A strategic approach to scholarly research (journal) output in South Africa

Susan Veldsman
ASSAf Mandate (1)

• Honour distinguished scholars in all fields of scientific enquiry

Quarraisha Abdool Karim  Jonathan Jansen  Brian Von Wilgen
ASSAf Mandate (2)

• Generate evidence-based solutions to national and global challenges

Hydraulic Fracturing

There is an intense global debate about the merits and demerits of hydraulic fracturing or ‘fracking’. ASSAf has recently completed an in-depth study, in collaboration with the South African Academy of Engineering (SAAE), aimed at investigating *The Technical Readiness of South Africa for Hydraulic Fracturing*.

The study panel is chaired by Prof Cyril O’Connor, University of Cape Town, and includes the following panel members:

- Mr Stefanus de Lange, University of the Free State
- Prof Maarten de Wit, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
- Mr Stefan Hrabar, Mirlem
- Pro Meagan Mauter, Carnegie Mellon University
- Dr Mike Shand, Aurecon
- Mr Mthozami Xiphu, South African Oil and Gas Association
ASSAf Mandate (aligned with Government goals)

• Promotion of innovation and scholarly activity
• Public interest in and awareness of science & science education
• National, regional and international linkages
Scholarly Publishing Programme (1)

Strategic Objective 1

Increase visibility, accessibility & searchability of SA accredited scholarly journals

Strategic Objective 2

Improve quality of SA scholarly journals, books & conference proceedings
Scholarly Publishing Programme (2)


- Publish report on impact of DHET policy
- Establish impact of the SPU in South Africa
- Engage stakeholders

Building research capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa through inter-regional collaboration

Africa doubles research output over past decade, moves towards a knowledge-based economy
Scholarly Publishing Programme (3)

Strategic Objective 3

Promote visibility & impact of SA research through publication of SAJS

- Publish 6 issues per annum
- E-only
- Highlight ASSAf’s 20th anniversary
- Introduce article-level metrics for improved impact measurement
- Undergo ASSAf’s peer-reviewed evaluation to assess quality
- Citation exports
- Website upgrade and maintenance
- Undertake an independent bibliometric assessment to monitor impact
Scholarly Publishing Programme (6)

Strategic Objective 4

Promote awareness of science among youth

• Full-colour, quarterly, popular science magazine
• Print-run 13 000 per issue
• Aimed at Grades 10-12, educators, scientific community
• Improve impact through:
  • Targeted distribution strategy
  • Increased collaboration with DBE, University Education Departments, SAASTA, Science Centres
  • Lectures
Report on Research Publishing

The 2006 ASSAf report identified the following:

“the .... low visibility of the existing local journals, most appearing only in print and with low circulation figures, and with few achieving inclusion in prominent international journal indexes, as the key barrier to general enhancement of the quantity and quality of locally performed research” Gevers (2013)”. 
Journal Publishing in South Africa

- 396 journal titles published in SA
- 329 scholarly journal titles accredited by the SA Department of Higher Education and Training
Accredited Scholarly Journal Titles (329) (67 in DOAJ)

157 Subscription
172 Open Access
STM vs SSH Scholarly Journals
SA Scholarly Journal Landscape (1)

- **303 DHET** accredited journal titles (incl. DHET, WoS, IBSS) (2 discont.)
- 65 titles indexed by SciELO SA
- **146 Open Access** (67 on Directory of Open Access Journals)
SA Scholarly Journal Landscape (2)

• 279 titles have a web page (154 have online ISSN)
• 65 titles indexed by WoS (20 on SciELOSA)
• 41 listed on IBSS
• 115 indexed by Scopus
• 163 titles peer-reviewed by ASSAf
• Next: DOIs, ORCIDs, APCs
Trends in total publication outputs (2005 – 2014)

Proportional shares of publication categories:
- Journal articles: 92915.35, 89%
- Conference proceedings: 6857.64, 7%
- Books and chapters: 4513.51, 4%

Graph showing the increase in total publication outputs from 2005 to 2014, with separate lines for journal articles, conference proceedings, and books and chapters.
Peer-review of Journals

• Titles reviewed to date: 145
  Agriculture, Social Sciences, Religion, Health, Law and Humanities: Language and Linguistics

• Titles to be reviewed (current): 162

Currently under review
• Engineering and Architecture (15)
• Humanities II: Visual and Performing Arts (10)
• Communication and Information Science (14)

Panels being established
• Education (17)
• Politics, History and Philosophy (26)
• Mathematics and Science (22)

Panels to be established
• Economics and Business Management (27)
• Other disciplines (31)
Impact of Peer-review of Journals

• ASSAf initially were very heavily criticized
• BUT provided them with objective, peer reviewed advise
• Relatively simple….but time consuming
• Increased visibility of ASSAf Scholarly Publishing Unit
• Heavily aligned with Brazil
• Trusted partner regarding quality issues,
• Transparency is core of our activities
• Open reports---the system is paying attention
Impact of Peer-review of Journals

• Better quality assurance in journals
• DHET has adopted many of the recommendations in their policy on editorial best practice (Journal and Book report)
• DHET very technical and ASSAf quality evaluations
• Relationships between lead Department and Academy extremely important
• In evaluations the power of experts, and different data sets
• Consensus between different data sets
• Allowed us to broaden our services i.e training
• Criteria to high quality journals—what are they??
• Support to editors to comply
• Scielo SA automatic accreditation
SciELO SA was established as a recommendation of the report “Strategic approach to scholarly publishing” and engagement stakeholders such as the DST, DHET and NRF.
SciELO Network

- Journal Collections
  - Argentina
  - Bolivia
  - Brazil
  - Chile
  - Colombia
  - Costa Rica
  - Cuba
  - Spain
  - Mexico
  - Peru
  - Portugal
  - South Africa
  - Uruguay
  - Venezuela
• Full-text searchable database of selected, high-quality South African open access scholarly journals

• **Main focus:** global *dissemination* of open access journal content

• **Purpose:** To increase the visibility, accessibility, indexability and *impact* of South African scholarly journals---discoverability is core.....
SciELO SA

To date, texts in the SciELO SA open access collection have been viewed more than 6 million times in total since its inception in 2009; ± 100 000 added every month.
## SciELO SA: Collection Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Titles</th>
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<td>1 January 2016</td>
<td>16 695</td>
<td>1086</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 December 2016</td>
<td>19 988</td>
<td>1 285</td>
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<td><strong>Total increase in the collection over 12 months</strong></td>
<td>16.5%</td>
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<td>citing journal title</td>
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<td>1. SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF ANIMAL SCIENCE</td>
<td>516</td>
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<td>14. ARCHIVOS DE MEDICINA VETERINARIA</td>
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<td>15. JOURNAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION</td>
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<td>16. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MORPHOLOGY</td>
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<td>17. ONDERSTEEPORD JOURNAL OF VETERINARY RESEARCH</td>
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<td>18. FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CAMPINAS)</td>
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<td>19. BRAZILIAN ARCHIVES OF BIOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY</td>
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<td>20. GENETICS AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY</td>
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<td>21. REVISTA CHAPINGO. SERIE CIENCIAS FORESTALES Y DEL AMBIENTE</td>
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<td>22. REVISTA CIENTIFICA</td>
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The SciELO Citation Index (SCI) is part of the WoS Portal.
(Note that the SCI is not part of the WoS Core Collection)
Benefits of being part of the SciELO SA Collection

DHET accreditation:
From 2016 journals appearing in the SciELO SA Collection will automatically be accredited by DHET.

Collaboration:
The SciELO Network provides opportunities for south-south collaboration between researchers.

Future growth:
The SciELO Network Portal is fast becoming a promising multinational journal indexing and publishing model in the developing world.

SciELO SA: Benefits
Benefits of being part of the SciELO SA Collection

- Implementation of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)
- Creative Commons Licenses
- Digital Preservation Strategy (Portico)
- Researcher IDs (ORCID)
- Allocation of online ISSN
- Concluding publishing agreements with editors/publishers
- XML
- Translation service
Becoming part of SciELO SA

The journal needs to qualify for inclusion:

Currently: If a journal is DHET accredited and has received a positive evaluation by the ASSAf peer-review panel (PRP).

Future: At the ASSAf Council meeting in January 2016 the CSPiSA requested that a SciELO Advisory Committee be constituted to advise on the criteria for inclusion and removal of journals from the SciELO SA platform.

Invitation to a journal to join:

Journal recommended → Check currency & periodicity → Invited to join SciELO by PRP
Commitment to being partners

The PARTNERSHIP entails commitments towards standards for the collection to remain certified.

All SciELO collections are evaluated twice a year to retain their certification.
PARTNERSHIP
STANDARDS (cont)

• Minimum of 12 research articles per year

• The journals in the collection publish according to their stated periodicity. (currency very important)

• Rolling pass journals: Need to publish at least 3 articles by the end of April
Online Journal System (OJS) Pilot Project

http://journals.assaf.org.za/
Support (1)

- **Criteria** for best practice in terms of journal publishing (6 lists + DOAJ criteria)
- **Pilot** project – ±R 5 000-00 per year (excl. staffing)
- **Roadshow** on journal management and publishing using OJS (WC, FS, GN, KZN, EC, FS)
- Investigation into APCs
- Funder: National Research Foundation (NRF) made OA Statement
- ORCID Ambassador
- Collaboration with CrossRef, Portico, Creative Commons, others
- Scientific writing
Support (2)

• Transition to online (OJS) – also digitise retrospective articles

• Online help wiki
  https://academyofsciencesa.wikispaces.com/

• Online newsletter & blog

• National Scholarly Editors Forum – annually

• National Scholarly Book Publishers Forum--annually

• Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review (currently being revised)

• Webinar: ScholarOne; Similarity checks; DOAJ, ORCID and soon.....alternative metrics
Some observations: National Journal Evaluation and Accreditation—Ethiopia

• Congratulations---very thorough study!!

• Evaluations of the journals of Ethiopia
  • Publish--inventory!--illiminate predatory journals
  • Keep up to date--annually
  • Findings—not different from the rest of Africa and even SA
  • Allows to plan a strategy for the improvement of journals
  • Training needs
  • Emphasise online presence

• Journal Accreditation
  • Policy vs evaluations
  • Relationship between DHET and ASSAf
  • Evaluations of DHET and ASSAf
Some observations: National Journal Evaluation and Accreditation - Ethiopia

• Journal Evaluation processes
  • Criteria
  • Collation of three data sets
  • Expert panels
  • Consensus views
  • Cycles
  • What constitutes an International journal?
  • IF vs article level measurements

• National System of Evaluation and Accreditation
  • Policy?? For what.. accreditation
  • Responsible departments
  • Evaluations
  • Developmental approach

• Central hosting of journals?
Some observations: National Journal Evaluation and Accreditation--Ethiopia

WHY?

To increase the:

• Quality and credibility

• visibility, accessibility, indexability, discoverability and impact of Ethiopian scholarly journals
Questions? Thank you!

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