or been a keynote speaker. They are provided the opportunity to opt out of this when registering for an AfricaLics event like a conference.

National LICS become automatic institutional members once their application as a National LICS has been approved by the ASB. Their representatives are non-voting members and cannot be elected to the ASB. Like national LICS prospective institutions become automatic institutional members without voting rights once their applications for membership have been approved by the ASB. Institutional members cannot be elected to the ASB.

Individuals who have not attended an AfricaLics conference or PhD Academy and other institutions who wish to become a member can apply in writing to the Secretary-General. In such circumstances, the individual will have to complete an application form affirming broad agreement with AfricaLics aims and objectives. In addition, potential members will be expected to provide relevant personal and academic data. The ASB will make the final decision on the individual's admission to the network.

Apart from payment of registration fees for conferences, membership of AfricaLics will be free unless agreed otherwise by the ASB.

Duties of the members:

- Support and promote the objectives of AfricaLics;

- Promote AfricaLics and its activities and facilitate the execution of the AfricaLics' activities and programmes in their respective countries and regions;
- Endeavour to participate in AfricaLics network activities (conference, academy);
- Respect other members of AfricaLics and diversity of opinion. Members are expected to conduct themselves with integrity and honesty;
- Agree to abide by the byelaws and constitution of AfricaLics.

Individual and institutional members have the right to be included in the list of members on the AfricaLics website.

Individual members have the right:

- To nominate candidates to the ASB;
- To be nominated for the ASB;
- To vote for members of ASB.

Institutional members can apply in writing to become official spokes of the network.

Membership expires after five years. All members will be asked to confirm their personal data once a year. After five years, membership is renewable either by means of participation in a new AfricaLics activity or through application to the ASB.

In case of severe academic misbehaviour or fraudulent or criminal activity (e.g. plagiarism, abuse of funds, etc.) that damages the reputation of AfricaLics, the ASB can decide to expel members.

## **6. Constitution ratification and amendments**

The constitution became valid from the time of its ratification, which took place at the ASB meeting in Cameroon in November 2022.

The Constitution is available on the AfricaLics website.

All amendments to the constitution will require a 2/3 majority of the ASB.

Proposals to modify or review the Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Constitution Committee through the President at least four months before

the annual meeting of the ASB held in the last quarter of each year. This annual meeting can be held online or in person.

## **7. Financial arrangements**

AfricaLics raises conference fees to help assist in the cost of running its research conferences. The ASB, in association with the local host organisation, sets the rates of these fees. All fees raised go towards the cost of the conference.

Additional funds can be raised for the purposes of events, training activities, research grants and scholarships. Such subventions, grants and donations may be accepted by the legal entity hosting the AfricaLics Secretariat or, on behalf of AfricaLics, by National LICs and spokes, for purposes that are consistent with the objectives of the AfricaLics under conditions approved by the ASB.

All activities that are to use the name and logo of AfricaLics must be agreed on by the ASB or by the Secretary General in writing.

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### **ADDENDUM: ELECTION OF ASB RESULTS PROCEDURES**

The following procedure will be applied for transforming voting results into diversity in terms of gender and geography. This procedure uses a worked example of the need to fill the ASB position relating to a male born in West Africa:

1. The male candidate representing a West African country with the highest number of votes is immediately declared the winner should there not be another representative representing that country on the ASB already.
2. In the case where there is already a member from the country he represents in the ASB, the candidate with the next highest number of votes is chosen who meets the criteria of being male and representing another West African country.

The vacancy lists will be filled in alphabetical order of the list titles. In a situation where it is not possible to fill a post because the candidates declared

winners on earlier lists fill the one member/ one country criteria, the post will remain vacant until supplementary elections are held.

If two eligible persons get the same number of votes the Secretary General and the President organise drawing of lots to decide who wins the seat.