

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 two Vice-Presidents
- The AfricaLics Secretary General
- The AfricaLics Secretariat (the Hub)
- The Friends of AfricaLics INGO
- Spokes including National LICS
- AfricaLics Constitution Committee

The governance structure is outlined diagrammatically in Annex 1.

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) Two 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 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.

From the period of this first constitution, members of the ASB will hold their post for a term of three years and can be re-elected for one additional term. A final three-year term can be held but requires at least a three-year gap after stepping down from the second term before standing for election.

Founding members of AfricaLics/ those who held ASB positions before November 2022 can stand for election as ASB members for a further single three-year term.

Contact-persons of national LICs of AfricaLics and approved spokes may participate as invited 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 annual meeting, preferably once every year in the last quarter of the year. The annual main meeting can be held in person or online. Should the annual main meeting be held face-to-face it will normally take place in conjunction with the AfricaLics Conference where most ASB members are expected to participate. In the years where there are no AfricaLics conferences, the ASB may meet face-to-face 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 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 two 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 the possibility for re-election for one additional three-year term.

The functions of the Presidency team (President and two Vice-Presidents) 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 amount and frequency of the remuneration (whether periodic/one-off) shall be set by the ASB, given the level of available funding.

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. Fundraising for AfricaLics activities, however, takes place in close collaboration with agreed hosts of AfricaLics events, including national LICs and other spokes.

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, administering and reporting on the use of funds received from funders for the purpose of AfricaLics activities).

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, the Friends of AfricaLics INGO, 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;

- Prepare annual report on AfricaLics activities to the ASB (in collaboration with the Presidency)
- Maintain collaborative relationships with Globelics, other regional and national LICs, and spokes;
- Coordinate as necessary with the hosting organization of the AfricaLics Secretariat.

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.

3.4 The Friends of AfricaLics INGO

The Friends of AfricaLics (FOA) International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO), legally registered in Kenya (with a possibility of expansion to other African countries), shall have the mandate to seek funds from members, alumni and others to support the work of AfricaLics (Annex 2). In particular, but not exclusively, the fundraising activities shall be used to support the participation of PhD students and early career researchers at AfricaLics events. The FOA shall have its own governance and administrative structure but hosted within AfricaLics under the ASB (see Annex 1). The ASB shall provide strategic oversight of the FOA operations, including future expansion plans. The mechanisms for doing this shall be clearly articulated in a framework (e.g. a Memorandum of Understanding) to prevent duplication of responsibilities and mitigate potential conflicts of interest.

3.5 AfricaLics Spokes

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 are required to submit a work plan and annual report of activities conducted in the name of AfricaLics to the ASB once a year.

A key set of spokes will include, at country level, voluntary and usually informal groups of AfricaLics members known as 'National LICs'. National LICs must apply to the ASB to be called a 'AfricaLics National LICs' through a formalised application process. As with other spokes, an annual work plan and report must be submitted to the ASB once a year.

Other key spokes include those organisations that host the Visiting Fellowship Programme students and those who co-host AfricaLics events e.g. PhD Academies or the biennial Research Conference. Such spokes are time-limited in nature and must be approved institutional members of AfricaLics before and during the period they are spokes.

3.6 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 are appointed to the Constitution Committee. These individuals are chosen based on their substantial experience of AfricaLics activities and for being generally trusted in the community. They cannot be members of the ASB during the period that they are on the Constitution Committee.

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.

4. Elections

4.1 Election of the ASB

Election of the ASB takes place as vacancies arise. 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's term is three

years, and they can be re-elected for two additional terms, i.e. an ASB member can serve a maximum of three terms. ASB members who have held two three-year terms can only be nominated for a third term after a minimum three-year gap following completion of their second term.

ASB members are appointed in the third quarter of each year so that there is an induction period before the holding of the main annual meeting in the last quarter of the year. An ASB member's term is measured as starting on the date of the first main annual meeting after their appointment. They step down after the third annual meeting. This means that some annual meetings will have a larger number of participants as the handover from one ASB member to another takes place.

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 more than three 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. Annex 3 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 took place in 2023 with the new ASB constituted by mid-2023. Further elections will take place every year when a vacancy opens up.

4.2 Election of the President and two Vice Presidents

The President and two Vice Presidents 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 the two Vice Presidents, 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 two Vice Presidents 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 Presidency positions under this constitution took place at the first ASB meeting in 2023 occurring after ASB elections were conducted.

Subsequent Presidency positions will be elected after each three-year term or should a member of the Presidency step down earlier.

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.

Spoke organizations must be institutional members of AfricaLics. 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. Universities, think tanks and other relevant organisations may apply to become institutional members of AfricaLics using the application form available on the AfricaLics website. The ASB makes the final decision on the admission of institutional members to the network. Institutional members cannot be elected to the ASB.

Individuals who have not attended an AfricaLics conference or PhD Academy but who wish to become members of AfricaLics 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 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.

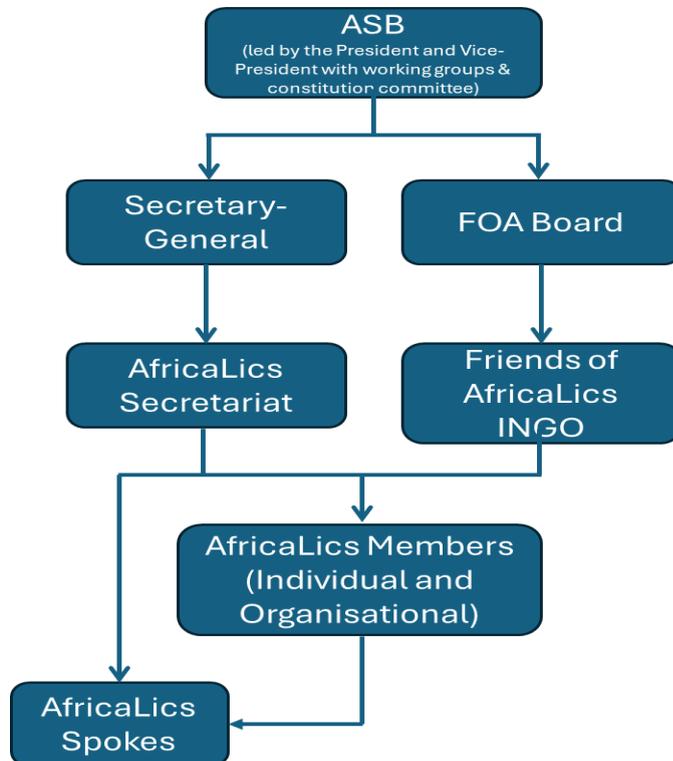
7. Financial arrangements

AfricaLics raises conference fees to help with 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, or by the FOA INGO 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.

ANNEX 1: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF AFRICALICS



ANNEX 2: PURPOSE OF FRIENDS OF AFRICALICS INGO

The 'Friends of AfricaLics' is proposed to be a non-profit fundraising arm of AfricaLics, which is an informal regional research network linked to the Global Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence Building Systems (GLOBELICS). The organization will support the work of innovation and development scholars in Africa by funding programs and initiatives designed to advance the field. It may also support other initiatives that are in line with the vision and mission of the AfricaLics network.

In close collaboration with the AfricaLics Scientific Board and the AfricaLics Secretariat, the organisation shall have the following principal objectives:

- a) To fundraise in support of AfricaLics' core activities such as AfricaLics conferences, PhD academies and the AfricaLics Visiting Fellowship Programme (VFP).
- b) To help AfricaLics thematic chairs and the secretariat fundraise for agreed activities as and when possible.
- c) To manage funds raised and distribute these to relevant individual scholars and other beneficiaries, including hosts and co-hosts of AfricaLics activities in a transparent and orderly way
- d) To report to funders according to grant agreements and to the AfricaLics Scientific Board on an annual basis.

ANNEX 3: 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.