



INGSA Africa - CALL FOR MENTORS (Third Cohort)

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

[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](#).

We are inviting policy-active scientists/researchers/policy makers, preferably in a field connected to climate change (Health, Water, Energy, Food Security etc.), with the capacity to provide voluntarily one- to- one virtual mentorship over a period of 6 months, starting September 2024, to talented early and mid-career African scientists interested in learning about, and contributing to, science advice.

Eligible mentors are expected to come from organizations that include continental, regional or national agencies, or national science academies anywhere in the world that have a demonstrated science advice portfolio and, familiarity with the science policy landscape in Africa or elsewhere related to climate change. Mentors can be drawn from INGSA Experts, ISC, EU-JRC, AAAS, science advisors. Bilingual French-English or Portuguese-English or Arabic-English mentors are encouraged to apply. More information on the program is provided in the annexed document.

Throughout the 6-month program, mentors will guide mentees to:

1. Learn how to effectively provide science advice from their research findings to policy makers to create political impact.
2. Empower them to translate complex scientific information into accessible and actionable advice for decision-makers and the wider community.

3. Identify relevant communication strategies and channels suited to effectively disseminate scientific insights and recommendations to policymakers, stakeholders, and the public.

As a mentor, you will play a pivotal role in guiding and supporting your mentee throughout his/her journey in the program and beyond. By sharing your expertise, insights, and experiences, you will contribute to the professional growth of the mentee. This is also an excellent opportunity to learn about the research being conducted by scientists in Africa and to expand your network.

Please confirm your interest to be a mentor by completing the mentor expression of interest [application form](#) online **by 15 July 2024.** You may contact Dr Richard L.K. Glover (richkwame@yahoo.com) at the secretariat of INGSА-Africa, with Dr Shaheen Motala-Timol (stimolsasdp@gmail.com) in copy, for any further information. Selected mentors will be notified by August 2024 and invited to participate in an introductory workshop in September 2024 (date to be decided).

Join us to shape the future of science advice in Africa and make a lasting impact on the scientific community.

Sincerely yours,



M.O. Odubanjo
(Chair, INGSА-Africa)

*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 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 run over a period of 6 months, starting in late September 2023 and ending in early April 2024.
- The program has engaged 10 and 12 early and mid-career scientists and researchers from African countries, respectively, per 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.
- The program 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.
- 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.

2.1. The objectives of the SASDP

- 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. Virtual Introductory Workshop (1/2 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 program by each pair of mentee-mentor.