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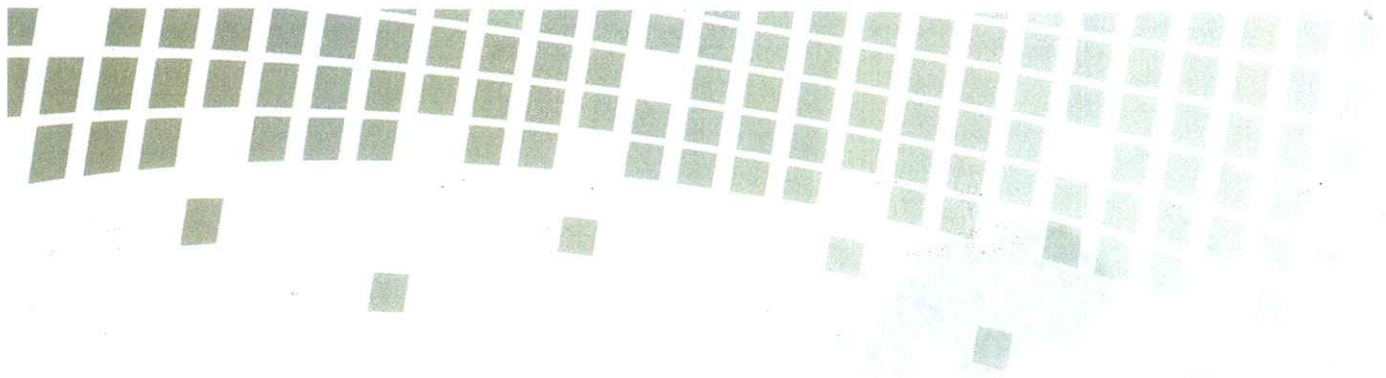


**Africa Institute  
of South Africa**

*Development Through Knowledge*



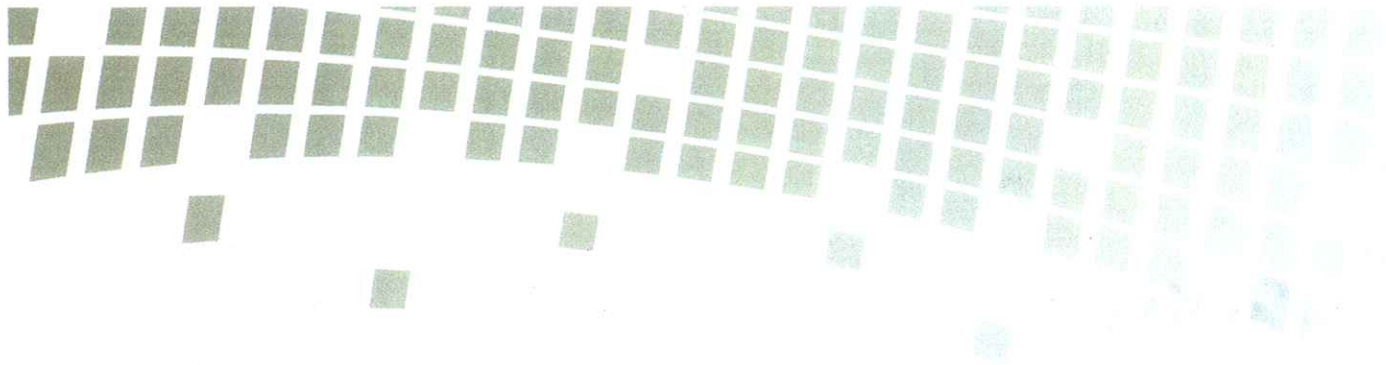
# **Institutional Review Report** 2010/11



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# About AISA

The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) was established in 1960, as a non-profit organisation. It was established by various academics, with the support of the Apartheid government. The aim was to better understand Africa, develop requisite policies and strategies and forestall the liberation struggle in South Africa. AISA's reason for existence evolved with time, in line with the changing socio-economic and political dynamics locally, in the rest of Africa and globally. By 1994, AISA had to join the democratisation project of the new South Africa. The nature of its work and modus operandi became more attuned to global standards and the stakeholders it served became more universal. Through Act of Parliament No. 68 of 2001, AISA was transformed into a science council. AISA was initially located under the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology but has since 2004 been moved to the Department of Science and Technology (DST) because its ambit includes both natural and social sciences. AISA's research focuses primarily on political, socio-economic, and developmental issues in contemporary Africa, and how these affect the people on the continent.

As per the Africa Institute of South Africa Act No. 68 of 2001, the objectives of AISA include:

- a) To promote knowledge and understanding of African affairs through leading social scientists acting in concert and across all disciplines and through training and education on African affairs.
- b) To collect, process and disseminate information on African affairs, give effective advice and facilitate appropriate action in relation to the collective needs, opportunities and challenges of all South Africans.
- c) Promoting awareness and consciousness of Africa at grassroots level.

AISA, mandated as shown above, spends a considerable amount of time consulting with stakeholders to ascertain needs, improve the scope of research and influence policies for the betterment of society.

In 2010, the Research Division's structure was re-engineered to maintain its coverage of Africa and to fulfil

its mandate much more effectively. Research is currently divided into five units:

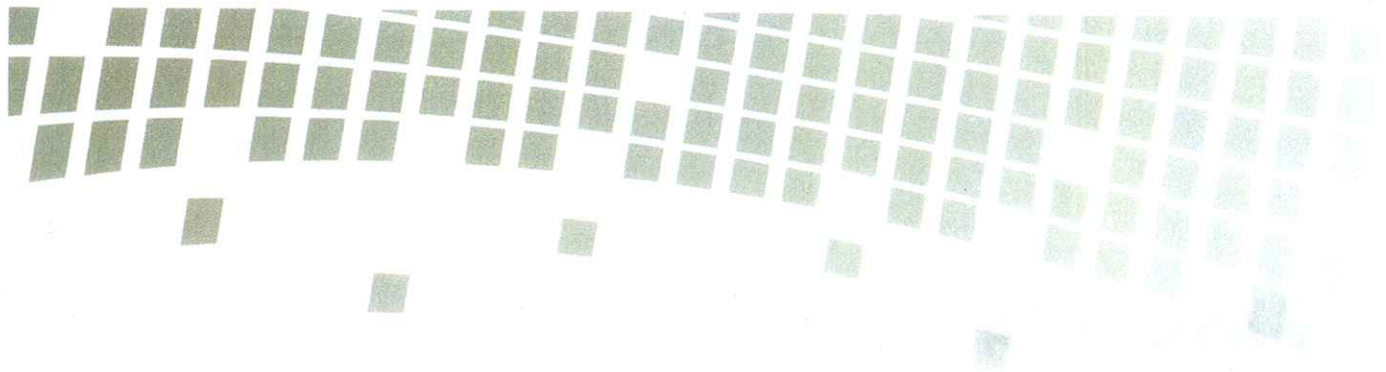
1. Governance and Democracy
2. Sustainable Development
3. Peace and Security
4. Science and Technology
5. Knowledge Transfer and Skills Development.

Although research is structured into specialist units, we retained our areas of expertise with the aim of improving our understanding of area politics and dynamics through our own staff and our partners across Africa and globally. In addition, our current research agenda of Continental Integration laid an excellent foundation for future research on areas of continued concern in Africa. Through our new Knowledge Transfer and Skills Development Unit, we are increasing the number of entrants to the Social Science field and improving the amount of knowledge generated in Africa on Africa, starting in South Africa, but increasingly going across the continent.

AISA conducts both fieldwork and desktop research. The fieldwork is mainly in Africa, and where necessary globally, while the desktop research is used mainly when exploring changes, or lack thereof, as experienced or perceived by people in Africa. These findings are then communicated through conferences and seminars, published outputs and the media.

All inputs received and published in *Africa Insight*, our accredited journal, or other publications of AISA are subjected to double-blind peer reviews. *Africa Insight* is accredited by the Department of Higher Education and Training and is indexed in the International Bibliography of Social Science.

AISA also houses one of the largest collections on Africa and African Affairs and is currently digitising all its old journals from 1971 until 2002 when AISA started producing all its publications in both hard and electronic formats. Library and Documentation Services (LDS) also produces the flagship publication *Africa A-Z Country Profiles*, as well as specialized maps in *Africa Facts and Figures*. LDS



also possess the resources and expertise to develop customised maps on request.

As a public entity, AISA is accountable to a Council, which is appointed by the Minister of Science and Technology. The 3-year term of the current Council commenced in January 2010. The Council comprises a chairperson, nine members and a DST representative. To expedite the implementation of policies, procedures and strategies, Council formed 5 sub-committees, namely Human Resources and Finance (HRFin), Research, Audit, and Executive committees. The

CEO serves on all these committees and in Council in an ex-officio capacity.

Guided by our mandate – the Council, other stakeholders and the outcomes of the 1997 and 2004 Institutional Reviews – we can only aspire to improve on past experiences and achievements as we forge ahead to create debate platforms and talking points which will alter perspectives and affect policies on the continent. This will, hopefully, have a positive impact and help change the quality of life of Africans for the better.



# Foreword

## AISA Council

The Council of AISA would like to thank the Institutional Review Panellists for participating in the institute-wide audit of AISA, undertaking copious reading of documents prior to the commencement of the exercise and completing the said exercise in a period of one week. We would also like to extend our personal thanks to Prof. Maxi Schoeman, the Chairperson of the Institutional Review Panel, for conducting all the necessary interviews after the investigation week and delivering the final report.

Note is also duly taken of the caution expressed by the panel that they were pressed for time and that the report merely expresses a number of core recommendations that could assist AISA to adhere to its mandate better and achieve its objectives. Likewise, we would also like to affirm that we are comfortable with the contents of the report and most of its recommendations. Understandably, external audit reports merely reflect information provided and that it is unrealistic to expect panellists, who only had intimate contact with AISA over a period of a few weeks, to make recommendations to resolve all challenges within AISA.

As Council, we would like to address the following:

- Progress made since the 2004 Institutional Review
- Clarification of issues mentioned in the 2010 Institutional Review
- Focus areas.

### Progress made since the 2004 Institutional Review

Subject to the last Institutional Review and the recruitment of the current management, many of the recommendations from the 2004 Institutional Review have been implemented or adapted to suit the business needs of AISA. As Council, we are cognisant of the fact that some of the challenges identified in the 2004 Institutional Review still need further attention and affirm our commitment to keep oversight hereof, as well as all areas of concern highlighted by the 2010 Institutional Review.

### Clarification of issues mentioned in the 2010 Institutional Review

AISA receives approximately R30 million of its budget from DST. With an Africa-wide mandate, the inadequate size of the institute, its location in South Africa where the predominant business language is English and a general lack of proficiency in the international languages spoken in Africa, not to mention the many local dialects, the depth and extent of the work AISA can undertake is limited. Nevertheless, innovative partnerships, better use of information and communication technology and other means are used to extend the scope of AISA's work. Based on this, Council approved the decision by management to commission outputs to Researchers of repute and to formulate strategic relationship with like-minded institutions to enable greater awareness of developments on the continent.

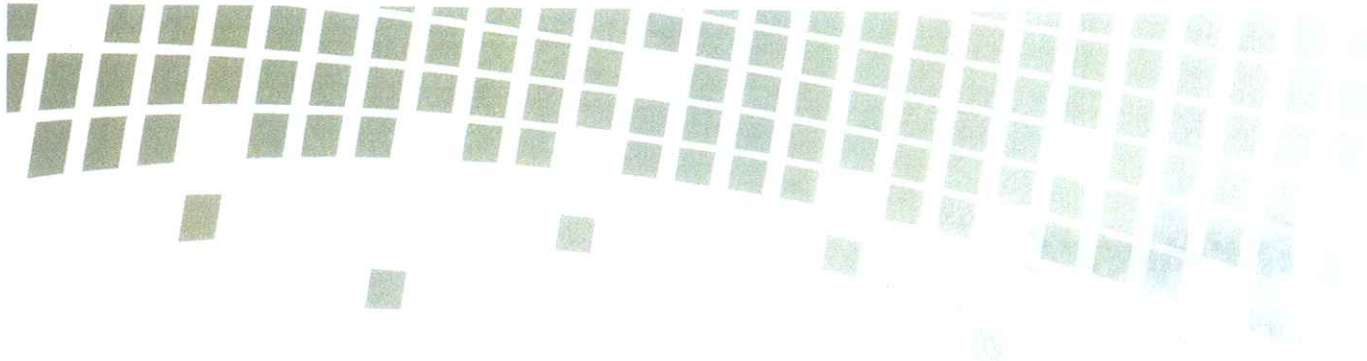
Although we are striving to attain 15% of our income from external sources in 5 years time, some of the recommendations cited in this report would inadvertently take time to achieve because of resource constraints.

### Focus areas

In the 2004 and 2010 Institutional Reviews, it was noted that AISA's research should generate relevant and reliable information, whilst becoming more visible within academia, the policy environment and the general public. Council concurs with these recommendations and would like to remind all that this can only be achieved if all divisions within AISA raise their expected performance standards to propel research and AISA back into the prominence it enjoyed previously. It is the considered opinion of Council that the following activities would assist AISA to increase the spread of its footprint:

- Interrogating the relevancy and audience of research more intensively
- Consulting more widely with stakeholders before finalising research programmes
- Improving the logistical planning of all research activities

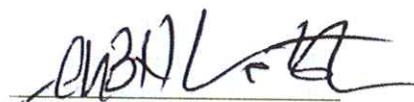


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- Employing highly motivated researchers with a verifiable portfolio of outputs and interns who prove their ability to publish and present at events
  - Targeting relevant stakeholders for participation in events
  - Improving access to and marketing of books and publications
  - Accelerating the library digitisation process
  - Becoming more advanced technologically
  - Increasing the circulation of AISA material to various audiences.

### Conclusion

Council shares the sentiments held by the panel and management that AISA has the potential to become the first

port of call on African affairs. To achieve this, AISA must grab all opportunities, plan outputs innovatively within its resource constraints and continue to foster and improve relations with stakeholders. The experience of the panelists and some of their recommendations would be used as a guideline to improve internal efficiencies and effectiveness, as well as the quality of our research outputs and deliberations as we chart into the future.



**Dr Beki Hlatshwayo**

Chair: AISA Council

# Management's Response

We would like to convey our thanks to the panel for the professional manner in which the review was conducted. The review did not affect operations at the Institute, save for the scheduled appointments with colleagues within AISA.

The 2010 institutional review of AISA is the second one since 1997. These five year exercises allow for an external panel to review the extent to which the organisation has implemented the findings of the previous exercise, various plans and strategies it would have developed and also implemented. This is done through undertaking a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of the organisation.

Some strengths of AISA are its 50 year heritage, being a statutory science council, with a clear mandate, annual parliamentary grant and a supportive shareholder and interested stakeholders locally, continentally and globally. We must continue to build on these strengths and develop others.

Major weaknesses that were identified and that we have to work on eliminating are the need to improve the research

focus and direction; improvement of publications quality control; seek to attract more top researchers; eliminate the dominance of administrative overload and strengthen weak team dynamics, especially at the management level.

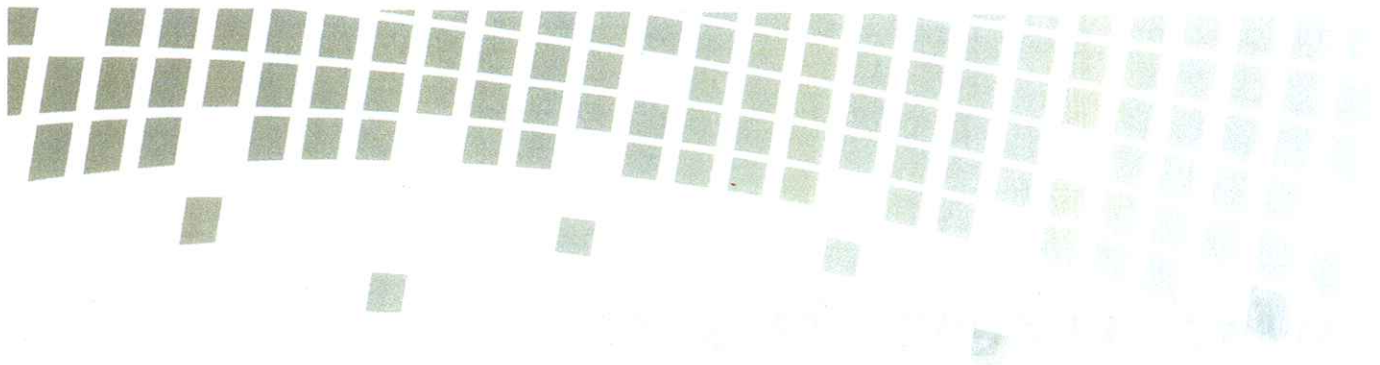
There are numerous opportunities on the horizon that can be harnessed including a renewed global focus on Africa and by various South African social partners especially government and business; rapid change across the continent and the globe, a possible African renaissance; the recognition of the importance of research for the development of human resources and nations.

There are always threats and risks that every organisation faces and for AISA these include competitors, limited resources, complacency, changing national priorities and internal instability amongst others. We have to work to ensure that these threats are eliminated or reduced. We must constantly also analyse the environment to manage possible new ones.

## Progress made since the 2004 Institutional Review

Finding	Progress
<b>Institutional location</b>	The 2010 Institutional Review panel reiterated the recommendation that AISA should remain independent and is best placed under DST like a number of other science councils. AISA maintains an independent and objective stance in its research and enjoys a healthy relationship with DST, DIRCO, DTI, DoI, DAC, DoE, and DoHA to name but a few.
<b>Establishment of new post of Deputy CEO for Research</b>	An Executive Director: Research post was approved by Council in 2006/07 and an appointment was effected in 2008/09.
<b>Commence fieldwork and maintain, support and expand existing research divisions, namely Area Studies and Programmes</b>	Research fieldwork commenced in 2005/06 as recommended by the 2004 review. Although the Research Division was restructured in 2008/09, area expertise has been maintained.
<b>Establish a Scientific Committee, accountable to the Council.</b>	A Research and Publications Committee (RPC) was created in 2007/08 to review and approve fieldwork proposals and to provide guidance and oversight for all research and publications issues.
<b>Rename the Research and Outreach and International Liaison</b>	The Outreach and International Liaison function was isolated from Research and became a fully-fledged division from 2005/06.
<b>Establish a policy division to mediate academic material into readable forms for stakeholders in the public service</b>	A Policy Unit, responsible for the formulation of policy briefs and managing capacity development programmes, was established in the last quarter of 2007/08. However, the responsibility entrusted to the said unit was too great with few resources. Thus the functions of the unit and of the Research Division were reviewed in 2009/10 and resulted in the formation of the Knowledge Transfer and Skills Development Unit to manage AISA's capacity development programmes, whilst the responsibility of developing policy briefs was spread across the division.
<b>Expand the fellowship programme to include scholars from the sub-region, and the Diaspora to visit the Institute for longer periods</b>	AISA expanded the fellowship programme to 5 fellowships and revised the objectives of the programme in 2009/10. Fellows are expected to conceptualise proposals based on the needs of AISA, which then lead to a call for papers and a management of authors until a manuscript is produced. A number of fellows have already commenced with the new thrust: jointly developing programmes with AISA staff, producing publications, organising conferences and creating networks for the organisation.





Finding	Progress
Expand the Fellowship programme to include senior government officials to spend sabbatical time at the Institute	Due to prior commitments and a lack of resources, AISA had no success in attracting retired and senior public officials to participate in a fellowship programme whilst on sabbatical. We have incorporated this into the revised fellowship programme.
Publications and documentation to be far more aggressively marketed, as evidence of the Institute's claim to be a fully-fledged research body.	Books and publications are showcased at all AISA events. In addition, AISA participates in the Cape Town, Johannesburg, Zimbabwe, Nairobi, London and Nigerian book fairs as well as specialised library conferences. We continue to grow our library holdings, to ensure that we are a major reference for African affairs.
A concerted effort be made to establish closer linkages with academics, universities and the tertiary sector	Via the AISA Youth, Graduate and Scholars (AYGS) programme and Campus Lecture Series, AISA forged relationships with 6 historically disadvantaged universities as well as NMMU, UNISA and WITS. We have built relationships with universities internationally as well.
Improve the Human Resource function of the Institute	AISA's control environment in Human Resources has significantly improved with the development of policies and procedures. However, the business and performance culture still needs to be enhanced.
Special projects to be de-linked from the CEO's Office	Since 2008/09, special projects have been incorporated into the budget received from the Department of Science and Technology.

The highlight of the 2010 exercise was recognising that AISA had undergone an unstable period in the last decade which impacted significantly on its performance, direction, staffing and institutional foundations. AISA subsequently reconstituted and strengthened its governance and control environment. Now it is challenged to focus and concentrate on its core business which is research, especially the quality and impact of outputs.

A new research agenda is being developed, outputs have been streamlined, quality assurance systems improved and vacancies filled, whilst new posts are being considered.

There are other general recommendations covering the amendment of the AISA Act, organisational development, better interpretation of our mandate, continued location under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), improved recruitment and retention of staff, development of positive team dynamics, overhauling of the governance and organisational structures, alignment of support services to the core business, better utilisation of information and communication technology for library and publication services and improved marketing and sales strategies.

Management has taken the recommendations and categorised them into high, medium and low priorities and developed action plans with specific timeframes for implementing them. Many of them will require extra resources and apart from approaching our shareholder other funding sources will be developed.

Staff members have been made aware of the institutional review through various fora and collectively management is working with them to improve performance and strengthening of the organisation. This will ensure that the process of implementing the recommendations is inclusive and achievable.

RE A LEBOGA

**Dr Matlotleng P. Matlou**

CEO: AISA





# Institutional Review Report

## 2010/11



# Background

## Report of the External Review Panel of The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA): April/May 2010

in line with the requirements of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) scheduled an Institutional Review for April 2010. Regular institutional reviews form part of the commitment of DST to inculcate a culture of review and striving for excellence in all the science councils funded by the DST. The 2010 Institutional Review is the third of its kind (the first was conducted in 1997 and the second in 2004). The core objective of the 2010 Review, as contained in the Terms of Reference (ToR) provided to the Review Panel (attached), was 'to determine if structures within AISA incorporated suggestions from the 2004 Review and if the current structure and modus operandi will enable it to meet the projected outputs and the mandate [of AISA]'.

### Review Panel

The Review Panel consisted of the following people:

- Mr Nambi **Chilemo** (CA), an independent management consultant based in Johannesburg.
- Mr George **Fosu**, a management consultant based in Johannesburg.
- Prof Dirk **Kotzé**, Head of the Department of Political Science, UNISA, and a member of the 2004 Review Panel.
- Prof Sam **Moyo**, African Institute for Agrarian Studies (AIAS) in Harare, and currently president of CODESRIA.
- Mr Garry **Rosenberg**, an independent consultant and former director of the HSRC Press, based in Cape Town.
- Prof Maxi **Schoeman**, Head of the Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria, requested by the AISA Council to act as chair of the panel.

### Acknowledgement

The members of the Review Panel extend their gratitude to all the respondents who participated in the investigation. We sincerely appreciate their forthcoming and honest responses which provided us with the necessary information and insight to carry out the review of AISA. The staff of AISA, and

in particular Ms Nadema Jainoo, provided sterling assistance to the panel and we thank them for having provided us with a pleasant and conducive environment within which to conduct the review.

### Methodology

Panel members were provided beforehand with the following documentation:

- ToR for the review
- a draft programme
- a reference pack including core documents such as the AISA Act of 2001
- the AISA research agenda
- the 2008/9 KPI report
- the 2010-2012 strategic plan
- the AISA business plan
- copies of recent AISA annual reviews
- a wide range of other documents related to the review process.

During the course of the review period spent at the AISA offices, staff provided additional documents as and when requested.

The AISA management had set up a series of interviews and meetings between the Review Panel and various internal and external stakeholders (programme attached). The panel requested a number of additional interviews. Shortly after the review had been conducted, during the first week of May, the chair received a request for a meeting from members of NEHAWU at AISA. After having consulted with all panel members, a meeting with two NEHAWU members (including the deputy chair of the AISA branch) was conducted by the chair and an additional panel member.

With reference to the interviews conducted by the panel, it should be emphasised that these covered a very wide range of stakeholders, including a meeting with the Director General (DG) of DST, an introductory and concluding interview with the AISA CEO, a telephone interview with a former CEO, a meeting with the chairperson of the



AISA Council, a telephone interview with a Council member and an interview with the former chairperson of Council. Furthermore, the panel conducted interviews with a range of staff members, both in senior management and at other levels within the organisation, paying particular attention to staff in the Research Division (being the core business section of the organisation). External stakeholders included representatives from various government departments, the City of Tshwane, the CEO of the HSRC, the CEO of the IGD, independent researchers with ties to the Institute and a member of the diplomatic community.

Throughout the review process the panel members conferred on a regular basis and early on decided on a structure for the report which would reflect its core understanding of the broad issues to be addressed on the basis of the ToR. In each of the sections addressed in this report we considered the questions posed in the ToR, with specific attention paid to those questions posed by DST, both in the ToR and during our interview with their DG. The report is a product of joint consultation and discussion between the panel members, and it represents the panel's interpretation of the ethos, activities and development path of AISA over the past several years (since the 2004 Review), as well as our reflection on the way forward for the Institute. The actual writing of the various sections was done on the basis of specific areas of expertise within the group. A draft report was submitted to the CEO on 19 May 2010. Comments from the CEO and staff of AISA were received on 28 June 2010 and some changes relating to technical and factual errors in the draft report were effected by the panel members. The final report was submitted to the CEO on 6 July 2010.

It should also be pointed out what this report is *not*: it is not a detailed business or strategic plan for AISA. Rather, our aim is to provide a number of core recommendations that

might assist AISA in living up to its mandate in terms of the AISA Act of 2001 and in achieving its core objectives.

## Structure of the Report

The first section provides a brief introduction which serves as a context for the analysis of key components of the organisation. This is followed in the second section by a consideration of the recommendations of the 2004 report, and a number of cross-cutting issues are identified. The second section does not provide an in-depth discussion of the extent to which these recommendations have been implemented, as these are explicitly or implicitly dealt with in the ensuing sections. Neither are the cross-cutting issues dealt with substantially. In the third section the mandate of AISA, as set out in the AISA Act, is interrogated. This was a specific task set by DST and informed much of the discussions with staff members and external stakeholders. The fourth section deals with the structure of the Institute, and with governance issues. This section is very closely linked to the previous one in which the mandate is discussed. The core business of AISA is research, and section five provides a detailed discussion of this core aspect of the Institute. It is deliberately placed at the centre of the report and is followed, in section six, by an overview and exploration of AISA's Publications Division and the Library, both of which provide support to the Research Division and both of which are core to dissemination activities. Section seven is concerned with the support infrastructure of the organisation, with attention paid to Human Resources, Information Technology, Corporate Affairs and Finance as function and process. The report concludes with a number of recommendations that summarise the various suggestions provided in the different sections of the document.





# 1. Introduction

2010 is an important year for the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) as it is celebrating its golden jubilee. Sixteen years into the birth of a democratic South Africa, AISA can look back at a distinguished history, having successfully transformed the organisation from an apartheid era institution to one that is fully associated with and perceived as being a landmark national asset. With the promulgation of the Africa Institute of South Africa Act, No 68 of 2001, the organisation was transformed into a fully-fledged research council and received its mandate directly from DST.

The organisation went through a rather tumultuous period in the mid-2000s, and more recently has been subjected to a range of demands and requirements by DST in order to ensure that all the necessary policies and processes are put in place in order to ensure compliance with DST governance requirements. In fact, one of the clearest impressions of the Review Panel is that the restructuring of the organisation in the service of compliance requirements has turned into *the* major

concern and objective of the organisation. In other words, AISA seems to have become an institution in which the 'core business' has become that of institutional policy development with a strong managerialistic approach to serve compliance requirements, and very limited concern for the actual core business i.e. research, as specified in the mandate of the organisation as set out in the AISA Act. The heavy emphasis on compliance and managerialism is understandable in the light of the organisation's history (referred to above) and demands set by DST, but it is the opinion of the Review Panel that the necessary infrastructure to ensure compliance has now been set in place and that the time has arrived for AISA to make a serious and urgent return to its core business. This requires visionary thinking and action, as well as strong and focussed leadership. Our report aims to motivate this fundamental recommendation and to make a range of suggestions that might, in a very practical way, assist the organisation to return to and focus on its mandate in the next five years.

## 2. Overview of the 2004 Institutional Review Recommendations

The brief discussion of the extent to which the recommendations of the previous Review Panel have been implemented does not include an evaluation of the success/failure/shortcomings of these activities, policies and processes as these are dealt with in detail in the following sections.

2.1 With reference to institutional location it was recommended that AISA retains its independence as a science council and that its mandate vis-à-vis that of the HSRC be clarified. The current Review Panel concurs with both these recommendations, but notes that the latter has not yet been successfully resolved. The reference in section (1) above to the interpretation of AISA's mandate should go some way in solving the problem. It should also be noted that the Director General of DST made it very clear that the perceived overlap in the focus of the two organisations should be managed through an MoU, but that it should be possible for AISA to define its mandate in a way that would allow it to retain and cultivate a clear and productive profile that would distinguish it from the HSRC.

2.2 As to research and policy development, it was recommended that: a) the Institute pays more attention to the creation of original knowledge by encouraging research based on fieldwork b) a position of Deputy CEO for research be created c) the existing Area Studies and Programmes research divisions be maintained, expanded and supported and that research agenda setting be embarked upon as a matter of urgency d) a scientific committee consisting of prominent and highly-rated academics be constituted to deal with research issues in AISA e) a policy division be established f) the fellowship programme be expanded.

- AISA now expects its researchers to conduct one fieldwork trip per year and that their research outputs are predicated on the results of the fieldwork conducted.
- The position of Executive Director Research has been created.
- The research divisions have been retained and a research agenda based on government's core priorities has been developed under the rubric 'African Integration'.

- The proposed scientific committee has not been established.
- A policy division was established, but is currently not operational.
- There is little evidence that the fellowship programme is still being actively pursued.

2.3 The 2004 Review Panel recommended that the internship programme be expanded. This programme is still active and some interns have been appointed as staff members, whilst others have found employment elsewhere, based on the experience and training received at AISA.

2.4 As to publications and documentation, it was recommended that these be more aggressively marketed as evidence of the Institute's status as a research body. Overall, and as will be pointed out below, both these divisions face a range of serious problems and obstacles.

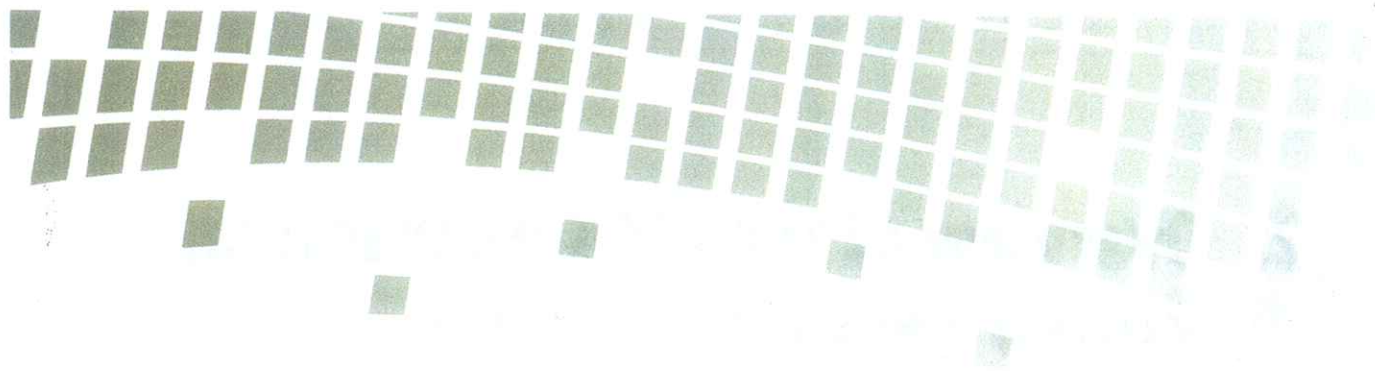
2.5 The Review Panel recommended closer linkages with academics, universities and the academic sector. This recommendation was merged with the Institute's outreach programme, targeting previously/historically disadvantaged universities and concentrating on methodology training courses and workshops at these institutions.

2.6 With reference to management, it was recommended that staff morale should be improved and that staff turnover should be reduced. Special attention should be paid to the human resource function of the Institute. The 2010 Review Panel was struck by the low morale of staff. As to HR, immense effort went into the development of a range of policies aimed at improving the management of staff.

A number of cross-cutting issues can also be identified. Some of these are dealt with in more detail in subsequent sections:

- An overall over-emphasis on management, administrative and compliance issues to the detriment of AISA's core business which is research





- Low staff morale
- General dissatisfaction on the part of staff members, especially those in the Research Division, with the conduct and outcome of the performance management process
- Tension between the management/administrative divisions and the Research Division
- Poor communication between the various divisions
- A low profile in the general South African research community
- A need for strong leadership across the various divisions of the organisation in order to promote and support the core business of the organisation
- A need for the development of a strong core of top researchers supported by a highly professional and effective administrative infrastructure.

The aforementioned should be viewed against the background of the strengths of the organisation which should be harnessed in support of addressing the cross-cutting issues mentioned above:

- AISA's status as an African research institute and its illustrious history spanning a period of half a century
- The reputation of its library holdings
- The support and trust of DST, and the encouragement and expectations of its Director General
- The Institute's status and related advantages of being a statutory science council
- A guaranteed annual income which allows the organisation to strategise and plan in an environment of security of tenure and predictability and in an independent way, without having to cater for donor preferences.

### 3. The Mandate of AISA

The Terms of Reference provided by AISA pertinently ask the following questions:

- a) whether the mandate of AISA matches its organisational structure and priorities
- b) whether the organisational structure and priorities are wrong
- c) or whether the mandate needs to be reviewed because it might be dated.

These questions come from DST, and were echoed by the DG during the interview with him. The DG stated explicitly that the mandate of AISA as defined in the Act provides the *boundaries* of AISA's activities, but that within those boundaries AISA could work with a creative interpretation of the mandate. The DG also indicated a willingness to review the Act should this be required to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, substance and status of the organisation.

The mandate of AISA, read in combination with the objectives of the Institute (art 3), makes it clear that the core business of AISA is that of research and policy development that will 'contribute to the further development of the African continent' (Preamble). The purpose of the research and policy development conducted by AISA is to 'promote knowledge and understanding of African affairs through leading social scientists acting in concert and across all disciplines...' [3(b)] and to 'promote awareness and consciousness of Africa at grassroots level' [3(c)].

Four aspects related to the mandate and objectives are of particular relevance. First, as set out in the Act, it seems that objectives and instruments are confused. References to the collection, processing and dissemination of information, the promotion of 'awareness and consciousness of Africa at grassroots level' [3 (b) and (c)] and the building of networks across the continent (Preamble) etc, are actually *instruments* through which the objectives of the organisation are to be achieved.

Secondly, this confusion or lack of distinction between objectives and instruments has detracted from the core business of AISA. As will be discussed in the different sections

below, the current structure, operation and focus of the organisation do not facilitate the achievement of the core objectives as set out in the Act. Research seems to be one of the focus areas among many within the Institute, receiving insufficient support from other divisions and insufficient attention and encouragement from senior management.

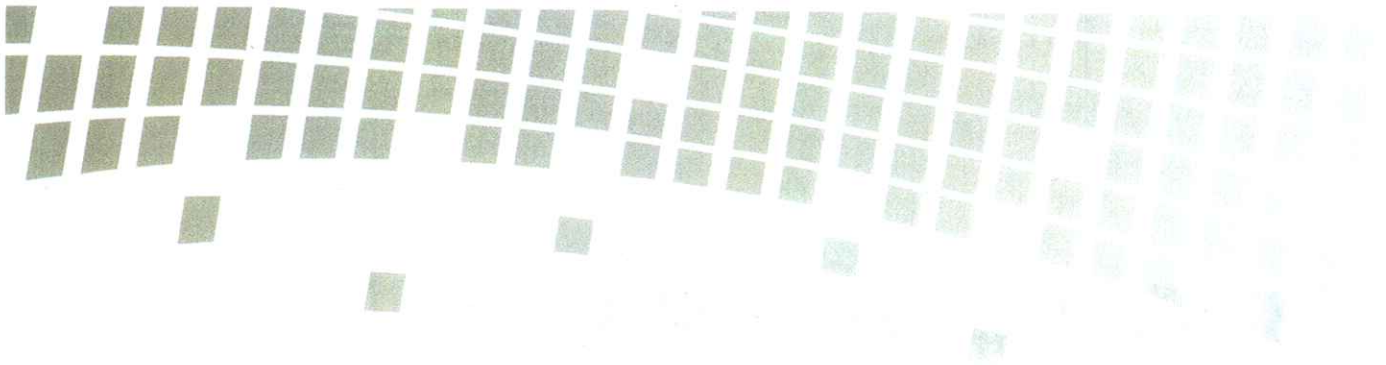
Thirdly, and closely linked to the above, is the interpretation currently given to the mandate and objectives of the Institute. This interpretation, based on the confusion in the Act between objectives and instruments, places a heavy emphasis on aspects such as networking and outreach, without these activities being closely linked to research and policy development. The current interpretation of the mandate focuses in large part on the reference to 'the collective needs, opportunities and challenges of all South Africans' and to 'grassroots level' [3(b) and (c)], losing sight of the core objective of the organisation, namely research and policy development. The result is a disjuncture in the activities of the organisation.

Though a somewhat minor concern, the fourth aspect of the Act which needs to be pointed out is the reference to the implementation of the New Africa Initiative mentioned in the preamble. This is a outdated reference that needs to be changed.

With reference to the mandate of AISA, the panel recommends the following:

- That the Act be reviewed in order to remove any confusion that arises from the lack of a clear distinction between objectives and the instruments through which these objectives could be met.
- AISA's mandate in the Act: two parts in the Act refer to the mandate, namely the Preamble and Article 3. Our view is that the two are not fully-aligned. Different concepts such as 'African studies' and 'African affairs' are used that might lead to different interpretations. Use of one concept consistently would give a common understanding of the mandate. The 'Objectives' in Article 3 and the section in the Preamble introduced by 'Bearing in mind that...' should be aligned to jointly refer to the same mandate.





- Council: no procedure for appointment of the Council members is included in the Act, while Article 4(2)(a) refers to 'the prescribed manner'. Other science councils have prescribed statutory procedures for appointment of their Council members.
- In Article 4 (3): it would seem that the Act prescribes that only South African citizens are eligible for Council membership, thus going against the grain of the mandate of AISA. The composition of previous councils suggests that the AISA mandate has enjoyed priority over the Act, as a number of non-South Africans have in fact served on the Council in the past. The panel is of the opinion that AISA's mandate dictates a need to include nationals from other African states or scholars in African studies from abroad and that the Act should be amended to allow for such appointment/s.
- In the process of reviewing the Act, the necessary updates could be made, specifically by removing the reference to the New Africa Initiative and substituting it with New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and perhaps by aligning the Preamble and objectives with South Africa's broad foreign policy objectives.
- That AISA examines its interpretation of its mandate, in line with the overall concerns and recommendations of this report, but also in the light of the mandate and activities of other science and research councils, e.g. the HSRC.

## 4. Governance and Structure

In order to review the governance and structure of AISA, it is first necessary to address the question of what type of institution AISA should be. In response to that, AISA's location can be assessed, which will have a direct impact on AISA's constitutive Act. In terms of governance, a number of matters regarding the Council are identified whereafter, the Institute's structure is assessed.

### 4.1 What type of structure?

After considering all the inputs, the panel reached the conclusion that AISA has three options from which to determine its nature as an institute. First is the CODESRIA option, with a relatively small nucleus that coordinates networks of researchers. The second option is a self-sufficient institute involved in its own 'deep' research, with limited networks or commissioned work. The third option is a combination of the two in which it maintains a strong core of researchers with good analytical capacity, while much of the fieldwork is commissioned through an established network of external researchers.

The panel's assessment is that AISA is currently positioned between option 1 and 3. At the same time, the panel's view is that the AISA Act probably implies a preference for option 3. The implication is that the current internal research capacity has to be strengthened by developing a bigger and stronger nucleus with a stronger internal intellectual capacity, while the African research network is also further developed. The structural implications of this recommendation are discussed later.

### 4.2 Location

AISA's institutional location has been posing questions for many years. Some of the questions are whether AISA should remain an autonomous research council in the Department of Science and Technology, or whether it should be integrated with the HSRC, or whether its mandate should be changed (to a policy think-tank) and be relocated to another department, such as the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)?

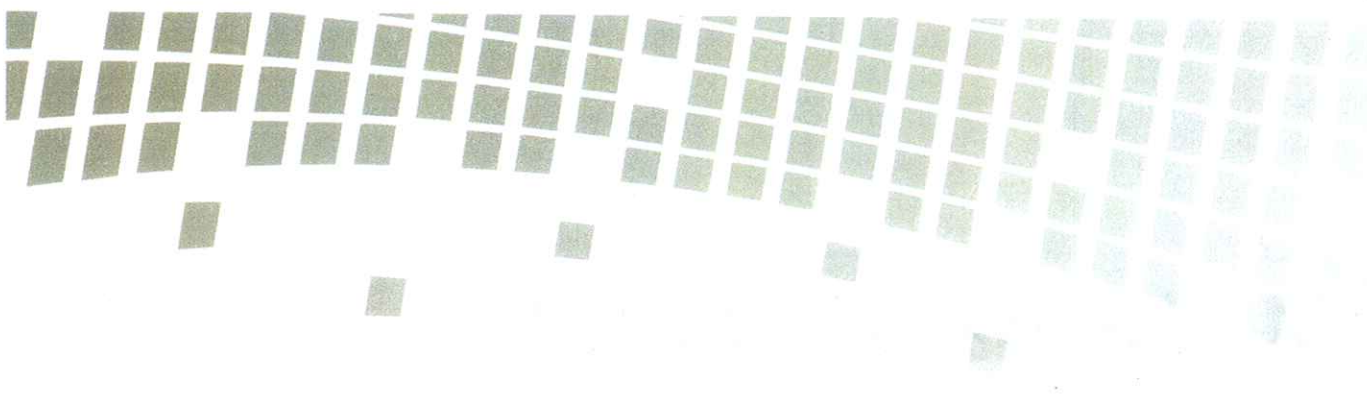
Regarding its status as a research council, a strong argument was presented that AISA should become a policy think-tank or that it re-interprets its current mandate to be mainly a provider of policy-relevant research for Government. The think-tank concept has been embraced by a number of private research NGOs such as the IGD and ISS, while the potential space for policy-relevant research is relatively limited. Most government departments have their own policy units, and DIRCO in particular has the Policy and Research Advisory Unit (PRAU). PRAU's research capacity is limited but its impact on policy will still be more than AISA's, given its institutional integration into DIRCO. The general view is that the think-tank option will reduce AISA's mandate to a very narrow focus, with too little emphasis on original 'deep' research. The panel, therefore, concluded that AISA should remain a separate and independent research council.

Another option is that AISA should merge with the HSRC as a research council, given their overlap in mandates. DST's view is that an overlap is not necessarily unacceptable or problematic, that Africa remains AISA's primary mandate, while the HSRC's mandate is broader, and the overlap needs to be managed without removing it. The panel was therefore convinced that AISA has a rationale for its autonomy separate from the HSRC.

Some of the inputs suggested that AISA should remain a science council but not under the DST, with its strong emphasis on the natural sciences. DST's view is that almost all the main issues in the natural sciences (like climate change, alternative energy, spatial development, etc) have direct social implications. The social sciences, therefore, have a direct relevance for them, and AISA can be one of the science councils to focus on these issues. If AISA were to be relocated to another department, that host department's specific policy focus (such as international relations or higher education) will also redirect AISA's focus to a very narrow emphasis. On balance, DST therefore remains the best-suited department to host AISA.

Relevant for the question about its location is also AISA's interpretation of its statutory mandate. Some of the inputs suggested that AISA's mandate is too broad; others indicated that the mandate provides a unique opportunity to AISA





that few other institutions can compete with. However, the panel faced a general consensus in almost all the inputs that AISA does not have a pronounced and recognisable public identity and that it does not project an awareness of that identity. The consensus is that it is not necessary to change the statutory mandate (except to the extent that it would bring more clarity as recommended in the previous section) but that AISA has to interpret the mandate in a manner that is publicly known, and act in accordance with it.

Such an interpretation should find a balance between policy-relevant research and 'deep' or fundamental research. It should also integrate the development of research networks in the interpretation. The current interpretation of outreach should be re-visited and be better integrated into the research function.

#### 4.3 Management of strategic and operational matters

Currently the Institutional Management Meeting (IMM) is AISA's main management body. It meets irregularly and is preoccupied with operational and ad hoc matters. The panel is of the view that it should be formalised as the Institutional Management Committee and that it should meet regularly. Chaired by the CEO, it should concentrate on strategic matters and only on operational matters that do not fall within the direct remit of the relationship between the CEO and the Executive Director Research (EDR) who should be considered and treated as the CEO's second in command and his duly designated representative in all matters concerning the organisation. The management structure must emphasise the inter-dependence between research and support functions. For example, the CEO's presence on the Research and Publications Committee (management body) should be used to ensure the necessary coordination so that the research function receives the required operational support.

#### 4.4 Research structure

The panel observed that in the past few years most of the managerial emphasis was on providing a sound structure

for the administrative-support functions of AISA, such as Finance and HR. The results are overall positive (as discussed under the relevant section in this report). The same attention to providing capacity to the research function has not yet occurred. The panel is, therefore, in favour of a phased approach. The first phase was to attend to all aspects of the administrative-support functions. The second phase should be to do the same for the research function. The structural aspects of the panel's recommendations are discussed here while the strategic aspects of research are discussed in the following section. The main emphasis for the immediate future should be on internal research capacity-building and not on research outputs.

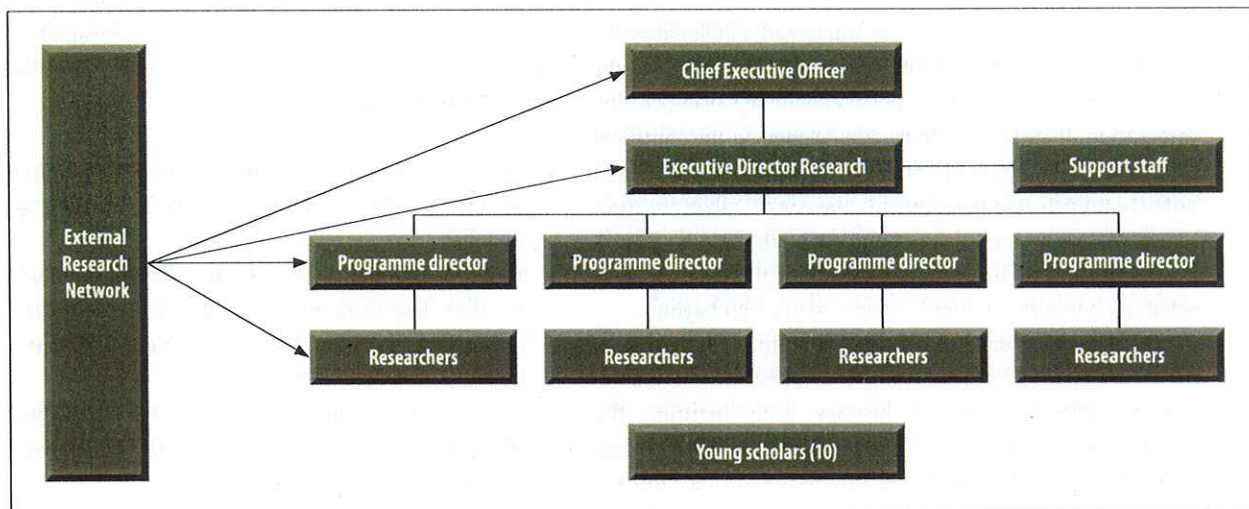
The CEO should be directly involved in the research function of AISA, mainly in strategic matters. Next to the CEO should be the Executive Director Research, who should be a top-level researcher and scholar. The Executive Director Research has to have sufficient support staff to ensure that s/he is not inundated with administrative tasks. At the next structural level should be about five programme directors, who are also senior scholars with at least a PhD degree. They must be developed as high-level researchers and high-profile programme leaders. Under each of the programme directors a group of researchers (about 4-5) should be developed, some with PhD degrees and others who are experienced MA holders. Below the researchers should be a pool of emerging scholars or junior fellows (about ten in total). As an approach to 'growing your own timber' some of them could be recruited for more senior positions later. The panel is well aware of the fact that well-qualified young scholars are very attractive and will receive appealing offers from outside, but a healthy core will remain in AISA if this approach is followed.

This core, internal research capacity should be augmented by an external research network. AISA's conceptualisation of commissioned work should be revisited and formation of a research network should be carefully considered. As a general indicator, the panel is more inclined to support the network concept if it includes building of a research capacity instead of merely increasing research outputs.

The Panel is of the view that such a capacity-building programme can take 3-5 years to reach a satisfactory point.



The suggested structure can be presented as follows:



These proposals do not dictate a particular research agenda. It is also not absolutely rigid in terms of structure but provides an indication of the type of structure the panel recommends. The emphasis on programmes can be operationalised with different forms of substance. The panel does, however, suggest a particular research approach that is not generic or open-ended but programme-based. However, the programmes' substance should be determined by the Institute.

The panel was made aware of the Policy Unit in AISA. At present it does not appear to be functional or well-integrated into the Institute's structure. The panel is, therefore, of the view that it should be discarded until a strategic plan is developed in which the roles of policy-relevant research and 'deep' research are formulated. The same applies to the structural aspects of the Outreach and International Liaison (OIL) division.

At present OIL appears to be an 'add-on' function that is not well-integrated into the research function. The panel is of the view that outreach should be reconceptualised to be better integrated into the research function. Such a reconceptualisation will most possibly also have structural-organisational implications.

#### 4.5 Governance in general

The panel's over-arching conclusion is that much has been done in the past few years to implement new policies and adhere to statutory compliance requirements. The Council concentrated most of the past two years on this matter and as a result could not pay much attention to the strategic positioning and research development of AISA. This should be the new priority, and can be achieved by creating an environment conducive for creative research and not smothered by compliance considerations. A disciplined but flexible governance regime is, therefore, necessary.

The panel received differing inputs on the governance roles of DST and the AISA Council. On the one hand, DST was presented as a governance body directly involved in AISA matters and pre-occupied with compliance requirements. Other inputs presented the Council with more institutional autonomy and a good working relationship with DST. It is difficult to determine which of these views represents the 'real' situation. The panel understands that DST has an oversight responsibility, but the Council members should be strong enough to be entrusted with the leadership responsibility in respect of AISA's strategic direction.





## 5. Research Agenda, Outputs and Management

### 5.1 Scope of the Research Division

AISA's mandate and governance framework emphasises the need for the Institute to promote research excellence on the social dynamics of African development, governance and integration, in order to enhance knowledge on the continent and to influence Pan-Africanism. As one of a number of publicly funded research councils the core business of AISA is to build a sound and structured research capacity within the Institute and to promote effective collaboration with scholarly networks in South Africa, Africa and beyond.

The main conclusion of the 2004 Institutional Review of AISA was that the Research Division and Knowledge Production were not reflected as the core business of the Institute. The quality of its research was considered weak, largely because it was based on desk work and limited fieldwork, and led to un-original products. The review recommended that the Research Division be placed at the centre of AISA business, based on a coherent research agenda and relevant priorities, derived mainly in relation to emerging scholarly concerns, as well as related policy questions. It proposed the establishment of a scientific committee, as a mechanism for defining current research priorities and the research policy, and to ensure the requisite conditions for sound research. It was recommended that the Research Division be disentangled from the international liaison aspect of the then combined Research and International Liaison Division, and that a policy sub-division which translates research results for policy-makers and consumers be set up within the new Research Division. It was proposed that financial resources allocations to research *per se* be increased, and that high quality research staff recruitments and productivity enhancing incentives and contracts be pursued. The review also recommended an expansion of the research fellowships for senior scholars and senior public servants, and internships for young post graduate students, in order to broaden AISA's research competency, to enhance the training of young scholars and to improve its linkages to the scholarly community.

This section assesses the extent to which AISA adopted the 2004 review recommendations and, in light of its changing environment, whether AISA has attained the requisite

research competence and capacities to fulfil its core business of research. It also examines the evolution of AISA's management structure and procedures, its research outputs and resource situation. The four specific questions addressed here include:

- How well does AISA contribute to knowledge production on African affairs and does it have a coherent research agenda?
- Have the quality and quantity of outputs generated by AISA improved since the last review and are these comparable to other research councils given the huge anomalies in budgets?
- How effective is the current structure of the Research Division and its responsiveness to the dynamics of change on the continent?
- Is AISA's human capital sufficient to meet its objectives and operational needs, and does AISA provide incentives to retain high quality staff? Given AISA's Africa mandate, should the Research Division, amongst others, be subjected to equity targets?

The following section elaborates on the impact of the research, and the nature of scholarly communication, practised at AISA. How AISA could better tailor its contribution in raising awareness, in South Africa and Africa, concerning development and integration is addressed through assessments of its library, publications and related services.

### 5.2 The research agenda and priorities in context

The existing AISA mandate with regard to its research focus, as specified in the Act's preamble and objectives, provides a wider scope to the Council and management to develop a relevant research agenda and priorities. The mandate calls upon AISA to undertake research on African development, social dynamics and integration, including networks, and to build capacities and raise awareness of the continent's needs. In this context, AISA has a growing number of competitors within South Africa, including non-governmental



NGOs and think-tanks, and some universities. AISA, therefore, has to produce quality work to be visible.

### The research focus

Until 2007 AISA's research agenda was not tied to or focused on an over-arching research issue or question, and was organised around three elements: area studies, thematic studies, and special policy initiatives. The AISA Institutional Review of 2004 found that the research agenda was not coherent and that it lacked focus, and that the depth of knowledge production was limited. The Research Division has since addressed this criticism in general through the current AISA Research Agendas (2008 to 2010) which is defined as being focused around the "rubric" of African continental integration.

The focus on integration is justified on the basis of the observation made by the AISA Research Agenda document, that there is renewed commitment by the African Union (AU) and African governments to enhance the long-held goal of African unity and integration, especially through the new initiatives led by the AU since 2006. The research agenda specifies the need for AISA to play a facilitative role in such a process by producing sound field-based knowledge to clarify the assumptions, prospects, challenges

and options of attaining integration. The AISA research agenda document asserts that this research focus is underpinned theoretically by Pan-Africanism and implicitly by the practice of interaction with networks of African scholars and policy makers. It could be argued that there are varied strands of Pan-Africanism, and of integration approaches, as identified by AISA, and the research agenda does not adequately address these competing conceptual and methodological perspectives that could shape AISA's own intellectual thrust.

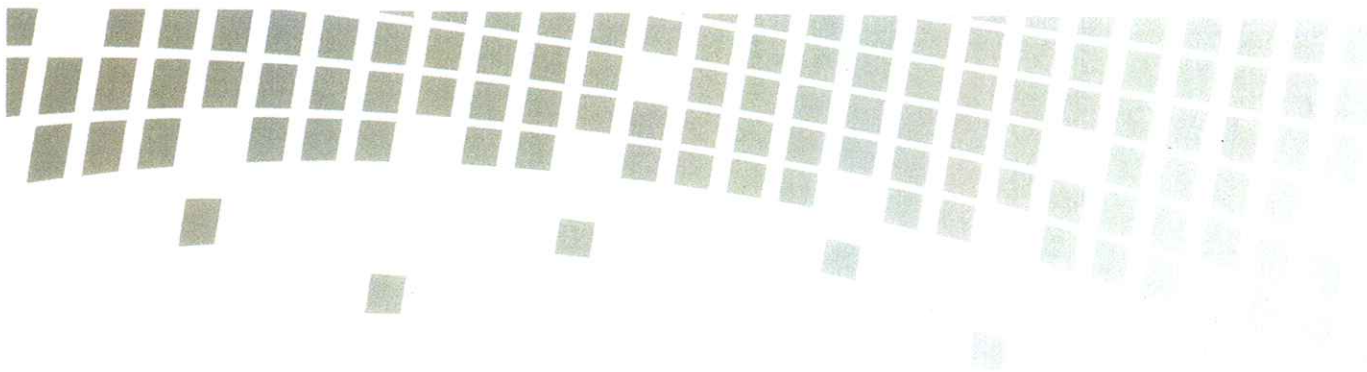
The research agenda is structured operationally around four subject matters (sustainable development, science and technology, democracy and governance, and peace and security), whose objectives and priority study topics are identified. About 20 research projects (see fig below) are identified for priority work over 3 years, with each research unit tackling at least 3 topics each year.

Although the ToR and time allocated to this institutional review do not adequately cater for a qualitative review of the actual research products of AISA, the overall pattern that emerges is that since 2004 there is an increased focus in the range of research products being produced or prioritised, notably around the issues of security, around areas of gender and defence, peacekeeping, human security and conflict

**Chart 5.1** Research Agenda on African Integration: planned/researched priorities

Sustainable Development	Peace and Security	Governance and Democracy	Science and Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa.</li> <li>Poverty intervention strategies, wealth creation and distribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human security, violent crimes, political violence, post conflict reconstruction, arms proliferation and resources conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Democracy, Good Governance, Human rights and Rules of Law.</li> <li>Political leadership</li> <li>Corporate responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess impacts of technology and their efficacy for human development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficient use of resources (water, land, marine, oil and other mineral resources) (JPOL)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict management and resolution, peace keeping, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEPAD, APRM, AU, PAP Regional Economic Communities (RECs), UN, WTO, Bretton Woods and allied institutions, Civil Society in Africa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human and Social Science Dynamics in Science and Technology</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health unemployment, education, transport, communication, economic development, and social welfare issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small arms production and resource conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Issues/Women in Africa, Youth in Africa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intellectual property management</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous knowledge and beneficiation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aviations, marine and small islands security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberation Movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology sharing and, transfer adaptation</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weapons of mass destruction, global terrorism</li> <li>Migration and security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Africa and the Diaspora</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harmonise technology regulations</li> </ul>





management, as well as around natural resources management questions, in relation to external actors (especially China). To a lesser degree, issues around democratisation are also covered. The degree to which the current prioritisation can lead to an incremental build-up of knowledge on any given theme, will require a more detailed assessment of the accumulated research outputs of AISA. Suffice to say that there is a tendency for the overall research focus to become incoherent of the research agenda, given that the 'out-sourcing' of research and publications, is based on an 'opportunistic' selection of topics and researchers throughout the continent.

Nonetheless, when we put together in general the various research issues explored, it can reasonably be concluded that AISA has concentrated on and produced a large body of work on the general question of African integration, even if the focus and quality of this are still relatively weak.

#### Policy support and capacity-building activities

The policy unit is intended to support the overall agenda through scanning the policy environment regarding key topical issues on the continent and to systematise the production of policy briefs and a flagship report on the state of Africa, while coordinating the research training and internship activities. As noted by the Francis Kornegay (2004) evaluation of the Campus Lecture Series (CLS), the role of the policy unit tends to have a mixed-up agenda, in which it coordinates policy briefs on African affairs, while promoting research methodology in historically disadvantaged universities, without any clear organic link in the content and projection of these activities.

The policy work itself is extremely scattered by the fact that a wide range of topics are covered in the policy briefs, media briefings and advisory briefings held, even though the flagship report on the state of Africa is of notable value.

The capacity-building activities of AISA include a range of activities. Perhaps the most institutionalised aspect is the internship programme provided to about six post-graduate students each year for a one year period, and in 2009 these were extended for a further 3 months. These internships enable AISA to maintain linkages with the sending academic universities to sustain some influence in sections of academe.

Through mentoring the students based on their post-graduate thesis work and their involvement in other AISA activities, AISA supports the growth of young South Africans concerned with African development issues, while supplementing its lower tier competence base. There is little doubt that these internships are a critical aspect of the AISA mandate, and that these are appreciated by most stakeholders.

Furthermore, AISA has been providing a Campus Lecture Series (CLS) programme to 6 historically disadvantaged universities, including University of Fort Hare, North West, Venda, Walter Sisulu, Limpopo and Zululand. This has mainly entailed one week research methodology workshops, including material on African affairs for the post-graduate students on these campuses using persons from AISA and other academic institutions. There remains some tension over the relevance of the CLS in its current form vis-à-vis AISA's mandate, and the expectation that universities and other research councils ought to be doing such research methodology training. The CLS activities could, however, be modified towards a focus on conceptual and methodological issues arising from research in Africa (and specifically related to AISA's research agenda) and contestations with external perspectives, and be implemented through partnerships with existing research networks and universities.

The effectiveness of these AISA capacity-building activities are in general limited by the thin spread of senior-level research competence within the AISA research division, and by the weaknesses of its network with top level African scholars within South Africa and abroad. Indeed, more thorough intellectual framing and coherence of the research agenda is a necessary tool to guide the methodological content of the capacity-building policy advisory services. It is necessary to further strengthen the role of the EDR in the process of building the required networks, and to ensure a clear link between AISA's mandate and its capacity-building activities.

### 5.3 Research policy, outputs and productivity

Over the last two years, AISA's Research Division has actively developed its research policy document (signed in 2009) in the context of its evolving strategic and business plans.



This is a positive sign, which is in line with the recommendations of the 2004 review. The strategic plan sets out the AISA vision mainly in terms of knowledge production and promoting awareness of African progress and integration as follows: *“to become the independent authoritative centre of excellence for the production of knowledge on Africa and promote awareness as well as the importance of unity, peace, prosperity and democracy on the African continent”*.

Nonetheless, the AISA mission statement provides a broader specification of the Institute's mission to include training, over and above knowledge production as follows: *“AISA is dedicated to knowledge production, education, training and the promotion of awareness on Africa, for Africans and the international community. This is achieved through independent policy analysis, the collection, processing and interpretation and dissemination of information”*.

The recent AISA research policy statement thus places emphasis on its core mission being to generate and disseminate basic research, characterised by originality and analysis of findings, in order to enable AISA to maintain a high ranking among African research organisations, and to contribute to a better understanding of the realities and needs of the African continent. Indeed, the research policy provides that 60% of the Key Performance Area scores be derived from basic research, while other research related work scores 30%, and administrative work gets 10%. The stated AISA research objectives also indicate the intention to prioritise basic research as follows:

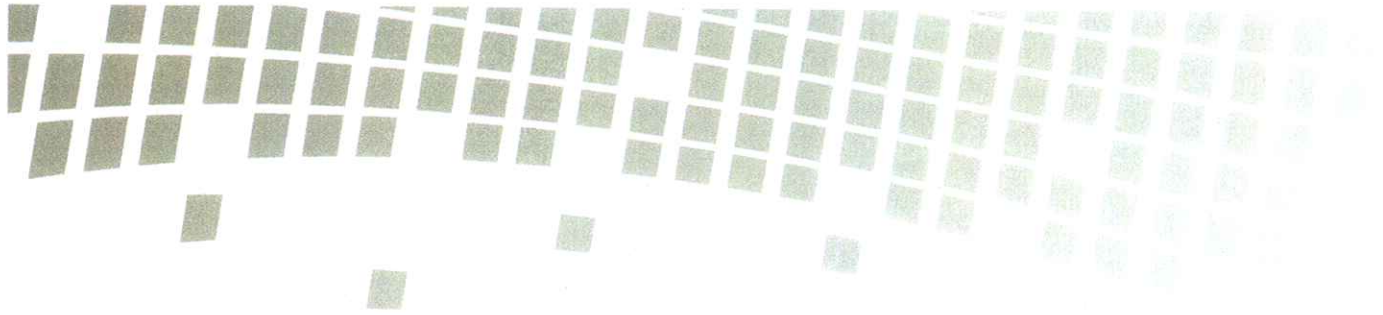
- ... aimed at building research excellence
- ... ensuring that a high value of contribution by research to the reconstruction and development of South Africa and Africa is realised
- AISA shall develop a culture of research within the institution by promoting and consolidating an enabling research environment and supporting research (sic) by establishing clear inter-divisional linkages within the institution to avoid duplication and waste of resources
- AISA's research manuscripts submitted for publication internally or externally shall be assessed on the basis of 'external peer-review' (p6).

Given that AISA has gone through a long drawn-out institutional crisis and change, it is notable that the research policy can become an instrument of forging coherence among the researchers. There are some important tensions within the Research Division, and between it and the other divisions. The research policy establishes relevant principles such as academic freedom, a programmatic approach to research which requires the coordinated planning of activities among and by the researchers, and basic procedures for assessing research and publications, and more controversially the outputs expected of the researchers.

The research policy defines the research leadership process, which entails a research sub-committee of the AISA Council, the CEO, the research divisions and the recently established Research and Publications Committee (RPC), providing guidance and direction on the research agenda and oversight on the research. Research directors are expected to lead the initiation, planning, execution and administration of research activities, while the AISA management (including the CEO, the Executive Director of Research and the CFO) are responsible for research fundraising, with the proviso that researchers may be asked to prepare research proposals in support of such fundraising, and initiate fundraising with the approval of the Executive Research Director. The policy establishes a 'basic field-research fund', in addition to other funds for research, and defines a procedure for application and regulates remuneration for consultancy work and conference work, key performance areas and research ethics principles.

In February 2009, the AISA RPC further elaborated the research policy by adopting the AISA Research Guidelines, also in line with the 2004 review proposals. This statement defines the research process in terms of conceptualising research projects in line with the research agenda, the procedures for submission and approval of such research and book proposals, the approach to fieldwork, manuscript processing and publications, conference attendance, as well as a review and appeals process. This policy statement admits that although the AISA research agenda is conceived in a 3 year cycle, the actual research is managed on an annual basis within the framework of a performance agreement, and that researchers shall only apply to the RPC for further funds once





they have fulfilled the annual 4/2 output publication requirement (Research Guidelines, p10). Whether the current research management process allows for continuity and depth in knowledge production requires more careful examination, through a review of the current content of the outputs so far.

Whereas the vision and mission emphasise knowledge production, this review finds that there is a lingering ambiguity among AISA's stakeholders, its main clients, the Council (Board) and among staff, as to whether AISA should be a policy think-tank or a basic research institute. Moreover, the think-tank role is considered by some to provide a unique niche that justifies AISA's existence in relation to other councils such as the HSRC and CSIR. In general, it appears that much more research staff energy and financial resources are allocated to the more diffuse policy and outreach work, than to basic research. This is evident not only in the limited presence of high level researchers and fieldwork financial allocations, but also in the limited depth of a number of AISA publications. Since the logistics and costs of doing fieldwork in Africa are high, the funding profile, time allocations and preparatory work required to undertake such fieldwork will need to be strengthened.

#### **AISA research outputs and benchmarking**

AISA's current research output policy framework was adopted in 2008 at a meeting involving the Research Committee of Council and researchers. It requires that each year, every researcher writes four peer-reviewed journal articles, and two policy briefs based on fieldwork in any African country. Whether equivalent outputs such as chapters and/or books qualify as outputs is not specified. In addition, researchers are expected to attend and present papers at conferences, engage in activities which enhance public awareness, provide policy advice or research for client departments or organisations and engage in AISA's capacity-building programmes. None of these output requirements are differentiated according to the seniority and/or experience of the researchers. Moreover, the researchers are expected to have some management and administrative responsibilities, which tend to increase with their seniority within the Research Division's hierarchy.

According to the AISA Research Report (2008/9), the division surpassed the outputs targets expected in all the activity areas, despite the fact that the division could not increase its staff to the expected total of 18, due to financing limitations.

This so-called '4 plus 2' research output requirement, and the other expected outputs, is problematic and has created numerous tensions within AISA. To begin with, some of the researchers argue that they were not adequately consulted about the desirability or feasibility of such a benchmark, and that it was imposed on them. Although this research outputs framework may not have been imposed on the researchers, and there is on-going dialogue at AISA on its feasibility, it is clearly evident that such output requirements are too onerous for AISA staff. Secondly, the output benchmarks are not differentiated according to the qualifications, experience and administrative responsibilities of the researchers, although the staffing levels are clearly heterogeneous. Thirdly, the focus given to journal articles does not give explicit and due recognition to equivalent outputs, such as the writing of books and chapters. Fourthly, the output benchmarking does not quantify, nor give adequate weight to other outputs such as policy advice and capacity-building activities in the assessment of the researchers. Fifthly, this number of expected research outputs per researcher is about three times as high as is required of researchers in sister research organisations (e.g. 2 journal articles at HSRC; 1.5 journal articles as a 'rule of thumb' in many local universities).

As a result, many of the AISA researchers are unable to fulfil this requirement. Indeed, the quality of some of the papers submitted to show outputs is considered by some stakeholders to be questionable. A consultant (S. Fikeni, 2010) was hired to assess the AISA output benchmarks. Our panel is in general agreement with his assessment (we were provided with a draft of his recommendations), which proposes that the outputs per researcher be reviewed downwards, that the writings considered be diversified to include the variety of research products (books/chapters), and that other policy and capacity-building activities be systematically measured and recognised as outputs.

Moreover, the researchers are expected to undertake two field research trips of a 2-3 week duration on the continent,

and to prepare and submit field research reports on these. Field research over the last three years has been undertaken in 15 countries as follows:

**Chart 5.2:** Range of countries with field work in 2008/9

Regions	Countries
North Africa	
West Africa	Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Chad
Eastern Africa	Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania
Central Africa	Rwanda, DRC
Southern Africa	Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia, Namibia, Swaziland, Botswana
Regional institutions	SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS, ECCAS
Other	China, Brazil, India, UNSC, EU, DPOPPA

One of the critical problems which arises from the current over-emphasis on numbers of papers produced and field-work missions undertaken, is the mechanical way in which fieldwork has been funded. The review found that standard minimal amounts of field research travel and expenses budgets are provided to the researchers, and that these

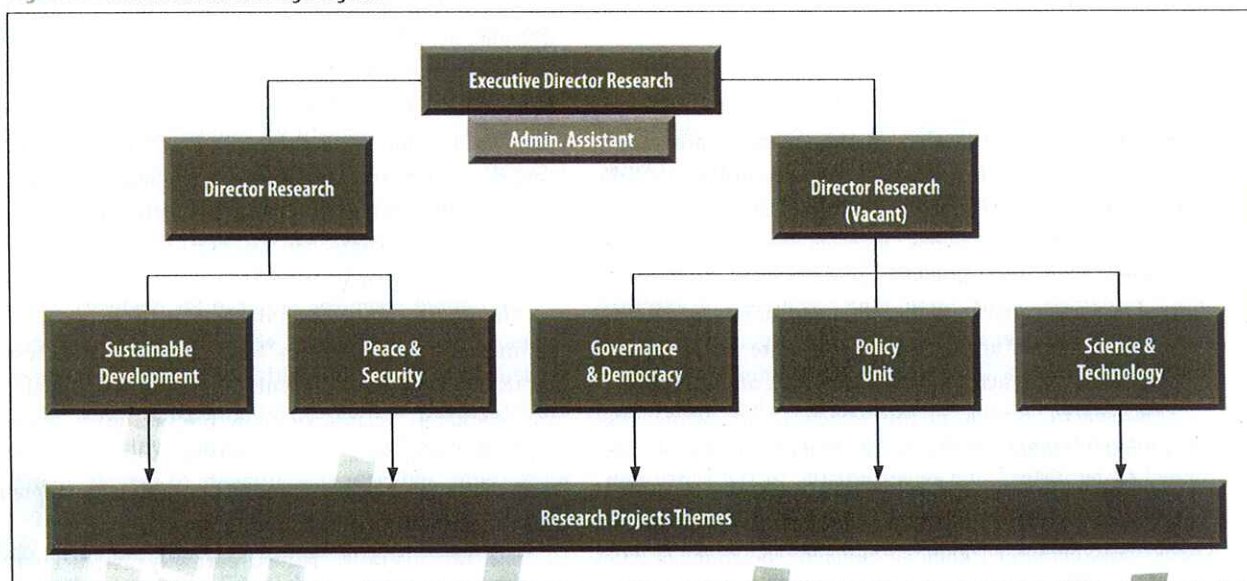
can barely cover sustained field research. As a result the choice of countries visited, and indeed the research topics addressed by researchers, may actually be a matter of convenience to suit available financial entitlements rather than the quality and focus defined by the research agenda. This quantitative output orientation, and the funding of research need to be revised. In effect, the 'measure becomes the aim', and that is counter-productive.

## 5.4 Research Division structure and capacities (human resources)

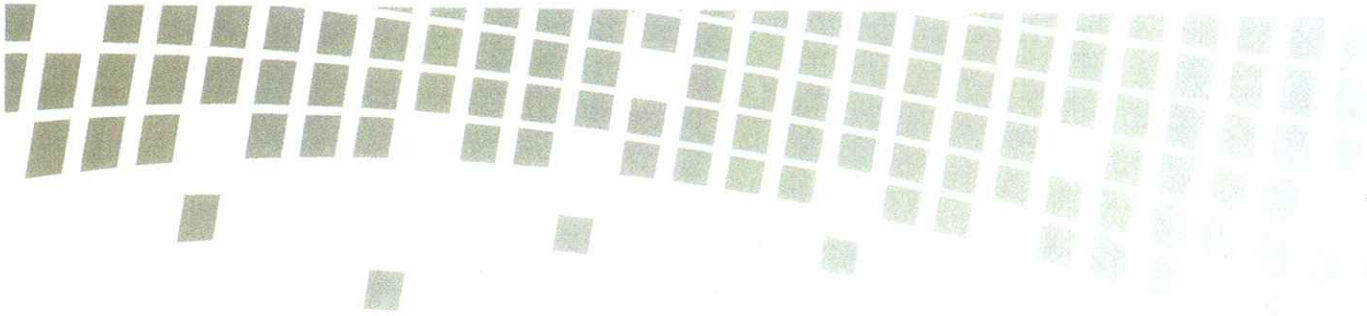
### Evolving structure of the research division

The structure of the Research Division was reformed in line with the 2004 Institutional Review recommendation. It created 5 new units led by Research Specialists, expected to report to two Research Directors, and led by an Executive Director Research who reports to the Chief Executive Officer of research (figure 5.1). In doing this, AISA re-structured the Research Division by separating it from the outreach section, and thus relieving the researchers from the logistical

**Figure 5.1** Research Division Organogram







work of organising conferences and other public relations work, while relieving the CEO of responsibilities to manage policy-specific research.

However, the Research Division has not been adequately staffed with sufficient high quality researchers. Apart from the Executive Director Research, AISA has been led by one Research Director, with about six Chief Research Specialists, most of whom have limited research experience. Currently AISA has only 7 (or 10) researchers, and only two of these have doctoral degrees, whereas the division is projected to have 31 researchers. Staff attrition, including of South Africans, is high. The number of high impact scholars at AISA is low. This calls for increased funding levels for AISA.

#### Alignment of research to key service division

The alignment of and relationships between the Research Division and the LDS as well as the Publications Division have remained tenuous, if not ineffective, as is also elaborated in various sections of this review. The link between research and access to useful research materials from the library, and the processing of research outputs for publications, is extremely dysfunctional, even though AISA hoped to eliminate the silo approach to its work. Some of these are transitional teething problems, but they now need to be addressed.

#### Research management strategies

As already stated, although AISA has a limited number of high-level researchers to lead its key research programme areas, it has and will continue to need to utilise networking and partnerships strategies to complement its in-house research competence. It has, however, been considered by this review that AISA should first and foremost build an internal research capacity, rather than rely mainly on external research networks or mechanically emulate network-based institutions or councils such as CODESRIA and OSSREA.

The general finding of this review is that while AISA has pursued linkages with partners and networks, this has tended to be diffuse and opportunistic, in the sense that a massive process of 'commissioning' scholarly papers and books was embarked upon to augment the count of AISA outputs, rather than a systematic approach intended to

build high quality research relationships with networks, and partners. Little structure can be discerned in terms of a coherent focus and content of the numerous publications produced recently, since the topics covered are not only diverse but also do not lend themselves readily to a pattern of interrelated works seeking depth in knowledge production. Nor does the Research Division and/or publications reports attempt to group the outputs and synthesise the research outputs emerging from the many outputs, into coherent statements on the new knowledge being offered.

### 5.5 Ensuring suitable conditions for doing research

#### Securing adequate research competence

We have stated that AISA will need to dramatically increase its core capacity to undertake research on Africa, through a phased recruitment of well-qualified researchers. The issue of why AISA has been unable to attract and retain high quality and competent researchers at its various levels in the Research Division is a critical pre-requisite for securing the core research competence necessary to achieve the AISA mandate. A combination of factors explains this current dilemma at AISA.

Firstly, the incentives provided to researchers are less favourable than is offered elsewhere in South Africa. The salaries are not competitive compared to other research councils and most universities, yet the research outputs expected of the AISA researchers are much more taxing than is the norm elsewhere. Few top-level researchers would opt to work in the current situation.

The limited resources provided for fieldwork are also a dis-incentive to researchers. Normally, committed researchers tend to be able to live with lower salaries, provided they are adequately excited by doing original work. Most critical is the need for a research agenda which is 'owned' by researchers, and clear commitments to provide appropriate direction and support to researchers.

The administrative burden currently placed on the researchers to meet the various compliance requirements of



AISA is also taxing and tends to stifle the research environment. This can be even more disparaging in a situation where the administrative divisions are better remunerated than the researchers, leading to an impression that research is not the core business. A better system of involving researchers in managing institutional compliance issues is a pre-requisite to improving the relationship between researchers and administrators within the Research Division, and between the latter and the administrative and service divisions. Of course the researchers also need to adequately value the administrators and service division, and there is currently an urgent need to manage existing tensions and to promote mutually beneficially work processes and healthy inter-dependence.

Furthermore, for AISA to more effectively undertake research on Africa it needs to be able to recruit and retain a reasonable number of non-South African scholars from Africa - at the level of research directors and chief specialists, and for these in turn to be able to attract credible networks of scholars across the continent. Indeed, half of the 12 AISA researchers in 2008/09 were non-South African, but attracting higher calibre Africans and retaining them is an issue which requires closer examination. Here, too, the current remuneration and work conditions are not as suitable as they need to be to attract the highest calibre of such African researchers. As is the general trend on the continent, top African scholars have for a while been emigrating to the 'north', and it is notable that during the last decade such scholars were being headhunted in African studies centres outside the continent.

There is the additional concern that AISA and other South African research institutions, as well as some of their stakeholders, are generally perceived to have an ambiguous, if not an unwelcoming, attitude towards the recruitment and maintenance of top level African scholars. Whereas this problem could at times be conveniently overplayed by both local and emigrant scholars for various other reasons, there is no doubt that a number of top level African scholars have recently been hesitant to take on appointments in South Africa. The recent rise in xenophobic attitudes provides some context to this problem. More critically, there seems to be a reading by some actors at

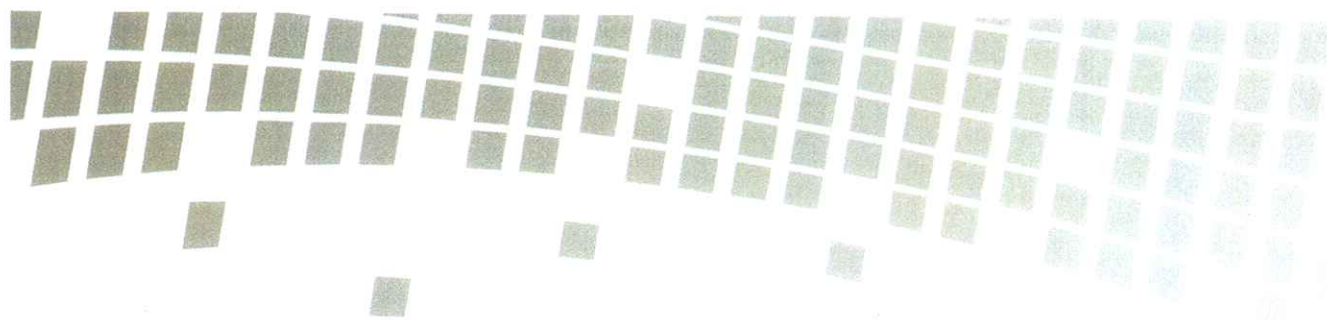
AISA of the South African employment equity regulations, which suggests that the hiring of Africans at AISA disadvantages South Africans, even though the AISA leadership has been open to non-Africans and provided some space for them. Given that the core business of AISA is to pursue knowledge on Africa, there is need for AISA to translate the employment equity policy in a manner that allows for a critical mass of African scholars to be employed at the Institute. It was clear to the reviewers that the DG understood this concern and need, and we were informed by a council member that the Minister of DST was also amenable to the recommendation that AISA looks increasingly beyond its borders to fill senior research positions in order to build its capacity, quality of its outputs and to ensure that AISA becomes a truly African-wide asset. This, however, should be balanced by building depth in South African scholarship on Africa at AISA.

### Research funding and financial allocations

There is also the broader constraint that was observed during this review: that the financial resources allocated to research activities, particularly to recruit qualified staff and to undertake field-based research, are limited. Also, as elaborated upon in a later section, the Research Division tends to be overwhelmed by the authority of the Finance and Human Resource departments over institutional compliance issues, to the extent that relationships between the two sections are tense, if not hostile. Whereas compliance must be attained, AISA should consider a more effective approach towards ensuring researcher inputs into the process.

In general, AISA requires a much more substantive budget to enable the research activities to be pursued in greater depth than is currently the case. The idea that researchers should depend on self-propelled research proposals, competing for NRF funds, defeats the whole purpose of having a unique and focused research agenda on Africa, and exposes the AISA team to competition on inappropriate terms with universities. Moreover, AISA already faces competition from other donor funded research centres (SAIIA, ISS, etc), which serve specifically-framed research agendas and perspectives.





A publicly funded basic research council, seeking original knowledge on Africa, ought to be better funded by the Government. The AISA board should prioritise the doubling of the budget within the next cycle. The DST DG indicated that he would be amenable to such a proposal, provided AISA submits a detailed, well-thought through and highly relevant expansion programme focusing on its core business.

## 5.6 Concluding remarks and recommendations

### Concluding Remarks

The capacities and organisation of AISA's Research Division over the past six years were degraded by the institutional crisis faced around 2005, and the over-emphasis that was placed on administrative and financial reforms. The AISA Research Division has been gradually re-organised since 2008 and this led to increased but scattered research outputs of uneven quality. Such outputs have had limited visibility according to many stakeholders in the policy community, as well as in the scholarly community. Conflicting interests, workflows and administrative demands between the Research Division and all the other divisions, particularly the Finance and Human Resources divisions, and the limited recruitment of top quality research leadership, together with the sporadic and scattered, but growing use of scholarly networks in South Africa and Africa, have all combined hampered the effectiveness and quality of the Research Division.

### Recommendations

AISA is encouraged to continue to re-double its effort to place research at the centre of its business. This will require that AISA mobilises much more than the available resources to enhance the key inter-related systems, which can drive a qualitative improvement of its research organisation and lead to academic excellence and relevance. First, a more coherent and focused research agenda than currently exists, with well defined and limited research project priorities, needs to be developed, through an analytic and consultative process that ensures relevance and familiarity with the

cutting-edge research questions on African integration. To this end, it is recommended that AISA commissions research experts who can, together with AISA researchers, undertake a research content review of its last ten years of research, and define AISA's contribution to knowledge on Africa, and draft an intellectual agenda for its future research. A process to engage scholars on Africa and other stakeholders should be facilitated, as part of the effort towards producing a 5-year research agenda.

Secondly, there is need to refine the research policy and promote the depth and quality in research work. To this end, it is recommended that AISA reduces the research outputs benchmark to 2 peer-reviewed articles or chapters and 1 policy brief per senior researcher per annum, calibrated over a 3 year cycle. The fieldwork requirement should be re-fashioned to suit the nature of research being pursued within a 3 year cycle. Junior researchers should have lower benchmarks set for them, including some based on joint-authorship with senior scholars.

Thirdly, based on such a research agenda-setting process, new partnership and networking strategies are required for the mobilisation of adequate human and material research resources, based on quality relationships focused on developing in-depth basic research with a Pan-African scope. The research networks and partnerships should also be based on three to five year collaboration cycles based on specific research projects within the sub-units. Such a capacity ought to be well positioned in the context of a growing competitive research environment, and seek to establish a unique or special value that identifies AISA.

Fourthly, the Research Division's management structure and procedures need to be overhauled in line with the earlier proposed institutional model of AISA and in line with the new research agenda. Improved research management and incentives are needed to secure and maintain adequate high quality researchers and appropriate research working conditions.

Finally, the deployment of effective mechanisms to ensure that the research is visible and accessible enough to influence scholarship, public debates and policies is critical, as the section below discusses.



# 6. Library and Documentation Services and Publishing

## 6.1 Library and documentation services

The 2004 review commended the Library and Documentation Services (LDS) on building an excellent and specialised collection of print and electronic material. Our findings are that LDS has continued this trend and increased the volume of the collection from 70 000 in 2004 to 95 000 in 2010. More importantly, it is very encouraging that LDS continues to be valued as a critical asset to the Institute.

The previous review recommended that LDS should accelerate the development of a virtual library; unfortunately, this recommendation needs to be reiterated as the progress made in this area appears to lag behind other institutions. It should be noted that the significance of a virtual library is not only to meet current best practice, but to provide the required level of support leading researchers have come to expect. The development of a virtual library will also have the effect of off-setting physical space constraints faced by LDS.

The qualitative dimension of the LDS collection received a favourable evaluation in the previous review but this appears to be an area of decline and deserves urgent attention. In quantitative terms the periodical titles are now less than 25% of the 2004 level, while the qualitative decline is evidenced by researchers' bemoaning the fact that current literature relevant to their research areas are not always readily available. It is also noteworthy that less than 18% of the library users are AISA staff, which could further indicate a perception of low relevance. During interviews, recent and current research staff consistently mentioned an appreciation for the archive established over many years, but stated that they lacked information services tailored to their research activities, for example alerts on periodicals and reports in their specialist areas. This is a crucial area of support for the research enterprise and could undermine the quality of AISA's intellectual output if the trend is not reversed.

Considering that AISA is first and foremost a research institute, it seems reasonable to place 'supporting the research processes' very firmly at the centre of any future strategy. To excel in this area will most likely have an effect on the entire Institute in future.

The Cartography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) functions appear to be experiencing a period of declining usage. Where this was once a service provider to external parties, increasingly these users are developing their own capability or going elsewhere. Furthermore, it is an area of rapid development as the pace of technological innovation increases. Both factors raise the question of how competitive these functions can continue to be within LDS. It might be an opportune moment for these aspects of LDS to re-imagine themselves and forge a sustainable path within the AISA mandate. As a start, it seems worth examining whether these functions should be maintained as an internal capacity, or could be better provided for in some out-sourced arrangement.

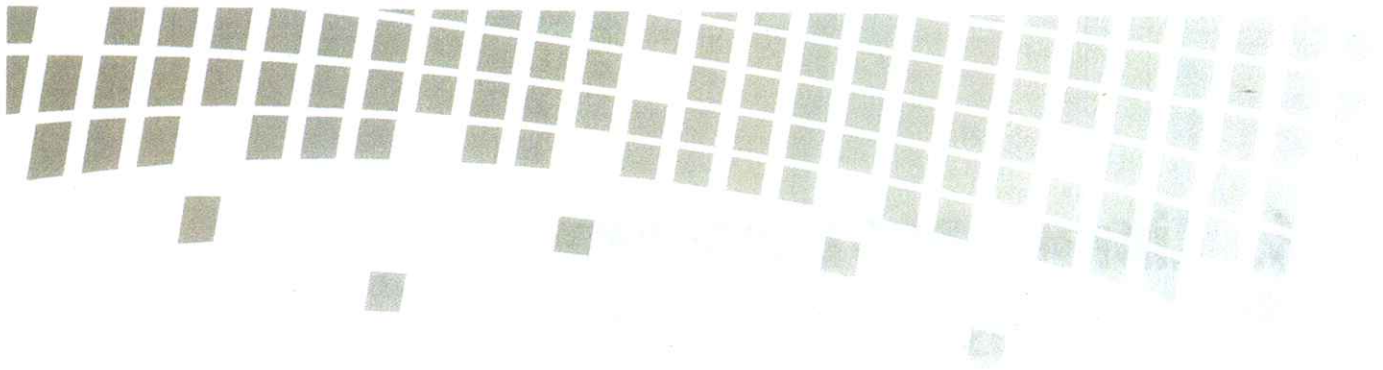
The outreach aspect of LDS work is a recent development and is, therefore, not covered in the 2004 review. Essentially, this amounts to school visits nationally, where maps are displayed and sold, with the aim of extending this throughout SADC over the next three years. Given the challenge of selling material directly to under-resourced schools - as opposed to via the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) as is general practice - this might not be the most effective means of outreach for AISA. It would be more effective to work through DoBE and cover the cost from the DoBE education materials budget, or examining the new curriculum to ascertain where an Africa focus can be supported.

As noted in the previous review, the on-site visitors continue to decrease. This is a worrying trend, considering the resources allocated to LDS. In part this is ascribed to the physical location of the library and inconvenience of access. To improve this aspect will require significant resources, and will most likely not be practical. Other aspects, such as marketing and more flexible on-line access, might be more feasible avenues to explore.

## 6.2 Publishing

The Publications Division has experienced a significant revitalisation over the past few years, producing 33 outputs in the 2008/09 financial year. Most impressive is the fact that





10 of these comprise substantial peer-reviewed scholarly books, which compares well with other scholarly publishers in the country and across the continent. The Institute is to be congratulated for this achievement.

The consistent publication and long-standing accreditation of the flagship journal, *Africa Insight*, is an achievement that the Institute can take great pride in. Considering the changes the Institute has undergone in recent years, it is no mean feat that the Institute has managed to retain accreditation of the journal. This vital indicator of academic prestige not only benefits the Institute, but all who contribute to it.

It is worrisome to note that as the publishing output increases the sales are falling, from a reported R274 554 in 2004/5 to R59 185 in the 2009/10 financial year. Combined with this, the Publications inventory has increased from R671 242 to R1 554 965 in the respective years. This suggests that the Publications Division is producing significantly more than they can sell. It is worth noting that while the output compares well with similar-sized publishers', the sales are unusually low for a scholarly publisher in South Africa. This raises two immediate issues:

- It appears that stock management policies and procedures are urgently required to ensure the appropriate quantities are produced, along with internal controls to satisfy the management requirements for public finances. This should include procedures for writing down stock value on a regular basis.
- The existing marketing and sales channels need to be extended, at least to get the sales level on par with similar publishers in the country. This could be achieved through more effective penetration of main-stream sales channels and establishing new ones, such as on-line sales.

As authors have expressed some concern about the review processes and production times, it would be advisable to develop an author management strategy. This could include ensuring all potential authors are clear on review processes

and the time needed for production. International benchmarks would be a useful indicator to base these on.

Key stakeholders have questioned the impact of the publications, as only output numbers are reported. This would be a useful area for the Publications Division to explore and establish simple impact factors that could inform stakeholders of the reach and uses of the material. This might have the added benefit of focusing the department on achieving greater impact as it develops.

The contemporary landscape of scholarly publishing has tended towards inventive exploitation of the internet – an area where the Publications Division appears to be significantly behind. This area should be developed to improve sales, visibility and impact. In relation to other recommendations, this is likely to be the area where short-term results can most readily be achieved.

### 6.3 Conclusion

As AISA has evolved it has entered a competitive space, not only at an institutional level but also for the key resource, namely, high calibre researchers. This suggests that defining itself in relation to others is an important consideration – in terms of what it researches and the type of research it conducts. The publishing, outreach and library functions could play a leading role in forging a public identity for the Institute where it can clarify and capture its niche in the international research arena, also providing an effective platform for researchers who seek impact from their work, thereby making the Institute a more attractive employer.

However, having these three functions working in a relatively diffused manner – to the research agenda and each other – lowers the impact and suggests that a more coordinated 'scholarly communication framework' would be useful to consider. Of utmost importance would be linking this closely to the research agenda to ensure that it creates a strong impression of what AISA stands for, while delivering on its mandate. In a sense, these should serve research and not be seen as separate entities.

# 7. Support Services

## 7.1 Introduction

This section presents our findings relating to the Institute's support functions.

Under the current construct of the Institute, support functions are located under the following divisions:

- *Finance, Administration & Information Technology*: This division is responsible for financial management services; administration services; and information technology services.
- *Human Resources*: This division is responsible for labour relations; payroll administration and human resource administration.
- *Corporate Affairs and Outreach International Liaison*: They are broadly responsible for providing administrative support to the CEO's office, and the functions allocated to that office, as well as managing the outreach activities of the Research Division.

To begin with, we note that generally over the last five years, the Institute has made significant management investment in addressing the capacity of its support functions in order to operate effectively and ensure legal and regulatory compliance. New capable staff members have been recruited and new policies and procedures have been developed and have been placed into operation.

The level of management focus and investment on support functions was deemed necessary given the turn-around priority of AISA management as explained earlier in this report. The outcome of this investment is an organisation with fairly strong administrative controls in the form of established policies and procedures for most functional areas.

However, the side-effect of management's focus has been the development of what appears to be an organisation with a strong control-culture at the expense of in-house core research capacity. It would also seem that accompanying this culture shift is the development of an 'us' versus 'them' organisational mentality or rivalry between the support and research-related functions which, in our view, does not augur well for any organisation that wishes to attract and

retain a quality workforce. This organisational climate is reinforced by the authority ambiguity created by the lack of a clear organisational structure for the Institute as a whole.

The rest of this section takes a more detailed look at the issues related to each functional area in the current operating environment and suggests recommendations for improvements.

## 7.2 Finance, Administration & Information Technology Division

The Finance, Administration & Information Technology Division is headed by AISA's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and organised into three units, namely: Finance, Administration, and Information Technology Support. Taking each in turn we present our observations.

### 7.2.1 Finance Unit

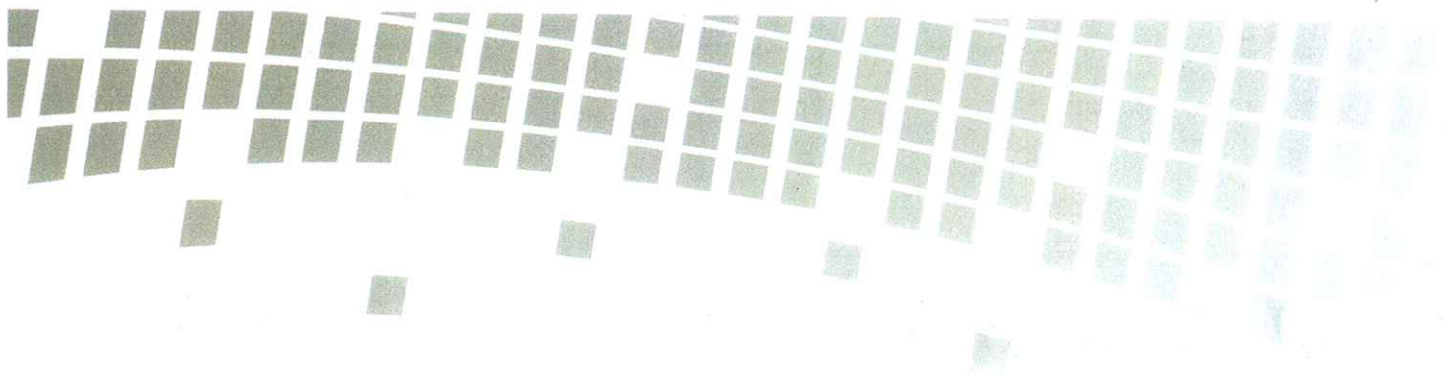
The Finance Unit comprises seven members of staff. The unit is responsible for the Institute's financial management which includes revenue and expenditure management, budgetary control, financial reporting and asset management.

During the period under review, there was significant staff turnover of senior finance personnel within the unit due to resignations and disciplinary actions arising from the turn-around strategy pursued by the Institute. In particular, we note that in the space of five years the Institute has had three CFOs.

The lack of management stability arising from the staff changes appears to have impaired the unit's ability to provide the necessary quality of financial management leadership and direction to AISA, culminating in the Auditor-General issuing a disclaimer on the financial report for the year ended 31 March 2007.

However, the combination of an effective out-sourced internal audit function and a measure of management stability to the unit resulted in an improvement to the quality of financial management within the organisation, which is evidenced by the unqualified audit report received for the year ending 31 March 2009. This suggests that the control environment has been normalised.





Indeed, at the time of our review, we were informed that dozens of policies had been approved and implemented in the organisation over the period of review and several other policies have been drafted and are in a state of readiness for submission to the Council of AISA for approval.

#### *Improvement opportunities*

Given the current size of AISA in terms of funding, scope and complexity of business operations, the size of the staff establishment of the Finance Unit is adequate. This assessment may need to be reviewed should there be significant change to AISA's business operations.

The organisation and structure of supply-chain management within AISA needs attention. We believe that the current architecture is not functioning efficiently and effectively. Our view is supported by the issues raised by various units with regard to the responsiveness of the Institute's supply chain. This may be due to a number of factors, such as a lack of a common understanding across all units as to roles and responsibilities along the supply-chain value chain from demand-management to inadequate enabling information systems infrastructure (for instance, the comprehensiveness of supplier databases to support strategic sourcing to facilitate responsive processing-cycle times).

#### **7.2.2 Administration Unit**

The Administration Unit is made up of seven staff members and is responsible for the following functions:

- reception area management
- transport and vehicle maintenance management
- office building and facilities management, including the telephone system maintenance and security maintenance.

Except as noted below, no significant operational findings came to our attention.

#### *Improvement opportunities*

We suggest that given the corporate nature of the Administration function, it should be relocated within the

Corporate Affairs Unit. The designation for Corporate Affairs may be revised to more accurately reflect its core activities once Outreach International Liaison is relocated to the Research Division as recommended in our detailed discussion related to Corporate Affairs & Outreach and International Liaison below. This refinement would ensure that functions that are largely administration-support in nature and corporate in scope are grouped and managed under the same umbrella, thus improving the overall alignment of the AISA management structure.

#### **7.2.3 Information Technology Services**

The broad functions of the Information Technology (IT) Unit include:

- IT policy development
- IT standards development
- systems architecture
- implementation of business applications
- network maintenance
- server maintenance
- hardware and software user support
- telephone systems support.

Under the current divisional structure of Finance, Administration and Information Technology, the function comprises of one employee.

By any measure, the current construct of the IT Unit is inadequate to provide responsive, effective and efficient information-systems management and maintenance services.

A research environment is data and information intensive. This means that the business of research is totally reliant on the efficiency of information systems for the purpose of analysing, synthesising and managing data and information. Therefore, from a strategic perspective, the IT Unit is a mission-critical business function and its current placement is inappropriate to provide meaningful strategic value to the Institute.

From a strategic perspective, for the unit to be effective in its engagement with the business, it needs to form part of the strategy-development dialogue that occurs at executive

meetings (IMM). Involvement at executive level meetings will provide the IT Unit with the necessary business insight and offer the function the opportunity to influence business strategy by providing the Institute with *technology insight* as to how its operations may optimise existing technology investments or scale its capacity in the most cost-efficient manner at the right time, and thereby assist in avoiding wasteful expenditure on expensive information technologies.

At an operational level the function is under-resourced and therefore fails to, amongst others:

- address maintenance issues associated with planned maintenance of the technology infrastructure
- provide appropriate and timely user training
- attend necessary courses to remain technically up-to-date
- enable proper separation of technical supervision and quality control from actual execution of maintenance tasks
- perform management checks on user compliance with information technology governance policies, etc.

Under the current construct the whole operational and strategic orientation of the function is limited to reactive service support and crisis management. Thus, we note that critical IT management-related activities, such as the establishment of integrated IT strategy and enterprise architecture for the Institute, identification of all business critical systems for *all* divisions and the operation of an off-site disaster recovery system, management of an IT succession plan, and the production of formal IT management reports, are lacking. We also note that most IT policies are yet to be approved by Council.

#### Improvement Opportunity

Given the mission-critical role played by information systems in the business operations of the Institute, we would strongly suggest that management elevate the IT Unit and resource the unit with an appropriately experienced Information Technology administrator at minimum. These two management actions will facilitate the transformation

of the function into a more responsive and efficient support service.

### 7.3 Human Resource Services

This division is primarily responsible for human resource management within the Institute. Its stated objective is to create a performance-led organisation, continually looking for ways to enhance efficiencies and effectiveness, and provide a world-class human resource service founded on best practice. We would suggest that it adds the following key objective: '*...to facilitate a work environment that enables AISA to be the employer of choice amongst South African research institutions*'.

The unit currently has a complement of three staff and one vacant position.

Generally, the Human Resource Division appears to be well-organised and seems to have made significant progress in establishing proper systems and processes in order to facilitate better human resource administration, management and development. We also note that there has been improved external compliance to labour-related regulations and internal compliance to organisational policies and procedures.

However, from an institutional perspective, the division is struggling to address the high staff-turnover which seems to have remained stubbornly high in the period under review. We present our analysis of turnover statistics from 2007/08 to 2009/10 supplied by the Human Resource Division below<sup>1</sup>.

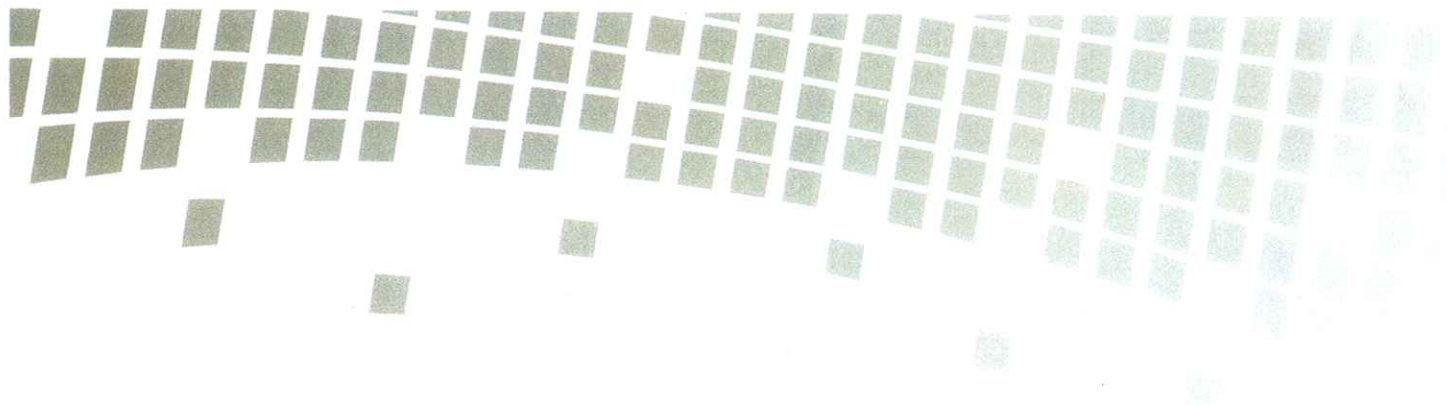
	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
Staff Turnover Percentage <sup>2</sup>	40%	23%	42%

Upon further examination, we note that resignations account for about 56% of all terminations in 2009/10, which

<sup>1</sup> Relevant information for earlier periods is not readily available to provide a trend for the complete five year period under review.

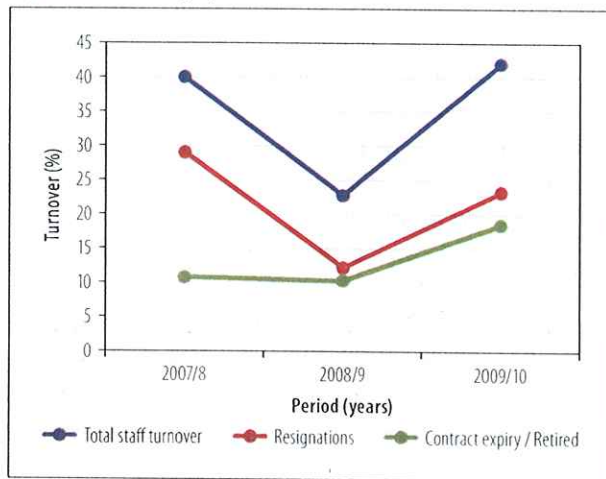
<sup>2</sup> Turnover is a best-estimation based on year-end employee complement after adjusting for interns and therefore assumes that *average* employee complement remain broadly stable throughout the year.





is a dramatic improvement from the 2007/08 when resignations accounted for about 73% of the staff turnover. This high rate of resignations in 2007/8 may explain why the Institute experienced a significant reduction in 2008/9, creating the dip-effect in the graph below.

Figure 2 Turnover graph



The 2009/10 improvement appears to correlate with the fact that more employees are on fixed-term contracts and hence a large part of the turnover may be attributed to a shift towards the contract-based staffing model by the Institute. In addition, the nature of the job market (given the recent economic recession), recent improvements to staff remuneration packages and the stabilisation of the working environment after the turmoil of the deep-rooted restructuring exercise undergone by AISA, may also be factors that have contributed to the reduction in the number of resignations.

Nonetheless a 40% employee turnover, however attributed, is undesirable in any organisation as it brings into question the economic and operational sustainability of the business.

In the course of our review, we also observed through our interviews that employee morale does not generally appear to be high across the organisation and is particularly very low amongst the Research Division. This seems to be due to a variety of factors, such as administration workload,

research workload, remuneration levels, control-driven culture, high vacancy level within the Research Division (which is estimated at 50%), lack of financial resources to pursue quality research, role and responsibility ambiguity, and the lack of clarity on performance management and criteria on which performance is measured and rewarded.

### Improvement opportunities

Improving staff morale should be the number one item on the CEO's agenda. Clearly, the issues affecting staff morale and employee turnover are significant, interconnected and systemic in nature. We do not believe that the current programme of staff workshops is an effective mode for dealing with the unique priorities of the different stakeholder groups or for managing the necessary change to reinvigorate the Institute.

A new phase of stepped-up engagement is required. This would probably require long-term involvement of external specialists to ensure fresh impetus to the programme and sustained engagement of all employees. To be successful, the change-management programme must be comprehensive, respond to *relevant* issues of each stakeholder group, be well-resourced and have the personal commitment of the CEO to ensure that the necessary change takes place. An egalitarian approach to the change-management task at hand is unlikely to be successful.

### 7.4 Internal Audit

As noted elsewhere in this report, the last audit report (i.e. 2008/9) of the Institute was unqualified by the Auditor-General. This was a result of progressive improvements to the control environment from 2007/8 when the Auditor-General had to issue a disclaimer of opinion partly because of a lack of adequate controls being in place. The turnaround was partly facilitated by the establishment of an effective internal audit function in the form of an out-sourced arrangement with an external service provider.

We understand that due to service-provider costs, management has taken a decision to establish an in-house internal audit function upon expiry of the out-sourced internal

audit contract. Accordingly, an internal audit manager has been recruited to operationalise the newly established Internal Audit Division.

We are of the view that one staff member, (however experienced), will not have the capacity to provide an effective internal audit service to the Institute. For the same reason, it is also unlikely that the Auditor-General would place significant reliance on the work of the in-house function and there is a possibility that the organisation will regress to the state of qualified audit reports. Secondly, in the absence of reliance on the internal audit work, the external audit cost of the Auditor-General are likely to rise and reduce any saving envisioned by management from the establishment of an in-house internal audit function. The scope of a proper internal audit function includes:

- financial audits to address issues of accounting and the propriety of financial transactions;
- operational audits to review operating information and procedures to determine if any modifications to operations would yield greater efficiency, economy and effectiveness
- performance audits to assess the degree to which the organisation has achieved its goals and objectives
- compliance audits to ascertain the degree of adherence to laws, regulations, policies and procedures
- information technology audits to evaluate the adequacy and integrity of system-processing controls, data security, physical security, systems-development procedures, contingency planning, and systems requirements.

These audits cut across *all* the divisions of AISA. In addition, this single internal auditor would need to juggle service delivery with the Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa (IIASA) requirement for continuing professional education in order keep abreast of technical developments in the auditing environment. Clearly, an in-house function with one staff member is inadequate for such a wide scope.

We also note that the internal audit function is placed within the Office of the Chief Executive. We would caution the Institute against such a placement, as the Office of

the Chief Executive is subject to the audit activities of the Internal Audit Division and its current placement may compromise its mandate and indeed the Internal Audit Division may not be perceived as objective in matters relating to the Office of the Chief Executive.

### Improvement opportunities

We would suggest that the Institute reviews the capacity and placement of the Internal Audit Division.

With regards to placement we would suggest that the in-house function be maintained as a separate division. Normal practice is for the Internal Audit Division to be *functionally* accountable to the Audit Committee and *administratively* accountable to the CEO.

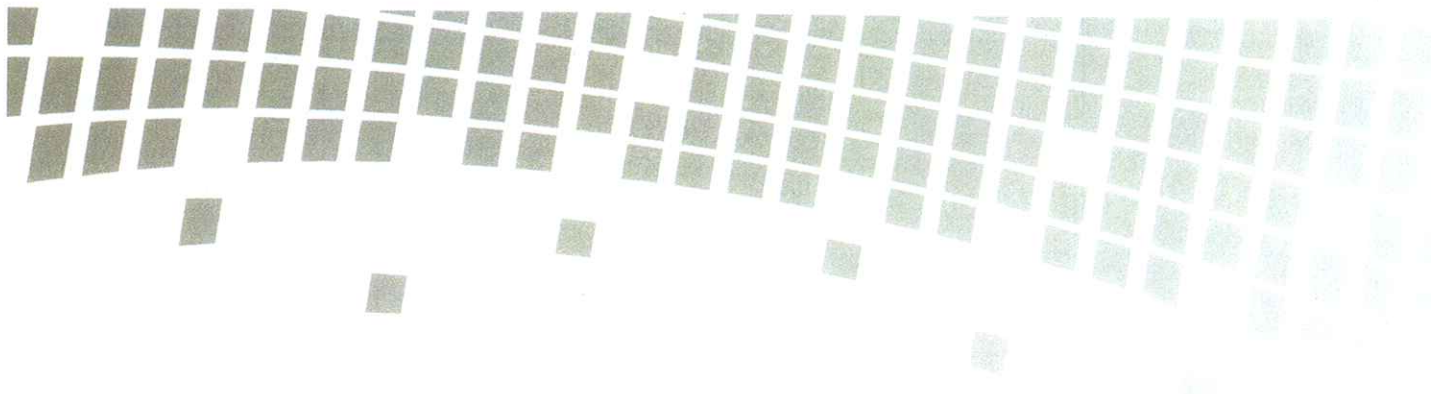
With regards to the capacity of the in-house function, we would suggest that the Institute either fully capacitates the function as a self-sufficient in-house Internal Audit Division or adopts a hybrid model, whereby a more limited augmentation of the in-house internal audit capacity is pursued *and* certain services are contracted-in (under the direct supervision and management of the chief internal auditor) on the basis of the internal audit work programme approved by the Internal Audit Committee of Council.

## 7.5 Corporate Affairs and Outreach and International Liaison

The Corporate Affairs Unit and the Outreach and International Liaison Unit are two separate units that have been placed under a single manager due to AISA's inability to attract and retain a suitable manager for the Outreach and International Liaison Unit. The Corporate Affairs manager currently provides leadership and direction to the staff of that unit.

To date, the focus of the Outreach and International Liaison Unit has been to manage all AISA events and events co-sponsored with other organisations, and creating media visibility of outputs produced by the Institute. Therefore, the unit has acted as a marketing channel for AISA's core research business. The unit's orientation is therefore creative, outward-focussed and its mission is to orchestrate





awareness of the AISA research brand. To support the achievement of its mandate, the unit is resourced with an events officer and a media officer.

The Corporate Affairs function on the other hand is focussed on ensuring that the Institute complies with the governance-reporting regime of the public sector and its shareholder, on providing secretarial support to the Council (i.e. Board), and on managing the administration-support requirements of the CEO. In contrast to the Outreach and International Liaison Unit, the Corporate Affairs Unit is internally focussed, reactive in nature to the support needs of its internal clients and is compliance-led.

In our view, the nature of the boundaries informing the nature of the Corporate Affairs function when compared with those of the Outreach and International Liaison Unit suggests that these two units are not natural bed-fellows. Secondly, our institutional review and deliberations on the mandate of AISA suggest that the role and remit of the Outreach and International Liaison Unit requires re-definition and the function needs to be located as a core research-support function, closely grouped organisationally with the Publications and the Library and Documentation Services Divisions.

### Improvement Opportunities

To realise better synergies and improve organisational alignment, we suggest that the Outreach and International Liaison function should be moved from Corporate Affairs and re-located with the other research-support functions, namely the Publications Division and the Library and Documentation Division.

The Administration Unit should be placed under Corporate Affairs as already highlighted in our findings-discussion related to the Finance, Administration and Information Technology Division. The Corporate Affairs Division should be given a more appropriate division designation (for example, Corporate Administration), to reflect its re-structured role and remit.

With the above re-organisation, we do not believe that it will be necessary for the current vacant position of Administrator: Corporate Affairs to be filled.

## 7.6 Summary of recommendations

In this section we present a summary of our recommendations arising from our review of the Institute's support services. These recommendations have been prioritised based on our best judgement.

### Cross-cutting recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** We recommend that a detailed macro-organisation structure for AISA is developed and approved, showing clear delineating reporting lines, and roles and responsibilities. All affected job descriptions should be revised in order to ensure alignment with the approved structure.

### Finance

**Recommendation 2:** The organisation and structure of supply-chain management within AISA needs attention. Given the central role it plays in facilitating the achievements of the goals of other units, we recommend an end-to-end review of the supply-chain value chain with a view to re-engineering critical processes where necessary.

### Administration

**Recommendation 3:** We recommend that as part of the development of the macro-organisation structure for AISA, the Administration function is relocated within the Corporate Affairs Unit.

### Information Systems & Technology Services

- **Recommendation 4:** Given the mission-critical role played by information systems in the business operations of the Institute, we recommend the elevation of the Information Technology Unit.
- **Recommendation 5:** We recommend that the capacity of the Information Technology Unit be augmented to enable a more responsive and efficient support service.

### Human Resources

**Recommendation 6:** We recommend that the Institute should initiate, as soon as possible, a comprehensive change-

management programme aimed at team building, culture change and re-invigorating the organisation climate. This programme should be integrated with the implementation of the other recommendations noted in this report to ensure that the systemic issues that give rise to the organisational climate of AISA are properly tackled.

### Internal Audit

- **Recommendation 7:** We recommend that the in-house Internal Audit function be maintained as a separate division outside the Office of the Chief Executive Officer, so as to ensure that the best practice of being *functionally* accountable to the Audit Committee and *administratively* accountable to the Chief Executive Officer is reflected both in substance and form on AISA's macro-organisation structure.
- **Recommendation 8:** We recommend that the Institute appropriately capacitates the Internal Audit function in a manner that is consistent with the in-house service-operating model variants.

### Corporate Affairs

- **Recommendation 9:** To realise better synergies and improve organisational alignment, we recommend that the Outreach and International Liaison function should be moved from Corporate Affairs and relocated with the other research-support functions, namely the Publications Division, and Library and Documentation Division. The administration function should be relocated under Corporate Affairs as noted in Recommendation 3 above.
- **Recommendation 10:** The Corporate Affairs Division should be given a more appropriate department designation (for example, Corporate Administration), to reflect its re-structured role and remit.

## 7.7 Remarks on the current financial position of AISA

As per National Treasury, AISA is classified as a 3A Public Entity. AISA's financial management is governed by the

Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) GRAP, GAAP and IFRS requirements and treasury regulations. Compliance, therefore, remains an area of focus. AISA's financial management now appears to be sound, following some years of upheaval as seen from the numerous audit queries and qualifications. Both internal and external stakeholders have expressed satisfaction with the progress made in this regard, particularly that an unqualified audit opinion in 2008/9 was issued.

The Africa Institute of South Africa Act, 2001 (Act No 68 of 2001) stipulates the funding sources of AISA as:

1. Parliamentary appropriations (by far the largest source)
2. Money paid by users of its services
3. Donations or contributions
4. Interest on investments
5. Income from other sources.

### Goals And Strategic Objectives For 2009/10- 2012/13

Financial objectives stipulated in the 5-Year Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Improve the control environment and compliance to legislation
- Ensure that AISA's budget is utilised effectively and efficiently in pursuance of its mandate
- Manage the Institute's cash-flow to facilitate operations
- Increase the revenue of AISA to augment the grant received from Government.

Focus areas indicated by Management include:

- Business efficiencies – 10%
- Control environment – 10%
- Information technology – 20%
- Cash-flow management – 20%
- Budget control – 40%.

The budgetary process at AISA is guided by National Treasury. The control environment has recorded improvements over the past 2 years. Management prides itself



for not having had a qualified audit opinion from 2008/9. Salient aspects in this regard include:

- **Alignment of accounting systems with the PFMA** - the assistance of an external service-provider has been sought as part of the internal audit service offering. In addition, the Compliance Report issued by the Auditor-General with regards to the quarter ended 31 March 2010 indicated that AISA had complied in all material respects with the requirements.
- **Adherence to policies and systems** – Management has reported that a total of 29 policies are awaiting approval by AISA's Council. These policies range from Human Resources, Finance, and Information Technology to Research.
- **Systems implementation to limit risk and exposure to fraud** – This is an ongoing activity.

Financial statements appeared to have been characterised by errors and corrections which warranted re-statements to comparatives in a number of cases. Audit opinions issued by the Auditor-General highlighted a number of issues including:

- **2005/6**
  - Numerous matters emphasised
  - 'Except for' audit qualification arising from non-disclosure of finance leases.
- **2006/7**
  - Absence of an Internal Audit function
  - Significant and material audit adjustments reported
  - 'Disclaimer' audit opinion was issued.
- **2007/8**
  - Significant and material audit adjustments reported
  - 'Except for' audit qualification arising from valuation of property, plant and equipment
  - Numerous other matters emphasised.
- **2008/9**
  - 'Clean' audit opinion issued by Auditor-General
  - Various matters pertaining to non-compliance with applicable legislation.

A review of the audited financial statements for the period 2005/6 to 2008/9 indicated the following:

**Table 1** Abbreviated Balance Sheets

	Notes	2005/6 R'000	2006/7 R'000	2007/8 R'000	2008/9 R'000
<b>Assets</b>					
Current Assets	1	3,492	7,832	9,336	11,833
Infrastructure, Plant & Equipment	2	9,792	9,930	2,035	2,792
Staff Benefits	3			2,275	2,418
Intangible Assets				352	747
		<b>13,284</b>	<b>17,762</b>	<b>13,998</b>	<b>17,790</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Current Liabilities		2,717	3,796	2,537	2,968
Non Current Liabilities	4	-	502	-	-
Total Liabilities		2,717	4,298	2,537	2,968
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>10,557</b>	<b>13,464</b>	<b>11,461</b>	<b>14,822</b>

**Notes**

- 1 Cash holdings from 2006/7 onwards account for the relatively high levels of current assets. These represent un-spent budgetary allocations as at the end of each year.
- 2 Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment were significantly written-down from approximately R10 million in the financial year 2006/7 to R2 million in 2007/8. AISA could not justify the carrying value of the assets which comprised largely library equipment.
- 3 In the year 2007/8, further balance sheet re-statements were effected which related to staff benefits.
- 4 For the first time, finance lease obligations were accounted for in 2006/7.

Source: Annual Reports, Shareholders Compact

**Table 2** Abbreviated Income Statements

	Notes	2005/6 R'000	2006/7 R'000	2007/8 R'000	2008/9 R'000
<b>Revenue</b>					
Sale of Goods	1	134	119	54	225
Cost of Sales		(133)	(62)	(43)	(406)
	1	57	11		(181)
State Grant	2	20,468	23,454	26,530	30,464
Special Projects Income		907	751	700	361
Other Income		85	317	175	280
		21,460	24,522	27,405	31,105
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>21,461</b>	<b>24,578</b>	<b>27,416</b>	<b>30,924</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Staff Costs	3	(12,627)	(13,638)	(11,206)	(14,744)
Admin Expenses		(8,767)	(7,770)	(9,700)	(9,607)
Other Operating Expenses		(684)	(2,301)	(2,966)	(3,139)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>(22,078)</b>	<b>(23,709)</b>	<b>23,872</b>	<b>(27,490)</b>
<b>Surplus From Operations</b>		<b>617</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>3,544</b>	<b>3,434</b>
<b>Surplus For Year</b>		<b>617</b>	<b>1,716</b>	<b>3,705</b>	<b>3,934</b>

**Notes**

- 1 Though insignificant in terms of its total requirements, AISA recovers revenues from sale of services and certain products
- 2 The grant from Government has increased steadily over the past few years
- 3 Staff costs are probably the largest expense item in AISA's income statement. A number of positions remain unfilled in AISA's staff complement due to resolving this matter is at the forefront of AISA's priorities.

Source Annual Reports, Shareholders Compact

The question of accumulated surpluses stemming from unspent budgetary amounts has been raised time and again. In 2008/9 this amount reached R14.8 million. Unspent funds will also serve to weaken AISA's case for an increased budget allocation from Government.

**Projected Expenditure**

The expenditure as detailed in the 5-Year Strategic Plan gives the following:

	R
Research	12,327,806
Publications	2,819,814
Library and Documentation	5,466,972
Human Resources	2,276,540
Corporate Affairs	3,271,502
Office of the CEO	3,842,452
Human Resources	4,478,250
<b>Total Projected Expenditure</b>	<b>34,483,336</b>

Source 5-Year Strategic Plan

As expected, the Research Division has by far the largest allocation (36%) followed by Library and Documentation (16%).





## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

AISA has experienced a rather turbulent time during which the organisation underwent radical organisational change, focused on the management and administration of the Institute. The objective of restructuring the organisation in line with best management practice and the requirements of the Department of Science and Technology has been achieved and, overall, the organisation now seems to be fully aligned with compliance requirements.

The biggest challenge to AISA now is to return to, and focus on, the development of its core business, which is, the production and dissemination of original research on Africa, thereby serving its mandate and the African Agenda of the South African government. In order to pursue its mandate successfully, a range of recommendations have been put forward in this review and these are summarised as follows (the more detailed recommendations can be found in the various sections of this report):

### Overall and general recommendations

Over the next five years, the organisation needs to focus seriously on building its research capacity and the quality of its research output and impact. In order to achieve this objective, strong, committed and visionary leadership is required and it is recommended that the CEO and EDR work closely together in order to re-orientate the organisation towards the goal of excellence in research on Africa.

It is recommended that the organisation pay serious and urgent attention to communication inside the organisation and to increasing its visibility, status and prestige in its external environment. If necessary, outside expertise should be brought in to assist with these tasks, including the development of a range of indicators for the measurement of standing in the research community locally and abroad.

### Specific recommendations

#### AISA's mandate and location:

- That AISA re-considers its interpretation of its mandate in order to find a balance between policy-relevant and

'deep' or fundamental knowledge-creating research and to prioritise the core business of the organisation, research. The development of research networks should be integrated into this interpretation.

- That AISA remains located within the Department of Science and Technology as a separate and independent science council focused on the African continent.

#### The Africa Institute of South Africa Act of 2001:

- That the preamble and Article 3 of the Act be aligned to draw a clear distinction between the mandate, objectives and instruments.
- That dated references (e.g. to the New Africa Initiative) be removed from the Act.
- That the 'prescribed manner' in which Council members are appointed [see Article 4(2)(a)] be included in the Act.
- That the option of the appointment of non-South African Council members be included in the Act in line with the mandate of AISA.

#### Governance and structure of AISA:

- That the Institutional Management Meeting (IMM) be constituted as a formalised management committee, dealing with strategic matters on a regularised basis.
- The management structure should emphasise the interdependence between Research and Support services with a clear emphasis on the priority of Research as the core business of the organisation.
- The CEO should be directly involved in the research function of AISA, whilst providing the Executive Director Research with the necessary authority to pursue the organisation's research agenda, and with the required administrative assistance.
- The Research Division should be structured in such a way as to promote research depth, effective networking with external scholars, development of staff and the establishment of a core pool of senior research capacity and experience (see the proposed structure on p 11).
- Although policy development and briefing is considered a vital output of fundamental research, the Policy Unit should be integrated into the various research foci/



themes of the Research Division rather than remain a separate unit.

- Outreach and International Liaison (OIL) is not integrated into the work of the Research Division and should be re-conceptualised in a way that is commensurate with the needs and functioning of the Research Division.

#### Research agenda, outputs and management:

- AISA is encouraged to re-double its efforts to place research at the centre of its business.
- That AISA develops a more coherent and focused research agenda with well-defined and limited research project priorities through an analytic and consultative process that ensures relevance and familiarity with the cutting-edge research questions on African integration.
- That the requirements for research outputs be refined and aligned with levels of seniority, and calibrated over a three year cycle.
- That fieldwork requirements be set on the basis of the nature and requirements of specific research projects, rather than in a mechanistic way.
- That partnership and networking strategies be formulated and developed in line with the research agenda-setting process, and that adequate human and material research resources be mobilised to seek quality relationships focused on the development of in-depth basic research of a Pan-African scope.
- That the management structure and procedures of the Research Division be overhauled in line with the new research agenda, and in a way that would support and empower the Executive Director Research.
- That improved management and incentives be put in place to secure and retain high-quality researchers and appropriate research working conditions.
- That the current pool of researchers be supplemented through the recruitment of a number of top-level local and continental African specialist researchers.
- That effective mechanisms be put in place to ensure that AISA's research is visible and accessible to influence scholarship and public debates and policies.

#### Library and Documentation Services:

- That the need for and importance of the development of a virtual library be reiterated as an urgent priority.
- That the LDS collection be updated in order to provide the necessary support for the research enterprise.
- That the GIS re-imagines itself in order to forge a sustainable path within the AISA mandate, given international technological innovations.
- That the outreach aspect of the LDS (and its financial targets) be re-considered and re-conceptualised as the current concept does not contribute in any real sense to the quality of the outputs or the profile of the organisation, nor to the financial targets.
- That on-line access to the library be significantly improved.

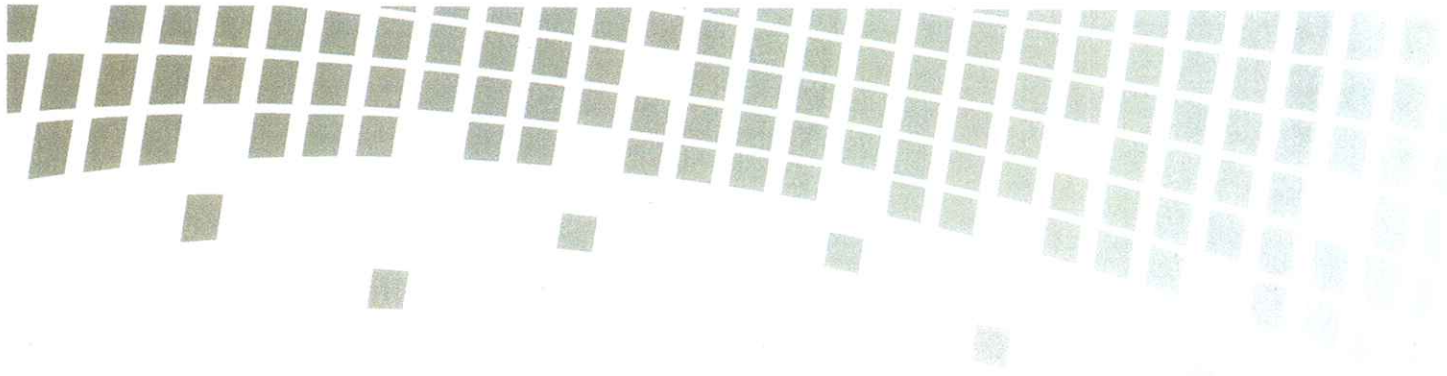
#### Publications:

- That a stock-management policy and procedures be developed as a matter of urgency.
- That existing marketing and sales channels need to be extended, also through the establishment of on-line sales channels.
- That an author management strategy be developed.
- That inventive exploitation of the internet be explored and implemented in line with international trends in order to improve sales, visibility and impact.
- That AISA develops a coordinated scholarly communication framework to improve the impact and visibility of its research output, and delivery on its mandate.

#### Support Services:

- That a detailed macro-structure for the organisation be developed, showing clear delineating reporting lines, roles and responsibilities and that all affected job descriptions be revised in order to ensure alignment with the approved structure.
- That the organisation and structure of supply chain management be reviewed with a view to re-engineering critical processes where necessary (see the detailed discussion and suggestions in section 7 of this report).





- That the Administration function be relocated within the Corporate Affairs Unit and that this unit be more appropriately designated, e.g. Corporate Administration.
- That the Institute reviews the capacity and placement of the Internal Audit Division in line with the discussion in 7.4 of this report.
- The improvement of staff morale should be a top priority for the organisation, as should be efforts to improve relations between the administrative and management divisions on the one hand, and the Research and research support divisions (LDS and Publications) on the other, as well as within these two groupings. For this purpose, a comprehensive change-management programme aimed at team building, culture change and re-invigorating the organisation climate is required.
- That the status of the Information Technology Unit be elevated, and that its capacity be augmented as a matter of urgency.
- That the organisation improves its staff recruitment and retention strategy, as well as its ability to disburse its annual financial allocation in a responsible, effective and timely fashion.

# Appendix 1: Respondents

## The following external stakeholders were interviewed:

- Dr Phil Mjwara, Director- General: Department of Science and Technology (DST)
- Dr Bobby Soobrayan, Acting Director-General: Basic Education, Department of Education (DoE) and caretaker CEO: Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA)
- Dr Eddy Maloka, Advisor to the Minister: Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and former CEO: AISA
- Prof Nthabiseng Ogude, Vice-Principal of the University of Pretoria and former Chairperson: AISA
- Ambassador Tejler, Diplomat from the Swedish Embassy
- Dr Olive Shisana, President: Human Science Research Council (HSRC)
- Dr Siphamandla Zondi, CEO: Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD)
- Dr John Tesha, Executive Secretary: Africa Forum
- Dr Samba Mboup, Director and Chair: African Renaissance Centre
- Mr George Monyemangeni, Independent Research Consultant (ex-DTI)
- Prof Mzobz Mboya, Advisor: Education and Training, NEPAD
- Dr Sifiso Ndlovu, Executive Director, South African Democratic Education Trust (SADET)
- Mr George Kgarume, Director: Governance, DST
- Mr Andrew Maswangani, Director : West Africa Directorate, DIRCO
- Mr Joseph Burton, Director: Immigration Policy & Directives, Department of Home Affairs
- Mr Fadl Nacerodien, Director: USA Directorate, DIRCO

- Mr Solly Mabunda, Deputy Director: International Relations, City of Tshwane
- Mr Patrick Rankhumise, Deputy Director: Multilateral, DIRCO
- Dr Zitha Mokomane, Senior Research Specialist: Child, Youth, Family and Social Development Programme, HSRC
- Advocate Siphon Mantula, Legal Assistant: Cultural, Religious and Linguists Rights Commission, also AYGS member

## The following Council members were interviewed:

- Dr Beki Hlatshwayo, Chairperson: AISA
- Prof Yolanda Sadie, Member of Audit and Research Committees, AISA

## The following AISA staff members were interviewed:

- Dr Matlotleng P Matlou, CEO
- Dr Monica Juma, Executive Director: Research
- Mrs Elsie Maritz, Chief Financial Officer
- Mr Solani Ngobeni, Director: Publications
- Mrs Segametsi Molawa, Director: Library and Documentation Services
- Mrs Ingrid Canham, Manager: Human Resources
- Ms Nadema Jainoo, Manager: Corporate Affairs and Council Secretariat
- Dr Thokozani Simelane, Head of Unit: Science and Technology
- Dr Sehlare Makgetlang, Head of Unit: Governance & Democracy



An interview was also granted to staff representatives of NEHAWU

## Appendix 2: Programme of the Institutional Review

### Institutional Review Schedule Interview Venue: Africa Institute of South Africa Boardroom

Sunday, 18/04/2010		
Arrival of Institutional Review members, Prof Samson Moyo and Mr Garry Rosenberg		
Monday, 19/04/2010		
Time	Item	Name
8:30	Arrival of the Institutional Review Panellists	
9:00	Welcome by the CEO, AISA	Dr Matlotleng P Matlou
9:15	Introductions	All
9:30	Brief background of AISA	Dr Matlotleng P Matlou
9:50	2010 Institutional Review Objectives	Dr Matlotleng P Matlou
10:00	Panel discussion on briefing notes, documentations, additional amendments, requests for additional interviews	
10:30	TEA/ COFFEE	
11:00	Panel discussion on briefing notes, documentations, additional amendments, requests for additional interviews	
12:10	Interview with the Director: LDS	Mrs Segametsi Molawa
13:15	LUNCH	
13:45	Panel discussion regarding briefing notes, documentations, additional amendments, requests for additional interviews	
14:30	Interview with the CFO	Mrs Elsie Maritz
16:45	Interview with the Director: Publications	Mr Solani Ngobeni
17:00	Interview with the Manager: HR	Mrs Ingrid Canham
18:15	Departure to Birdwood	
19:30	Supper with AISA CEO and Mgr: CA	
Tuesday, 20/04/2010		
Time	Item	Name
8:30	Arrival of the Institutional Review Panellists	
8:45	Interview with the Executive Executive: Research	Dr Monica Juma
9:40	Interview with the Director: Governance, DST	Mr George Kgarume
10:20	TEA/COFFEE	
11:00	Telephonic interview with the Advisor: Education and Training, NEPAD	Prof Mzobz Mboya
11:30	Interview with the Deputy Director: International Relations, CoT (Partners in the hosting of the Ambassadorial Forum)	Mr Solly Mabunda,

12:10	Interview with the Executive Director: SADET	Dr Sifiso Ndlovu
12:50	LUNCH	
13:30	Review of interview notes	
14:40	Departure to UP	
15:00	Interview with the Vice- Principal: UP and ex- Chairperson: AISA	Prof. Nthabiseng Ogude
16:30	Departure to Birdwood	
19:30	Supper with AISA Chair and Mgr: CA (Council Secretariat)	

### Wednesday, 21/04/2010

Time	Item	Name
8:30	Arrival of the Institutional Review Panellists	
8:45	Interview with the Deputy Director: Multi-lateral (also an ex- Researcher)	Mr Patrick Rankhumise
9:15	Interview with the Executive Secretary, Africa Forum	Dr John Tesha
9:45	TEA/ COFFEE	
10:00	Video conference interview with the President: HSRC	Dr Olive Shisana
11:15	Interview with the Director: West Africa Directorate, DIRCO	Mr Maswangani
11:45	Interview with the Director: USA Directorate, DIRCO	Mr Fadi Nacerodien
12:30	LUNCH	
13:30	Follow-up interview with the Executive Director: Research	Dr Monica Juma
15:00	Follow-up interview with the Director: LDS (Garry Rosenberg)	Ms Segametsi Molawa
15:00	Interview with a Legal Assistant: Cultural, Religious and Linguists Rights Commission, also AYGS member	Advocate Siphso Mantula
16:30	Departure to Birdwood	
19:00	Supper	

### Thursday, 22/04/2010

Time	Item	Name
8:30	Arrival of Institutional Review Panellists	
9:00	Interview with Home Affairs	Mr Joseph Burton, Director: Immigration Policy & Directives
9:45	Interview with an External Researcher/ Consultant (ex- DTI)	Mr George Monyemangeni
10:30	Interview with the Acting Director/ Head of Unit: Science and Technology	Dr Thokozani Simelane
11:15	Telephonic Interview with AISA Council member, also Research Committee member	Prof Yolanda Sadie
11:30	Interview external Researcher, HSRC	Dr Zitha Mokomane



12:15	Interview with the Head of Unit: Governance & Democracy	Dr Sehlare Makgetlang
12:45	LUNCH	
13:30	Interview with the Manager: Corporate Affairs	Ms Nadema Jainoo
14:00	Panel discussions	
15:00	Telephonic interview with CEO: IGD	Dr Siphamandla Zondi
15:30	TEA/ COFFEE	
16:00	Panel discussions	
16:30	Departure to Birdwood	
19:00	Supper	

**Friday, 23/04/2010**

Time	Item	Name
8:00	Interview with the DG: DST at CSIR Campus	Dr Phil Mjwara
9:30	Interview with Director and Chair: African Renaissance Centre	Dr Samba Mboup
10:30	TEA/COFFEE	
11:00	Structuring of report/ reviewing additional information	
11:30	Interview with Embassy of Sweden	Ambassador Tejler
12:00	Structuring of report/ reviewing additional information	
12:30	LUNCH	
13:15	Information clarification/ structuring of report/ reviewing additional information	
14:00	Telephonic interview with Advisor to the Minister: DIRCO	Dr Eddy Maloka
14:30	Sensitise CEO of issues, way forward	
15:30	Panel departs for home.	

# Appendix 3: Terms of Reference

## Background

### Origin

The Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) was first established in 1960 as a non-profit organisation, until its transformation by Act No. 68 of 2001 of parliament, which accorded it the status of a statutory body located under the Department of Science and Technology. AISA's research focuses primarily on political, socio-economic, international and development issues in contemporary Africa.

As per the Africa Institute of South Africa Act No. 68 of 2001, the objectives of AISA are to:

- a) promote knowledge and understanding of African affairs through leading social scientists acting in concert and across all disciplines and through training and education on African affairs
- b) collect, process and disseminate information on African affairs, give effective advice and facilitate appropriate action in relation to the collective needs, opportunities and challenges of all South Africans
- c) promote awareness and consciousness of Africa at grass-roots level.

### Evolution of the Research Division

In the past AISA's research division was divided into two sections: Area Studies and Programmes. In the former, focus was placed on national and regional politics and developments, and in the latter on Peace and Security, Global Governance and Sustainable Development. To ensure that we address continental integration, our Research Division was restructured with this objective in mind and the need to conform to the DST's 10 year Grand Strategy and topical developments in Africa. From the 2008/09 financial year, AISA's Research Division comprised of thematic units to address issues of Sustainable Development; Governance and Democracy; Peace and Security; Policy; and Science and Technology without losing focus of its area studies expertise. This, we believe, will enable AISA to maintain its credibility as an advisory body on African affairs

and promote greater awareness of current issues on the continent.

### Dissemination

Apart from our mandate to conduct research in Africa, AISA must also produce and disseminate the information it gathers. The latter we accomplish via a strong media presence, hosting seminars and conferences, submitting papers and presenting papers at external events. To ensure that we achieve a wider reach, AISA is developing partnerships with social development institutes and organisations, which will aid us with the collection of information and dispersing this knowledge as far afield as possible. The ultimate goal being to increase awareness about developments within Africa and contribute to the creation of a knowledge based economy.

### Development

In addition to the above, AISA also actively pursues developing and increasing interest in the Social Sciences via our internship, - fellowship, - and Young Graduates and Scholars (AYGS) programmes. To facilitate improved production of post graduate outputs, we conduct an AISA Campus Series, at historically disadvantaged institutions, in which we lead seminars, together with other partners, on Research Methodology concentrating on fieldwork experience in Africa; appropriate use of documentation centres and the world of publishing.

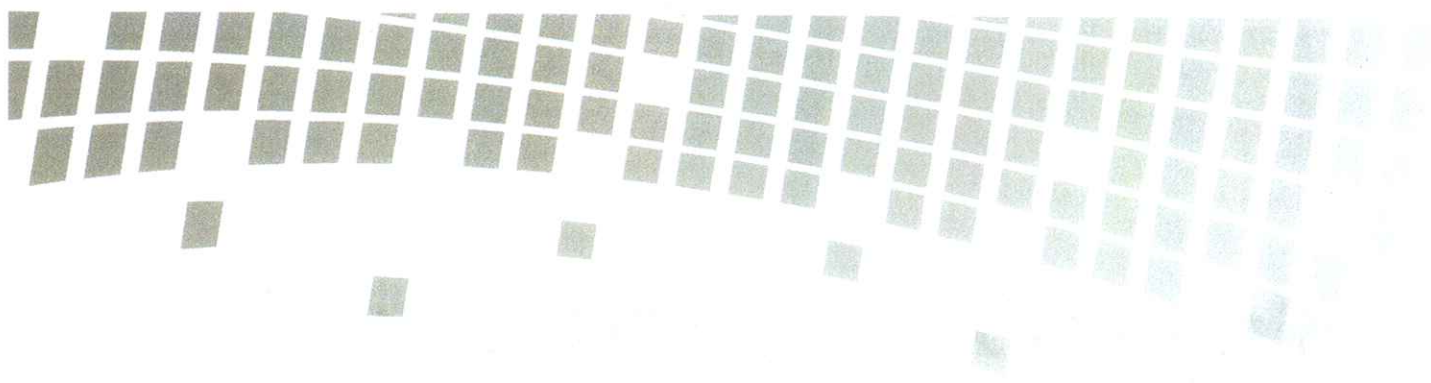
Given the ever changing dynamics of Africa, our research produces policy briefs and inputs on regional and continental issues. With AISA working towards attaining African elections observer status, we hope to; ascertain conditions prior to elections; report on election proceedings; and the resulting post election changes.

As an independent research institute, AISA is committed to reporting the status quo of African affairs to encourage discourse, which will contribute to peace, development and prosperity on the continent.

### Objectives of the 2009/10 Institutional Review

To determine if structures within AISA incorporated suggestions from the 2004 Review and if the current structure and





modus operandi will enable it to meet the projected outputs and the mandate.

Questions that could possibly assist in ascertaining the above include:

- Is the Africa Institute of South Africa Act 68 of 2001 still relevant, concise w.r.t. objectives of the institute and areas of operations? Should AISA continue to report to DST? Does the Act give a brief overview of the responsibilities of the Executive Authority, Accounting Authority and the Accounting Officer and make reference to the PFMA?
- Have any of the suggestions of the 2004 Institutional Review been adopted by all divisions in AISA?
- Is the structure and operandi modus of the Research division aligned to AISA's strategic plan, the Research Agenda, AISA's mandate and the DST 10 year grand challenges?
- How well are the statutory mandate and the organisational structure and priorities matched to each? Does either need revision – is the structure and its priorities wrong or does the mandate (i.e. the Act) require review because it is dated?
- Do the structure and the modus operandi of the Research division allow it to respond to the dynamics of constant change on the Continent? Do outputs reflect this?
- Have the quality and quantity of outputs generated by AISA improved since the last review?
- Have these said outputs created the desired impacts?
- Where should the Research Capacity Building programmes be located?
- Is AISA producing as much research outputs, comparatively speaking, as the HSRC and CSIR, given the huge anomalies in budgets?
- Is there alignment between the core divisions, i.e. Research, Publications and LDS?
- How well Research, Publications and LDS complement each other to ensure that we reach our mandate?
- Assess how well AISA is contributing to knowledge production on African affairs and publishing in Africa?
- Have the quality and quantity of the Library holdings on African affairs increased since the last review and how accessible are these documents?
- Have support divisions created systems and procedures to increase the organisation's effectiveness and efficiencies?
- Assess the compliance and strength of the control environment?
- How well is AISA performing – i.t.o its use of resources and its production output as well as in its operational sphere, both nationally and internationally?
- Is AISA over- or under-staffed, in comparison to other institutes this size? Is a mindset change required to accomplish SMART outputs and contain operational overheads? How could AISA better tailor its contribution to meet South African and African future development priorities and raise awareness as mandated?
- How effective is the organisation's structure?
- In sum total, how relevant is AISA i.t.o of our mandate?

### Proposed Structure of the Investigations and the Report

We herewith request the panel to digest the documentation provided, look at the current structure of the institute, financials, performance and our ability to continue to meet our mandate's requirements.

The above will be augmented by discussions with members of the outgoing Council, the CEO and divisional heads (6 divisions), DST staff members, as well as other stakeholders including academia, African Affairs students, staff members from other National government departments and colleagues from sister organisations over a period of four days. On the 5<sup>th</sup> and last day of the formal Institutional Review block week, discussions amongst the panel members would be encouraged to ensure that they have clarity on all questions posed to management and allow them to telephone other interviewees, should the need arise.

A proposed structure for the report format is provided, to assist in the production thereof and guide discussions and investigations.

## Proposed Methodology

The Institutional Review block week will take place from 19 – 23 April 2010 at the premises of the Africa Institute of South Africa.

The panel will comprise of six individuals, 4 of whom were selected for their knowledge of research, the management of public research institutions and of the public research infrastructures in Africa. 2 panel members, who have an auditing background, were also selected for their expert knowledge of control environments and performance to accommodate the fact that the AGSA will be expressing an opinion on the latter as of 2010/2011.

Panel members will receive preparation documentation by 1 April 2010, i.e. two weeks prior to the commencement of the actual Institutional Review discussions and investigations.

Discussions will place with members of the outgoing Council, the CEO and divisional heads (6 divisions), DST staff members, as well as other stakeholders including academia, African Affairs students, staff members from other national government departments and colleagues from sister organisations, over the first four days of the aforementioned period. On the 5<sup>th</sup> and last day of the formal Institutional Review block week, discussions amongst the panel members would be encouraged to ensure that they have clarity on all questions posed to management and allow them to telephone other interviewees should the need arise. A draft report must be submitted to AISA's Chairperson and CEO within two weeks after the end of Institutional Review block week.

The Chairperson and one of the auditing "expert" panel members should present the report to the senior management team for them to hear of the findings first-hand. This management team will provide written feedback to the Institutional Review Panel within two weeks of submission of the draft copy. This feedback should ideally correct factual misstatements, clarify issues, and offer suggestions where gaps exist in the report. Management is cognizant of the fact that their inputs may not be incorporated into the final report if the panel deems these to be irrelevant.

The final report must be submitted to AISA's Chairperson of Council and the CEO within two weeks of receiving management's feedback. Copies of the report will be available to the Minister of Science and Technology and Director-General of the Department of Science and Technology through AISA's Chairperson.

**Table 3** Illustrated in tabular format:

Item	Dates
Courier of Document	31 March 2010
Commencement of Institutional Review Process (interviews)	19 April 2010
Investigations ends (block week of interviews ends)	23 April 2010
Composition of draft report	24 April– 9 May 2010
Submission of draft report	10 May 2010
Presentation of said report	Week of 10 May 2010
Receipt of management's responses	21 May 2010
Submission of final report	28 May 2010

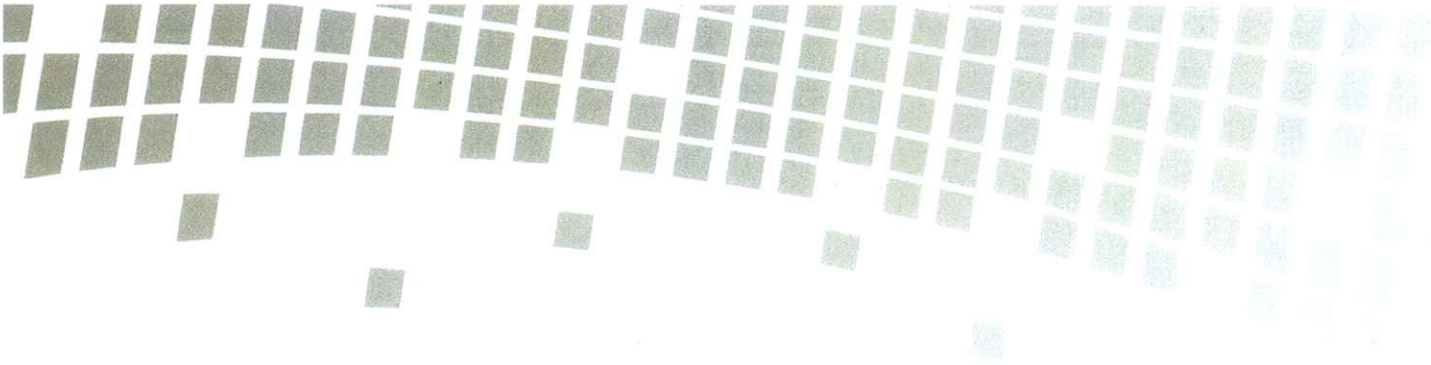
## Background Material and Secretariat

To allow panel members to prepare adequately for the Institutional Review, the following documentation will be couriered to them a minimum of two weeks prior to the commencement of the hereof. In addition, all the meeting logistics will be finalized and communicated one week prior to the Institutional review.

- AISA Act 68 of 2001
- Strategic Plans 2008/09 and 2009/10
- Business Plans 2008/09 and 2009/10
- KPI Reports 2008/09 and 2009/10
- Research Agenda
- Institutional Review Report 2004
- Institutional Review report 1998/1999
- Annual Reports for 2004/05 - 2008/09

Additional documentation of relevance:



- 
- HSRC Act
  - CODESRIA modus operandi

In addition to the above, should any panel member require additional information, the requested information will be availed to them and they will be provided with the required tools to enable them to conduct the Review

For the investigation block week, i.e. 19- 23 April 2010, the services of a typist will also be secured to transcribe interviews and deliberations at AISA's premises.

### **Gratuity**

Council approved an honorarium payment to thank Institutional Review Panellist for their participation in this process.

### **Budget**

Money for the Institutional Review has been ring- fenced and the budget for conducting this exercise has been approved.

# Appendix 4: Proposed Structure of the Institutional Review Report

We suggest that panellists utilise the format below and questions raised in the institutional review of 2004 and point number 2 of the Institutional Review ToR to guide investigations and report. Ideally the report should cover the following areas:

## Brief introduction to the Background

### Objectives of the Review

To determine if structures within AISA incorporated suggestions from the 2004 Review and if the current structure and modus operandi will enable it to meet the projected outputs and the mandate.

- How can AISA better achieve its broad mandate with its relatively small size?
- What should AISA's research agenda be?
- If knowledge is trans-disciplinary and indivisible, should AISA also cover the natural sciences?
- Knowledge about Africa is largely through the western languages and knowledge systems, how should AISA be contributing to the transformation of this situation?

### AISA's Strategic Objectives

Are the institute's strategic objectives aligned with its mandate and stakeholders expectations?

### Structure and Governance

- Is the institute's structure and operandi modus relevant to its objectives?
- Has structure of the institute adapted to the challenges of decreased resources and the compelling need to increase coverage on the continent?
- Is AISA's mandate comparable to its budget?
- How should the LDS and Publication divisions be better utilised?
- Is the governance structure relevant and does it facilitate operational deadlines and rapid decision implementation?

### Human Capital (excluding equity and transformation)

- Has AISA addressed the principal recommendations of the 2004 review?
- Are all HR policies, procedures and systems compliant to legislation and good business practices?
- Is AISA's human capital sufficient to meet its objectives and operational needs?
- Is AISA's senior management capable of implementing planned strategies and monitoring performance?
- Does AISA encourage staff to increase scientific qualifications and fund studies as a means of staff retention?
- Are capacity building programmes augmenting tertiary education curricula and increasing interest in Social Science disciplines?

### Equity and Transformation

- With an Africa mandate should the Research Division, amongst others, be subjected to equity targets?
- As recommended by the 2004 review that the OSSREA and CODESRIA models be reviewed and aspects thereof be utilised, what progress has been made in this regard?
- Are AISA's outputs marketed to increase awareness and its impact?
- Is staff motivated to become more performance-driven?

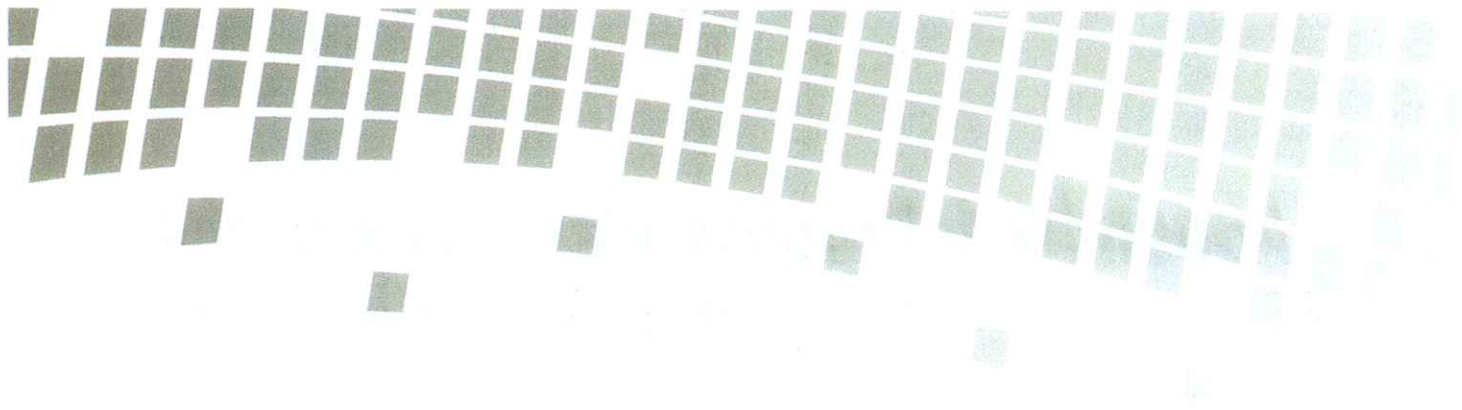
### Control Environment

- Are accounting systems aligned with the PFMA, GRAP, GAAP and IFRS requirements?
- Are systems in place to monitor performance against targets?
- Is the adherence to policies and systems monitored?
- How can ICT be used more effectively?
- Is expenditure warranted and monitored?
- Are systems implemented to limit risk and exposure to fraud?

### Relevance of the Africa Institute of South Africa Act No 68 of 2001

- Is the Act aligned to the PFMA?





- What overlaps exist between AISA, DIRCO and HSRC?
- Is AISA correctly placed as a public entity of DST?
- Should AISA continue to exist as an independent research institute?

#### Conclusions

- What main challenges would AISA face in the next five years?
- How should these be addressed?







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