



FIRST AFRICAN SCIENCE COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE

Science in Society/ Society in Science Africa Forum 2006

4 – 7 December 2006

Introduction

The public communication of science and technology is expanding rapidly as a professional and academic field, with national and global networks being formed to facilitate collaboration and share best practices. While these networks are rapidly expanding in other countries, there is a low level of participation from Africa in this field.

The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) will be hosting an African Science Communication Conference focusing specifically on the need to develop this field and establish collaborative networks on the African continent engaging academies, universities, public and private research centres and industry, the media, the education field and professional practitioners.

The conference will be held at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, from 5-7 December 2006 with a welcoming reception being held on the evening of the 4th.

The conference aims to:

- Bring together Science Communication role players and representatives from African countries and internationally to develop the field of Science Communication in Africa and forge/strengthen collaborative networks on the continent;



- Establish Africa as an international role player in the field of Science Communication; and
- Provide opportunities for skills transfer in the area of Science Communication.

Conference venue

The conference will be held at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth. The university is located in a nature reserve, near the popular beaches of this coastal city. The main university hall will be used for the plenary sessions and three additional halls will serve for the parallel sessions of the conference. The extensive corridors will be used for exhibitions and posters.

Port Elizabeth is the fifth largest city in South Africa and is situated in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. It is the eastern starting point of the famous Garden Route. The city overlooks Algoa Bay, is known as *the friendly city*, and boasts 40 km of unspoiled coastline, golden sandy beaches and rocky shores, complemented by a perfect combination of warm water and sunny skies.

Conference Organisers

The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) is organising the conference. SAASTA is a business unit of the National Research Foundation with a mandate to promote public awareness, appreciation and engagement with science, engineering and technology via an innovative and synergistic approach. The organisation's priority aim is to bridge the gap between science and society and to develop the scientists and innovators of tomorrow.

Conference Logistics

SAASTA is partnering with Inkanyezi Event Organisers to ensure the smooth running of event logistics. Inkanyezi will advise on available accommodation, the social programme as well as other aspects to make delegates feel at home.

Scientific Committee

Members of the Scientific Committee are prominent science communicators. This committee will make decisions regarding the scientific agenda of the Conference, its format and themes, and is responsible for identifying guest speakers to present state-of-the-art papers on the themes.

This list of committee members will be available on the website www.saasta.ac.za/ascc as soon as all the selected members have indicated their willingness to participate.

Keynote speakers

This list of invited keynote speakers will be posted on the website www.saasta.ac.za/ascc as soon as confirmation of participation has been received.

Scientific programme

Every day there will be plenary lectures, parallel sessions and poster sessions focused on different themes. A preliminary programme will be available in September 2006.

The first day (5 December) will start with the Opening Ceremony. The next two days will start with a plenary session consisting of two engaging keynote presentations on the different conference themes (see below). Concurrent parallel sessions on the themes, one before lunch and two in the afternoon, will follow the plenary sessions. The parallel sessions will feature invited speakers and presentations of research from abstracts submitted to the Conference.

Conference themes and sub-themes:

- Innovative approaches to sharing science with African communities;
- Public engagement, dialogue and debate: Best practice for Africa?
- Science and mass media in Africa;
- Communicating science from unique African angles: African skies; Indigenous knowledge; Biodiversity & conservation; African origins; and HIV/AIDS.

Conference language

The language of the conference will be English. No translation services will be provided.

Call for abstracts

Submission deadline 21 August 2006

SAASTA invites abstracts in the following formats:

- PAPERS
Papers that warrant both presentation and discussion will be accepted.
- POSTERS
Poster presentations offer an opportunity for students at any African tertiary institution to showcase their work in the field of science communication and stimulate discussion around the featured topic.

All paper and poster presenters must register for the conference.

Note: If a delegate can only get permission or sponsorship to attend the Conference if the delegate presents at the conference (delivers a paper or presents a poster), then registration and payment for the conference may be done only after receipt of confirmation of acceptance of his/her abstract.

Selection process

The Scientific Committee will review all abstracts for this conference and make selections based on content, objectives, relevance to science communication in Africa, and the evaluation criteria.

All persons who submit abstracts will receive notification of the committee's decision at end August 2006. Deadline for submissions is 21 August 2006.

Evaluation criteria

Submission of a paper or poster is more likely to be accepted if it is original, innovative, and contributes to the practice of science communication in Africa. Quality of work, clarity, and completeness of the submitted materials will be considered.

Abstract guidelines

Abstracts must be submitted in English. Abstracts must be text only and must be 250 words or less. Please proofread carefully before submitting the abstract. The following must be included in your submission:

- Presenters must include credentials, name of institution, mailing address, contact information and details of any co-authors in their submissions.

Presentation format options

Only electronic presentations will be accepted. PowerPoint presentations can be supplied on one of the following: Floppy disc, CD-ROM or USB (flash drive).

The computers used for presentations at the conference will be PCs equipped with Microsoft Office Professional Edition, which is compatible with earlier versions of PowerPoint.

Chairs will apply a strict time limit of 20 minutes (plus 10 minutes for questions) to all presentations at parallel sessions of the conference.

Poster Presenter Information

Designated poster space will be wooden or felt boards. The space allotted to one speaker will measure 100cm (width) x 122 cm (height). Posters will be attached to the board using push pins. Pins will be provided.

All posters will be on show through out the conference. However, there will be three Poster Sessions during the conference during which time the presenters of that series will be required to be available at their posters. At registration, a map

of the poster board area, the session assignment and location of your poster will be provided.

Sponsorships

Young and mid-level science communicators who require sponsorship to attend and/or present a paper at the conference should submit their requests via email to taskeen@inkanyezi.co.za. Priority will be given to science communicators from Africa.

Dates and deadlines

Abstract submission deadline: 21 August 2006

Deadline for early bird registration: 30 June 2006

Deadline for late registration: 30 October 2006

Registration

Fees:

Early bird registration

Registration fee for delegates who register before 30 June 2006: R500

Late registration

Registration fee after 30 June 2006: R750

Cancellation policy

Cancellation of registration in writing up until 27 October 2006, will suffer a R100 penalty (if payment has been received); after 27 October 2006, no refunds will be made.

Entitlements

The full conference registration fee includes the registration at Bayworld, cocktail party and dolphin show at registration, opening ceremony, lectures, teas, lunches, registration material, and beach party. A free shuttle service will be provided between specified hotels and the conference venue.

Letters of invitation

Upon request, the Secretariat will send a formal invitation to delegates. It should be clearly understood that such an invitation is meant to assist participants to raise travel funds or apply for a visa. They do not constitute a commitment on the part of the conference organiser to provide financial support nor a confirmation of acceptance of the participant's abstract.

Payment information

Please see payment and banking details on the registration form.

Contact details

Conference Secretariat:

Inkanyezi Event Organisers: Taskeen Henry, Tel: +27 +41 365 5634; Email: taskeen@inkanyezi.co.za

Abstract submission:

Please send abstract submissions to Andrea Bandelli, Email: andrea@bandelli.com.

Social programme

Registration will take place on the evening of 4 December 2006 at Bayworld in Port Elizabeth, where delegates will be treated to a dolphin show and refreshments.

On the evening of 6 December, delegates will attend a beach party and *braai* (barbeque) on Humewood Beach, a beach with "Blue Flag" status. Security will be provided.

General information

Climate

The climate of Port Elizabeth is mild all year round.

Electricity

220/230V. Three pronged plugs are universal.

Security and Insurance

Every effort will be made to ensure delegates' safety, but the conference organisers cannot accept liability for personal accidents, or loss of, or damage to private property of the delegates and accompanying persons either during, or directly or indirectly arising from the conference. All participants should make their own arrangements with respect to health and travel insurance.

As in any country, crime does exist. Normal precautionary measures should be taken.

Mobile phones

Travellers are advised to carry mobile phones. Rental mobile phones are widely available and may be rented from kiosks at major airports.

Time

Standard time zone: UTC/GMT +2 hours. There are no time zone differences within South Africa.

Visas

It is strongly suggested that all travellers check the latest visa requirements with the nearest South African Embassy or Consulate before travelling, or visit [www.sa-venues.com/tourist_and_visitor_information .htm](http://www.sa-venues.com/tourist_and_visitor_information.htm). The passports of all travellers entering South Africa must contain at least two clean (unstamped) visa pages at each time entry is sought.

Travellers entering South Africa from countries where yellow fever is endemic are often required to present their yellow World Health Organisation (WHO) vaccination record or other proof of inoculation. If they are unable to do so, they must be inoculated at the airport in order to be permitted entry.