

COMMITTEE ON SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Report on Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in the Agricultural and related Basic Life Sciences



*Applying scientific thinking
in the service of society*





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The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) was inaugurated in May 1996 in the presence of then President Nelson Mandela, the Patron of the launch of the Academy. It was formed in response to the need for an Academy of Science consonant with the dawn of democracy in South Africa: activist in its mission of using science for the benefit of society, with a mandate encompassing all fields of scientific enquiry in a seamless way, and including in its ranks the full diversity of South Africa's distinguished scientists.

The Parliament of South Africa passed the Academy of Science of South Africa Act (Act 67 in 2001) which came into operation on 15 May 2002.

This has made ASSAf the official Academy of Science of South Africa, recognised by government and representing South Africa in the international community of science academies.

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PREFACE

COMMITTEE ON SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Discipline-Grouped Peer Review Reports on South African Scholarly Journals

Independent, multiple peer review in science and scholarship is the equivalent of democracy in politics – sometimes awkward, often criticised, but ‘the least bad way to do things’, all things considered (for a full discussion, see Chapter 3 of ASSAf’s Consensus Report on *Scholarly Books: their Production, Use and Evaluation in South Africa Today*. ASSAf, 2009, Pretoria).

The traditional focus of peer review is on a single journal article, book chapter or book. Journals have not often been subjected to independent, multiple peer review, and are usually evaluated in qualitative, reputational terms, or, more recently, quasi-quantitatively by the bibliometrics of impact factors.

Peer review of journal titles thus requires the development of an unfamiliar methodology, including encouraging peers to undertake a task that seems daunting when approached in the traditional way of close reading and evaluation of an entire work. We have accordingly taken on this ambitious programme of peer reviewing, in groups, all scholarly journals published in South Africa, by ‘paving the way’ in two pilot reviews; these have respectively examined the last 3-5 years of local journals in the Social Sciences and related fields, and those in the Agricultural and related Basic Life Sciences. Multi-perspective peer review panels were appointed by the Academy Council on the recommendation of the Academy’s Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa; editors were requested to complete specially designed questionnaires, and peer reviewers were selected from a spectrum of scholars in the fields concerned. Each was asked to provide answers to a set of pointed questions, which addressed the quality, scope and focus of the peer-reviewed articles in the journals under review, the authorship generally, and the presence or absence of enrichment features, such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and ‘news and views’ articles. [The editors’ questionnaire and peer reviewers question list are provided as Appendices to this Report.]

Each peer review panel met to discuss the individual peer reviews and questionnaires and consolidated them into a consensus review for each journal. Final formulations and recommendations were prepared, including suggestions for improvement from both the peer reviewers and the panel. The responsible editors were asked to check the accuracy of the information in each individual journal report, and the final version of the full report sent for approval to both the ASSAf Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa and the Council of the Academy of Science of South Africa.



We have learnt a great deal about the peer review of journals from these two pilot reviews. The task can be achieved and we believe it is going to be valuable, from the point of view of the national accreditation system, editors, prospective authors (new and established) and peer reviewers, and the National System of Innovation generally.

We would like to thank the members of the two pilot peer review panels, the many peer reviewers, and the Director, Susan Veldsman, and Thabo Radebe and Zweli Ndayi of the Scholarly Publishing Unit of the Academy for helping to make these two pilot reviews possible. The path forward will be a lot easier as a result of their contributions.

Wieland Gevers

David R Woods

Chairpersons, Peer Review Panels, ASSAf



FOREWORD

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Policy and Procedures for the Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions

In 2003, the Department of Education (now the Department of Higher Education and Training – DHET) introduced the 'Policy and Procedures for the Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions'. The purpose of the policy is to "encourage research productivity by rewarding quality research output at public higher education institutions". The policy defines research output as "textual output where research is understood as original, systematic investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge and understanding". Therefore, the policy is a tool for the distribution of subsidy in lieu of research publication which, in turn, is regarded as proxy for the research productivity of institutions. It is in this regard that the allocation of subsidy is only to authors who are officially associated with the claiming institutions and not anyone outside the public higher education sector. The distribution of subsidy or allocation of funds against approved publications is, therefore, to the institutions and not the individual authors or academics.

The policy recognises the following categories of research outputs for subsidy:

- **Journals** – defined as "peer-reviewed periodical publications devoted to disseminating original research and new developments within specific disciplines, sub-disciplines or field of study". Only articles in journals which appear on approved journal lists qualify for subsidy.
- **Books** – defined as "peer-reviewed, non-periodical scholarly or research publications disseminating original research on developments within specific disciplines, sub-disciplines or fields of study". Monographs, book chapters and edited works are included in this category.
- **Conference proceedings** – defined as the "published record of a conference, congress, symposium or other meeting whose purpose is to disseminate original research and new developments within specific disciplines, sub-disciplines or fields of study". Only peer-reviewed proceedings are considered.

The Department is aware that certain publications fall outside of the parameters set by the policy and, in this regard, improvements to the policy are under consideration.



The purpose of the policy should, however, always be remembered, and this means that non-recognised publications do not signify lack of importance or poor quality. For instance, textbooks are not recognised under the policy but the production of quality textbooks to support teaching is important.

The policy makes provision for the development of a list of approved quality South African journals¹. The Department receives applications for inclusion of journals in the DHET list on an annual basis. The process for consideration of inclusion of a journal is twofold. First, the journals are reviewed within the Department for compliance with the requirements of the policy. Second, all applications are then sent to the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) for consideration before a final decision is made by the Department. The DHET follows this process to ensure that all accredited journals are of high quality, and the involvement of ASSAf is important to ensure a robust review process.

Furthermore, periodic reviews of all listed journals are undertaken by the Department, again in collaboration with ASSAf, to ensure that all approved journals continue to meet both the technical and quality criteria as laid out in the policy. This continued involvement is vital to support the development of quality South African journals. We would like to believe that the fruit of this exercise is seen in the increasing number of South African journals that appear on quality international indexes.

While care is always taken to ensure and sustain consistency in policy implementation, the policy itself must be dynamic to always be relevant to current developments in higher education. It is for this reason that the policy is currently being considered for improvement. Moreover, it also recognises electronic publications that meet the standards and quality set for this form of medium.

The Directorate: University Education Policy and Development Support of the Department is in continuous communication with the individual research offices of all universities in the country. Much information resides at these research offices; as such, queries on the policy can be directed to the universities' research offices or directly to the Directorate. All university research offices have the contact details of the Directorate.

Mr M Mabizela
Dr G Simpson
Ms N Luruli

Directorate

¹A journal is considered South African if its seat of publication is in South Africa.

1 PERIODIC PEER REVIEW OF SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOLARLY JOURNALS: APPROVED PROCESS GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

1.1 Background

During the launch meeting of the ASSAf-led National Scholarly Editors' Forum held on 25 July 2007, the 112 participants supported ASSAf and the Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPiSA) taking the lead in the implementation of Recommendation 5 of the 2006 ASSAf Report, *A Strategic Approach to Research Publishing in South Africa*. This recommendation dealt specifically with the need for a system of quality assurance for the over 260 South African journals that are accredited by the Department of Education:

Recommendation No 5: that ASSAf be mandated jointly by the Departments of Education and Science and Technology to carry out external peer review and associated quality audit of all South African research journals in 5-year cycles, probably best done in relation to groups of titles sharing a particular broad disciplinary focus, in order to make recommendations for improved functioning of each journal in the national and international system.

1.2 ASSAf peer review panels

The quality assurance system for journals is conducted primarily through discipline-grouped peer reviews carried out by a series of purpose-appointed peer review panels (PRPs) drawn from the ranks of researchers and other experienced scholars in and around the fields concerned in each case, and also include persons with practical (technical) knowledge of publishing. The proposed ASSAf PRPs are overseen by the CSPiSA, but appointed by the Academy Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and relevant inputs, before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and final consideration sequentially by the CSPiSA and the ASSAf Council.

The following quote from the 2006 ASSAf Report clarifies the approach to be followed in the review of the journals and some aspects of the approach proposed:

*The periodic, grouped **quality assurance-directed peer review of South African research periodicals** would function analogously to the quality audits of the CHE/HEQC, would be developed as an outcome of the Editors' Forum, and would focus on: the quality of editorial and review process; fitness of, and for purpose; positioning in the global cycle of new and old journals listed and indexed in databases; financial sustainability; and scope and size issues. The **ASSAf panels** carrying out the reviews would each comprise 6-8 experts, some of whom would not be directly drawn from the areas concerned, and would require data-gathering, interviews, and international comparisons, before reports with recommendations are prepared, approved, and released to stakeholders such as national associations, the Departments of Science and Technology and of Education, the CHE/HEQC, the NRF and HESA.*



The first ASSAf PRPs reviewed and assessed sets of journals in two selected fields, and simultaneously assisted to refine the initial criteria and process guidelines (see below), for use in the subsequent reviews of further sets of journals by other panels.

It must be emphasised that the main purpose of the ASSAf review process of journals is to improve the *quality* of scholarly publishing in the country and not an attempt to control these publications in any way. ASSAf respects the independence and freedom of researchers and of the research process itself as important preconditions for the critical and innovative production of new knowledge. At the same time, the work of South African researchers has to be assessed as part of the global community of scholars and scientists and in this respect ASSAf has an obligation to contribute to the improvement of quality of such work where possible.

1.3 Initial criteria

A number of criteria were explored in the part of the 2006 ASSAf Report (Chapter 4) that dealt with the survey of the then over 200 editors of accredited South African scholarly journals. Other possible criteria were proposed in other sections of the Report, or have since been suggested by members of the CSPiSA or the National Scholarly Editors' Forum; these are grouped and listed below (they have been consolidated in the Questionnaire presented in Appendix A):

1.3.1 Editorial-related criteria (generally based on the Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review developed by ASSAf):

- Longevity of the journal (continuous or discontinuous) in years.
- Number of original peer-reviewed articles published, plus the number of manuscripts submitted, rejected out-of-hand and rejected after peer review per year during the last five years; average length of published articles; and 'author demography' of articles submitted and published.
- Number and nature of peer reviewers used per manuscript and overall per year, including institutional and national/international spread; quality (as per the Code of Best Practice) and average length of peer review reports.
- Average time period between submission and publication of accepted manuscripts; frequency of publication.
- Professional stature and experience of the editor; selection and longevity of service of the editor; success in addressing the major issues in the field, through commissioning of reviews/articles, editorial comment, etc.
- Number and professional stature/experience of editorial board members; selection, turnover, nature of involvement and spread (national/international) of members.
- Existence and nature of editorial policy/guidelines and frequency of revision; and existence of a conflict-of-interest policy (for example when manuscripts are authored/co-authored by an editor or board member).
- Publication of *errata* and number per year.

- Publication, number, acquisition and proportion of enrichment features, such as editorials, 'news and views', correspondence, book reviews and policy/topical fora.
- Existence of a peer review process (e.g. by a professional association).

1.3.2 Business-related criteria:

- Frequency and regularity of publication.
- Print run; redundant stock; and method of distribution to readers (direct or indirect).
- Production model and service provider(s).
- Paid and unpaid advertising.
- Sponsorships and *quid pro quo* agreements.
- Paid and unpaid subscription base; marketing of subscriptions; and cost level of print and (if applicable) e-subscriptions.
- Existence (or consideration of), accessibility and evaluation, especially in respect of tagging and searchability, of an e-publication version.
- Existence of HTML and XML versions in addition to PDF versions; and use of multimedia.
- Provision of open-access portals.
- Total income and expenditure per annum.
- Distribution to international destinations.
- Inclusion (and nature thereof) in Thomson Reuters Web of Science and/or IBSS, or any other international database. Receipt of offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.
- Existence of copyright agreements.

1.3.3 Bibliometric assessments:

- Citation practice (e.g. the number of authors listed).
- Availability, if applicable, of Web of Science journal-type impact factors (and various derivatives) over the last five years.
- Nature (regular/increasing) of publication of reviews.
- Publishing of English abstracts for non-English articles.

1.4 Process guidelines

The issues to be considered in forming ASSAf PRPs and in conducting quality assessment review activities include: selection of the panel members; organising panel activities; and conducting panel meetings. An ASSAf Projects Officer (within the Scholarly Publications Unit, SPU) is assigned to support the panel chairs, but reports to the Director

of the SPU in terms of review logistics and the production of draft and final review reports (the panel chair and the Director agree in advance on the scope and extent of the activities to be undertaken by the Projects Officer).

1.4.1 Selecting panel members

The appointment process of PRP members is managed by the Chair of CSPiSA until the panel and panel chair have been appointed.

A typical PRP consists of 6-8 members. (A smaller group limits panel interaction while a larger group may be unwieldy.) The individuals selected to serve on a panel should have experience and credibility in the disciplines under review, or in related disciplines, but at least one panel member must be from a completely different discipline. A majority of the panel members should have demonstrable expertise and experience in both the editing and peer review aspects of research journals – a mix of senior researchers and a few active or former editors is appropriate – but all should have some appreciation of the significance of both editing and peer review in building and maintaining the standing of scholarly journals. At least one member should have direct practical (technical) experience of publishing.

Persons selected as panel members are typically drawn from the ASSAf membership, academic institutions, science councils and consultancies, attracted variously by direct invitation and/or Web notices, or through disciplinary associations. It is necessary to avoid known conflicts.

Committee expertise, balance and conflict of interest are discussed at the first PRP meeting (and may again be discussed at any later meeting), and recommendations to resolve problematic issues are brought through the SPU (Secretariat) to the ASSAf Council for possible amendment of the composition of PRPs. Panel members are requested to submit written 'Conflict of Interest' statements, and are bound to report any new potential sources of conflict during the review process.

The PRPs are chaired by an ASSAf Member appointed by Council for this purpose, who assumes accountability for the panel's work in helping to develop a credible quality assurance mechanism for South African scholarly journals.

1.4.2 Setting up and organising the panels

Organisation of the panel is conducted by its chair, supported by the assigned Projects Officer functioning as the 'Study Director' under the Academy's guidelines for projects and studies. The activities related to organisation may include:

- identifying the scope of panel activities;
- identifying possible additional panel members;
- identifying and approaching suitable independent peer reviewers for an individual or group of journals [see 1.4.3 below];
- issuing invitations to interview or correspond to editors, publishers, selected peer reviewers, presidents of national disciplinary associations etc.;

- assembling print or e-copies of journals for peer review and panel meetings;
- establishing meeting dates;
- preparing/drafting and distributing pre- and post-meeting materials [see 1.4.3 below];
- arranging meeting logistics;
- establishing meeting agendas;
- taking responsibility for post-meeting activities, including report preparation and evaluation of the panel processes.

1.4.3 Peer reviews

Independent peer reviewers are selected on the basis of their eminence and activity in their disciplines, drawing from the ASSAf membership, registers of grant holders from the National Research Foundation (NRF), Medical Research Council (MRC) and others, and from the leadership and general membership of scholarly associations. Once they have agreed to serve, they are provided with a set of questions (Appendix B) to be answered in examining all the issues of particular journals that have appeared during the preceding 2-3 years, or not fewer than eight issues. They are asked to examine print or e-copies of the journals, and to submit a confidential report including, if possible, comments in each of the areas specified in the question list, plus on any other relevant matter.

As the individual reviews are subsumed in the process of drafting the consolidated consensus review, they are in effect anonymous and confidential.

1.4.4 Panel reports

A detailed and motivated draft report of each PRP's findings and recommendations are prepared by the assigned Projects Officer, working closely with the panel chair, and in consultation with the CSPiSA. The drafting of the consensus review from the individual reviews is key, and is overseen by the panel chair and the Director of the SPU. Draft materials are circulated to all panel members for review and comment before draft consensus reports are prepared. The relevant excerpts are sent to the editors and publishers for comment and correction of misconceptions and inaccuracies, after which the final versions of each report are prepared for consideration by the CSPiSA and subsequently the ASSAf Council. If approved, the reports are published by the Academy and made generally available. Specific submissions and recommendations are made to the Department of Higher Education and Training.

2 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING SOUTH AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED BASIC LIFE SCIENCES JOURNALS

The 2006 ASSAf Report, *A Strategic Approach to Research Publishing in South Africa*, contained some contextually important information about the role of local journals in

disseminating the country's research in broad fields of scholarship. While the narrower area of the 'Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences' covered in this Report was subsumed into a larger 'Natural Sciences' group, there is no reason to doubt the applicability of the findings of the larger group to the specific one of interest to us here.

Over the 15-year period from 1990 to 2003, about 36% of all (Department of Education-accredited) articles authored by scholars with South African addresses were in the 'Natural Sciences'. The next highest percentage was the 'Humanities' group with about 20%. The total number of 'Natural Sciences' articles published during this period was 35 400. It is interesting that the number of articles published per year over this 15-year period has remained the same with approximately 2 500 to 2 700 articles published per year. The large majority of 'Natural Sciences' articles were published in journals indexed in the Thomson Reuters: Web of Science (Arts and Humanities Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index and Science Citation Index Expanded), hereafter referred to as WoS, with 85% of the articles published in WoS-indexed journals and 15% in non-WoS journals. Although natural scientists prefer to publish in overseas journals (61% of articles), there is a role for local journals since a significant number of articles (39% of articles) also are published in South Africa.

The impact factors (the average number of current year citations in all indexed journals to articles published in the two preceding years) of local 'Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences' journals in the Journal Impact Factor ranged between 0.5 and 2.1 with the majority being between 0.9 and 2.1. The 'composite extended impact factors', using 8-year collection periods, were determined for 29 'Natural Sciences' journals. Six of these journals had the highest rating (above 0.5) and eight had ratings between 0.25 and 0.5. Two journals in the group covered in this report had ratings above 0.5 (the *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research*, 0.56, and *African Zoology*, 0.56). The *South African Journal of Range and Forage Science* and the *South African Journal of Enology and Viticulture* had ratings between 0.25 and 0.5.

Analyses of citations in the evolving Latin-American SciELO platform has permitted the identification of journals with significant 'regional' (or 'non-WoS') impact factors and much lower 'international' (ISI) impact factors. The recent decision to launch a South African site of SciELO, and the eventual free inclusion in this open-access, online, world-wide service, of all or most of the quality-assured local journals in the 'Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences' fields will allow new and more refined bibliometric approaches to impact assessment to be conducted, which will be of great value in this and similar groups of disciplines.

Thomson Reuters Web of Science has recently added more journals published in developing countries to its various indexes, and it is desirable that the peer review process conducted by ASSAf should become part of the application/admission process of that organisation.

3 PANEL MEMBERS

The Panel Members of the PRP for South African scholarly journals in the 'Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences fields' were as follows:

- i. Prof David Woods (Chairperson), MASSAf, Microbiology, Retired VC of Rhodes University (member of CSPiSA) (ASSAf Council nominated)
- ii. Prof Simeon Albert Materechera, Crop Science Department, Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, North-West University (Editorial Board, *SA Journal of Plant and Soil*) (Volunteer)
- iii. Prof Mary Scholes, MASSAf, School of Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand (ASSAf Council nominated)
- iv. Prof John Duncan, MASSAf, retired Dean of Research, Rhodes University (Retired end 2008) (Volunteer)
- v. Prof Rob Gous, MASSAf, Department of Animal and Poultry Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal (ASSAf Council nominated)

Servicing Project Officers, SPU: Mr Thabo Radebe and Mr Zweli Ndayi

4 CONSENSUS REVIEWS OF JOURNALS IN THE AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED BASIC LIFE SCIENCES

1. *Koedoe Journal: African Protected Area Conservation and Science*

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor-in-chief, associate editors and members of the editorial board are of high national and international disciplinary reputation and standing.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published since 1958, without significant interruption, except in 2007, when the journal changed its publication mode to open access (see www.koedoe.co.za). The editor was invited to serve two years ago, for an indefinite period. Members of the editorial board, whom are from both inside and outside the country, are also invited to serve; they occasionally handle manuscripts. Editorial/policy guidelines are published and they have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review for South African Scholarly Journals* (hereafter referred to as the *National Code of Best Practice*). The number of manuscripts rejected before peer review is small. Peer review is compulsory, with two, sometimes three, reviewers consulted per manuscript. A total of 40 peer reviewers was used, ten of whom were from other countries. Review reports are retained in the archives. The current emphasis of *Koedoe* is to publish good articles online, which are openly accessible in three formats, PDF, XML and HTML, with a print-on-demand facility. An annual print issue of the journal is produced, but the emphasis is on articles published on the website.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The quality of the articles is very variable, but generally satisfactory to good. Many of the articles are variable in terms of subject coverage, but very comprehensive on local issues, especially reserve ecology, and would probably not be published internationally simply because they are too long and too local in focus. The tendency is to focus on small issues rather than on big topics. A good number of articles are published per annum. Overall, the journal is not attracting the best work in the country, although it maintains a regional focus and has a wide range of national authors; there are also occasionally international authors, especially as co-authors. Additional enrichment features such, as 'short communications', reviews, and essays, were always part of *Koedoe*, although none were published during the assessment period, such scholarly features are now again being included.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: Abstracts for all the articles in the journal are written in English. Publication of *errata* is included. The citation practice is good. The quality of the presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions is high.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young researchers in the discipline concerned. The journal is, however, not comparable with the top international journals in the field but is highly complementary to many leading conservation journals, in the sense of publishing local, area-focused research (which is of international interest too).

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: This is a very well-known journal, and much respected and consulted in its field. It would likely receive more submissions articles if it were WoS indexed and it should be. There is a fair amount of overlap with the *South African Journal of Wildlife Research*. As National Parks include land, rivers and sea, there are proportionally too few articles on marine and freshwater ecosystems. *Koedoe* is indexed in Scopus and has applied for WoS indexing.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is Open Journals Publishing, a division of AOSIS (Pty) Ltd, a commercial open-access publisher. The journal is free online, at www.koedoe.co.za. The *Koedoe* website received a total of 12 602 unique visitors in 2008, from over 92 countries. South Africa was the origin of most of the visitors (with downloads amounting to 6.9 GB of information), followed by the United Kingdom (595 MB), Germany (415 MB), the Netherlands (400 MB) and Australia (266 MB). A total of 178 957 pages were viewed by a total of 19 919 visits to the website. In addition, *Koedoe* was one of the first journals to be incorporated into the SciELO-South Africa open-access platform. The journal's total expenditure per annum is R189 000; the cost is incurred by the South African National Parks (SANParks). In terms of copyright, the articles are published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works

2.5 South Africa License. It is impressive that *Koedoe* has followed the open-access 'gold route' and is a peer-reviewed online publication. Annually produced print copies (and print-on-demand reprints) are available through subscription, but are not the main focus of the journal. Income is derived through page charges (and advertising, as this arises). *Koedoe* is the journal of African Protected Area Conservation, and therefore SANParks pays the page charges for the first ten pages (in final layout format) of each article published. Other running costs are also carried by SANParks.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals. (See Appendix C.)**
2. **The journal should continue to be listed on the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
3. **The editor and publisher should be encouraged to use the outcome of the present review in making application for indexing by WoS.**
4. **The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
5. **In addition, the Panel believes** that the journal should keep its name *Koedoe*, which is well known in the field. Also, the editor should consider focusing on issues or problems in the area of terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems.

II. *South African Journal of Wildlife Research*

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The reputation and standing of the editor and members of the editorial board are generally high, in national terms.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 37 years (since 1971), without any significant interruptions in publication. Peer-reviewed articles published comprised 58 research articles, 17 'short communications', and two book reviews. Manuscripts received were 99 research articles; 21 'short communications'; two book reviews; one critique paper, and one review. Of these, eight manuscripts were rejected without peer review. For each manuscript there are two to three reviewers. In 2008, 88 reviewers were used, of whom about 50% had non-South African addresses. Review reports are accessibly retained in the archives. The editor was appointed competitively through advertisement within the organisation, for a 3-year period, with the option for renewal. Members of the editorial board are not appointed competitively, and are retained for an unspecified period. Members of the editorial board are from inside and outside the country, and they handle peer review of individual manuscripts, as well as give advice on editorial policies/practices. The published editorial guidelines are not yet aligned with the *ASSAf National Code of Best Practice*; new guidelines are being prepared to include those parts of the *ASSAf National Code of Best Practice* which are missing in the guidelines (e.g. a statement on conflict of interest).

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The articles appear to be of a variable, but generally high, scientific standard. There are a good number of articles per issue and, given the biannual appearance, these add up to a substantial volume in relation to the subject matter. Several of the published articles represent some of the best work done in South Africa. There is clearly a focus on national subject matter, although given the significance of the African (even South African) fauna and flora, this seems appropriate. There is an acceptable ratio of publication of articles between authors from within the country and internationally. Useful enrichment features are not published.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: Abstracts are in English. No *errata* were published in the journal (but would be if the need arose). Good citation is one of the prominent features of the journal, as well as high-quality presentation, professional layout, style and copy-editing interventions.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The articles would certainly be useful to graduate students as exemplars of the kind of work they are doing. There are equivalent journals in North America, Europe and Australia and the journal would indeed compare favourably with them. The journal serves an important local need.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal needs to attract a higher proportion of non-South African authors, perhaps by encouraging or soliciting more articles with topics dealing with issues important in other regions of the continent.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is Isteg Scientific Publications. The print run is 530 copies per issue, and 360 Southern African Wildlife Management Association members are entitled to copies; in addition, the journal has 60 foreign and 32 local subscribers. The journal appears on the basis of delayed open access (an embargo of 24 months). The Association's and journal's income are integrated. The Association also organises an annual conference to cover shortfalls, and the surplus generated varies from R20 000 to R40 000. The editor receives an honorarium, and other expenses are part of the general expenses of the Association, such as an honorarium for the secretariat, postage, stationery, telephone, internet and computer expenses. The total expenses are about R160 000 per year. The copyright belongs to the Association. The journal is WoS indexed, its Journal Impact Factor in the period under review was 0.82. The editor is in principle interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**

2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
3. **The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
4. **In addition, the Panel believes** that the journal's impact factor is good, especially compared to other South African journals.

III. African Natural History

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor and editorial board have high national and international disciplinary reputations and standing. This is a journal with a very specific purpose, namely to publish articles on natural history that would otherwise have been published in the discontinued *Annals of the South African Museum*. Initially there was no editorial board, but one has now been established. The editor and three of the eight editorial board members are based at the Iziko Museums of Cape Town, which is not surprising given the remit of the journal but it does reduce the 'international flavour' of the journal, since priority is, by policy, given to work based on the Museum's own collection.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for four years, without interruption. The editor is appointed for an indefinite period, and the appointment of the editorial board is not performed on a competitive basis. The appointment of editorial board members is also for an unspecified period. Members of the editorial board undertake peer reviews of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies and practices. Editorial guidelines are published; the editor is not aware if the journal's editorial guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. The journal received only 17 manuscripts of all three types in the review period, only one was rejected before peer review. Peer review is compulsory, and two to three reviewers are used per manuscript. A total of 32 reviewers were used in the review period, 16 of whom had an international address. Review reports are retained in the archives.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The published articles are typical for this kind of publication (e.g. *Annals of the Transvaal Museum*) and appear to be of generally good quality. Most of the articles are descriptive and/or taxonomic, but this is not inappropriate. The journal published only 16 articles in the 3-year review period – an equivalence of about five articles per annum, which is a weakness. Some of the published articles are of a substantial depth. There is clearly a focus on 'local' material in the sense that this is housed at the Museum, although the collections themselves extend across the country. A small proportion of authors are international collaborators, but four of the 16 articles published in the journal were authored or co-authored by the editor himself, which is a serious concern. There are no enrichment features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews or correspondence.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: There are English abstracts for all articles. The citation practice is good and no *errata* were published in the journal. High-quality figures and colour photographs are published when appropriate.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young researchers in the discipline. The journal serves a local need and, although it is not comparable with the top international journals in the field, it does compare favourably with similar journals in North America, Europe and Australia.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The number of articles and the proportion of international contributors should be increased. Articles authored by the editor should rarely be published, and an independent *ad hoc* editor should be appointed for such articles (as per the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*). In addition, enrichment features, such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and scholarly correspondence should be published. There is also a need to define the scope of the articles the journal would like to publish. At the moment, most of the articles are descriptive and taxonomic, and many of them are derived from Museum work. Manuscripts from a wider spectrum should be solicited and published.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is Iziko Museums of Cape Town. The print run is 400 copies per issue. The annual expenditure is about R125 000. The editor is in principle interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals. (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
- 3. The editor and publisher should be encouraged to use the outcome of the present review in making application for indexing by WoS.**
- 4. The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
- 5. In addition, the Panel believes** that published articles should be derived from a wider spectrum, the editor should be discouraged from publishing in the jour-

nal, the number of published articles should be increased, the scope and focus of the journal should be reviewed, and it's the editorial guidelines should be aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

IV. South African Journal of Animal Science

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor and members of the editorial board have high national and international disciplinary reputations and standing. Some members of the editorial board are from outside South Africa.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 38 years, without interruption. About 120 manuscripts (excluding conference proceedings) were published from 2005 to 2008. Of all the articles published, about 82% had at least one author with a non-South African address. All published articles are peer reviewed, and the practice is that each manuscript should have at least two independent reviewers plus overall review by an assistant editor. It is the responsibility of sub-editors to approach reviewers, and to write a motivated recommendation (the editor may thus be unaware of how many reviewers were used, or what they said). Since 2002, review reports have been retained in the archives. The journal is published quarterly, and publishes peer-reviewed conference contributions as a separate issue, usually only as an electronic issue (the last one was published in 2006). The editor was specifically approached for the position and has been in the position for seven years. The editor's contract is renewable every second year. There are 14 assistant editors who handle the peer-review process, while the publication committee handles appeals and problem cases. The publication committee and the South African Society of Animal Science's Council advise on editorial policy and practices. Members of the editorial board are from inside and outside the country and are not appointed competitively. Editorial and policy guidelines are published on the South African Society for Animal Science (SASAS) website. The editor has not checked the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice* point for point, but agrees with it in principle.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The quality of the articles varies, naturally, but generally they are of a high standard. The rejection rate is apparently quite high, thus maintaining a high standard for those articles published. The journal is published four times per annum, each issue containing between nine and 11 articles. One of the advantages of publishing in this journal is that the articles are published electronically, immediately after being accepted by the editor; the articles thus enter the public domain more rapidly, which obviously appeals to contributors. Only once a sufficient number of articles are published electronically, are issues printed. There is a wide range of topics covered by the journal on all aspects of animal and poultry science, including nutrition, genetics and physiology of beef and dairy cattle, horses, sheep, chickens and ostriches. Sadly,

the facilities for research in animal and poultry science in this country are dwindling, but fortunately those researchers remaining, publish regularly in this journal. Many articles would be acceptable in some of the best international animal science journals. There is a fair amount of work that describes regional issues, but there is a strong international focus, with articles being submitted from a wide range of countries overseas, rather than from the rest of Africa. Research emanates from the United States, China, Turkey, Argentina, France, Jordan, Iran, Mexico, India, Brazil and Portugal, with a few articles from Kenya, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia. The journal attracts many articles from Turkey, for no apparent reason. The journal does not publish enrichment features, such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews or scholarly correspondence.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: There are English abstracts for all articles. In the print version *errata* are published on a separate piece of paper inserted into the journal, which is not fool-proof, and in the electronic version corrections are made. There is a good citation practice. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are good.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The standard of articles in this journal has increased over recent years, and the subjects covered have been expanded, thus catering for a wider and more discerning audience. Local graduate students should be impressed by the journal, and, because of its electronic accessibility, they are able to access articles of interest very easily. The articles should therefore stimulate some interest among students and young researchers. The standard is equivalent to some of the international animal science journals, but not comparable with the top journals such as the *Journal of Agricultural Science*, *Animal*, *British Poultry Science* or the *British Journal of Nutrition*. The standard of reviewing is improving and hence the quality of published articles also is improving.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal should widen its coverage to include African researchers in other African countries. With the online availability of abstracts and full-text articles the citation rate should increase.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is the SASAS. The print run is 300 copies per issue, and the number of paying subscribers is 213 (plus 16 free library members). Sponsorship is received only through the Society, and infrastructure is supplied by the Department of Animal & Wildlife Sciences, University of Pretoria. The journal's total expenditure per annum was approximately R100 000 in 2006 and 2007 and R120 000 in 2008. At submission, the corresponding author is informed that the Society owns the copyright on published articles. The journal is WoS indexed. The editor is in principle interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals. The editor is not able to establish how to distribute the electronic publication to overseas libraries.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
3. **The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
4. **In addition, the Panel believes** that the editor should check the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice* to align the editorial guidelines with them; the editor should consider improving the journal by adding enrichment features; and the editor should encourage authors to co-author articles with graduate students.

V. Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor and members of the editorial board have a high national and international disciplinary reputation and standing.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 97 years, significant interruptions in publication occurred only for three or four years during the Second World War. The editor was appointed non-competitively for a 3-year period, with the option of renewal. In the period under review, the journal received 128 manuscripts; of these, 80 were published and ten were rejected without peer review. For each manuscript there are two reviewers, and, in the period under review, 24 reviewers were used, 12 of whom had non-South African addresses. Review reports are accessibly retained in the archives. The peer reviewers are subject specialists from all over the world, therefore the editorial board does not provide specific topical expertise. Members of the editorial board are not appointed competitively, and are retained for an unspecified period. The editorial board handles peer review of individual manuscripts as well as gives advice on editorial policies and practices. The published editorial guidelines are not yet aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The quality of articles varies, as does the subject matter, but generally these are of a good-to-high quality, and generally academic in nature. There are four issues per annum, each consisting of between seven and ten articles. A high proportion of the articles emanate from Onderstepoort, and these reflect the research being done there, which is where most of the veterinary research is conducted in South

Africa. The articles cover a wide range of topics, such as diseases, management issues resulting in distress, clinical studies, and causes of death in captivity, related to a wide range of mammals, livestock and wildlife. This journal appears to be very popular with veterinarians in other African countries, with many of the articles emanating from Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Sudan, Zambia and Mozambique. Within South Africa, the majority of articles is from Onderstepoort, but there are others from veterinary laboratories in other parts of the country. There are a few useful enrichment features like editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and scholarly correspondence.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: The journal contains adequate English abstracts. No *errata* were evident. The citation practice is good and presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are also good. Articles are easy to read, the tables and graphs are very clear, and the reference format is excellent.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young researchers in the discipline. There are many articles of interest in this journal. It is comparable with international journals in the field. About 45% of articles have international collaboration.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: No improvements were suggested.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The joint publishers are the ARC-OVI and the University of Pretoria. The production and distribution of the journal are outsourced. The print run is 400 copies per issue, and the number of paying subscribers is 83. Copyright permissions are freely given to those who accept the proviso that the journal is acknowledged. The journal is WoS indexed. The editor is in principle interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals; to this effect an arrangement has already been made with the University of Pretoria – all articles published by staff and students will be submitted to the university's open-access website a year after they have been published in the journal. The journal and the university will have to discuss the funding arrangements.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publishers should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

3. **The journal should include enrichment features such as editorials, book reviews, topical reviews.**
4. **In addition, the Panel believes** that the editor should consider aligning the editorial guidelines with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

VI. Journal of the South African Veterinary Association

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor and editorial board have good national and international disciplinary reputations and standing, and the editorial board includes one member from the United States.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal was published as the *Journal of the South African Veterinary Medical Association* (Volumes 1 – 42) from 1927 to 1971 and as the *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* (Volumes 43) from 1972 to present, without interruption. About 91 articles were published in the period under review, selected from 271 manuscripts received in the same period. Very few manuscripts were rejected before peer review. All articles are peer reviewed, and two independent reviewers per manuscript are used. An accurate record of reviewers with a non-South African address is not readily accessible. The peer review reports are accessible and are filed in sequence of rejection or publication, not chronologically.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The articles are generally of a high scientific standard. Some reflect practical issues, whilst others are more clinical. Four issues are published annually, with each issue containing about five articles. There does appear to be a preponderance of good work from within South Africa. The articles are mainly of a practical nature, identifying and describing problems that have been encountered, and solutions to many of these. The majority of authors emanate from within South Africa, but others are from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Botswana, Nigeria, Namibia and Tanzania. Many of the international contributors appear to have links with some of the South African veterinarians. In addition to the original articles published in each issue, a sizeable portion of book reviews, topical reviews, historical data and 'short communications' is published.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: Each article contains an English abstract. *Errata* are published in subsequent issues of the journal, as are rebuttals and other comments to the editor. The citation practice is good, as are the presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young researchers in the discipline. It is comparable with international journals in the field. In addition, about 20-40% of articles have international collaboration. The journal would appear to be of more interest to practising veterinarians than the *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research*, as the articles reflect less academic subjects generally, and there is more of scholarly interest, such as editorial comments and book reviews.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: No improvements were suggested.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: Data not provided.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

VII. *Bothalia*

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor is well regarded (but seemingly overworked, as he edits the full spectrum of the South African National Biodiversity Institute's (SANBI) in-house publications). The editorial board is small, but composed of eminent persons. Three of the four are from abroad (the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew; the Missouri Botanic Gardens and the University of Utrecht). The reviewers generally are respected in their fields. The journal is essentially an in-house journal for the National Herbarium and its related taxonomic activities.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published since 1921, without any interruptions. The number of peer-reviewed original articles published during the period under review is approximately 116. Approximately 89 manuscripts of all three types were received per annum. The number of peer reviewers approached for each manuscript is two or three, and about 168 reviewers were used during the period under review, 73 of whom had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are retained in the records. The editor has been in the position for 12 years and was appointed for an indefinite period. The position of editor is advertised in-house and an appointment

is made following interviews with the CEO and management. Members of the editorial board are selected from within SANBI and the scientific fraternity; they are from inside and outside the country, and occasionally handle peer review of individual manuscripts and give advice on editorial policies/practices. The editorial policy guidelines are not aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best*. The publication frequency is biannual.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The articles are generally of high quality and the journal compares favourably with similar international journals. A good number of articles per annum are published. Articles are mainly on plant taxonomy and species level work. The journal carries little or no modern systematic studies (e.g. those that include DNA data) and only a few articles that present phylogenetic analyses. The journal publishes excellent line-diagrams, and maps are generally good; however, the quality of photographs is not consistently good. The absence of colour photographs is a shortcoming, as colour would be appropriate in (many) cases. The focus is taxonomy, although some cytology, plant anatomy (histology) and ecology is included. There is a good sample of the best work in South Africa, with many of the authors being well respected in their field(s). The focus of the journal is mainly on local issues, with some articles from other African countries. As an in-house journal of SANBI, this is the intended emphasis. There are some international authors (e.g. from Missouri Botanic Garden) who are specialists on South African flora and generally publish with South African co-authors. Occasionally, book reviews and interesting obituaries are published, but editorial or invited review articles are not published.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: There are English abstracts for all articles, but no abstracts are published for 'Notes on African Plants'. *Errata* are apparently published as the need arises. The journal has a good citation practice and good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions, except for a few low-resolution photographs and the lack of colour photographs.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal needs to be better publicised among students as the focus on species descriptions does not necessarily mean that young scientists will be inspired to publish in the journal. Obvious comparative journals would be the *Kew Bulletin*, *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, *NOVON* and perhaps elements of *TAXON* and *Systematic Botany*. *Bothalia* is the least adventurous of these, but is equally capable of disseminating information on southern African plant diversity at the species level.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The use of colour illustrations/photographs would be highly desirable. *Bothalia* compares well with the *Kew Bulletin*; articles are of similar calibre but

enhanced by quality photographs and the use of colour photographs. It would be advantageous if the journal was accessible online. The journal competes with the *South African Journal of Botany*, and to improve its status it should consider changing its scope into something locally relevant but that does not compete with the *South African Journal of Botany* – perhaps the 'South African Journal of Biodiversity Science', given that SANBI's mandate now covers all aspects of biodiversity, or even the 'African Journal of Biodiversity' would not be unwarranted. For the journal to remain viable, it needs bold and major interventions.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is SANBI, Pretoria. The regular print run of the journal is 400 copies per issue; the number of paying subscribers is 60. The journal's average expenditure per annum is R600 000. SANBI holds the copyright. The journal is WoS indexed. The journal was independently peer reviewed at the beginning of 2009. The editor is interested in publishing **only contents pages** in the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals. The publications process and web availability are currently being reviewed.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
- 3. The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
- 4. In addition, the Panel believes** that the journal should publish articles on an open-access platform. The Panel also recommends, in the interest of the botany discipline, that the journal should consider changing its scope or amalgamating with the *South African Journal of Botany*.

VIII. South African Journal of Botany

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor-in-chief is a widely respected botanist and an NRF A-rated researcher. The editorial board is a mix of local and international experts in their field.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal was published as the *Journal of South African Botany* from 1935 to 1981. The name changed to the *South African Journal of Botany* in 1982 and it has been published under this name to date, without any interruptions. The number of peer-reviewed original articles published during the period under review

is approximately 80 per annum; approximately 400 manuscripts were received and about 80% were rejected before or after peer review. The number of peer reviewers approached for each manuscript is two, and approximately 100 reviewers were used during the period under review. Peer-review reports are NOT retained. The editor has been in the position for nine years, after being appointed by the Council of the South African Association of Botanists. Members of the editorial board are appointed for a 3-year period, and they are from inside and outside the country. They handle the peer review of individual manuscripts and give advice on editorial policies/practices. The editorial policy guidelines have not been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The articles are generally of good quality, but the quality does vary. Articles have a good visual appeal; illustrations in the form of line diagrams, maps, photographs, micrographs etc., are all of excellent quality and colour is used where appropriate. A good number of articles are published annually and consistently. A good sample of work is published, which ranges across the plant sciences from taxonomy, through molecular aspects, physiology, bio-/phyto-chemistry, microscopical work, seed biology, etc. to ecology. There seems, however, to be an overly large proportion of articles dealing with plant compounds, ethnobotany, traditional plant uses, pharmacology, etc. In general, the focus of the journal is on South/southern African flora (species), as well as those from further afield in Africa. Occasional articles deal with non-African species, and some are focused on crop species. Aside from authors from all over South Africa and neighbouring countries, the journal draws contributions from authors from an impressive range of other countries, both in Africa (as far afield as Cameroon, Ethiopia, Uganda, Benin), as well as countries in Europe (e.g. Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, Turkey and several in East Europe), the United Kingdom, the United States and even China, Japan and India. However, it seems that the main 'players' in plant science in South Africa reserve their best work for publication in international journals. The journal does contain enrichment features – in the 2007-2009 issues, there was an opinion paper; a mini-review; an editorial and many book reviews. The *South African Journal of Botany* also publishes abstracts of congresses and periodic, focused, special issues, which are handled by appropriate guest editors.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: The quality of the writing is good and the journal does contain English abstracts. *Errata* are published. There is a good citation practice. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are impressive features of the journal.

Capacity development, and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal is suitable for encouraging students and young academics, not only in coverage, but also affording extremely good examples of presentation across the board of botanical and related topics. The *South African Journal of Botany* compares well with any other inter-disciplinary journal devoted to the plant sciences. The scope of the journal is very broad and even general journals, such as the *American Journal of Botany*, are more limited in scope. The impact factor of the

journal recently increased substantially – a consequence of the move to Elsevier and improved marketing.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: There are too many uncritical/descriptive articles on plant product chemistry. At least 20% of the articles published since 2005 involve plant natural products, pharmacology, etc. The editor should consider whether the journal should be an outlet for plant product chemistry or whether it should represent South/southern Africa's botany at a suitable internationally comparable level. Review articles (a suggested two per annum) should be solicited from eminent botanists – local and international – on topics relevant to South African plant science. Similarly, local botanists should be persuaded to submit some of their better work to the *South African Journal of Botany* as a commitment to the discipline in the country. However, institutional (and NRF-related) demands for high-impact publications from researchers compete with this altruistic endeavour.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is Elsevier, which also handles the printing. The number of paying subscribers is handled by Elsevier. The journal is WoS indexed. The journal was independently peer reviewed by Thomson Reuters. *The South African Journal of Botany* works only through Elsevier, and therefore would not be interested in being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform, despite present reservations.**
3. **The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
4. **In addition, the Panel believes** that the journal should broaden its scope to include other disciplinary areas within botany, as well as broadening its content of scientific articles.

IX. Flowering Plants of Africa

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The impact of this journal is more a reflection of the artwork than the editor's profile, and the editor need not be a high-profile scientist. The botanical

artist has a high reputation as an artist and has painted a significant number of the colour plates appearing over the period in question.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published since 1921, without any interruptions. The number of peer-reviewed original articles published during the period under review is 40 original articles and one letter-type article. Approximately 81 manuscripts of all three types were received per annum. No manuscript was rejected without peer review in the period under review. Manuscripts (20 per volume) are invited to accompany available watercolour paintings, most of which are part of SANBI's collection and usually are painted by an in-house botanical artist, although other artists are invited/encouraged. The object of the serial is to convey to the reader the beauty and variety of form of the African flora, to stimulate an interest in the study, conservation and cultivation of African plants and to advance the science of botany, as well as botanical art. Two peer reviewers are approached for each manuscript, and 31 reviewers were used during the period under review, 42% of whom had a non-South African address. Peer-review reports are retained in the records. The publication frequency of the journal is one volume every second year. The chief editor position is permanent and the current chief editor has been in the position for 12 years. Members of the editorial board are currently only from inside the country; they occasionally give advice on editorial policies/practices, but do not provide specific topical expertise. Currently, the editorial policy guidelines are not aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The quality of articles is excellent, but as each species treatment is purely descriptive, it is not really 'mainstream science'. The journal uses a fair number of reviewers from abroad. It compares favourably with *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* – a similar type of publication which now incorporates *The Kew Magazine*. The number of published articles is satisfactory, but the journal only publishes one issue every two years. Materials are almost entirely devoted to local flora. Articles are by authors from across South Africa with very occasional collaborators (co-authors) from abroad. South Africa's top taxonomists provide descriptions to accompany the artwork, and it is somewhat prestigious to have a description appear in this journal. Early works of this journal are considered 'Africana' and therefore very collectable. No enrichment features, such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and scholarly correspondence are published. Officially, this publication is described as "a magazine containing colour plates with descriptions of flowering plants of Africa and neighbouring islands", so the absence of these features is not surprising.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: Each article is preceded by a synopsis incorporating the formal, proper name of the plant and relevant author(s). No *errata* were encountered. The citation practice is good – everything is explicit, given in full, and in logical order. It has an excellent, essentially flawless, presentation, and the layout, style and copy-editing interventions also are excellent.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal is comparable to Kew's *Curtis Botanical Magazine*, as well as coffee table books dealing with taxonomic monographs or revisions.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: This is a very different sort of publication from the 'normal' journal, being devoted to plant taxonomy and very high-quality accompanying artwork. The number of issues published per year should be increased. The journal is presumably very expensive to produce, using hand-painted illustrations throughout. This cost could be countered by use of high-quality colour photographs, but the opinion is that these cannot show the detail as can paintings. This opinion was gleaned from the 'Instructions to Authors/Artists', who are cautioned not to paint from photographs, as these do not show the requisite detail. The notion of digitising the art into high-resolution graphics could be contemplated, and an incentive to attract contributions from young botanists may enhance the journal's local profile. While an anachronism in the context of modern botanical science, it is a unique mouthpiece for botanical artists and taxonomists.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher of *Flowering Plants of Africa* is SANBI, Pretoria. The regular print run of the journal is 500 copies per issue. Production and distribution is done in-house, except printing (outside printing firms). The journal's average total expenditure per annum is R70 400. SANBI holds the copyright (once-off publication). The editor is NOT interested in being considered for inclusion in the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should be accredited as a book under the DHET subsidy system.**
2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform, but as a book publication (see point 4 below).**
3. **The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
4. **In addition, the Panel noted** that the journal is published once every two years and it is a valuable scholarly publication. The Panel believe that the publication, is disadvantaged being published as a journal, and therefore recommend that it should be published as a scholarly book. In addition, the Panel believes that the journal should seek sponsorship from art dealers to support it as an annual scholarly book.

X. African Journal of Range and Forage Science

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor and assistant editors are recognised researchers from South Africa. The editorial board and advisory panel include a reasonable number of members from abroad.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 44 years, without interruption. The Grassland Society of Southern Africa (GSSA) recruits an editor by approaching a pool of suitable candidates (rangeland scientists active in South Africa) identified by the Society's Council. The appointment period is one year, renewable annually. The editorial board consists of assistant editors (a group of five to seven, usually South African, rangeland professionals who oversee the review of manuscripts, approach reviewers and make a recommendation based on the reviews received) and the editorial advisory panel (a bigger, international group, currently consisting of 16 members, who advise on editorial practice and policy). Members of both groups sometimes review manuscripts. Members of the editorial board are approached by the editor, based on their areas of expertise and reputation, with the aim of having both a representative range of expertise and a representative range of countries in Africa and beyond. Both assistant editors and editorial advisory panel members serve until voluntary resignation. The turn-over of assistant editors is higher than that of editorial advisory panel members (because more work is required of them). Often assistant editors join the editorial advisory panel after they finish serving as assistant editors. Assistant editors thus far have been South African, which reflects the membership of the GSSA. This is mainly for practical reasons, such as the ability to meet annually at the GSSA Congress. The editorial advisory panel currently consists of ten members based in South Africa, three members from other African countries and three members from other countries (Australia and the United Kingdom). The journal's aims, scope and instructions to authors are published in the journal. Editorial guidelines exist in electronic format and are given to members of the editorial team. A revision of the editorial guidelines and procedures was meant to take place in 2009 to address issues of consistency and the quality of the review process. Editorial policy guidelines are generally aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The quality of articles generally is good, with an emphasis on South African and African research but with broader applicability. The journal caters for a rather focused field, but nevertheless publishes a consistent number of articles per annum. During the period under review, 61 research articles were published; an average of about 20 per annum, which is adequate considering the focus. The majority of the contributions are research articles, with a fair proportion of research notes. There is a consistent contribution by respected scientists and the journal does represent a good sample of high-quality work. The journal fulfils an important niche, as the articles are relevant to land-use managers, farmers, agriculturists and scientists. While many of the authors are local, a respectable number of articles are drawn from elsewhere in Africa – and from authors further afield (e.g. Norway, Sweden and Scotland) with an interest in South African/African range and forage science. Enrichment features were irregularly published and no reviews were published in the period under review.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: Abstracts for all the articles are written in good English. The citation practice, presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are good, are comparable to similar journals across the world, and are typical of the NISC journals.

No errata were evident. The cover image is African, which may give the perception that the journal is parochial, but the print quality and presentation are good.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: Considering its international indexing/recognition, this journal is well respected among scientific publications of a related nature. Articles are worthwhile in terms of highlighting local issues and the journal is consistently in demand by students. A number of articles published in this journal could also be published elsewhere, such as in the *South African Journal of Botany*, perhaps in the *South African Journal of Science* and even in overseas journals, such as *Oecologia*.

Suggested Improvements

Consensus review: Inclusion of enrichment features, such as editorials, and reviews relating the African context to a global context would perhaps make the journal more accessible to overseas readers. Invitations to targeted overseas researchers may enhance the visibility and citations of articles in the journal. The presentation would be enhanced by the use of colour and photographic illustrations; while these features should not be used routinely or indiscriminately, a good proportion of the articles would benefit. The use of (even monochrome) photographs, where justified, would raise the attractiveness of many of the articles.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is NISC (Pty) Ltd. The print run is approximately 450 copies per issue, with approximately 385 subscribers. The *African Journal of Range and Forage Science Botany* is free to eligible countries on African Journals OnLine (AJOL, www.ajol.org), and it is part of commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication services, on IngentaConnect (www.ingentaconnect.com) and EBSCOhost. The journal is WoS indexed and will receive its first Journal Citation Report impact factor in 2010. It has been periodically reviewed on a purely logistical basis by the Department of Higher Education and Training. It was also reviewed by Thomson Reuters prior to indexing in the Journal Citation Reports and Science Citation Index. The editor would like to be kept informed of the government's consideration of a SciELO-type model for online, open access of South African journals and how it might be implemented. A strategic planning meeting for the *African Journal of Range and Forage Science* was held in July 2008 at the annual GSSA Congress. The main aim of this meeting was to chart a way forward to improve the international profile of the journal while at the same time encouraging a greater cross-section of people active in rangeland science in South Africa and other African countries to publish their relevant research findings. The aims and scope of the journal were revised to bring them more closely in line with the GSSA's vision and mission and to reflect the journal's broader African relevance. It was also decided to recruit a new editor who has sufficient time to focus on achieving several strategic objectives, which include:

- soliciting manuscripts from high-profile researchers;
- attracting a greater number of research articles from South Africa, other African countries and beyond Africa, and following a more stringent review process to improve the quality of published articles;

- developing a mentorship programme to support younger researchers and researchers based in non-academic institutions in their efforts to publish their research;
- soliciting book reviews and review articles, especially by well-known scientists, to add value to the journal; and
- reviewing the editorial procedures and attracting more international members to the editorial board .

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
- 3. The editor should seriously consider the following recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers:**
 - Soliciting manuscripts from high-profile researchers.
 - Attracting a greater number of research articles from South Africa, other African countries and beyond Africa, and following a more stringent review process to improve the quality of published articles.
 - Developing a mentorship programme to support younger researchers and researchers based in non-academic institutions in their efforts to publish their research.
 - Soliciting book reviews and review articles, especially by well-known scientists, to add value to the journal.
- 4. In addition, the Panel believes** that the journal should expand the number of peer reviewers, outside the range of the editorial board.

XI. Agrekon

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The print copies of the last three years reflect a high national disciplinary standing of the editorial team. The editor is well respected by his peers in the international economic community. All the members of the editorial board have high academic reputations in the field of agricultural economics, both in South Africa and abroad.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 47 years, without interruption. The editor has been in the position for six years and was appointed competitively, for a second 4-year term. Members of the editorial board are from inside and outside the country and are not appointed competitively. Editorial policy guidelines are published. The editor is unaware of the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. Approximately 175 manuscripts (of all three types) were received during the period under review. All articles are peer reviewed, and two reviewers are used per manuscript. A total of 20 reviewers were used during the review period, about 10% of whom had a non-South African address. Review reports are retained in the archives but accessible only to the editor.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The majority of articles published in the volumes examined are of high quality and clearly point to a strong editorial policy. Both the theoretical and applied aspects of the published articles are of high quality. There is a high proportion (about 80%) of contextually good articles published per annum in the journal between 2006 and 2008. A rejection rate of 43% of submitted manuscripts suggests a high editorial standard by the journal. There are good samples of articles in the journal that reflect some of the finest work of agricultural economics in South Africa, including articles of an analytical nature and modeling of various aspects of the discipline (e.g. marketing, agribusiness, production, land reform). Both the small-scale and commercial agricultural sectors are reported on in the publications. The overwhelming majority (about 85%) of the articles published in the journal, focuses on local material and issues. The remainder focuses on other African countries, with very few from outside of Africa. The authors of the published articles in the journal are from institutions of higher learning spread evenly across South Africa. Since some articles are very relevant to South African issues, citations of these articles are rather limited outside of South Africa. The relatively small print run (350) of the journal and the fact that it is not linked to a major publishing house also affects the number of citations, and can thus lead to the perception of average-quality articles. The journal publishes a good number of articles annually and the lag time of between nine months and 18 months suggests that there is a large pipeline of articles. The journal has over its 48 years of existence been recognised as the main authority and main collection of peer-reviewed agricultural economic research in South Africa, and, over the last 15 years, in southern Africa. This recognition is largely due to the fact that there is no other journal with the same standing and continuity available in the region. The journal does include additional enrichment features, including book reviews, presidential address, memorial/commemorative lectures and best student award winning essays. These add value to the journal's reputation and standing.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: Abstracts for all the articles are written in proper English and reflect the implementation of a good editorial policy and practice. According to the editor, publication of *errata* is included but none was detected in the volumes examined in this study. All citations and references were properly and strictly adhered to according to the guidelines. This was consistent in all the volumes examined. The presentation,

layout and style of the journal and its articles are of high quality. Both figures and tables are also of reasonably good quality.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal continues to serve as an important avenue for graduate students to publish. At the same time it provides an important resource for all students in agricultural economics and economics in South Africa and Africa. The annual essay award serves as a big stimulus for local students to publish their work. The journal can be compared with the *Australian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics* and the *Review of Agricultural Economics*. It is, however, not as well rated as *Agricultural Economics*, *Food Policy* and the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, which are perceived to be the top international journals. The journal's applicability in the wider international context is very low. Even the stochastic analyses are of local situations and would have a low international interest. However, the current international economic crisis and related analyses around this event, as well as the impact of climate change, may bring a surge of interest in the agricultural economic situation of the region and continent.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: There may be value in the journal considering a change of name that would widen the scope and draw more interest. For example, the name 'Agrekon' could be replaced by a name such as the 'Southern African Journal of Agricultural Economics and Development'. The interest shown by students to study agricultural economics has decreased and the discipline has to compete with a range of qualifications in economics. If the discipline is to survive, consideration should be given to widening the scope of the field of study (as is the case at some universities) that would be reflected in the journal. The proportion of authors and articles from outside of South Africa is relatively low (<20%) and should be increased. The pool of peer reviewers (both South African and from outside) needs to be widened so that one reviewer is not reviewing so many manuscripts at one time. The number of international peer reviewers needs to be urgently improved in order to keep the journal's international standing. The appointment, selection and terms of service for the editorial team need to be reconsidered – positions should be advertised and appointed competitively, rather than selecting individuals. The editor (and possibly the editorial board) should align the editorial and peer-reviewing practice with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. Placement of appropriate advertisements that could generate some income should be considered. The advantages of the journal being included in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa need to be properly explained to the editorial board for them to make an informed decision about whether to participate or not. The manuscript acceptance rate is too high and stricter reviewing procedures should be followed. The major shortcoming of the journal is the low number of citations and the limited impact factor, largely due to little attention being paid to marketing and distribution.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa. The print run is approximately 350 copies per issue, with as many

subscribers. The journal is WoS and IBSS indexed. The journal was independently peer reviewed by Thomson Reuters Web of Science. The journal levies page charges, and has done so for more than ten years; the current charge is R50 per page. Copyright vests with the authors. The editor is NOT interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS- and IBSS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
- 3. The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
- 4. In addition, the Panel believes** that the advantages of having the journal included in the ASSAf-administered SciELO-South Africa platform need to be properly explained to the journal's editorial team to enable them to make an informed decision on inclusion. The Panel also recommends that the editor should limit self-publishing in the journal. Last, the Panel recommends that the journal should consider a name change, as the current name is outdated.

XII. South African Journal of Agricultural Extension

Editing functions: Standing and spread of the editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor is well regarded amongst his peers and amongst the agricultural extension community. The editorial quality of the journal has been improved resulting in a higher rejection rate of submitted articles. The spread of the editorial board has been renewed and improved by increasing the racial and regional representativeness of the members of the editorial board. The content of the topics and authors of articles published in the journal reflect a high international disciplinary standing of the editorial team in that not only are the issues diverse but cover both theoretical and practical aspects. The authors are also from different countries (within and outside of Africa) with different academic and professional backgrounds.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published since 1966, without interruption. The number of peer-reviewed original articles published during the period under review is 42 in total. The number of manuscripts received in the same period is approximately 70, 28 of which (of all three types) were rejected before peer review. Each manuscript is peer reviewed by three independent peer reviewers. The number of peer reviewers used in 2006, 2007 and 2008 was 35, 25 and 20, respectively; the

number of these having non-South African addresses was four in each year. Review reports are accessibly retained in the archives. The editor was requested to accept the position by the Board of the South African Society for Agricultural Extension (SASAE). The editor's position is discussed annually, at the last Board meeting of the year. Members of the editorial board are not appointed competitively, and are retained as long as they are willing to serve on the board. Members of the editorial board are from inside and outside the country, and they handle peer review of individual manuscripts, as well as give advice on editorial policies/practices. The editorial guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The journal does not appear regularly and contains a rather small number of articles, although over 40% were from outside the country. In 2006, in which two issues were published, eight of the 17 articles were from outside South Africa, in 2007, six of the 16 articles and in 2008, four of the nine articles. The small number of local articles is probably the result of strict quality standards but could also be a reflection of the very small research community in this discipline. The quality of the published articles is generally good with some (about 30%) being of high quality in terms of their content, presentation and layout. The majority of articles present survey-type results with descriptive statistics presented in a common format. The contextual content of the articles in each year has been adequate in that almost all the aspects of research reported are topical, practical and relevant. They are all consistent with the objectives of the journal. The articles published certainly reflect a very good sample of the best work conducted in South Africa in the field of agricultural extension, which is clear from the topics, approaches used and the distribution of study sites across the country. The focus of the majority (84%) of articles is on local materials/problems. The authors of the articles are spread across the country although the majority of the lead/senior authors are mostly from one academic institution (the University of Pretoria). The international authorship is significant and widespread, which improves not only the image but also the international standing and relevance of the journal to the African continent. There are no enrichment features.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: Every article has an English abstract, which reflects a good editorial policy and practice. There were no *errata* in the volumes of the journal examined, however, the editor indicated in the questionnaire that *errata* are published when necessary. It is therefore assumed that there was no such error apparent in the volumes examined. The citation and referencing practice is good, consistent and suitable. Similarly, the presentation, layout and style are consistent, suggesting strict adherence to copy-editing guidelines.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: This journal is a very good stimulus for local graduate students and upcoming young researchers in the discipline of agricultural extension as it accommodates a wide range of issues and topics. A large proportion of the articles were

co-authored by postgraduate students and their supervisors. Both the content and format of articles in the journal, together with its layout, are comparable to international journals in agricultural extension published elsewhere in the world.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: It is strongly recommended that enrichment features, such as editorials, book reviews and topical reviews of different issues in the discipline be considered and included regularly. The proportion of articles with non-South African addresses needs to be increased from the current 27% in order to improve the international standing of the journal. Currently, 85% of the peer reviewers used by the journal have South African addresses. This proportion needs to be reduced and that of non-South African addresses increased also to improve the international standing of the journal. The average number of reviewers per manuscript over the three years was less than two – in 2007 it was 1.6; this average must be increased to at least two. It is very important that authors from other institutions within South Africa be encouraged to publish in the journal in order to reflect a broader national authorship of the journal and thereby improve further its national relevance. It is important to indicate on the article when a manuscript was received and accepted for publication. The appointment, selection and terms of service of the editorial team need to be reconsidered – positions should be advertised and appointed competitively rather than selecting individuals. A major shortcoming of the journal is the low number of citations and the limited impact factor, which could largely be due to the little attention given to marketing and distribution. Linking the journal to a major publishing house that has links to electronic bouquets sold to institutional subscribers will certainly help to improve the standing of the journal.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is the SASAE, and there are approximately 500 subscribers. The *South African Journal of Agricultural Extension* appears free online on AJOL, and is also available on Sabinet Online for members. An invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals, will definitely be considered and was discussed at the journal's March 2009 board meeting.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals. (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
- 3. The editor and publisher should be encouraged to use the outcome of the present review in making application for indexing by WoS.**
- 4. The editor should seriously consider the following recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers:**

- The proportion of articles with non-South African addresses needs to be increased from the current 27% in order to improve the international standing of the journal.
- Currently, 85% of the peer reviewers used by the journal have South African addresses. This needs to be reduced and that of non-South African addresses increased to improve the international standing of the journal.
- The average number of reviewers per manuscript over the 3-year review period was less than two (in 2007 it was 1.6). The number should be increased to at least two.
- It is very important that authors from other institutions within South Africa be encouraged to publish in the journal in order to reflect a broader national authorship of the journal and thereby improve its national relevance.
- It is important to indicate on the article when a manuscript was received and accepted for publication.
- The appointment, selection and terms of service for the editorial team need to be reconsidered – positions should be advertised and appointed competitively rather than selecting individuals.

XIII. South African Journal of Enology and Viticulture

Editing functions: Standing and spread to editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor and associate editors are all internationally established South African researchers. The associate editors have diverse backgrounds, which cover most of the fields of expertise required to arrive at sound conclusions regarding the acceptability of submitted articles.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 28 years (since 1980), without interruption. The number of peer-reviewed original articles published during the three years under review is 42; the number of manuscripts received in the same period was about 51, and only one manuscript was rejected without peer review. Three reviewers are used per manuscript, and a total of 40 reviewers were used; of the 40 reviewers, 60% had non-South African addresses. The editor was appointed competitively, for a 3-year cycle. Members of the editorial board are not appointed competitively; they handle the peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices. All editorial board members are from within South Africa. Editorial guidelines are published on the website. The editorial guidelines have not been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The articles published in the journal over the 3-year period were of consistently high quality and good mix. The contents of the majority of published

articles were contextually good and consistent with the aims and objectives of the journal. The journal publishes articles in the specialised discipline of enology and viticulture, and almost all the articles published were in the discipline. There are several exceptionally good articles and several that adequately represent some of the finest work done in South Africa in this discipline. This work compares quite favourably with that done in other countries in the world, and the journal compares favourably with such journals as the *American Journal of Enology, Viticulture* and *Vigne et Vin*. The journal is published biannually, and an average of 12 articles is published per annum. This number is adequate in a South African context. However, there is scope to increase the number of issues per annum. Indeed, the journal occupies an interesting niche in the global wine science community, and increasing the frequency of publication should attract more international scientists to consider publishing in the journal. The South African articles published focus on local problems and issues; however, there is a large mix of articles including overseas articles, some of which focus on international problems. The authors of articles from South Africa are concentrated in the region/ areas where vines are grown (the Western Cape) and consequently the majority of the authors are from research and tertiary education institutions from around this region. However, there are a good proportion of articles by authors from outside Africa; in one volume, published in 2008, 85% of the articles were from overseas contributors. The journal publishes useful features including review articles and research notes; the review articles are on topical issues in the field. Extending such features would make a positive contribution to the image and relevance of the journal.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: On each article there is an indication of when the manuscript was received and accepted for publication, which is a commendable practice. Published articles have well-written English abstracts, which reflects an efficient editorial practice. Similarly, citations and references are all properly formatted. No *errata* were evident. The journal and articles are well presented with high-quality illustrations (figures and tables). The style and layout of the journal is very impressive.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: From the authorship and addresses of the authors, it is clear that the articles in the journal were authored by senior researchers and academics. There was no sign of postgraduate students' participation in the authorship; in this respect, the journal is not serving as a stimulus for local graduate students. The journal is widely distributed in South Africa and to the relevant overseas universities (i.e. those that teach in the fields of interest), and many articles are part of the teaching material that is used for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in our environment. It provides an opportunity to publish research data of direct relevance to the local wine industry. The format, presentation and content of the articles in the journal are comparable with those from the United States, France and Australia.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal should encourage postgraduate students and other young and upcoming researchers to publish in it. A higher frequency of publication would be desirable to decrease the time period between submission and publication – a factor that negatively impacts on the journal's ability to attract more articles from

international researchers. Attracting more international contributions is essential to increasing the overall reputation and citation impact of the journal, but currently the published articles consist of a good mix of reviews and original research articles, and cover all aspects of relevance within the broader field of interest of the journal. The journal clearly plays a prominent role in linking academic research and the local and international wine industries, and as such, it plays an extremely important role in local knowledge transfer, and in exposing locally relevant research to a global audience. The journal's editorial policy guidelines should be aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of appropriate advertising in the journal.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is the South African Society for Enology and Viticulture. The journal's total expenditure per annum is R250 000. It appears free online and is WoS indexed. The editor is in principle interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
3. **The editor should seriously consider the following recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers:**
 - Encourage postgraduate students and other young and upcoming researchers to publish in the journal.
 - Maintain the average of three reviewers per manuscript if possible, in order to maintain the quality.
 - Consider aligning the editorial policy guidelines of the journal with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.
 - Consider carrying appropriate advertising in the journal.

XIV. African Zoology

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: Members of the editorial board have expertise in a range of disciplines, including marine biology, mammology, herpetology and taxonomy. The

editor-in-chief and editorial board members have appropriately high national and international disciplinary reputations.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 43 years, without interruption. The co-scientific editors have been in the position since 2003; the position is an honorary appointment by the Zoological Society of Southern Africa (ZSSA). Most members of the editorial board are within the country and each member has a faunal or subject-specific portfolio; members willingly recuse themselves if a conflict-of-interest situation arises. The editorial guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. The number of manuscripts (of all three types) received in the period under review was 164; 38 of these were rejected without peer review, because they were outside the publication policy of the journal (i.e. not relevant to African faunas and zoology), because they were too anecdotal, or because the manuscripts were believed to have been written in such a way as to divide studies into numerous 'least publishable units', each with minimal information and content. Peer review is compulsory, with two reviewers per manuscript; in 2008, 48 reviewers were used, about 35% of whom had non-South African addresses. Review reports are retained in the archives but accessible only to the editor.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The standard of the publications is high. A contextually good number of articles is published per annum, including a good number of research articles, short communications and book reviews. Book reviews are published in each volume, but there are no editorials or reviews of current ideas in zoology. The journal has a regional focus and a good sampling of local/regional kinds of materials/problems, as well as a good sample of the best work done in the country, is published. Authors of published articles are from across the country and abroad.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: Abstracts for all articles are published in good English. Publication of *errata* does not occur often, but when necessary. The citation practice, presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are very good. The journal shares a managing editor with *African Entomology*, which is a high-quality journal.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal publishes a number of articles by graduate students. Articles do have appropriate introductions to the subject. The newsletter, the *Aardvark*, provides a useful summary of the research being undertaken at universities and research institutes around South Africa. The journal is a general zoological journal so it is difficult to compare it with more specialised journals but comparability with leading international journals in the field is estimated at 65-75%. It is an excellent zoological journal that covers reports on many aspects of the discipline. More editorials or reviews of the state-of-the-art research in zoology would make the journal more useful and exciting to readers.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal would benefit from invited reviews and commentary about new ideas in the field, and also from editorial comment about what is especially interesting in each issue, and the relevance of published articles to prevailing ideas in the discipline. Such editorial comment at a conceptual level would be of great value in assisting students and young researchers to focus on significant questions. Reports of international conferences would help to bring the cutting edge of the field to graduates and young researchers. This type of input would change the overall impression of the journal and make it more appealing to readers.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is the ZSSA. The print run is approximately 500 copies per issue, and there are 122 (65 international; 57 African) subscribers plus 297 members (a total of 416 recipients). Production and distribution is outsourced to Scientific Productions. The journal is WoS indexed. There are no page charges. Copyright is retained by the Society. The editor is in principle interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals. The ZSSA supports the principles of the open-access initiative, but will not be able to participate in such a scheme until there is financial support (to cover production and postage costs) over and above income derived through subscriptions. More than 70% of the Society's subscription income is devoted to the journal's production, and making the journal content freely available would potentially erode the subscription base, thus severely threatening the financial viability of the journal and Society.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
3. **The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**

XV. African Journal of Herpetology

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editors and editorial committee comprise local and international people with very good reputations. The three associate editors comprise two international, and one local herpetologist. All three are well respected in their disciplines and are well-known internationally. They are all prolific and active publishers. The edi-

torial committee comprises nine members, of which four have been drawn from the international community. The local members represent the top local herpetologists.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 58 years, with no significant interruption. The current editor took over in 2009, following election by the Herpetological Association of Africa. The editor is appointed for a 2-year term. Members of the editorial board are not appointed competitively; both local and international members are invited to serve and members occasionally handle manuscripts. As of 2010, a new editorial board will be elected and members will be chosen to provide topical expertise. The journal publishes editorial/policy guidelines. However, these have not been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. The current editor has submission figures for only 2009, during which the journal received 25 manuscripts, only two of which were rejected before peer review. Of the articles of all three types published in 2009, 21 had at least one author with a non-South African address. Peer review is compulsory, with at least two and as many as four reviewers per manuscript. In 2009, 58 reviewers were used, most (approximately 75%) of whom had non-South African addresses. Review reports are not centrally stored, but this will change in 2010. Issues of journals are presently pre-scheduled to appear in June and December, but this will be migrated to January and June over the coming years.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: Published articles (full length and short communications) are of a high quality, and focused on African herpetology. Approximately 40% are taxonomic, but there is an increasing inclusion of systematic work. The journal appears biannually, with a variable number of full-length articles (typically about 15) published per annum. The journal is the primary source of publications on African herpetology, and is clearly well known as an appropriate, WoS-indexed journal. It is recognised as a journal for international, as well as regional herpetologists, and attracts approximately 16 citations annually for its publications. The journal would probably not attract the best herpetological articles produced within the country, as there are competing international journals in the field with relatively high impact factors. The journal serves as a primary publication avenue for local advances in taxonomy and systematics, and further includes articles of local interest on ecology and to a lesser extent, herpetological conservation. The journal attracts a fair number of publications produced by local herpetologists, and in addition, regularly publishes work by international scientists (typically reflecting work that was carried out in Africa). There was a high number of book reviews in the 3-year review period – ten – all written by the same person; the journal stopped publishing book reviews in 2009. No editorial communications were detected.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: English abstracts with keywords are present. Publication of *errata* was not detected. The citation practice and referencing are in line with international norms and the presentation, layout and illustrations are of high quality.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: There were some published articles by postgraduate students in the period under review. The range of publications, interspersed with a large number of

short communications and regular book reviews, makes the journal easily accessible to young herpetologists. This journal compares favourably with leading international herpetological journals, such as *Copeia* and the *Journal of Herpetology*, as well as the local journals *African Entomology* and *African Zoology*.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: Other article types, such as historical perspectives, obituaries, news items, reviews of important recent literature, should be included. It would be useful if the articles could be grouped into sections in each issue, for example taxonomy, systematics, ecology.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is the Herpetological Association of Africa (HAA). Production and distribution will be outsourced from 2010. In 2009 the number of paying subscribers was 315. All copyright is held by the HAA. The journal is WoS indexed. The HAA is in the process of signing a contract with Taylor & Francis to publish *African Journal of Herpetology* for five years from 2010. Depending on the outcome of this arrangement, they may be interested in open-access publishing from 2015. The editor was not able to provide the relevant answers for the period 2007-2008.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
3. **The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
4. **In addition, the Panel requests** the ASSAf Secretariat to obtain a questionnaire from the editor in order to enable the Panel to establish if the journal's editorial guidelines are aligned to the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

XVI. *African Entomology*

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: Both editors are prominent in the entomological research community of South Africa. There is a well-known overseas member of the editorial board; the other members of the editorial board all have excellent reputations as leading entomologists in South Africa, with considerable international recognition. The standing of the reviewers is high.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 71 years without interruption – from 1937 to 1992 as the *Journal of the Entomological Society of Southern Africa* (ESSA) and from 1993 to the present as *African Entomology*. The ESSA Executive Committee appoints the editors; some have volunteered for the position, while others have been invited. The appointment of the editor is for an undefined period, as are the appointment of the members of the editorial board; a policy which is under review. Editorial guidelines are published and they are fundamentally aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. Instructions to authors and guidelines are being revised as part of an ongoing editorial practice. Peer review is compulsory, with a minimum of two, but up to four reviewers per manuscript; a large pool of reviewers (about 165) is used, with about 35% having international addresses. Reports are retained in the archives. The rejection rate is variable, but usually between 40% and 60%. Two issues per annum appear on time. An editorial about responsibility, editorship and authorship was recently published in *African Entomology* 16: i-ii (2008). Much of the recent editorial policy of *African Entomology* is informed by international trends in journal publication as reflected in that editorial. For instance, the journal is implementing a double-blind reviewing system to minimise inadvertent or other biases in the reviewing process. *African Entomology* has an occasional *memoir* series in addition to the regular volumes.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The articles accepted for publication are of good quality. The journal covers all aspects of entomology and the proportion of articles from different disciplines varies from issue to issue. Overall there are a good number of contextual articles dealing with both applied and pure entomological topics. As a more general (i.e. not a specialised) journal, the standing is high internationally. Perceived pressure from funding bodies (the NRF and universities) to publish articles in overseas journals has detracted from local journals because authors are inclined to send their best contributions abroad. Nevertheless, the journal continues to attract excellent submissions both nationally and internationally. Certainly, there is a focus on local/regional kinds of materials/problems especially in the articles dealing with applied entomology. There is a broad mix of contributors from universities and other research organisations, both national and international. There has been one editorial, which was extremely useful, and each issue has relevant book reviews. However, there are no regular editorials or reviews of ideas in entomology. An accompanying series of intermittent *memoirs* review topics of a specialised nature.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: There are English abstracts for all articles. Publication of *errata* is infrequent, but occurs when necessary. The citation practice is good. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are very good.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: One of the most important attributes of the journal is that it is an excellent place for graduate students to publish. The turnaround time is good and the editorial process rigorous but efficient. *African Entomology* is on a par with most, and even surpasses some, other general entomological journals around the world, and is

recognised as a good-quality source of information. The newsletter, *Rostrum*, which accompanies each issue of the journal, provides an excellent informal commentary on national current events.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: *African Entomology* is a good journal that is well edited, well run and well supported, with a 'tried and trusted' format and there is no real need for change. The journal would, however, benefit from invited reviews and commentary about new ideas in the field, and from editorial comment about what is especially interesting in each issue and the relevance of the content to prevailing ideas in the discipline. Such editorial comment at a conceptual level would be of great value in assisting students and young researchers to focus on significant questions. Reports of international conferences would help to bring the cutting edge of the field to graduates and young researchers. This type of input also would change the overall impression of the journal and make it more appealing to readers.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is the ESSA. The print run is 500 copies per issue, with 117 subscribers. The journal is WoS indexed and accessible on BioOne. The annual expenditure is about R157 000. Funds are generated from membership which entitles the member to a print copy and access to the full-text articles on the website for a small extra charge. Copyright resides with the journal which gives immediate access to authors should they require their own material. The editor is in principle interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
- 3. The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
- 4. In addition, the Panel believes that the journal should enhance its enrichment features.**

XVII. African Invertebrates

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editorial board is entirely national and mostly from research institutes and museums. The editor-in-chief and members of the editorial board have

appropriate national and international disciplinary reputations and standing. The members of the editorial advisory board are all from outside of South Africa, which is viewed favourably.

Synopsis of questionnaire: *African Invertebrates* has been published for eight years (since 2001), and is a continuation of the *Annals of the Natal Museum* which commenced in 1906 as the *Annals of the Natal Government Museum*. *African Invertebrates* has never experienced any interruption. The editor-in-chief is not appointed competitively and serves until resignation. Members of the editorial board are also not competitively appointed and may be from inside or outside the country. Editorial/policy guidelines are published and have been aligned to the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. In the period under review, 67% of published articles had at least one author with a non-South African address. All articles are peer reviewed, with two reviewers per manuscript; a total of 41 reviewers were used during the period under review, about 78% of whom had a non-South African address. Review reports are retained in the archives. *African Invertebrates* is published biannually.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: *African Invertebrates* is an international peer-reviewed scholarly journal that covers the taxonomy, systematics, biogeography, biology, ecology, conservation and palaeontology of Afrotropical invertebrates, whether terrestrial, fresh water or marine. All contributions are published in English (British standard). The length of manuscripts generally should not exceed 50 printed pages. Exceptions, as in the case of monographic revisions, can be negotiated. Authors are encouraged to make use of extensive collections of the Natal Museum and other South African museums, and to deposit holotypes (paratypes) and voucher specimens in recognised South African institutions. The quality of published articles is good. There is a good number of articles published per annum, which includes a good sample of the best work done in the country in the field of taxonomy, with many articles from KwaZulu-Natal. An interesting feature is the remarkable number of articles from Western and Eastern Europe. A specialised focus on local or regional kinds of materials is good to adequate. The articles published cover material from the entire continent. The journal publishes many taxonomic articles, and, although their importance is recognised, they are generally long and very specific, and therefore do not appeal to a wide audience. Although a good number of book reviews is published in each volume, the journal should publish more editorials and reviews of ideas in invertebrate biology.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: abstracts for all articles are published in English. The citation practice, presentation and layout are good. No *errata* were seen in the period under review.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: There were some published articles by postgraduate students in the period under review. The journal compares favourably with other museum annals in

South Africa, but is less substantial than those from other countries. More editorials or reviews of the state-of-the-art research in invertebrate zoology would make the journal more useful to students and more appealing to readers.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal is called *African Invertebrates* but most of the articles are on taxonomy or systematics, which is in line with its origin and fame as the *Annals of the Natal Museum*. The journal is marketed as an international journal open to everyone working on Afrotropical invertebrates from any institution, which is in contrast to many other South African research institutions (museums) that publish scientific journals and stipulate in their editorial policies that only articles from staff members/associates/collaborators or articles based on the institutional holdings are acceptable for publication. There are not that many other independent local journals in the specified research area and the journal should thus be able to attract more submissions; to this end, it would thus be of benefit if the spread of articles was wider to better reflect the current title *African Invertebrates*.

The journal would also benefit from publishing invited reviews and commentary about new ideas in the field, as well as editorial comment about what is especially interesting in each issue and the relevance of the articles to prevailing ideas in the discipline. Such editorial comment at a conceptual level would be of great value in assisting students and young researchers to focus on significant questions. Reports of international conferences would help to bring the cutting edge of the field to graduates and young researchers. This type of input would change the overall impression of the journal and make it more appealing to readers.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is the Council of the Natal Museum. The print run is approximately 300 copies per issue, with approximately 20 paying subscribers. The journal is WoS indexed and was independently peer reviewed by Thomson Reuters Web of Science. There are no page charges. The annual expenditure in 2008 was about R170 000. Copyright belongs to the Council of the Natal Museum. The editor is NOT interested in an invitation to join the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals.

Panel's consensus view:

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
2. **The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
3. **The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
4. **The Panel also commended** the journal for its scope and focus.

XVIII. South African Journal of Plant and Soil

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The scientific editor and editorial board have generally high national reputations; three of them are especially widely known and recognised.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published for 26 years in 2009, without interruption. The average number of peer-reviewed original articles published during the period under review is 43. The number of manuscripts received in the same period was 167, three of which did not meet scientific standards and 11 were returned to the authors for style corrections. In 2008, 98 reviewers were used. The editor has been editing the journal since the beginning of 2007 which includes a 1-year overlap period from the previous editor, and independently since the beginning of 2008. The editor was chosen from within the editorial board, to serve for a 3- to 5-year period. Members of the editorial board are not appointed competitively; two representatives of each of the supporting societies are chosen by the society boards in collaboration with the editorial committee. Some board members have many years service whilst others are only involved for a year or two. All editorial board members are from within the country. There are instructions to authors. In principle, a reviewer would not review a manuscript if there was a conflict of interest, but there is no written policy to this effect. The instructions to authors have NOT been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The quality of the articles has improved over the last five years; three to five years ago the majority of the articles had a narrow focus, and results were often interpreted without trying to convey a mechanistic basis. An adequate number of articles are published per annum. The 12 volumes published during the 3-year review period had a few topical reviews which were valuable. The 'short communications' format is useful but it is possible that it is being abused in order to create research outputs that wouldn't otherwise qualify for subsidies. The mix of articles varies; the majority of articles are associated with agricultural crops. It is disappointing that the journal does not seem to be the journal of choice for cutting-edge soil science researchers in South Africa. The journal does, however, serve a valuable purpose in conveying, mostly agricultural, findings and is one of the few sources of information in the region on soils and agriculture. The majority of the articles are published by South Africans and are especially from those universities which historically have agriculture faculties. There seem to be very few partnerships with other institutions. It is heartening that research conducted in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe is published in this journal. (In the case of the Zimbabwean article, the research was conducted in Zimbabwe and published by Zimbabweans; in the case of the Ethiopian article, the research was published by graduate students registered at the University of the Free State. In the period under review, there also was one paper from research conducted in Kenya.)

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: The quality of the writing is good and the journal contains English abstracts. There was no evidence of the publication of *errata* in the 12 volumes published in the three years under review. There is a very good citation practice. The layout, style and copy-editing interventions are excellent.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal does serve a valuable role in publishing graduate students' work. The quality of the journal has continually improved, although it is still not as good as the majority of leading journals in this disciplinary field, it still plays an indispensable role in South Africa.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: It is very valuable that the scientific editor is based at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) but this association should be exploited to a greater extent to market the journal within the ARC, thereby encouraging submissions from researchers working at the ARC and other agricultural/horticultural/soil science/weed research institutes in the country. Nearly all articles are currently derived from academic staff and their students based at universities. The journal is not yet worthy of WoS indexing, but it serves a valuable vehicle for the dissemination of research in South Africa. The journal will not be able to grow in international stature unless the terminology used (e.g. 'swart vlei soils') is made more internationally understandable. The newly emerging disciplinary area of biogeochemistry does not seem to have made its mark on this journal, nor much of the work being conducted internationally and locally on soil biology and biochemistry. There is also very little published on future expectations within the field, for example how the agricultural/soils/horticultural landscapes will be changing in the next 50 years in response to water limitations, higher temperatures and the use of ecofriendly products. There is a gap in the South African research arena for articles on soil science in natural (non-agricultural) areas, which the journal could take advantage of, by expanding its current narrow focus to publish more articles within that area. There are also too few articles published that describe the adoption of new technologies for understanding yield variability, e.g. isotope studies and remote-sensing approaches.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publisher is Intrepid Press. The regular print run of the journal is 1000 copies per issue. The four supporting societies (SAWSS, South African Society of Crop Production, Soil Science Society of South Africa, Southern African Society for Horticultural Sciences) each contribute to the running cost of the journal. All members of the supporting societies have free access to the online articles (with a username and password) through the Sabinet site; in contrast subscribers access the journal through Scientific Publishing Services. The journal forms part of a bundle of journals to which access is sold by Sabinet and this is the only pay-to-read access facility online. The editor has received a commercial offer from Routledge (Taylor & Francis), and the journal is at a point where the editorial team will have to make informed choices about

the options for the future of the journal. The journal changed the cover design (from two-tone to full colour) at the beginning of Volume 25 (2008).

The editor's biggest challenges as a 'new' editor have been:

- updating the reviewers' list;
- obtaining peer review reports from international scientists;
- providing information on the status/standing of the journal; and
- improving the quality of graphs.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals. (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
- 3. The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
- 4. In addition, the Panel believes** that the scope of soil plant research published should be broadened to include natural systems; more substantive articles should be published; assistance from the publisher should be solicited to make the editor's work much easier; and the editorial guidelines should be aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. The Panel also recommends that ASSAf should interact with the editor to discuss the pressures faced by the editor and find ways to ease the pressure. The inclusion of more enrichment features in the journal is recommended.

XIX. Southern Forests: A Journal of Forest Science

Editing functions: Standing and spread of editorial collective, international participation, peer review

Consensus review: The editor-in-chief, associate editors and members of the editorial board have high national and international reputations. The editor and the associate editors are all South African. The journal has been published by the South African Institute of Forestry (SAIF) since 1989. The editorial advisory board, which was revised and expanded in 2005, includes many international scientists. All national and international members are well known and respected as experts in their particular scientific fields.

Synopsis of questionnaire: The journal has been published since 1938, but, since 1986, it has been regarded as a full science journal. The number of issues has increased from two to three per annum over the years. The journal title has also changed over the years: *Journal of the South African Forestry Association* (from 1938 to 1962), *South African Forestry Journal* (from 1962 to 1997), *Southern African Forestry Journal* (from

1997 to 2006), *Southern Hemisphere Forestry Journal* (in 2007) and *Southern Forests: A Journal of Forest Science* (from 2008 onwards). The number of objective peer reviewers approached for each manuscript is three, but articles are also seen by the editor, three associate editors and by at least one editorial advisory board member. The number of peer reviewers used during the period under review is 72, of whom 24 had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in records, but only until the release of the next volume. The editor has been in the position since July 2000. The previous editor served for 11 years i.e. from 1990. The editor's appointment is by nomination and SAIF Council approval, and the term of service is renewed annually. Members of the editorial board are also appointed by nomination and SAIF Council approval, for a period of three years, and are from inside and outside the country (originally members were only South African but now they are equally distributed) The editor believes that the editorial policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*. The publication frequency of the journal is three times per annum, with a special edition every second year.

Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in South Africa, enrichment features

Consensus review: The quality of the articles has improved markedly over the last five years and there is a continual improvement in each volume published. Only high to very high quality articles are accepted and published. The editor-in-chief, associate editors and editorial advisory board members decided in 2005 that scientific quality should not be compromised and drastically tightened the review procedures which resulted in an increase in the rejection rate. There are an adequate number of articles per annum at the present time but as the journal grows in stature, the editor may have to consider increasing the number of issues from three to four per year, especially as the international stature of the journal increases. Scientific articles, research notes, management articles and editorials are published. The journal publishes very valuable editorials and the forward-looking editorials written over the three years under review have certainly turned the journal from an inwardly focused to an internationally focused journal. Many relevant book reviews and topical reviews were published in the journal until five years ago, when the SAIF Council took a deliberate decision to suspend book reviews because of the serious difficulties experienced in finding scientists with available time to review new books. Readers are frequently invited to submit comments on articles and their letters were published in the journal. There is certainly an adequate sampling of the best research done in the country. The journal holds an interesting position among South African scientists: whilst many would prefer to publish in some of the international forest journals with a higher impact factor, many choose to publish in *Southern Forests: A Journal of Forest Science* because it is widely read by the forest practitioners as well as the forest research scientists. The research featured in this journal does reach and have an impact on operational forestry in South Africa. As the reputation of the journal spreads in southern and East Africa, as well as in South America, India, Australia and New Zealand, the scientific quality will increase. The journal does focus on problems and forestry issues in the region, currently mostly within southern Africa. Many foresters in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and Zambia frequently use information published in the journal. The number of articles published by Africans, other than South Africans, has increased since 2007, and authors from other countries in the Southern Hemisphere also are starting to submit manuscripts for publication.

Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation

Consensus review: The quality of the writing is good and the journal does contain English abstracts. *Errata* are published when necessary. There is an excellent citation practice. The layout, style and copy-editing interventions are excellent. The journal changed its format, presentation and layout in 2007. Publication of some articles in colour has become a standard feature. The journal is published in print and, since 1990, in electronic format.

Capacity development and international comparability

Consensus review: The journal, the editors and the members of the editorial board create a very inviting forum for encouraging young scientists. The journal publishes results from relevant and most-recent research programmes and initiatives. Students and young researchers who read the journal will keep abreast of the latest work that is being done and this will serve as a stimulus and encourage them to continue with research on the relevant topics. The journal is indexed/abstracted in key bibliographic databases including BIOSIS, CAB Abstracts, Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, Journal Citation Reports, Science Citation Index Expanded and Scopus. The journal compares favourably to other regional journals in the field and the recent drive to improve the quality of published articles, as well as becoming part of the WoS Journal Impact Factor will attract more leading scientists to publish their results in this journal. The mix of pure science, management and operational articles has changed over the years with more emphasis being given to science articles with rigorous reviewing. This approach has met with some opposition from some sectors of the community but has generally been lauded. The time between submitting a manuscript to final publication is much shorter than many other prestigious forestry journals.

Suggested improvements

Consensus review: The journal has undergone a number of profound changes over the last three years in response to the community wanting the journal to become WoS indexed, to enhance its scientific reputation, and to attract articles from the international scientific community. These changes include revision and expansion of the editorial board; improving the review process to ensure that only manuscripts conforming to the highest scientific standards are published; and appointing a new publisher (NISC) in 1997. The journal is now available in hard copy and electronic format. The presentation, layout and the style of the journal also were improved – it is now printed on coated glossy paper and some articles are printed in colour. Authors do not have to pay page charges to publish their manuscripts. Articles are indexed/abstracted in key bibliographic databases and searchable with generally used search engines such as Google. The journal will receive an annual JCR Impact Factor rating. The SAIF initiated a 'Scientific Writing Award' for the journal to give recognition to outstanding high-quality scientific writing in the journal. All these changes will make it more attractive to top-rated scientists to publish or to continue publishing their work in this journal. The journal should continue to invite leading scientists to publish their research in this journal and to have special and dedicated editions focusing on specific topics, themes or events. The journal would be further enhanced if there was a section for job placements and advertisements for local and international conferences. It should be noted

that all the changes mentioned above came at a cost – the subscription fees increased substantially, which will probably have a negative effect on the number of individuals subscribing to the journal and thereby negatively impact on the exposure of research published in the journal.

Business aspects

Synopsis of questionnaire: The publishers of the journal over the years have been the South African Forestry Association (SAFA) (from 1938 to 1974); SAFA/Southern Africa Institute of Forestry (SAIF) (from 1969 to 1989); SAIF (provision of an Editorial Advisory Board from 1986 to 1989), SAIF (from 1990 to 2006); and NISC/SAIF (from 2007 onwards). The print run is approximately 350 copies per issue. NISC deals only with publishing logistics and with subscriptions (i.e. production, printing and online hosting) and SAIF provide support to cover editorial expenses. The electronic journal can be freely accessed by certain countries. The journal is WoS and IBSS indexed; and was independently peer reviewed by Thomson Reuters Web of Science. There are no page charges. The annual SAIF expenditure is R50 000; NISC bears the publishing, printing and distribution costs which are substantially higher but unknown. In terms of the collaboration agreement between SAIF and NISC, SAIF provides peer-reviewed copy and NISC publishes and distributes – each to their own account. The copyright vested in SAIF until 2006, but has been fully vested in NISC from 2007 onwards. Three attempts over about 15 years to gain WoS accreditation were unsuccessful because the journal was categorised as 'too regional'. Open-access publishing is a matter for the publisher, NISC, to consider because they incur the major expense of distributing the journal; an important consideration is that forestry is a highly rural industry and in many countries foresters are still dependent on hard-copy information distribution, though the situation is rapidly improving. The biggest challenge faced by the journal is the obsession of those who only wish to publish in overseas journals indexed by WoS. It is of interest that in the 200th edition of the journal (March 2004) an editorial was published under the title 'Southern African Forestry Journal: What has been achieved since October 1938?'.

Panel's consensus view:

- 1. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). (See Appendix C.)**
- 2. The editor and publisher should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**
- 3. The editor should seriously consider the above recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.**
- 4. In addition, the Panel believes** that the journal should increase its publication to four issues per year.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO THE EDITORS OF THE JOURNALS BEING PEER REVIEWED

Please type in a short answer, just after each question, and send us your consolidated response as an MS Word document.

(a) Editorial process-related criteria (generally based on the *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review for South African Scholarly Journals* developed by ASSAf):

- For how many years has your journal been published?
- Have there been significant interruptions in publication?
- How many peer-reviewed original papers have you published during the last three years:
 - Articles?
 - Letter-type articles?
 - Reviews?
- How many manuscripts (of all three types) were received in the same period?
- Approximately how many manuscripts of all three types were rejected without peer review?
- What proportion of papers of all three types that you published had at least one author with a non-South African address?
- How many peer reviewers are usually approached for EACH submitted manuscript?
- How many peer reviewers were used in total, in any ONE of the last three years?
- What proportion of these had non-South African addresses?
- Are peer review reports accessibly retained in your records?
- What is the average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication
 - in print?
 - on the web?
- What is the publication frequency of your journal, per year?
- Are issues of your journals pre-scheduled to appear on given dates?
- If scheduled, do the issues in fact appear regularly on the scheduled dates?

- How long have you been editor/chief editor of this journal?
- Were you appointed competitively (i.e. following advertisement and a selection process)?
 - For what period?
- Do members of your editorial board
 - handle peer review of individual manuscripts?
 - advise on editorial policies/practices?
- Are they appointed competitively (i.e. following advertisement and a selection process)?
 - for a given period?
 - from inside and outside the country?
 - to provide specific topical expertise?
- Do you have published editorial/policy guidelines?
- Is there a conflict-of-interest policy?
- Have your editorial/policy guidelines been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice*?
- Do you publish *errata* in all cases where these have become apparent?
- Does your journal contain enrichment features such as
 - editorials?
 - "News and Views"?
 - topical reviews?
 - book reviews?
 - correspondence on published articles?
- What is the percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material?

(b) Business-related criteria:

- What is the regular print run of your journal?
- Who is the publisher?
- Is production and distribution outsourced?
- Do you carry advertising which is
 - paid?
 - unpaid?
- Do you receive financial sponsorship(s)?

- What is the number of paying subscribers?
- How many of the subscribers are organisations as opposed to individuals?
- If your journal appears online,
 - is it free online (open access)?
 - is it part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service?
 - is it part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism (e.g. Medline)?
- What is your journal's (average) total income per annum?
- What is your journal's total expenditure per annum?
- Have you had offers to purchase from multi-national publishers?
- What are your copyright arrangements?

(c) Bibliometric assessments:

- Is your journal indexed in Thomson Reuters: Web of Science and/or the IBSS?
- Have Web of Science journal type impact factors (e.g. Google Scholar or Scopus) ever been determined for your journal?
- If articles are not in English, are 'front details' like titles, authors, addresses, and English abstracts mandatory?
- Has your journal ever been independently peer reviewed before?

(d) General:

- Would you (and your publisher) in principle be interested in being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's proposed SciELO-South Africa as a free-online, open-access journal (the project description recently was circulated to all editors) ?
- Have you any other information or comments that may be useful to the Panel?



APPENDIX B

REQUESTS TO INDEPENDENT PEER REVIEWERS:

1. Do the hard copies of the last 2-3 years of issues of the journal reflect:
 - 1.1 high national/international disciplinary reputations/standing of the editor-in-chief/ associate editors/members of the editorial board?
 - 1.2 a high/good (general/average) quality of the articles accepted/published?
 - 1.3 a (contextually) adequate/good number of articles per annum?
 - 1.4 an (adequate/good) sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline/field?
 - 1.5 a focus on local/regional kinds of materials/problems?
 - 1.6 publication of articles by authors from across the country, and internationally?
 - 1.7 useful additional scholarly features like editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, scholarly correspondence, etc?
 - 1.8 proper (English-language) abstracts for all articles?
 - 1.9 suitable publication of errata?
 - 1.10 good citation practice?
 - 1.10 good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions?
 - 1.10 suitability as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students/young academics in the discipline concerned?
 - 1.11 some kind of comparability with leading international journals in the field?
2. Please list your suggestions for an improvement programme for the journal?

APPENDIX C: Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences: Evaluation of journals according to DHET accreditation criteria and policy

No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the Journal (disseminate research)	ASSAT comments
1	Koedoe: Research Journal of the South African National Parks	0075-6458 (print) 2071-0771 (online)	Print - Annually; Online - Continuously	*not requested	www.koedoe.co.za	Dr Llewellyn C Foxcroft	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 13	AOSIS (Pty) Ltd; Suite #55, Private Bag X22, Cape Town, 7536; Tel: 086 1000381; Fax: 086 5004974; email: koedoe@sanparks.org; info@openjournals.net; www.openjournals.net	Yes, the journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students/young staff in the discipline concerned, and is highly complementary to many leading conservation journals, in the sense of publishing local, area-focused research (and of international interest too). This is a very well-known journal, and much respected and consulted in its field.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals. 2. The journal should continue to be listed on the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor and publisher should be encouraged to use the outcome of the present review in making application for indexing by WoS. 4. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers above. 5. In addition, the Panel believes that the journal should keep its name Koedoe, which is well known in the field. Also, the editor should consider focusing on issues or problems in the area of terrestrial, marine and fresh water ecosystems.
2	South African Journal of Wildlife Research	0379-4369	Semi-annually	*not requested	http://www.sawma.co.za	Dr Michael Somers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Southern African Wildlife Management Association; PO Box 217, Bloubaergstrand, 7436; Tel: 021 5541297; Fax: 086 6729882; email: elma@mweb.co.za; www.sawma.co.za	Yes, several of the published papers represent some of the best work of its kind in South Africa. There is clearly a focus on 'national' subject matter, although given the significance of the African (even South African) fauna and flora, this seems appropriate.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendation for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers above. 4. In addition, the Panel believes the journal impact factor is good for a South African journal.

APPENDIX C: Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences: Evaluation of journals according to DHET accreditation criteria and policy

No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the journal (disseminate research)	ASSAF comments
3	African Natural History	1816-8396	Annually	*not requested	http://www.journals.co.za/lej/ejour_ainatnhist.html	Dr Herbie Klinger	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 7	Iziko Museums of Cape Town	Yes, the journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young staff in the discipline.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. The editor and publisher should be encouraged to use the outcome of the present review in making application for indexing by WoS. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers above. In addition, the Panel believes the journal should publish manuscripts from a wider spectrum; discourage the editor from publishing in the journal; and consider increasing its article output; review its scope and focus; and align its editorial guidelines with ASSAF's National Code of Best Practice in editorial discretion and peer review.
4	South African Journal of Animal Science	0375-1589	Triannually	*not requested	http://www.sasas.co.za/	Prof J.B. van Rysen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	South African Society for Animal Science	Yes, articles are generally of a high standard and should stimulate some interest among students and young staff. The standard is equivalent to some of the international animal science journals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. In addition, the Panel believes the Editor should check the ASSAF guidelines on the National Code of Best Practice in editorial discretion and peer review to align the journal with them; the editor should consider improving the journal by adding essential scholarly features; and the editor should encourage co-publishing of articles with graduate students.

APPENDIX C: Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences: Evaluation of journals according to DHET accreditation criteria and policy

No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the journal (disseminate research)	ASSAf comments
5	Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research	0030-2465	Quarterly	*not requested	http://www.journals.co.za/ej/ejour_opvet.html	Prof Joop Boomker	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 4	Onderstepoort Veterinary Inst, Agricultural Research Council, Private Bag X5, Onderstepoort, 0110	Yes, the journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young staff in the discipline. There are many articles of interest in this journal, it is comparable with international journals in the field.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The journal should include items of scholarly interest such as editorials, book reviews, topical reviews, etc. 4. In addition, the Panel believes that the Editor should consider aligning editorial guidelines with ASSAf's guidelines on the National Code of Best Practice in editorial discretion and peer review.
6	Journal of the South African Veterinary Association - Tydskrif Van Die Suid-Afrikaanse Veterinêre Vereniging	0038-2809	Quarterly	*not requested	http://www.journals.co.za/ej/ejour_savet.html	Dr CM Cameron	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	South African Vet Assoc, PO Box 25033, Monument Park, Pretoria, 0105	Yes, the papers are generally of a high scientific standard. Some reflect practical issues, whilst others are more clinical. The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young staff in the discipline. It is comparable with international journals in the field.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform.
7	Bothalia	0006-8241	Semi-annually	*not requested	http://www.nbi.ac.za/products/publications/bothalia.htm	Prof Gerrit Gemshuizen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	National Botanical Inst; Private Bag X101, Pretoria, 0001; http://www.nbi.ac.za/products/publications/bothalia.htm	Yes, disseminates information on Southern African plant diversity at the species level.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. 4. In addition, the Panel believes that the journal should publish articles on full open-access platform. The Panel also recommends in the interest of the botany discipline that the journal should consider changing its scope or amalgamating with the South African Journal of Botany.

APPENDIX C: Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences: Evaluation of journals according to DHET accreditation criteria and policy

No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the journal (disseminate research)	ASSAT comments
8	South African Journal of Botany	0254-6299	Quarterly	*not requested	http://www.science-direct.com	Prof Hannes van Staden	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 21	Esevier	Yes, the journal is suitable for encouraging students and young academics, but not only in coverage, but also affording extremely good examples of presentation across the board of botanical and related topics. The SA Journal of Botany compares well with any other inter-disciplinary journals devoted to the plant sciences. The scope of the journal is very broad.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed peer-odical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. Despite present reservations. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. 4. In addition, the Panel believes the journal should broaden its scope to include other disciplinary areas within botany as well as broadening its content of scientific articles.
9	Flowering Plants of Africa	0015-4504	One volume every second year	*not requested	None	Prof Gerrit Gemshuizen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	National Botanical Institute; Private Bag X101, Pretoria, 0001; Cussonia Avenue, Brummeria, Pretoria; Tel: 012 8043200; Fax: 012 8043211	Yes, but the journal is published once every two years and it is a valuable scholarly publication. The Panel also felt it is disadvantaged being published as a journal, and therefore recommends that it should be published as a scholarly book. Apart from these two recommendations the Panel believes the journal should seek sponsorship from art dealers to support it as an annual scholarly book.	1. The journal should be accredited as a book under the DHET subsidy system. 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform, but as a book publication (see below). 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers above. 4. In addition, the Panel noted that the journal is published once every two years and it is a valuable scholarly publication. The panel also felt it is disadvantaged being published as a journal, and therefore recommends that it should consider to be published as a scholarly book. Apart from these two recommendations the Panel believes the journal should seek sponsorship from art dealers to support it as an annual scholarly book.

APPENDIX C: Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences: Evaluation of journals according to DHET accreditation criteria and policy

No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the journal (disseminate research)	ASSAF comments
10	African Journal of Range and Forage Science	1022-0119 (print) 1727-9380 (online)	Triannually	*not requested	www.nisc.co.za	Dr Susanne Venter	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 2	Mike Schramm: NISC South Africa; 1 Dundas Street, PO Box 377, Grahamstown, 6140; Tel: 046 6229 698; Fax: 046 6229 550; email: publishing@nisc.co.za	Yes, general quality is good with an emphasis on South Africa and African research but broad applicability. Well respected among scientific publications of a related nature. Papers are worthwhile in terms of highlighting local issues and the journal is consistently in demand by students.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the following recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers: Soliciting manuscripts from high-profile researchers. Attracting a greater number of research articles from South Africa, other African countries and beyond to allow a more stringent review process to be followed. Developing a mentorship programme to support younger researchers and researchers based in non-academic institutions in their efforts to publish their research. Soliciting book reviews and review articles, especially by well-known scientists, to add value to the journal. 4. In addition, the Panel believes that the journal should increase the number of peer reviewers outside the range of the editorial board.
11	Agrekon	0303-1853	Quarterly	*not requested	http://www.aeosa.org.za	Prof Nick Vink	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 4	Agricultural Econ Assoc South Africa, Dept Agricultural Econ; Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602	Yes, both the theoretical and applied aspects of the published articles are of high quality. Good sample of articles reflecting finest work in agricultural economics. The journal continues to serve as an important avenue for graduate students to publish. At the same time, it provides an important resource for all students in agricultural economics and economics in South Africa and Africa.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. 4. In addition, the Panel believes that the advantages of having the journal included in ASSAF's administered SciELO-South Africa platform needs to be properly explained to the journal's editorial team to enable them to make an informed decision about getting the journal included in the platform. The Panel also recommends that the editor should limit self-publishing in the journal. Last, the Panel recommends that the journal should consider a name change, as the current name is outdated.

APPENDIX C: Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences: Evaluation of journals according to DHET accreditation criteria and policy

No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the journal (disseminate research)	ASSAT comments
12	South African Journal of Agricultural Extension	0301-603X	Annually	*not requested	http://www.journals.co.za/ej/ejou_agri.html	Dr Fanie Terblanche	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	South African Society for Agricultural Extension (SASAE), Department of Agriculture, Economics, Extensions and Rural, University of Pretoria, 0002; Tel: 012 4203246	Yes, this journal is a very good stimulus for local graduate students and upcoming young staff in the discipline of extension as it accommodates a wide range of issues and topics. A large proportion of the articles were authored by post-graduate students with their supervisors. Both the content and format of articles in the journal, together with its layout, are comparable to international journals in extension published elsewhere in the world.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SICEO South Africa platform. The editor and publisher should be encouraged to use the outcome of the present review in making application for indexing by WoS. The editor should seriously consider the following recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers: The proportion of papers with non-South African addresses needs to be increased from the current 27% in order to improve the international standing of the journal. Currently, 85% of the peer reviewers used by the journal have South African addresses. This needs to be reduced and that of non-South African addresses increased for the same reason. The average number of reviewers per manuscript over the three years was less than two. In 2007 it was 1.6. This must be increased to at least two and above. It is very important that authors from other institutions within South Africa be encouraged to publish in the journal in order to reflect a broader national authorship of the journal and thereby improve its national relevance. It is important to indicate on the article when a manuscript was received and accepted for publication. The appointment, selection and terms of service for the editorial teams need to be reconsidered – positions should be advertised and appointed competitively rather than selecting individuals. In addition, the Panel believes that the journal should increase the number of reviewers per manuscript as well as advise the editor to pay regular attention to the output of the journal.

APPENDIX C: Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences: Evaluation of journals according to DHET accreditation criteria and policy

No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the journal (disseminate research)	ASSAF comments
13	South African Journal of Enology and Viticulture	0253-939X	Semi-annually	*not requested	http://www.sasev.org/journal	Prof Leon MT Dicks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	South African Society for Ecology & Viticulture, PO Box 2029, Demmesig, 7601, Stellenbosch, Tel: 021 809 3123/ 021 809 3089, Fax: 021 889 6335, email: sasev@nievoor.org.za	Yes. The articles published in the journal are consistently high quality and good mix. The contents of the majority of published articles are contextually good and consistent with the aims and objectives of the journal. This journal publishes articles in a much specialised discipline of enology and viticulture, and almost all the articles addressed were in the discipline. There are several exceptionally good articles and several that adequately represent some of the finest work (cutting edge) done in South Africa in this discipline.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the following recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. The journal should encourage and allow postgraduate students and other young and upcoming researchers to publish in it. Maintain the average of three reviewers per manuscript if possible, in order to maintain the quality. Consider aligning editorial policy guidelines of the journal with the ASSAF's National Code of Best Practice in editorial discretion and peer review. Consider carrying appropriate advertising in the journal.
14	African Zoology	1562-7020	Semi-annually	*not requested	http://www.journals.co.za/ej/ejour_atzoo.html	Prof P le Fras N Mouton and Prof JH van Wyk	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 6	Zoological Association of Southern Africa	Yes, the standard of the publications is high. A good number of research articles, short communications and book reviews. The focus is regional. Contextually good number of articles published per annum. Good sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline/field. Good sampling of local/regional kinds of materials/problems. Publication of articles by authors from across the country, and internationally.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers.

APPENDIX C: Agriculture and related Basic Life Sciences: Evaluation of journals according to DHET accreditation criteria and policy

No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the journal (disseminate research)	ASSAF comments
15	African Journal of Herpetology	0441-6651	Semi-annually	*not requested	http://www.informaworld.com/smp/Title~content=1917596259~db=all	Dr John Measey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 5	Routledge (Taylor & Francis)	Yes, there have been some papers by postgraduate students over the last three years. The range of publications, interspersed with a large number of short communications and regular book reviews makes the journal easily accessible to young herpetologists. This journal matches up well to leading international herpetological journals.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving ScELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. 4. In addition, the Panel requested ASSAF secretariat to get a questionnaire from the editor in order to enable the panel to establish if its editorial guidelines are aligned to ASSAF's National Code of Best Practice in editorial discretion and peer review.
16	African Entomology	1021-3589	Biannually	*not requested	http://www.bioone.org/toc/afen/18/1	Prof Shirley Hamrahan and Dr Mike Picker	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 10	Entomological Society of Southern Africa; PO Box 13162, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0028; http://www.psa.org.za	Yes, the journal is an excellent place for graduate students to publish. The turnaround time is good and the editorial process rigorous but efficient. African Entomology is on a par with most, and even surpasses some, other general entomological journals around the world and is recognised as a good quality, source of information.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving ScELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. 4. In addition, the Panel believes that the journal should enhance its enrichment features.
17	African Invertebrates	1618-5556	Biannually	*not requested	http://www.africaninvertebrates.org.za/AboutUs3.aspx	Dr Mike B Mostovski	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes - 6	Natal Museum; 237 Jabu Ndlovu Street, Pietermaritzburg; Tel: 033 3451 404; email: info@rmsa.org.za	Yes, good quality of articles published. Good number of articles and book reviews published per annum. Good sample of the best work done in the country in the field of taxonomy with many papers from Kwazulu-Natal. An interesting feature is the remarkable number of papers from Western and Eastern Europe. The papers published cover material from the entire continent.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving ScELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. 4. The Panel also commended the journal for its scope and focus.

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No	Journal name	ISSN number	Frequency	Issues submitted	URL	Editor	Editorial policy	Editorial board beyond single institution	Peer review	Majority of contributions beyond single institution	Proof of library holdings	Publisher	Purpose of the journal (disseminate research)	ASSAF comments
18	South African Journal of Plant and Soil	0257-1862	Quarterly	*not requested	http://www.plantandsoil.co.za	Dr VLTaitmay	No, it has instructions to authors, but not guidelines for reviewers/editors; the editor is compiling guidelines to be published on the website.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Intrepid Press	Yes, the journal does serve a valuable purpose in conveying, mostly agricultural findings and is one of the few sources in the region on soils and agriculture.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals. 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. 4. In addition, the Panel believes the journal should broaden the scope of soil plant research that includes natural systems; publish more substantive articles; solicit assistance from publisher to make the editors work much easier; and align guidelines to ASSAF's National Code of Best Practice in editorial discretion and peer review. The Panel also recommends that ASSAF should interact with the editor to discuss the pressures faced by the editor and find ways to ease the pressure. The inclusion of more enrichment features is recommended.
19	Southern Forests: A Journal of Forest Science	2070-2620 (print) 2070-2639 (online)	Quarterly	*not requested	http://www.ingentaconnect.com	Dennis L Owen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NISC; PO Box 377, Grahamstown, 6140	Yes, there is certainly an adequate sampling of the best research done in the country. The journal holds an interesting position among South African scientists. The research featured in this journal does reach and have an impact on operational forestry in South Africa.	1. The journal should continue to be listed on the so-called DHET 'list' of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a WoS-indexed periodical). 2. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO South Africa platform. 3. The editor should seriously consider the recommendations for improvement of the journal made by the reviewers. 4. In addition, the Panel believes the journal should increase its publication to four issues per year.

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2010

Report on Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in the Agricultural and Related Basic Life Sciences

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

Academy of Science of South Africa

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