



INGSA AFRICA - CALL FOR MENTEES (Third Cohort)

Science Advice Skills Development Program (SASDP-3) 2024-2025

[INGSA-Africa](#), the Africa Regional Chapter of the International Network for Government Science Advice, is delighted to announce the launch of the third cohort of the Science Advice Skills Development Program (SASDP-3). This program aims to build the capacity of early and mid-career African scientists across the continent for the effective practice of science advice. Following the success of our inaugural mentoring program in 2022 and a second cohort in 2023, we are eager to continue this momentum. Twenty-two scientists, from 11 countries in Africa, have been mentored so far, by mentors from the African continent and beyond. The report of the first cohort can be found [here](#).

The objective of the SASDP is to support early and mid-career African scientists and researchers in strengthening their skills for science advice – influencing policymaking with their research findings, evidence and expertise. We invite relevant organizations, especially those engaged in science advice, such as recognized academic or research institutions and Academies of Science in Africa, to nominate qualified scientists and/or staff as MENTEES under this program. Additionally, self-nominations are accepted from eligible applicants.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants should be early or mid-career African scientists or researchers working on the African continent. Mentees should have obtained their PhD in the past 5-10 years. Applicants should be below the age of 50 years and demonstrate a keen interest in science advice, with a strong scientific track record in their field of expertise, particularly related to climate change (Health, Water, Energy, and Food Security). Applications will be assessed based on the applicants' research skills and experience, as demonstrated by their public outputs.

Application Process

Applications should be made using the [online form](#) by 15 July 2024. All sections of the application should be filled in. Required documents to support the application are a recent CV and a recommendation letter from a science organization (university/research center/national academy of science), and a letter from the nominating organization (where applicable). The requested supporting documentation must be uploaded with the Google Form. For additional queries please contact Dr Richard L.K. Glover (richkwame@yahoo.com) at the secretariat of INGSA-Africa, with Dr Shaheen Motala-Timol (stimolsasdp@gmail.com) in copy. Selected mentees will be notified by August 2024 and invited to participate in an introductory workshop in September 2024 (date to be decided).

Join us in advancing science advice capacity in Africa and contributing to the sustainable development of our continent. We look forward to receiving your nominations/applications and fostering another successful cohort of mentees!

Program Information

Focus Areas	The SASDP focuses on Climate Change in Africa, covering areas such as Health, Water, Energy, and Food Security.
Mentors	Mentors are volunteer resource persons from INGSA, various African institutions, EU-JRC, AAAS, science advisors, etc., who are experts in their fields and experts in science advice.
Duration	The program will run over a period of 6 months, starting in September 2024.
Pairing	Mentees will be paired with mentors according to expertise and interest. Although the program is conducted in English, Francophone and Lusophone candidates are encouraged to apply, and consideration will be given to connect them with language-appropriate mentors.
Program Phases	The program will start with a contact phase in the form of a virtual one-day introductory workshop, followed by a one-to-one mentoring phase with a science advice practitioner, for up to 6 months. A closing workshop will be organized at the completion of the mentoring program.
Introductory Workshop Content	During the introductory workshop, mentees will be introduced to their mentors and will learn more about science advice and the SASDP program.
Mentoring Phase	During the mentoring phase, mentees will work together with their respective mentors to develop science advice documents for their organizations and to acquire key science advice skills.

Follow-up of program	One month into the SASDP program, mentees will convene for a virtual meeting with the program coordinators. This session aims to review progress and to share with other mentees their science advice proposal towards community of practice building. Mentees may also be invited to attend webinars by science advice experts throughout the program.
Reporting	A mid-program progress report is to be submitted by 15 December 2024, with final reports due in March 2025
Closing Workshop	A closing workshop will be organized in March 2025 to present findings and outputs of the mentoring program. The event will also serve to facilitate networking among mentees and mentors, and foster the establishment of a science advice community of practice for Africa.
Output	Participants in the SASDP are expected to produce tangible and impactful outcomes that demonstrate their enhanced skills in communicating science advice effectively. These outputs serve to showcase the application of their learning and mentorship experiences throughout the program. The primary output is the development of science advice documents tailored to the specific needs of their respective organizations or fields of expertise.
Science Advice Documents	These documents may include policy papers, white papers, policy briefs, reports, or statements, tailored to effectively communicate scientific findings and recommendations to policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public.
Incentives	Potential incentives for mentees who produce excellent outputs include funding support for organizing science advice dissemination events or invitations by INGSA-Africa to participate in scientific events.

*Annexed document***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 strengthened the cooperation between scientists and policy makers and augmented the 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 block against its endorsement.

Science advice is a critical area for science capacity development in Africa. It has the potential to create notable contributions to developing research and innovation in Africa. The employment of relevant African scientific knowledge 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 scientists to convey their knowledge to policy makers, and to the public.

The means and channels for providing science advice are varied. Science advice is formulated in different types of documents such as policy papers, white papers, policy briefs, reports, statements etc. It is important for scientists to understand the differences between these forms, their usage and peculiarities, to better communicate their science.

2. Overview of the SASDP

- The Science Advice Skills Development Program was established by INGSA-Africa in 2022, to tackle the need to build African capacity in communicating science advice effectively.
- The first cohort of the program was run over 3 months. (September - December 2022). The program for the second cohort ran over a period of 6 months, starting in September 2023 and ending in April 2024.
- The program engaged 10 and 12 early and mid-career scientists and researchers from African countries respectively, for each cohort. Twenty-two mentees have been trained so far.
- **INGSA Africa will run the 3rd cohort of the SASDP as from September 2024, with a call for mentors and mentees launched in May 2024.**

- Mentees can be nominated by their organizations, which are active in science communication and advice. Self-nominations are also accepted.
- It will start with a contact phase in the form of a virtual introductory workshop delivered over 1 day, followed by a one-to-one mentoring phase with the science advice practitioner, for up to 6 months.
- During the workshop, mentees will be introduced to their mentors and will learn, through presentations, about science advice and the SASDP.
- During the mentoring phase, mentees will work together with their respective mentors to develop science advice documents for their organizations, based on findings from their research work.
- During the mentoring phase mentors may deliver a lecture about science advice and its tools (virtual lecture) to all mentees.
- Focus Areas of the SASDP - Climate Change in Africa (Water, Energy, Health, Food Security)
- A mid-program progress report is due by 15 December 2024 by mentees.
- A closing workshop to present findings and outputs of mentoring program will be run in March 2025.

The objectives of the SASDP are:

- To bridge the gap between research and policy making.
- To equip mentees with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively communicate their research findings and viewpoints as science advice to diverse audiences.
- To facilitate networking opportunities among mentees, mentors, and INGSA-Africa committee, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- To build capacity of African scientists for evidence-informed policy analysis

3. Proposed outcome

3.1. Introductory Virtual Workshop (1 day) in September 2024

General objective: Mentor-Mentee meet and greet

Program 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

3.2. Mentoring Program 2024-2025 – 6 months

Format: One-to- one virtual mentoring

Responsibilities of Mentors

- a) To participate in the introductory workshop.
- b) To design, in collaboration with the mentee, the virtual mentoring program, 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 program.
- d) To ensure that the learning outcomes are met at the end of the program.
- e) To support the mentees in preparing the final document for science advice (policy papers, white papers, policy briefs, reports, statements).
- f) To provide any feedback to INGSA Africa on the mentoring program.

Responsibilities of Mentees

- a) To participate in the virtual introductory and closing workshops, and to take part in the progress reporting meeting.
- b) To ensure that they have access to internet and the technology to participate in meetings.
- c) To fully engage with the mentors in the designing of the virtual mentoring program.
- d) To attend scheduled mentoring meetings with their mentors.
- e) To submit a mid-program report by 15 December 2024.
- f) To achieve the identified learning outcomes
- g) To prepare the final document for science advice to be presented at the closing workshop.
- h) To organise a dissemination event at their organisation to share their experiences and findings with their peers following completion of the program.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the SASDP , mentees will:

- Be empowered to translate their research findings into evidence and into accessible and actionable advice for decision-makers and the wider community.
- Learn how to effectively provide science advice to policy makers to create political impact.
- Identify relevant communication strategies and channels suited to effectively disseminate scientific insights and recommendations to policymakers, stakeholders, and the public.

3.3. Closing Workshop

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 in March 2025).

Programme

- Presentation of findings/outputs by mentees and proposed way forward.
- Lessons learned from scientific advice mentoring program.
- Proposed dissemination events from mentees
- Evaluation of the SASDP

Objectives

Mentees, and their mentors, 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 mentoring by each pair of mentee-mentor.