

CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR PLANT PATHOLOGY (SASPP)

1. NAMES AND STATUS

- 1.1 The Society shall be named the "Southern African Society for Plant Pathology", abbreviated as "SASPP", hereinafter referred to as "the Society".
- 1.2 The Society shall be an association not-for-gain and shall be a juristic person, the bearer of its own rights and duties with perpetual succession capable of:
 - 1.2.1 existing in its own right, separate from its members;
 - 1.2.2 continuing to exist even when its membership changes and when there are different office bearers;
 - 1.2.3 suing and being sued in its own name;
 - 1.2.4 being able to own property and other assets; and
 - 1.2.5 acquiring rights, including obligations and entering into legal and binding transactions.
- 1.3 The Society does not pursue any financial gain for or through its members and no member is entitled to any of the assets of the Society by reason of membership, either before or after the dissolution of the Society.
- 1.4 No member of the Society and no member of the Council of the Society are liable for the fulfilment of any duty or the payment of any debt, which might be incurred by the Society.
- 1.5 Donations made to the Society must be underpinned by documents of agreement outlining the objectives and requirements pertaining to the donation. These must be approved by Council and ratified by members at an AGM. The Society further undertakes to honour the specific undertakings of agreements pertaining to donations.

2. AIMS

The aim of The Society is to promote Plant Pathology in Southern Africa by:

- 2.1 Acting as the official mouthpiece of plant pathologists in Southern Africa;
- 2.2 Providing opportunities for plant pathologists to meet and exchange information of mutual scientific interest;
- 2.3 Coordinating affiliation with related scientific societies in Southern Africa, as well as with corresponding and related foreign societies;
- 2.4 Gathering and disseminating information on Plant Pathology.

3. POWERS

In order to promote the objectives of SASPP, the Society will be empowered to in a non-profit manner:

- 3.1 Register, sell, hire or let, or deal with in any other way, any movable or immovable property in the name of the Society.
- 3.2 Operate and close any accounts, whether bank accounts, deposit accounts, savings accounts, investment accounts or other accounts.
- 3.3 Acquire, undertake, cede, assign, take over, dispose of, give up and/or in any other manner deal with any rights or duties.
- 3.4 Register or deal with in some other manner to the advantage of the Society, any trade mark or heraldic registration or copyright or other protection in respect of any emblem, names, words, marks, publications and other things used, developed or designed by the Society.
- 3.5 Take on such power and authority that it needs to be able to achieve the objectives of the Society in terms of this constitution.
- 3.6 The Society's funds shall be deposited into an account/s at a registered bank or other financial institution and all financial transactions shall be conducted by means of such account/s.
- 3.7 After the election of a new Council, the president shall inform the manager of the bank or financial institution where the Society's funds are invested, of the newly elected Treasurer and shall ensure that the Treasurer is granted authority to transact upon the Society's account/s.
- 3.8 All powers granted in terms of this clause shall only be exercised in a manner that is consistent with this constitution.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Eligibility and application for membership

4.1.1 Any person possessing at least a bachelor's degree in Plant Pathology or an equivalent degree in a related discipline, from a recognised university, and registerable as a Natural Scientist or Natural Scientist in Training in accordance with the requirements of the Natural Scientific Professions Act 106 of 1993, as amended, is eligible for Ordinary Membership.

4.1.2 Any person or group associated with Plant Pathology or a related discipline or activity and deemed acceptable by the Council on the grounds of training, experience or position is eligible for membership in any of the categories listed in this Constitution.

4.1.3 Application for membership shall be on the prescribed form obtainable from the Secretary. All applications shall be considered for approval by the Council. The successful applicant becomes a member on payment of the appropriate membership fee.

4.2 Membership categories:

Membership may be conferred in one of the following categories:

4.2.1 Ordinary Members:

Ordinary membership may be conferred on any person possessing at least a bachelor's degree in Plant Pathology, or an equivalent degree in a related discipline from a recognized university, or otherwise deemed acceptable by Council on the grounds of training, experience or position.

4.2.2 Affiliated Members:

Any person possessing a technical diploma in Plant Pathology or a related discipline, or whose work is connected with Plant Pathology or a related discipline, but who does not qualify for Ordinary Membership, may be admitted as an Affiliated Member.

4.2.3 Student Members:

Bona fide postgraduate students in Plant Pathology or a related discipline, who are not employed on a full-time basis, may apply for student membership.

4.2.4 Honorary Members:

The Society may confer Honorary Membership upon retired members on the grounds of outstanding contributions to Plant Pathology in southern African. They shall be eligible to pay half the ordinary membership fee. Guidelines for the acceptance of Honorary Membership are those outlined in the “Policies and Procedures” document of the Society.

4.2.6 Fellows

The Society will elect Fellows in recognition of outstanding service and support to plant pathology over an extended period of time. Guidelines for the election of Fellows are those outlined in the “Policies and Procedures” document of the Society.

4.2.7 Patrons:

Any person, organization or institution may, with the approval of Council, become a Patron of the Society after payment of an annual fee to be determined at the Biennial General Meeting.

4.3 Rights and privileges

4.3.1 In compliance with Statute 5 of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), the Society endorses the right of scientists throughout the world to associate with and participate in international scientific activities without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, political philosophy, ethnic origin, citizenship, language or sex.

4.3.2 Ordinary and Associate Members have all the rights and privileges of the Society, including the right to vote at General Meetings.

4.3.3 Honorary Members have all the rights and privileges of Ordinary Members but are exempt from membership fees.

4.3.4 Student and Affiliated Members have all the rights and privileges of Ordinary Members except the right to vote at General Meetings.

4.3.5 Patrons have all the rights and privileges of Ordinary Members. Each Patron may accredit a Representative to attend General Meetings. The credentials of the Representative must be submitted to the Secretary for ratification before the General Meeting.

- 4.3.6 All members shall have access to all scientific and social meetings organized by the Society and its recognized Local Branches, Sections and Groups.
- 4.3.7 All members shall receive all publications, notices and circulars distributed by the Society.

4.4 Membership fees

- 4.4.1 All membership fees shall be determined at the Biennial General Meeting (BGM). Provided that such fee may be increased by at least the prevailing CPI (Consumer Price Index) or such higher amount as the BGM may determine.
- 4.4.2 Membership fees of Associate and Student Members shall be one half of that paid by Ordinary Members.

4.5 Termination of membership

- 4.5.1 A person admitted as a member of the Society shall remain a member until he/she resigns in writing to the Secretary; or is two (2) years in arrears with the payment of membership fees; or has his/her membership terminated by the Council.
- 4.5.2 A person whose membership has been terminated because of non-payment of arrear membership fees may, within thirty (30) days of receiving notice to this effect, and after paying all arrear membership fees, as well as an additional levy equal to half of the prevailing annual fees, be reinstated as a member.
- 4.5.3 The Council shall be entitled to suspend or terminate the membership of any member on the basis of serious misconduct which has the effect of bringing the Society into disrepute, after having given such member the opportunity to make representations in their defence. A member whose membership is terminated by the Council shall be informed to this effect in writing.

5. REGIONS

The society shall function in the following regions:

- 5.1 Northern Region: The northern provinces of South Africa being Gauteng, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga west of the 30° meridian, as well as Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe;
- 5.2 Southern Region: Western Cape and Eastern Cape;
- 5.3 Eastern Region: KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga east of the 30° meridian, as well as Mozambique and Swaziland;
- 5.4 Central Region: Free State, North West and Northern Cape, as well as Lesotho.
- 5.5 Proposed changes to the delimitation of the regions may be made at the Biennial General Meetings.

6. COUNCIL

- 6.1 The business of the Society shall be conducted by a Council all of whose members shall reside in the same region, and which shall be situated in a different region every four (4) years rotating in the following cycle: North, East, Central, and South.
- 6.2 Written nominations for a complete Council, on official nomination forms, shall be submitted to the Secretary at least two months prior to the Biennial General Meeting. Each nomination shall bear the signatures of two enfranchised members as proposer and seconder, and the nominees shall express acceptance of the nominations by signature on the nomination form. If no nomination is received for any particular office on the Council, the office shall be filled by nomination and election at the Biennial General Meeting.
- 6.3 The Council shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The outgoing President shall serve a further year (1) on the new Council in an advisory, non-voting capacity.
- 6.4 Each region will elect a representative that will act as the regional facilitator for organising regional meetings, reporting on behalf of, and back to, their region, and other related activities.
- 6.5 The term of office of Council Members shall be four (4) years from 01 April to 31 March.

- 6.6 The Council may at its discretion co-opt two (2) additional persons and in the case of death, disability or resignation of a Council Member, a successor to serve for the unexpired term of office.
- 6.7 No Council Member shall receive a salary or any other compensation for services rendered to the Society.
- 6.8 The Council shall meet not less than twice a year and shall decide on its own operating procedures. The President or, in her/his absence the Vice-President, shall act as chairperson at Council Meetings.
- 6.9 Three (3) members shall constitute a quorum of the Council.
- 6.10 The Council shall have power to co-opt members for particular purposes.
- 6.11 The Council shall conduct the affairs of the Society in accordance with the terms and requirements of this Constitution and of any policies of the Society.
- 6.12 Each member of the Council shall be accountable only for his/her own acts, and shall not be accountable for any act done or authorised to which s/he has not expressly assented. No member of the Council shall incur any personal liability in respect of any loss or damage incurred through an act, authorised or allowed by her/him, in good faith for the benefit of the Society, although in excess of her/his legal powers. Provided that nothing herein contained shall indemnify a member of Council from gross negligence or wilful misconduct.

7. BIENNIAL CONGRESS

- 7.1 A Congress of the Society shall be held every two (2) years at a locality determined at the preceding Biennial General Meeting. Written notice including the agenda of the Biennial Congress shall be sent to each member at least sixty (60) days prior to the Congress.
- 7.2 The Biennial Congress shall include:
- 7.2.1 The Biennial General Meeting; and
- 7.2.2 A symposium for scientific discussion.
- 7.3 Arrangements for the Biennial Congress shall be made by a Congress Organising Committee (COC) in consultation with the Council and according to the relevant Policies.

7.4 The COC shall consist of three (3) members elected at the BGM of the Society until the next Congress.

7.4.1 All members of the COC should preferably reside in the centre where the next Congress is to be held.

7.4.2 The COC shall appoint its own convener and shall decide on its own procedure. It has the right of co-option.

7.5 The Vice-President shall be an *ex officio* member of and serve as liaison between the COC and the Council.

8. GENERAL MEETINGS

8.1 All members in good standing may attend the Biennial General Meeting and take part in the discussions.

8.2 The President or, in his/her absence the Vice-President, shall be the Chairperson at a BGM.

8.3 Twenty percent (20%) of the members in good standing of the Society shall constitute a quorum at a BGM.

8.4 The BGM shall deal with the following matters:

8.4.1 The President's report;

8.4.2 The Treasurer's report, which shall include a financial statement, audited by an auditor appointed by the Council, of funds received and administered by the Society;

8.4.3 Reports of Branches, Sections, Groups, Committees and Representatives of the Society;

8.4.4 Approval of the appointment of members of the Council for the next term of office;

8.4.5 Election of members of the Organizing Committee for the next Congress;

8.4.6 Confirmation of the appointment of the Society's representatives;

8.4.7 Transaction of any other business and the adoption of resolutions on any matter of importance to the Society.

8.5 Deferred Biennial General Meeting (BGM)

8.5.1 If a quorum of members in good standing is not present at the appointed time of a BGM, the meeting shall adjourn for thirty (30) minutes. If a quorum is not present on reassembly, a Deferred Biennial General Meeting shall be held with those members present.

8.5.2 The Agenda prepared for the BGM shall be dealt with by the Deferred BGM.

8.5.3 The Deferred BGM shall have the same powers and functions as a BGM, but may neither consider nor adopt proposed changes to the Constitution of the Society.

8.6 Extraordinary General Meeting

8.6.1 An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened by the Council when deemed necessary.

8.6.2 The Council must convene an Extraordinary General Meeting within thirty-five (35) days if requested in writing to do so by at least five percent (5%) of the members in good standing of the Society.

8.6.3 Notice of an Extraordinary General Meeting must be sent to members at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the date proposed for the meeting.

8.6.4 Only matters for which the Extraordinary General Meeting has been convened shall be dealt with at such a meeting.

8.6.5 Twenty (20%) per cent of the members in good standing of the Society shall constitute a quorum for an Extraordinary General Meeting.

9. AFFILIATIONS, BRANCHES, SECTIONS, GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

The Council may approve that the Society may:

9.1 affiliate with other organisations locally, regionally or internationally;

9.2 establish Local Branches in any centre;

9.3 establish Sections or Groups representing specific subject fields; and

- 9.4 appoint Committees to further the aims of the Society. Provided that any such Committee shall have a specific convenor, written terms of reference and shall report to the Council and the Biennial General Meeting.
- 9.5 Each Branch, Section or Group shall elect its own office bearers and may draw up its own Policies, which shall be submitted to the Council for approval.
- 9.6 Committees, Branches, Sections or Groups shall arrange their own meetings and functions.
- 9.7 The Council shall, if practical and possible, provide Committees, Branches, Sections and Groups with reasonable financial and other assistance.
- 9.8 Branches, Sections and Groups shall present written reports on their activities to the Biennial General Meeting.
- 9.9 The establishment, functions, and rules of procedure of all Local Branches, Sections, Groups and Committees of the Society shall be in accordance with the terms and requirements of this Constitution and of any policies of the Society.

10. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The rules and regulations relating to Awards made by the Society, Publicity and the holding of Congresses are outlined in a separate Policies and Procedures document. These Policies and procedures form part of the Constitution of the Society and are binding upon all of its members.

11. LANGUAGE MEDIUM

- 11.1 All communication by and of the Society including international and national notices, shall be in English.
- 11.2 The language used by speakers at any meeting or gathering of members may be any of the national languages of the country in which it is held, as considered appropriate by the speaker; however, the speaker should present summaries in English, where this is not the language of presentation. Any member will have the right to ask for a translation of any formal proposal or other official transaction where this was not given in English.

12. AMENDMENTS

- 12.1 This Constitution may be amended only during a Biennial General Meeting of the Society and by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote whereas changes to the policies only require a simple majority (50% of quorum)..
- 12.2 Proposals for amendments shall be made in writing and shall be proposed and seconded by two members in good standing, and must reach the Secretary at least thirty (30) days prior to the BGM.
- 12.3 The Secretary shall circulate proposed amendments to all members to reach them at least ten (10) days prior to the BGM.
- 12.4 Proposed changes which are submitted to the Secretary but which cannot be considered by the BGM because of the lack of a quorum, shall be placed on the agenda of the following BGM.
- 12.5 Policies of the Society may be amended after acceptance of written or verbal proposals during a BGM by a simple majority vote of the members present who are in good standing. Provided that if the Council deems it necessary to change any policy between BGMs, it shall be entitled to do so, provided such changes are ratified at the next BGM.

13. DISSOLUTION

- 13.1 The Society may be dissolved after acceptance of a motion to this effect by a two thirds (2/3) majority of the members in good standing present at a Biennial General Meeting. The provisions of clauses 11.2 and 11.3 shall apply to any such motion.
- 13.2 Upon the dissolution of the Society and after payment of any liabilities, its assets shall be transferred to an institution, organisation or society having similar aims and nominated and approved by the BGM.