



## **INGSA Africa - CALL FOR MENTORS (Fourth Cohort)**

### **Science Advice Skills Development Program (SASDP 4)**

**September 2025-April 2026**

***(Deadline for applications is 10 August 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). 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 second and third cohorts in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 respectively, we are eager to continue this momentum. Thirty-nine scientists, from 16 countries in Africa, have been mentored so far, by mentors from the African continent and beyond. The reports of the previous cohorts can be found on our [website](#).

We are inviting policy-active scientists/researchers/policy makers, science/evidence advisors, knowledge brokers, amongst others, preferably in a field related to climate change (Health, Water, Energy, Food Security, Biodiversity, Natural Resource Management, Indigenous Knowledge, amongst others etc.), with the capacity to provide voluntarily one-to-one mentorship over a period of 6 months, **starting September 2025**, 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. We especially welcome expressions of interest from experienced professionals based in Africa or from the African diaspora, who bring contextual understanding and a commitment to strengthening science-policy systems on the continent. 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 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 their journey in the program, and potentially beyond as demonstrated by the continued engagement between past mentors and mentees. By sharing your expertise, insights, and experiences, you will contribute to the professional growth of the mentee.

The mentees are early- to mid-career African scientists who have obtained their PhDs within the past 10 years and demonstrate a strong interest in science advice and policy engagement. They bring solid research backgrounds in areas connected to broader issues of climate change. Mentors will support these emerging leaders as they strengthen their capacity to translate scientific knowledge into actionable advice for policy and societal impact. This is also an opportunity to learn about the research being conducted by scientists in Africa and to expand your network.

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

You can confirm your interest to be a mentor by completing the mentor expression of interest [application form](#) online **by 10 August 2025**.

We invite you to read the attached documents for more information on the program and your role and responsibilities as an SASDP mentor. Selected mentors will be notified and invited to attend an Introductory Workshop in **September 2025**. The mentoring program will run over 6 months and will close in **April 2026**. You may contact Dr Richard L.K. Glover ([richkwame@yahoo.com](mailto:richkwame@yahoo.com)) at the secretariat of INGSA-Africa, with Dr Shaheen Motala-Timol ([stimolsasdp@gmail.com](mailto:stimolsasdp@gmail.com)) in copy, for additional information.

Sincerely yours,

**Shaheen Motala-Timol**  
(Chair, INGSA-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 the SASDP**

- The Science Advice Skills Development Program was established by INGS-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 third cohort program started in September 2024 and ended in April 2025.
- The program engaged 10,12 and 17 early and mid-career scientists and researchers from African countries respectively, for each cohort. Thirty-nine mentees have been trained so far.
- 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 in **December 2025** by mentees.
- A closing workshop to present findings and outputs of mentoring program will be run in **April 2026**.

**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 in September 2025**

**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 2025-2026 – 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) Participate in the virtual introductory and closing workshops, as well as in the progress reporting meeting.
- b) Ensure reliable internet access and the necessary technology to fully participate in virtual activities.
- c) Actively engage with their mentors in co-designing and shaping the virtual mentoring programme.
- d) Attend all scheduled mentoring meetings with their assigned mentor.
- e) Submit a mid-programme report in **December 2025**.
- f) Work towards achieving the agreed learning outcomes of the programme.
- g) Prepare a final science advice document to be presented during the closing workshop.
- i) Complete the programme feedback form to support future improvements.
- h) Organise a dissemination event within their home institution or organisation to share their experiences and key insights from the programme with peers and colleagues.

#### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

*The following learning outcomes represent the key skills and capacities the SASDP aims to develop in mentees, to the extent possible within the scope of the programme and opportunities available:*

- Strengthen their ability to translate scientific research into accessible and policy-relevant formats.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the principles, practices, and challenges of providing science advice in the African policy context.
- Explore effective strategies for engaging with policymakers, even indirectly, through intermediaries, institutional channels, or public communication.
- Develop skills in tailoring scientific messages for different audiences, including policymakers, civil society, and the media.
- Build confidence in contributing to policy-relevant discussions and in framing their expertise within broader societal challenges.
- Strengthen leadership skills relevant to science-policy engagement, including strategic thinking, influence, and communication.
- Produce a draft science advice output as a practical demonstration of their learning, with peer and mentor feedback.

### **3.3. Virtual 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 in **April 2026**.

#### Programme Highlights

- Presentations by mentees on their science advice outputs and proposed next steps.
- Reflections on key lessons learned from participating in the science advice mentoring programme.
- Overview of planned dissemination activities by mentees within their institutions or networks.
- Evaluation of the SASDP, including feedback from participants and mentors to inform future iterations.

### **Workshop Objectives**

The closing workshop aims to:

- Provide a platform for mentor-mentee pairs to reflect on their experiences and insights gained in science advice and policy engagement.
- Share practical tools, methods, and approaches for science advice used across the mentor-mentee collaborations.
- Foster peer learning, mutual feedback, and network building among the cohort.