



African Scientific
Research and
Innovation Council

2ND ASRIC BUREAU MEETING REPORT
AU-STRC HEADQUARTERS
ABUJA
NIGERIA
9TH – 13TH SEPTEMBER 2019

1. Introduction

The 2nd ASRIC Bureau meeting was held in Abuja, Nigeria from the 9th – 13th September, 2019 in furtherance of the 1st meeting of 7th – 9th March 2019, to discuss the development of ASRIC flagship projects, the reports of the three ASRIC Committees and to concretize plans for the 2nd ASRIC Congress.

2. Attendance

The following **Bureau Members** were present: Prof. Ratemo Michieka, Chair; Mr James Phiri, 1st Vice Chair Scientific Programme; Prof. Mosto Onuoha, 2nd Vice Chair Innovation; Prof. Driss Ouazar, 3rd Vice Chair Communication; Prof Beban Sammy Chumbow, and 4th Vice Chair Resource Mobilization.

The Meeting was attended also by the following resource personnel as observers: Prof. Hoummada Abdeslam from Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology, Morocco, Prof Lawrence Ezemonye-Nigerian Environmental Society & Dr. Oladoyin Odubanjo- Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Academy of Science.

The **ASRIC Secretariat**: Dr. Ahmed Hamdy-Executive Director of AU-STRC, Dr Mohammed Kyari-Senior Scientific Officer, Seble Alemu-Finance and Admin Officer, Gilbert Byatuhair-Documentalist, Marie Johnson-Executive Assistant, Adaeze Akaduchieme-Programme Secretary, Mathew Adegbite-IT Programme Associate and Hawawu Hussein- Programme Associate on health; Dr Victor Fadipe; and Eng. Adamu Timothy Ombugadu “ secondees from the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Science and Technology”.

3. Opening Session

Welcome Remarks by **Dr. Ahmed Hamdy**, The Executive Director of ASRIC, who congratulated the participants of the meeting on the African Union Day, 9th September, 2019 and encouraged the members of the Bureau and other participants to always endeavor to foster unity and development in Africa.

In addition, he welcomed the distinguished Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Bureau to the 2nd ASRIC Bureau meeting and briefed the meeting on the activities of the Secretariat including the successful Call for Abstracts for the 2nd ASRIC Congress and the ongoing review of full manuscripts with the assistance of the Nigerian Academy of Science and the Editorial Board of the Journal of the Nigerian Environmental Society amongst others.

He also briefly mentioned the challenges that hindered the Bureau meeting from taking place in Morocco earlier in June and highlighted that the objective of this meeting is for the Bureau to develop detailed documentation on each Committee which would guide the sub-committee meetings during the upcoming Congress.

Prof Ratemo Michieka, the Chair of ASRIC in his opening remarks welcomed the members of the Bureau to the 2nd Bureau meeting and appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat in organising the meeting and in following-up with the Committees' Chairs to ensure submission of their programme documents. He also celebrated the African Union Day and Africa's need for continued integration, growth and development.

4. Presentation/Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting's agenda was presented by the Chair to the Bureau, which was adopted unanimously after some amendment (see copy attached).

5. Report from Science and Innovation Committee:

The 1st Vice-Chair, Mr James Phiri and Co-Chair of the Committee gave a presentation on the plans of the Science and Innovation Committee with the revised Concept Note. The 2nd Vice-Chair, Prof Mosto Onuoha and Co-Chair of the Committee highlighted the flagship projects and emphasized that they must be launched properly to increase the visibility of ASRIC within and outside Africa.

The meeting deliberated and agreed on the criteria for institutions that would participate in the ASRIC flagship projects and research consortia as well as priority areas for the development of ASRIC flagship projects in line with the STISA2024 strategy of the African Union.

A. Criteria for Lead Institutions and Participating Institutions in ASRIC Flagship Projects and Research Consortia

The following criteria were identified for the selection of Lead institutions and participating institutions to be eligible to participate in the ASRIC flagship projects and research consortia:

1. Recognized research output in the field/domain
2. Human resources
3. Evidence of facilities for research & training

B. Priority Areas for the Development of ASRIC Flagship Projects and Research Consortia

In line with the STISA2024 strategy, the meeting deliberated and outlined the various flagship projects/research areas identified under each priority area as follows:

Priority 1: Eradication of Hunger and Achieving Food Security

The areas of research for ASRIC flagship projects identified under Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition are:

- a. Development of improved seed varieties (bio-technology, nano-technology etc.)
 - Disease-resistance
 - Adaption to ecological zones
 - Improved yield and nutrition
- b. Land degradation and soil remediation
- c. Reduction of harvest and post-harvest loss

Priority 2: Prevention and Control of Diseases

The priority diseases identified as areas of research under Health are:

- a. Cancer
- b. HIV
- c. Tuberculosis
- d. Ebola
- e. Malaria

Priority 3: Communication (Physical & Intellectual Mobility)

The areas of research for ASRIC flagship projects identified under this priority area are:

- a. Research on Material Sciences for Affordable Road Building, Airports and Railways
- b. Research on Efficiency of Utilizing Maritime Services in Africa for fishery and transport
- c. Research on Development of Affordable ICT Infrastructure (hardware & software)

Priority 4: Protection of our Space

The areas of research for ASRIC flagship projects identified under this priority area are:

- a. Research on Satellite Imaging for Land Coverage (Agriculture, Habitat, Infrastructure), Water Exploration and Mining
- b. Research on Monitoring the Space (over Africa's landmass)
- c. Research on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Priority 5: Live Together – Build the Society

The areas of research for ASRIC flagship projects identified under this priority area are:

- a. Research on Natural Hazard Mitigation
- b. Center for African Seismological Database
- c. Research on Rural-Urban Migration and Community Behavior/Lifestyle
- d. Advanced Water Technologies (water use, recycling & desalination)
- e. Integrated Water Resources Management

Priority 6: Wealth Creation

The areas of research for ASRIC flagship projects identified under this priority area are:

- a. ICT Application (hardware & software) for Community/Market needs
- b. Legislative gaps and guidelines to improve accessibility of entrepreneurs in the African market
- c. Social studies to enhance the participation (change the attitude) of African youths in entrepreneurial activities

Recommendation and Decisions of the Bureau on the Report of the Science and Innovation Committee

- The criteria for eligible Lead institutions and participating institutions to participate in ASRIC flagship projects and research consortia was endorsed.
- The Bureau further approved and endorsed the flagship projects as reported by the committee.
- The Bureau appreciated the efforts made by the Science and Innovation Committee and requested the Committee to further develop and improve the Concept Note considering the above-mentioned discussions.

6. Report from Resource Mobilisation Committee:

The 4th Vice-Chair of ASRIC and Chair of the Resource Mobilisation Committee (RMC), Prof Beban S. Chumbow gave a presentation to the Bureau on the revised Concept Note, Report and Action/Strategy of the RMC.

The following recommendations were then tabulated for the Bureau's consideration:

1. Approval of the establishment of:
 - A. the Sub-committee on development of Protocol on the Engagement with the AU Member States to support African Science Technology and Innovation Fund (ASTIF), to attract 0.1% of the allocation for Science and Technology in the Member States.
 - B. the Sub-committee to focus on the functionalization aspect of ASTIF.
2. The following additional names have for now, been proposed by the Resource Mobilisation Committee for the membership of the RMC:

- Professor MAVONDO Felix Tinoziva
- Dr Rex Daniel HARAWA
- Professor Jean Emmanuel PONDI
- Professor DANIELS, Chux Uzoka (PhD)

Recommendations and Decisions of the Bureau on the Report of the Resource Mobilisation Committee

The Bureau appreciates and commends the efforts made by the RMC and recommends the following:

- The request by the RMC on the establishment of the two sub-committees and new membership to the committees was endorsed by the Bureau.
- The Bureau highlighted the need to ensure that all donations/resource mobilised to the ASTIF should be done to the ASTIF official bank account to ensure transparency and good governance.
- The Bureau requests the RMC to enhance the Concept Note by adding a special paragraph on the Human Resources Utilization and to expand the other sources of raising funds under the Alternative Sources of funds.
- The Bureau decides to have its 3rd meeting back-to-back with the consultative meeting with potential sponsors and partners. Therefore, the RMC and the SIC should prepare the relevant documents.

7. Report from ASRIC Chair:

The ASRIC Chair gave the Bureau a report on some actions decided on at the 1st ASRIC Bureau meeting which include a request to the H.E. Commissioner of HRST on the transfer of the African Union Research Grant Programme Management Unit to the ASRIC Secretariat in line with the mandate of ASRIC to administer research grants on STI in Africa.

On the matter of consulting the AUC on the possibilities of identifying alternative sources of funding for the ASTIF, the Secretariat briefed the meeting that the AU-STRC properties in Lagos, Nigeria are being taken over by the AUC HQ and no longer belong to the Secretariat.

Recommendations and Decisions of the Bureau on the Report of the ASRIC Chair

- The Bureau endorsed the report of the Chair and raised a concern on the non-response by H.E. the Commissioner of HRST on the request made by the Chair of ASRIC on the transfer of the African Union Research Grant Programme Management Unit to the ASRIC Secretariat in his letter dated 3rd March, 2019. The Bureau further requests the Chair to follow-up on this matter with H.E. the Commissioner of HRST and report to the Congress.

- The Chair is requested to further consult with H.E. the Commissioner as soon as possible on this matter before the 2nd Congress meeting.

8. Report from ASRIC Secretariat:

The ASRIC Secretariat gave a report to the Bureau on:

a. The Call for Papers for the 2nd ASRIC Congress

The Secretariat gave a presentation on the Call for Papers for the 2nd ASRIC Congress which was designed to focus on four (4) thematic areas which are the 2nd ASRIC Congress Sub themes: Health Sciences; Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Water, Energy and Environment; and Governance, Sociology, Business and Economics.

The Call was launched on 13th April, 2019 and closed on 30th June, 2019. 654 abstracts were received from 32 Member States as follows:

- Health Sciences - 149 abstracts from 20 Member States
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries - 137 abstracts from 16 Member States
- Water, Energy and Environment - 196 abstracts from 25 Member States
- Governance, Sociology, Business and Economics - 196 abstracts from 25 Member States

Initial Assessment of Abstracts was done by notable professors from Nigerian Universities and 158 abstracts scored 70 and above. Notification letters were sent to the authors whose abstracts were selected to submit their full manuscripts for further evaluation. Out of the 158, 108 full manuscripts were received.

For the evaluation of the full manuscripts, the Secretariat is being assisted by the Nigerian Academy of Sciences, the Nigerian Environmental Society and the University of Abuja with Prof Abubakar Garba Kari as the coordinator. The completed evaluation of full manuscripts is expected to be received from all the reviewers by end of September, 2019.

Recommendations and Decisions of the Bureau on the Report of the ASRIC Secretariat on the Call for Abstracts for the 2nd ASRIC Congress

- The Bureau appreciates the role of the Secretariat in running a transparent and inclusive Call for Papers for the 2nd ASRIC Congress.
- The Bureau recognizes with appreciation the support given by the Nigerian professors – Prof Sunday E. Atawodi (Health Sciences), Prof David Malgwi (Water, Energy and Environment) Prof Abubakar Garba Kari (Governance, Sociology, Business and Economics) and Dr A. A. Oyerinde (Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) for their excellent work in reviewing the abstracts submitted by the scientists for the 2nd ASRIC Congress.

- The Bureau urges its members to engage with the Northern region academies and scientific institutions to enhance more participation from the region in the future Calls and other ASRIC activities.
- The Bureau appreciates and commends the role of the Nigerian Academy of Sciences, the Nigerian Environmental Society and the University of Abuja with Prof Abubakar Garba Kari as the coordinator, for availing their resources to evaluate the full manuscripts for the 2nd ASRIC Congress.
- The Bureau agreed on the criteria for selection of full manuscripts to be presented at the Congress.
 1. Only full manuscripts that score $\geq 70\%$ will be considered. In case, the required number of articles is not achieved, the Secretariat can consider the next best candidates taking in consideration the criteria agreed on in No 2 below.
 2. Further criteria for selection shall be:

Merit	50%
Geographical Distribution*	30%
Gender	10%
Science Under-Resourced Countries*	10%

*Geographical Distribution refers to the 5 Geographical regions of the African Union

*Science Under-Resourced Countries are the low-ranked countries in terms of scientific publications according to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) Reports.

- The Bureau calls on the Communications Committee to develop the modalities on having National Academies Champions to ensure advocacy of ASRIC, its mandate and activities.
- The Bureau decides the need to have not more than two thematic areas for future Congress; as of the large number of 654 abstracts and 108 full manuscripts received by the Secretariat and the potentials that Africa has in all the thematic areas.
- Individuals who may wish to sponsor themselves are welcome to attend the Congress.

b. The ASRIC Website

The Secretariat gave a brief presentation on the ASRIC Website which is still being improved on and the Bureau requested the Secretariat to expedite action on the completion of the Website.

c. Implementation of the African Union Network of Sciences

The Secretariat gave a presentation on the ongoing development of the African Union Network of Sciences (AUNS) portal. In line with the procurement procedures of the African Union, an ICT firm successfully won the bidding process for the development of the portal and work is currently in progress.

The launching is predicted for the last quarter of 2019. The Secretariat calls on the members of the Bureau to assist in the popularization of the AUNS in their respective Member States National Academies of Science.

Recommendations and Decisions of the Bureau on the Report on the AUNS

- The Bureau recognizes the progress and development being made so far in the AUNS and requests the Secretariat to expedite action on the implementation of the portal and functionalization of the platform.

d. India-Africa Health Capacity Building Scheme

The Secretariat gave a presentation on the ongoing India-Africa Health Capacity Building Scheme. The ICMR/AU-STRC Health Sciences Cooperation was developed in response to the outcome of the landmark India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) III, October 2015 that was hosted by the Honourable Prime Minister of India. The MOU between the ICMR and the AU-STRC was signed in March 2019 and in furtherance to the outlined objectives of the partnership, a Call for applications for training in 7 courses in 3 ICMR institutions was launched. The Call was launched in May 2019 and closed in June, 2019. 428 applications were received from 31 Member States.

The Secretariat also presented on the continental distribution of applications according to Region with West Africa at 52%, North Africa at 6%, South Africa at 0.9% and East Africa at 29% and Central Africa at 13%.

Recommendations and Decisions of the Bureau on the Report of the ASRIC Secretariat on the India-Africa Call for Health Training Scheme

- The Bureau commends the success of the ICMR/AU-STRC Health Sciences Cooperation and appreciates the work of the Secretariat in the India-Africa Health

Capacity Building Scheme which is in line with the STISA2024 and towards capacity building for African health professionals.

- The Bureau agreed that similarly to the ASRIC Call for Abstracts, more publicity needs to be done to enhance increased participation from all the 5 African regions.
- The members of the Bureau pledged to assist the Secretariat in the popularization of future Calls in their respective Member States amongst others.

e. Bank account to achieve a full-fledged STI Fund

The Bureau mandated the Secretariat to open a Bank Account for the African Science Technology and Innovation Fund (ASTIF) and to contact potential partner organisations for funding and collaboration such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the African Capability Building Fund (ACBF).

The Secretariat reported that the Bank Account was opened with the United Bank for Africa (UBA). Also, the Secretariat reported that there has not been much success being made in contacting potential organisations for funding and collaboration.

9. Report from Communications Committee:

The 3rd Vice-Chair of ASRIC and Chair of the Communications Committee (CC), Prof Driss Ouazar gave a presentation to the Bureau on the Concept Note and Report of the CC. The presentation outlines the mandate of the CC, components of the Communication strategy including the stakeholders in ASRIC Communication strategy, Advocacy for ASRIC, and implementation plan.

The CC proposes to create 4 sub-committees under the Communications Committee for:

- Scientific publications (to handle Journal, Proceedings/Conferences, Scientific Reports)
- Advocacy (to enhance dialogue between scientific community and policy-makers, media engagement, policy briefs, news releases, awareness creation)
- Internal Communication (on meetings, review of internal operational committee policy, operational plan, reports, Interface with other groups, website)
- Outreach and Education (popularization of ASRIC, capacity building, youth education, social media, distance learning, MOOCs)

The CC further suggested to the Bureau that the ASRIC Journal should be an electronic journal for easy experimentation, reduced cost and functional processes for discussion and review amongst others.

Recommendations and Decisions of the Bureau on the Report of the Communication Committee

- The Bureau appreciates and acknowledges the report of the Communication Committee.
- The Bureau endorsed the establishment of the ASRIC Scientific Journal in the four thematic areas which are “Health Sciences; Agricultural Sciences; Social Sciences and Humanities; and Water, Energy & Environmental Sciences” and that it should be published bi-annually.
- The Bureau requests the Communication Committee to develop a Concept Note on the Journal that addresses the financial implications and other modalities for the launching of the ASRIC Journal.
- The Bureau decides to develop the following publications for ASRIC:
 - ASRIC Newsletter to be published twice/ year
 - ASRIC at a Glance (*Analyse - Plan - Advance Africa's future*)
 - Policy Briefs to be published twice/ year (for the first year, Policy Brief shall be on: a. Why we need to spend more on STI in Africa; b. TBD in due course)
- The Communications Committee were directed to liaise with the experts within the African National Academies on expertise on the domain for ASRIC publications.
- The Bureau requests the Secretariat to urge African Academies and Governments to celebrate and recognize the Africa Science Renaissance Day.
- The Bureau requests the Communications Committee to elaborate more on having an Africa Youth and Science Day (Further Study Recommended).

10. Presentation on the Establishment of the ASRIC Scientific Journal:

Prof Lawrence Ezemonye, President of the Nigerian Environmental Society gave a presentation on the establishment of the ASRIC Scientific Journal which will fulfill one of the aims of the ASRIC to be a continental platform promoting research and research collaborations in Africa. Therefore, the ASRIC Scientific Journal shall have the main objective of mobilizing African research excellence and innovation through its research findings.

Proposed Journal Title: *ASRIC SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL (MAIDEN)*, An International Journal of the African Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC) of the African Union.

Prof Ezemonye also gave further information on the nature/type of journal, Editorial Board, copyright information, indexing, types of articles, submission of articles, publishing/nature of access, peer review policy, authorship, ethics, funding costs, etc. He also highlighted that the ASRIC stands a better chance in establishing a new journal rather than being based on an existing journal.

Dr Odubanjo, Secretary of the Nigerian Academy of Science (NAS) added that following the years of the experience the NAS has gathered in publication of their own journal, with regards to the proposed proceeding for the ASRIC Journal, 3 key things essential: Funding, ICT-based journal and Staffing.

Recommendations and Decisions of the Bureau on the Establishment of the ASRIC Scientific Journal

- The Bureau appreciates the participation of the Nigerian Environmental Society and the Nigerian Academy of Science in the meeting as well as their invaluable support to the Secretariat and other activities of the ASRIC.
- The Bureau unanimously approved the request for Prof. Lawrence Ezemonye- *President, Nigerian Environmental Society* and Dr. Oladoyin Odubanjo- *Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Academy of Science* to be Members of the ASRIC Communication Committee.

11. Dates and Venue for the 3rd Bureau Meeting

- The Bureau unanimously agreed to have its 3rd meeting in Abuja, Nigeria at the AU-STRC Headquarters in March 2020.
- The Secretariat is to ensure that this 3rd Bureau meeting is held back-to-back with ASRIC partners meeting.
- The Secretariat is to communicate with the distinguished members of the Bureau to identify the dates before the end of 2019.

12. Dates and Venue for the 3rd ASRIC Congress

- The Bureau unanimously agreed that the 3rd ASRIC Congress is to be hosted by the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology, Rabat, Morocco from 23rd to 26th November, 2020. In furtherance, the Bureau appreciates the kind offer by the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology to host the Congress.
- The Bureau approved the request by the 3rd ASRIC Congress Local Organising Committee to organise an exhibition as a parallel event to the forthcoming Congress. Also, the Bureau encourages African enterprises, entrepreneurs to participate in such exhibition.
- The Bureau requests the Secretariat to work with the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology and relevant Moroccan authorities to ensure the implementation of the above decision.

13. Adoption of the Report:

The report was endorsed unanimously by the Bureau Members.

14. Closing ceremony

The Meeting was closed by the Chair of ASRIC and the Executive Director of ASRIC where they appreciated the contribution of the Bureau Members, observers and the secretariat. The participants was wished to have safe journey back home.