



## **INGSA AFRICA - CALL FOR MENTEES (Fifth Cohort)**

### **Science Advice Skills Development Program (SASDP-5)**

**October 2026-April 2027**

***(Deadline for applications is 17 August 2026)***

[INGSA-Africa](#), the Africa Regional Chapter of the International Network for Government Science Advice, is delighted to announce the launch of the fifth cohort of the Science Advice Skills Development Program (SASDP-5). 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, third and fourth cohorts in 2023/2024, 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 respectively, we are eager to continue this momentum. Fifty-eight scientists, from 19 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](#).

The Science Advice Skills Development Programme (SASDP) aims to support early- and mid-career African scientists and researchers in strengthening their capacity to engage in science advice, translating research, evidence, and expertise into inputs that can inform policymaking.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

- Applicants must be an early or mid-career African scientists or researchers working on the African continent.
- Applicants **must** have obtained a PhD within the past 10 years.
- They must demonstrate a strong interest in science advice and policy engagement.
- A solid scientific track record in the applicant's area of expertise is required. Preference will be given to those whose work relates to **Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa** with sub-areas such as: Health, water, energy, food security, biodiversity, natural resource management, indigenous knowledge, and digital and AI innovations, amongst others.

#### **Assessment and Selection Criteria**

Applications will be assessed based on the applicant's research experience and

achievements, as demonstrated through public outputs such as publications, reports, or contributions to policy-related initiatives. Applicants will also be expected to propose how they intend to apply their existing research outcomes or outputs within the context of the programme.

### Program Information

Focus Areas	The SASDP focuses on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development with sub-areas: Health, water, energy, food security, biodiversity, natural resource management, indigenous knowledge, and digital and AI innovations, amongst others.
Mentors	Mentors are volunteer resource persons from INGSA, various African institutions, EU-JRC, ISC, AAAS, science advisors, evidence advisors, knowledge brokers etc., who are experts in their fields and have substantial and demonstrable knowledge and experience in Science, Policy and Innovation and/or science advice and diplomacy.
Duration	The program will run over a period of 6 months, starting in <b>October 2026</b> .
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 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 online 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. There may also be 2 online lectures of 45 minutes duration each 6 weeks to give insight on science advice technicalities
Reporting	A mid-program progress report signed by the mentor is to be submitted by the mentee in <b>December 2026</b> , with the final report due <b>end of March 2027</b>

Closing Workshop	A closing workshop will be organized in <b>April 2027</b> 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 dissemination events or invitations by INGSA-Africa to participate in scientific events.

## Application Process

Application to become a mentee should be made using the **online application form: <https://forms.gle/4NrSqmeQi3LxXq1y9>** only, by **17 August 2026**. 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), if a nominated applicant.

The requested supporting documentation must be uploaded with the [Google Form](#). Incomplete applications will not be considered. For additional information 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, by the deadline.

Selected mentees will be notified and invited to attend an **online** Introductory Workshop in **October 2026**. Final selection may include an interview.

**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!**

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 INGSAs-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. Cohort 4 ran between September 2025 and March 2026.
- The program has so far engaged 10, 12, 17 and 19 early and mid-career scientists and researchers, a total of 58 from 19 African countries.
- 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 - Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development with sub-areas: Health, water, energy, food security, biodiversity, natural resource management, indigenous knowledge, and digital and AI innovations, amongst others.
- A mid-program progress report is due by **15 December 2026** by mentees.
- A closing workshop to present findings and outputs of mentoring program will be held in **April 2027**.

#### **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 October 2026**

**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 2026-2027 – 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 INGA 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 communicate with INGA-Africa and 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 2026**.
- 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.
- h) Complete the programme feedback form to support future improvements.
- i) Organise a dissemination event within their home institution or organisation post SASDP to share their experiences and key insights from the programme with peers and colleagues.

#### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

*By the end of the mentorship, mentees will be able to:*

- Explain the key principles, actors, and processes of science advice in the African policy context.
- Translate scientific research into clear, accessible, and policy-relevant formats (e.g. policy briefs, summaries, presentations).
- Apply appropriate strategies for engaging with policymakers, including indirect pathways such as intermediaries, institutional channels, and public communication.
- Adapt and tailor scientific messages for different audiences, including policymakers, civil society, and the media.
- Analyse how scientific evidence can inform policy discussions within broader societal and development challenges.
- Demonstrate increased confidence and effectiveness in contributing to policy-relevant discussions.
- Develop and present a science advice output (e.g. policy brief, advisory note, or communication product), incorporating mentor and peer 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 2027**.

### 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.