

Agenda: GSSA Strategic Planning meeting 26 - 28 March 2008, Kenosis Retreat, Pietermaritzburg

1. Welcome

RG

RG welcomed all at the Strategic Planning meeting and thanked everybody for attending. She especially thanked Harry Biggs for facilitating the meeting.

2. Present and apologies

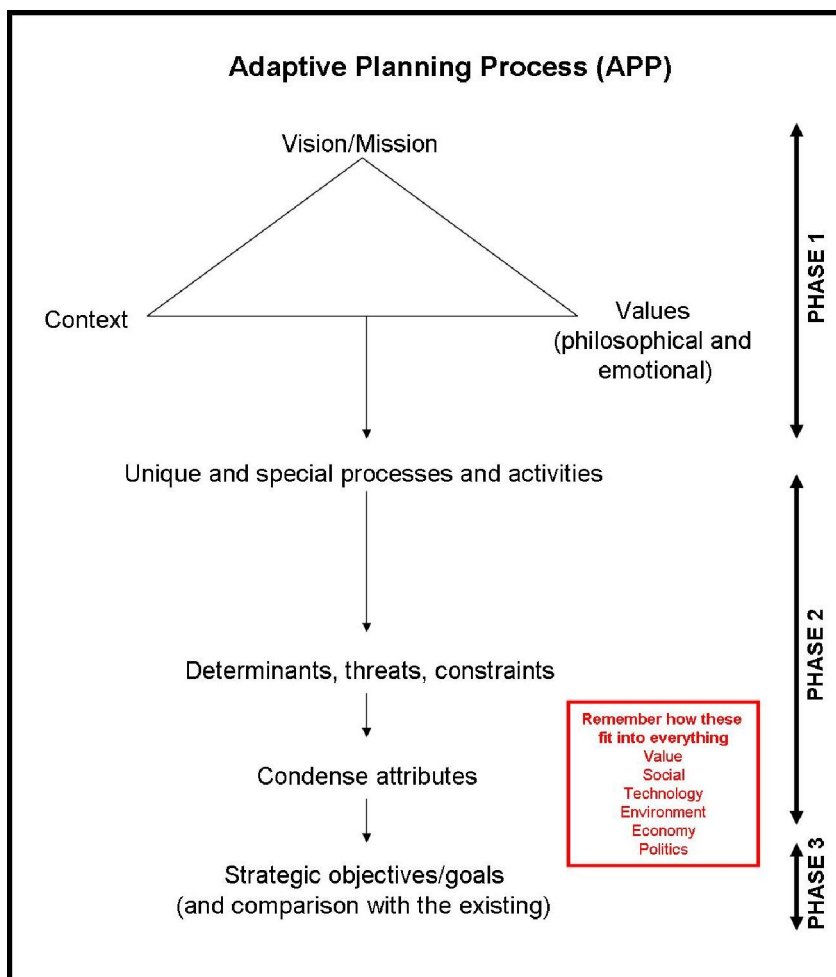
Present - Harry Biggs (HB), Kevin Kirkman (KKirk), Jorrie Jordaan (JJ), Peter Scogings (PS), Luthando Dziba (LD), Mark Hardy (MH), Klaus Kellner (KK), Richard Hurt (RH), Pieter Conradie (PC), Kanysile Mbatha (KM), Alan Short (AS), Lorraine van den Berg (LvdB), Justin du Toit (JdT), Freyni du Toit (FdT), Pete Zacharias (PZ), Dave Goodenough (DG) and Susi Vetter (SV)

Apologies - Susi Vetter (SV) (day one), Phillip Botha (PB), Leslie Brown (LB), Luthando Dziba (day two)

3. Blue Sky Visioning

HB
All

HB explained the agenda for the day and indicated that it was necessary to refine or challenge the Strategic Plan (Vision, Mission, Objectives). He indicated that an Adaptive Planning Process (APP) will be used throughout the meeting to bring out new and fresh ideas. He invited everybody to participate during the meeting.



4. Preparatory work prior to the Strategic Planning Meeting

JdT

JdT presented and explained the results of the preparatory work (Attached). Two questions were asked relating to the different Strategic Objectives. He indicated that per person there were no real statistical differences in respondents' opinions regarding how well the GSSA performed over the last 3 – 5 years, but when looking at the box and whisker plot, differences could be seen. The performance regarding different Strategic Objectives could be divided into three groups:

Poor	Mediocre	Good/Excellent
Translate information Media PAC Partners	Inform key role players ISI rating Grassroots Additional members portfolio	Theme at Congress Promote Congress NISC Administration of GSSA Constitution Review of strategic plan

He furthermore indicated that the second question did not give the best results. The overall feeling of respondents was that most of the issues should remain on as Strategic Objectives, but that the following aspects needed some discussion at the review:

- Advertising for Grassroots
- NISC
- PAC

It was pointed out that the GSSA has been strong on governance, which provided the foundation for the Society to focus on our core business. From the results of the second question it was evident that the Objectives which were regarded as poor correspond with the second part of the mission.

It was felt that there has been some uncertainty in the last couple of years on how the media and PAC functions, which could explain why the second part of the mission has not been so effectively implemented as the first. The general feeling however was that there could be an improvement if these points stay on the Strategic Plan and more clarity is provided on their function.

There was a general feeling that if we want to promote the Society in SADC and other African countries we need time and experience on how to cope with certain aspects.

Another contributing factor could be the fact that nobody gets paid for their contribution to the Society. We need to remember that in most of the cases it is just something extra that people do on top of their other work.

A suggestion was made as to the possibility of lumping some of the objectives. There was a concern that very few of the current objectives address our core business. Another concern was that most of the current objectives are rather just tasks, and need the necessary resources to obtain the objectives. Most of these objectives need redefining.

A question was raised on why we are pursuing an ISI rating and not some other rating. The meeting indicated that it is a world accepted rating and probably the best one to have. We need to look at the journal from two angles (1) do we want a journal with a rating or (2) do we want a journal where we could publish local contributions. PS felt that publishing everything would damage the journal. We need to improve the rate of submissions to the journal. Another concern was that NISC should be marketing the journal, but currently they are not doing so. PS felt that we should look at alternative publishers as NISC is taking a very long time to do the things that they have promised. LD indicated that the online submission and review system is still not working. If we could improve on this the whole process would be faster and this could lead to an increase in submissions. FdT felt that although NISC have some faults there is no assurance that another publisher won't have similar faults. She felt that we should not throw away what we have.

5. Adaptive Planning Process (APP)

5.1 Phase I

HB
All
HB
All

5.1.1 Vision/Mission

- HB – Challenged the existing vision and mission and gave opportunity for new inputs with regard to the vision and mission
- MH – Pointed out that it is extremely broad – all inclusive, but not focused
- JdT – Agreed with MH and felt that the keyword in the mission is forum and indicated that the second part of the mission is not what the GSSA do (nobody in the Society is championing anything)
- RH – Agreed with JdT - the GSSA should act as watchdog on things that influence rangeland Science
- AS – If one looks at the publications in the Journal and Grassroots it is clear that the GSSA is very broad (environmental, economical etc)
- LD – Felt that we struggle with the second part of mission BECAUSE we are so broad – we should promote rangeland science as a profession from the lowest levels to improve the profession as a whole
- KKirk – Raised the question whether we should continue to include both rangelands and pastures in the vision in the face of the changing profile of the GSSA
- MH – Indicated that the second part of the mission comes from the idea that we should be seen as a professional body and should be recognized as such – this however has not happened – he raised the question that if we move away from being a champion should we then still include the PAC in the Society
- KK – Indicated that he doesn't like the word champion, but felt that we are not only a forum, we facilitate and guide as well
- RG – Linked up with KK – felt that the agricultural support services don't function that well anymore and the GSSA is trying to assist with this
- AS – Agreed that the extension services do not exist anymore and that the GSSA can potentially play an important role with guidance. He pointed out that we could split the first part of the mission into science and practice
- MH – Felt that we must avoid needing somebody specific to do something
- KKirk – Indicated that there are a big question mark about who WE are in both the mission points
- JdT – Indicated that it is a combination of both scientists and practitioners. Felt that the word FORUM implies networking. There is also dissemination of information and promotion of rangeland science through products. We act as two separate entities – we are a forum and we provide products
- HB – Summarized that the GSSA are very good at accomplishing the first part of the mission, but that we are only partly accomplishing the second part
- RG – Indicated that although we are accomplishing the first part, we should clearly define what we should do in the second part
- PS – Felt that at some point we should list what our main focus is

5.1.2 Context

HB
All

- HB – Asked what frames your context? (What caused the GSSA to exist – legal context, agricultural context?)
- KKirk – Pointed out that 20/30 years ago the GSSA was very agriculturally based with the focus on conservation. Historically in South Africa we dipped into the agricultural profile with more focus on biodiversity, conservation etc., but he felt that there is going to be a swing back, which will include things like biodiversity, carbon sequestration, environmental legislation, climate change etc.). There should be a balance between the two (historical and current). He also felt strongly about the fact that there should be increased focus on the pasture management component of the Society
- JdT – Indicated that the current context is more focused on academic research of livelihoods, biodiversity, sustainability, ecology of large systems - mainly theoretical i.e. less product focused
- KK – Mentioned that most agriculturalists don't only work for the Department anymore and

- therefore people must nowadays have knowledge of various other aspects
- HB – Asked whether the GSSA helps in this regard
 - KK – Felt that it does as the Society covers a range of aspects
 - KKirk – Mentioned that there is also more focus on the economic aspect
 - AS – Felt that the social context is also important as the profile of the social structure (age, gender, race etc.) of the Society has changed in the last couple of years
 - JdT – Felt that the context of our forum has changed – sessions at Congress are coordinated by interested/enthusiastic people and this is beneficial for the Society
 - LD – Indicated that there is not much technological context (except GIS) and asked whether this discourages young people from the discipline
 - FdT – Coupled with the technological context is the fact that far-off research stations do not have the technological capacity. She felt that these people are important and the GSSA should not forget this
 - JJ – Felt that research in Governmental organizations is forced into specific directions (e.g. action research)
 - LD – Indicated that the Department now responds very much to individual farmer needs and that this does not facilitate long-term research planning and development
 - MH – Pointed out that the GSSA is socially/politically guided to support rural populations as opposed to building an agricultural economy
 - LD – Felt that recently there are more social sciences included, but still need to increase. Currently there is less investment into finding new knowledge and people are relying more on existing knowledge use and dissemination
 - MH – Indicated that in the past the GSSA never had the resources to champion anything as opposed to other organizations. He felt that the GSSA should network more with these organizations
 - LD – More of our members are present on task teams, but how do these individuals play a role in promoting the Society (formal/informal)
 - FdT – Stated that although our members are on the task teams etc. our name/logo is not included in their collaborator list, as we do not give money or have a person permanently there
 - JdT – Felt that despite the above mentioned point it is very good to have connections with other initiatives who have the necessary resources to do things
 - KK – Felt that this is important, but we must have good communication and collaboration to keep things together even after the external funding stopped
 - KKirk – Indicated that these things are important but that we need to improve the Journal and Congress to achieve the first part of the mission
 - RH – To do this we could give our collaborators a special issue in the Journal or at Congress

5.1.3 Values

HB
All

- HB – What are the values driving us?
- RG – Felt that collegiality is an important value
- KKirk – Altruism – noble cause (people put in more than they expect out)
- AS – Conservation/naturalism ethic but also production orientated
- LD – Information generation, sharing and research
- MH – Indicated that there is a value on resources (depending on who uses it). There are conflicting values by members and we are trying to accommodate all these values
- PS – Doing science will help us understand the system – Research philosophy
- AS – Links with land users and practitioners (respect and understanding of the needs of land users and practitioners)
- LD – Promote diversity and create opportunities for the development of young scientists
- MH – Peer review
- PC – Independence and openness
- KKirk – Training – education – academic (Co-optation – things put together have greater value)
- AS – Excellence in science
- MH – We value leading practitioners and we award them
- LD – Belief in co-operation and collaboration (between individuals and institutions)

5.1.4 **Wrap up Phase I**

HB
All

The forum part works well, but the sustainable part doesn't. There is an appreciation of change and recognition of the wider world without losing focus. We are getting involved with context and we try to make the discipline more attractive. Pasture management should be seen as a part of the vision which includes a variety of issues.

After a detailed discussion about changing the vision and mission the following change was proposed and accepted:

Vision

Advancing rangeland ecology and pasture management in Africa.

Mission

We provide a dynamic and inclusive forum and publish quality research.

Through embracing diversity and change, we seek to promote:

- Science into practice
- Human capacity development
- Trans-disciplinary views

and support the understanding of ecosystem services to achieve production, conservation and biodiversity goals.

5.2 ***Phase II***

HB
All
HB
All

5.2.1 **Unique and special attributes**

The following were mentioned as unique and special attributes of the GSSA:

- The membership profile is very diverse (cultural diversity, youthful membership, but on the flipside we have lost a lot of experience)
- The GSSA is very trans-disciplinary
- Agriculture and conservation together
- Interaction between scientists, practitioners, policy makers and stakeholders
- Knowledge base – Lots of knowledge (we must exploit outgoing knowledge)
- Ability to run a successful Congress/forum (social nature of Congress – congeniality)
- Currently excellent administrative support and communication – allow for greater membership that can even increase
- High level of trust within Council (social capital)
- Lots of members who are enthusiastic, willing and loyal?? – the number of new members are rather balanced with the members retiring
- Long-term and continuous collegiality
- Our publications (maybe it does not set us apart as other societies have this as well)

All of the above support the vision and mission – lots of soft issues, but it makes the GSSA successful.

5.2.2 **Determinants, threats and constraints**

HB
All

Issues from the vision/mission, values, context and uniqueness were grouped and discussed to find determinants and threats/constraints to these issues:

ISSUES	DETERMINANTS	THREATS/CONSTRAINTS
Running successful meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask people to organize own sessions and symposia • Professionalism • International speakers – good keynote speakers • Spread leadership – network of people • Continuity • Having financial backup from Trust if needed • Venue of Congress • Good post-Congress tours • Opportunity for students to present • Interactions with regional niches – reaching the broader community • Running successful ‘side events’ • Improve science into practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideological rifts • Perception of cost • Segregation • Other smaller congresses might pose a threat • ‘Dumping’ sessions at the end of Congress • Congress should not be seen as time wasted • Congress seen as too general – Trade-off between general and specific • ‘Brain drain’ of big names • Congress venue – logistical problems • Time constraints
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freyni du Toit by name • Use of technology (databases, website) • Enough financial resources to pay for Administrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of continuity – key people • Losing financial resources • Complacency
Knowledge base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to loyalty – continuity of active membership • Good quality Journal • Reflective organization – having a strategic plan • Giving something to people who want it • Research funding • GSSA nursery for good scientists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive departures • Funders deciding not to fund activities anymore
Openness and trans-disciplinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of tolerance • Very small discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complacency
Diversity (welcomes young people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence from established scientists – bringing along students • Fun vibe – intergenerational vibe (non patronizing) • Awards to farmers and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideological rifts e.g. conservation vs. agriculture • Segregation • Actual diversity – becoming too broad (but this might be good for students)
Collegiality and congeniality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small discipline atmosphere • Wine, dine and chat about business (networking and interaction) • Having support and interest from overseas people 	
Enthusiasm and willingness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noble cause – common goal • Not a lot of money in it – Society not run by ‘fat cats’ • Some spare capacity available • Existing people leading by example – role models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints • Regional representatives was a good idea but it did not work

Condense attributes – Suggestion – Congress and Admin – Knowledge base – Soft stuff

5.3 **Phase III**

HB
All
HB
All

5.3.1 **Running successful meetings (especially Congress) – Ingredient list**

(See p12 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

- Faux Pas award
- Continuity
- Professionalism
- Provide freedom for participants to organize own sessions
- Access to key speakers
- Ensure high quality papers
- Ensure inter alia opportunities for students to present
- Awards
- Crosslink with wine, dine and business
- Sexy venue and local support
- Emphasize science into practice
- Trade-off between general and specific content
- Tours are affordable
- Don't marginalize any sector
- Perception of cost
- Think of time constraint
- Sexy graveyard shift
- Proposal session for research projects
- Monitor feedback

5.3.2 **Publish good quality research – Discussion and Ingredient list**

HB
All

Discussion:

JdT indicated that we have no other option but to make the science in the journal as good as possible. RG felt that in doing this we should not exclude local descriptive science. A possible solution for this is to provide an opportunity in the journal for different sections (limiting the descriptive science manuscripts to two pages and having an extended version available on a database). SV indicated that this might be valuable, but indicated that there would be a trade-off between international 'rocket science' and local science (relevant to South Africa). She indicated that there should be criteria, etc. Science done good and properly, Peer review process needs attention, Go beyond regional relevance. PS felt that before we can make elaborate plans we should get to a point where we have enough good quality papers to be able to do this.

Ingredient list:

(See p13 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

- Doing quality research (funding, capacity)
- Research/management policies
- Choosing this Journal
- Becoming attractive to convince submission (ISI, key speaker)
- Professionalism and capacity
- Work at personal level ('chatting them up')
- Link with building capacity (hurdle – language) – provide service to review language. Provide service to review language of submitted manuscripts. Currently Rachael Judd is providing such as service, but it has never been used.
- Could have workshop for students to help with planning of research projects – must have a screening process.
- Need a way to increase short-term submissions, with the focus on high profile researchers

- and manuscripts.
- Short turn around
- Editor pay

5.3.3 **Revitalize planted pasture component of GSSA (medium-term) – Discussion and Ingredient list**

PC
HB
All

PC made apologies for PB who could not attend the meeting. He indicated that PB and he met to discuss the role of planted pastures within the GSSA and *vice versa*.

Present situation:

PC reported that the following aspects were discussed during their meeting:

- What happened to planted pastures? In the past there was a strong planted pasture discipline in South Africa.
- With a change in the Society there was a move of planted pasture scientists out of the GSSA. Could it be attributed to the demise of the Department of Agriculture and extension offices?
- The GSSA should have a specific effort or Strategic Objective to boost planted pastures. There are a few planted pastures scientists in the country and it is important that the Society serve as a focus point and forum for all planted pasture scientists in South Africa.
- There are currently few papers covering planted pastures.
- Planted pastures is a growing field e.g. biofuels, dairy industry etc.
- It is important that individuals, industries etc. from other fields are included as various other fields are covered in the planted pasture discipline.

Possible strategy:

- The GSSA should have an additional member on Council dedicated to planted pastures.
- There should be at least one day at Congress allocated to planted pastures.
- There should be farmers days dedicated to planted pastures.
- The GSSA should encourage participation, article submissions and the database for planted pastures.
- There should be a closer involvement with industry e.g. Milk Producers Organization to identify gaps and needs in planted pasture knowledge (science into practice).

Discussion:

MH added that during his discussions with SANSOR in the previous year (see previous Council minutes) it became evident that there is a need for advancement in the planted pasture industry. He also felt that pasture management should be seen as a whole and not only as ryegrass and legumes.

DG suggested that there is a need to include the “people out there” back into the Society.

PZ felt that there was a loss of planted pasture scientists to commercialism post 1994 and that the GSSA failed to give continuous informational support to the planted pasture section. FdT furthermore added that the length of Congress is too long for companies to attend for the whole duration. These companies might be more interested to attend if there was a day long planted pasture session. DG indicated that linking the planted pasture session at last year’s Congress with the post congress tour worked very well.

KK asked whether companies pay for planted pasture research. He furthermore wanted to know if the results are “owned” by the companies. DG indicated that the results of most of the studies are in the public domain and are available in their annual report. He stated that there is a large amount of information, but it needs to be shared on a regular basis (maybe published in our journal). FdT asked DG who reads their annual report. He indicated that the annual report is provided to the companies who fund the research and the companies then decide how and to

whom the information is disseminated.

PC indicated that the knowledge capital concerning planted pastures is declining and that the available information is very old. LD pointed out that the GSSA can provide a talent base to be used in the future (capacity building). JJ felt that there is a limited output of graduates in the planted pasture discipline. LD indicated that it is a scarce skills designation and the Department must invest in training in this regard.

AS felt that the role of the GSSA is to facilitate a process where the planted pasture sector themselves identify gaps in knowledge. This would facilitate the process of addressing the gaps. MH supported AS and stated that we as the GSSA can't do anything physical, but we can act as a forum.

PZ felt that it was important to identify and find people from the planted pasture sector and ask them some questions:

- Where do you publish?
- Are you a member of the GSSA?
- Where is your intellectual home?
- Etc.

It might then be easier to target these individuals to organize symposia and special sessions at Congress.

HB wrapped up the discussion and indicated that it is extremely important to have a focused plan to attract the planted pasture sector. He pointed out that planted pastures will become a link between "commercial" and the growing "pastoralism" sectors.

Ingredient list:

(See p14 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

- Dedicated farmers days
- Congress
- Specialists
- Role of industry
- Attract back planted pasture participation
- Government structures supporting these goals (NAEPT)
- Retraining
- Link between commercial and pastoralism

5.3.4 Clarify role of PAC – Discussion and Ingredient list

HB
All

Problem statement:

FdT explained how the PAC operates. She indicated that the PAC is fully constituted (Chairman and Committee) and there is positivism about the functioning of the PAC as a whole. The question however remains – what does the GSSA expect of the PAC and *vice versa*. She pointed out that the PAC is unsure of what to do and further indicated that there are no resources to implement activities e.g. response protocol.

Discussion:

KKirk asked whether the number of professional members are increasing or declining. FdT indicated that the numbers is slightly increasing. 10 – 15% of the GSSA are professional members.

PZ stressed the fact that it is NOT a refereeing process, but rather an accreditation process (assessed as neutrally as possible). FdT asked if it won't be better for the GSSA to only facilitate the process if SACNASP have an accreditation process. It was indicated that

SACNASP (who is not interested in Grassland Science) may eventually accept and accredit our professional members, but seems endlessly delayed. KK indicated that this would not be good because at SACNASP you know the person that you assess.

KKirk felt that there is a definite need to separate the response protocol (responding to various things) from the professional members (how we as Grassland Scientists conduct our business = code of conduct). PZ indicated that initially it was a government ticket vs. being ethical. He furthermore pointed out that there are two ideas for acceptance as a professional member – (1) conducting business under ethics and (2) competency. JdT asked whether it would be useful to prove competency on an annual (or 5 year basis) – renewal of registration. LD agreed with JdT and felt that there needs to be a more extensive application form to prove continuous competency, coupled with renewal of registration. There must be some advantages to be a professional member.

AS felt that there is a need to advertise and market the whole process.

Possible way forward:

- Changing the name from Professional Affairs Committee to Professional Accreditation Committee
- Get someone who was involved in the beginning e.g. Pete Zacharias to write one page on the original idea
- Explain this at the AGM
- The PAC needs to clarify their own role and responsibilities within their Committee as far as possible
- Would it be possible for the PAC to maintain themselves? Would it be sustainable? Feasibility is a big issue – allow for a STOP/GO decision.

Ingredient list:

(See p15 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

- Historical development and recent changing context
- Considering future possibilities
- Clarifying refereeing process
- In GSSA mission this fits into the science into practice

5.3.5 Increased capacity development – Ingredient list

HB
All

(See p16 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

- Young scientists
- Awards (at Congress)
- Writing skills
- Eskom Expo for Young Scientists
- Age overlap between scientists

5.3.6 Soft stuff – Ingredient list

HB
All

(See p17 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

- Tolerance
 - Small discipline
 - Young scientists
 - Fun vibe
 - Altruism
- Wine, dine and chat about business

5.3.7 Grassroots

HB
All

(See p18 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

5.3.8 Administration

HB
All

(See p 19 for diagram of Strategic Objective planning)

6. Gaps in preparatory work partially or not covered during the Strategic Planning meeting

HB
All

At the end of the meeting an analysis was carried out to determine which parts of the preparatory work and concerns were partially or not covered during the meeting. The following gaps and possible solutions were identified (Yellow – Partly covered, Blue – Not covered):

Gaps	Possible solutions	Tasks
Improve communication between Council and members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Message from President after each Council meeting Council report abstracts Improve preparation for AGM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market survey for Grassroots E-mail link to Council News
PRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build membership Improve/increase publications in journal Science into practice Building capacity Awareness of GSSA activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jack up PRO Satellite events Expo's and awards
SADC involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise Congress across borders Update mailing list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who know people must become involved
Fund raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society and Trust relationship 	
Council portfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have definite portfolio jobs 	
Relations with SANSOR / SANBI should be individual		

7. Closure

RG

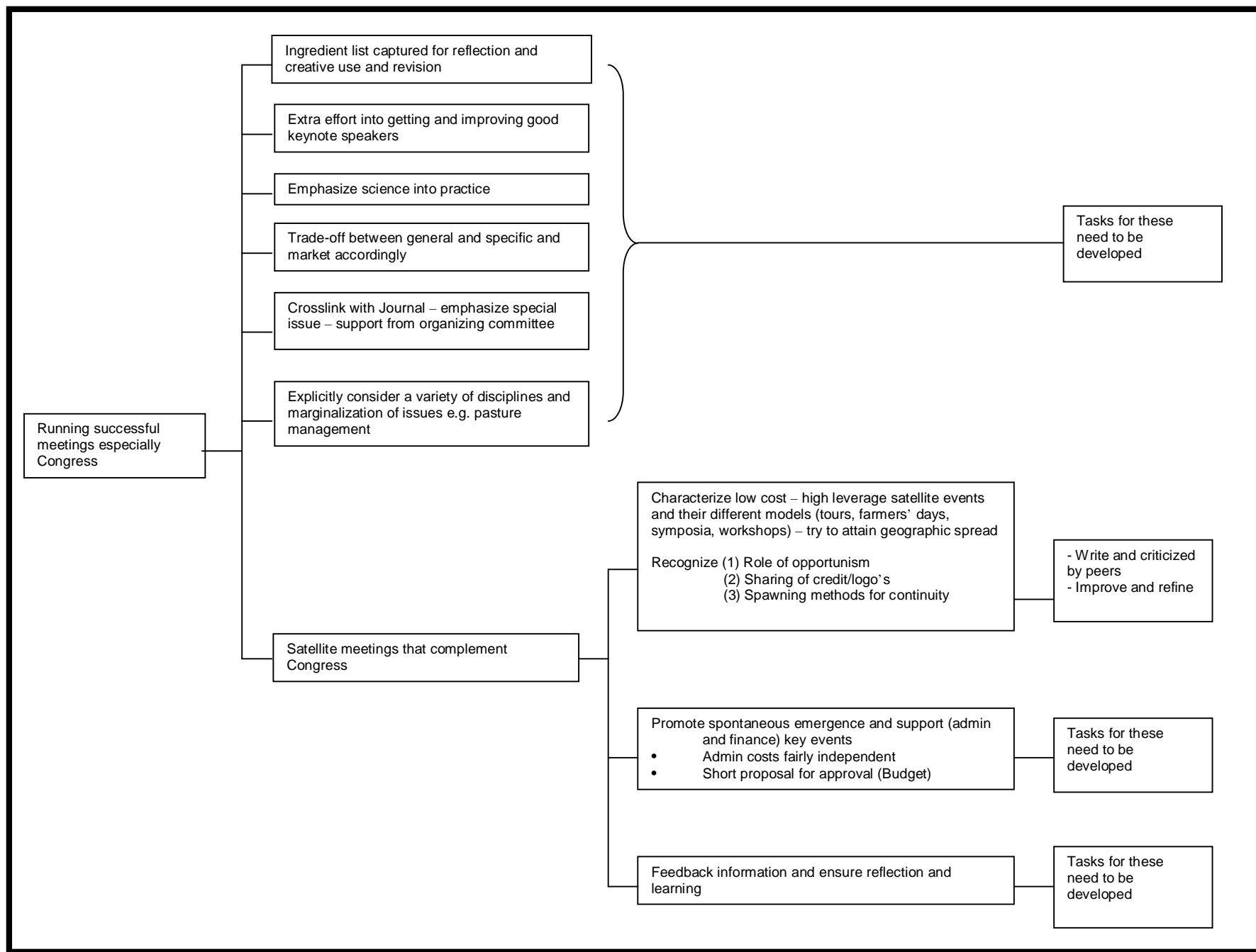
RG thanked everybody for their valuable inputs during the Strategic Planning meeting. She particularly thanked all non-Council members for their willingness to actively contribute to the Society.

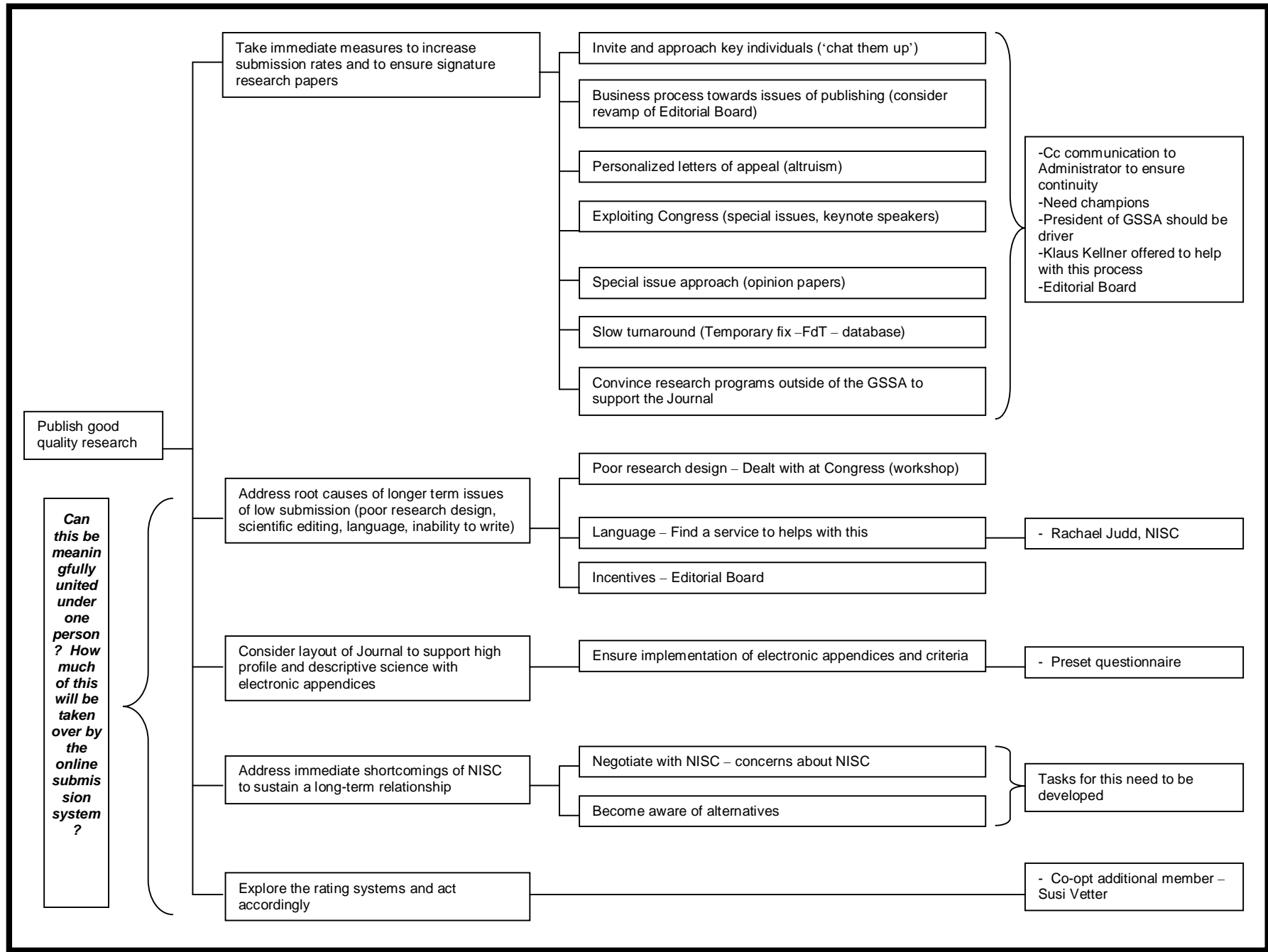
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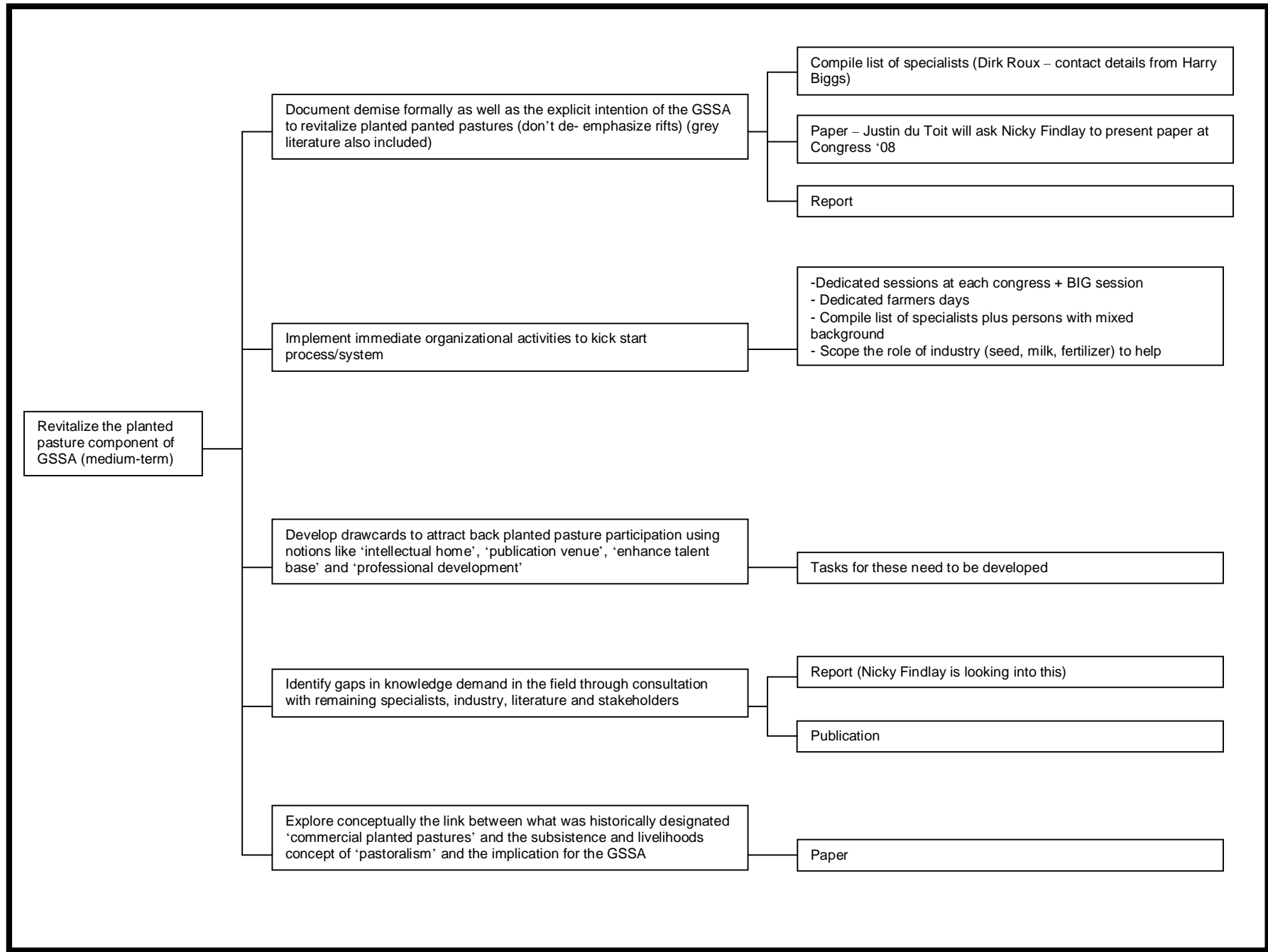
Secretary _____

Date _____

Date _____







Clarify role of PAC

Elucidate confusing situation of PAC in the light of its historical development and recently changing societal context e.g. SACNASP – Demonstrate its role in the GSSA

Considering future possibilities – clarifying refereeing of assessment processes. Detail level of inputs needed if ongoing re-evaluation is required, and effort needed for evaluating competency and ethical status; clarify legal liability etc. Inputs required to publicize this institution

Immediate action

- Only potential responsibility left with PAC is accreditation. Name change – Professional Assessment Committee – Constitutional change
- Pete Zacharias writes a one pager on original idea at the time of inception – within weeks
- PAC reflects on their own role and prepares submission to Council - before Council Meeting July '08

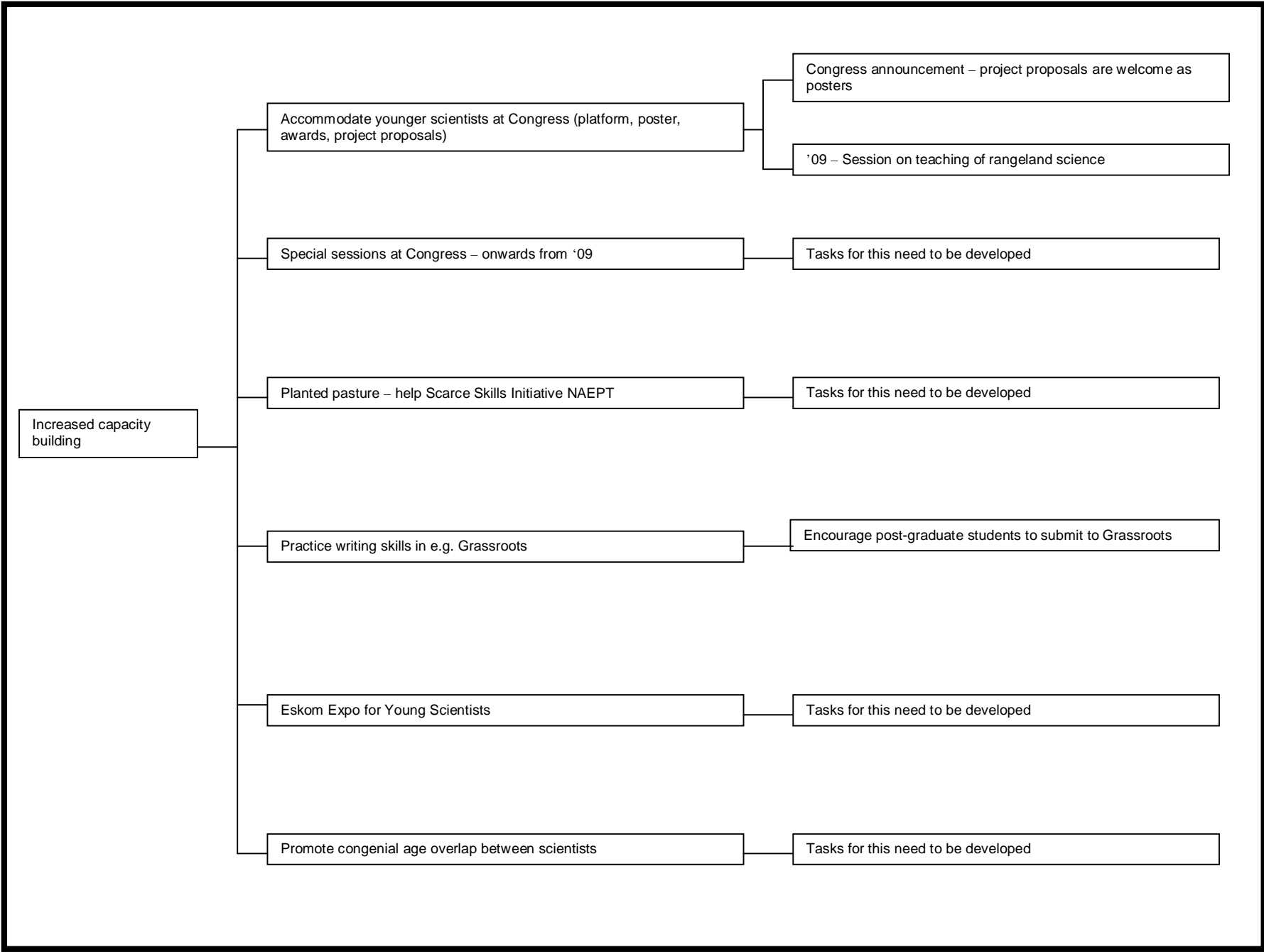
Action thereafter

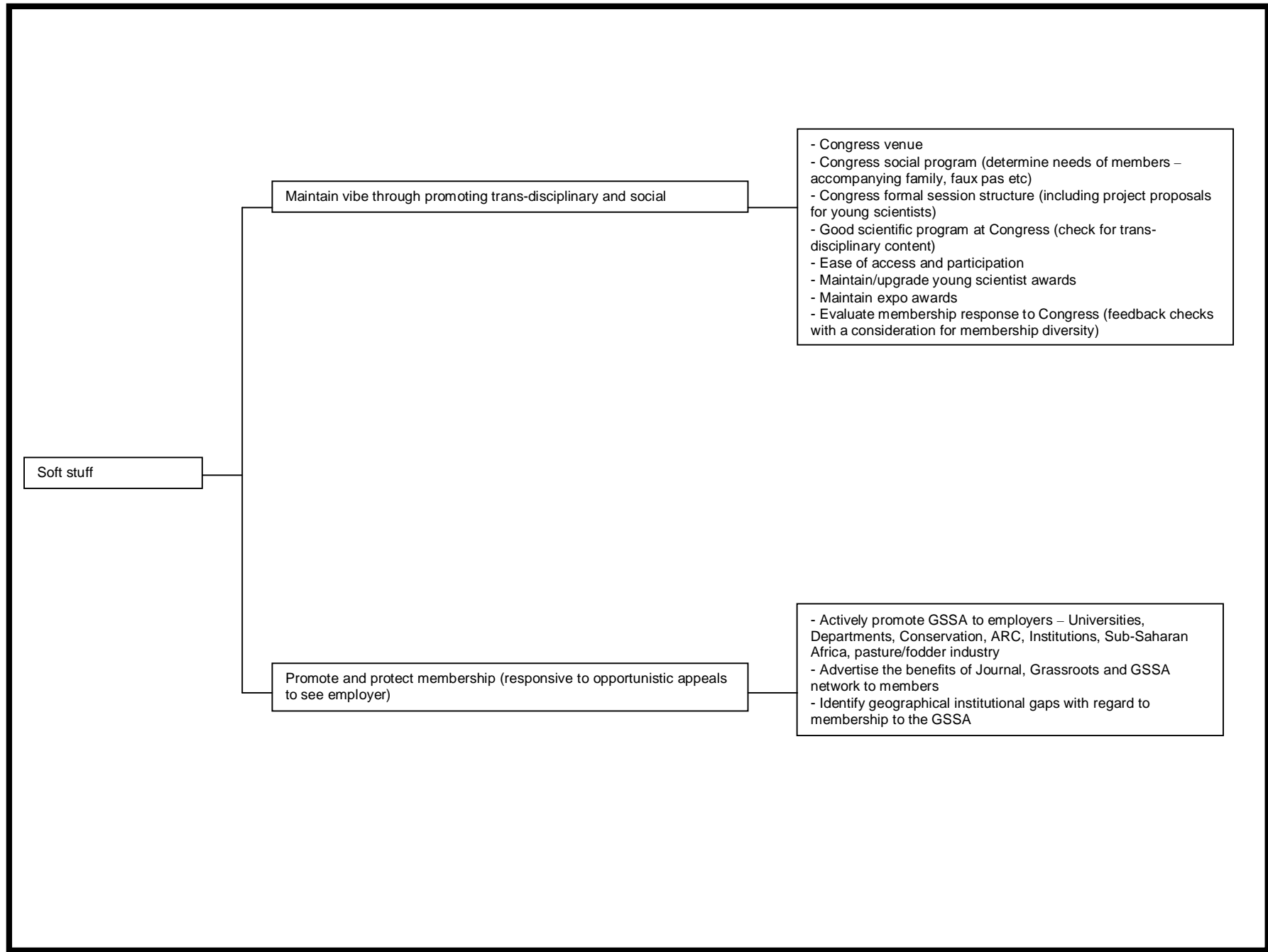
- Discussed more broadly with GSSA membership
- Contemplate societal meaning and anticipate response

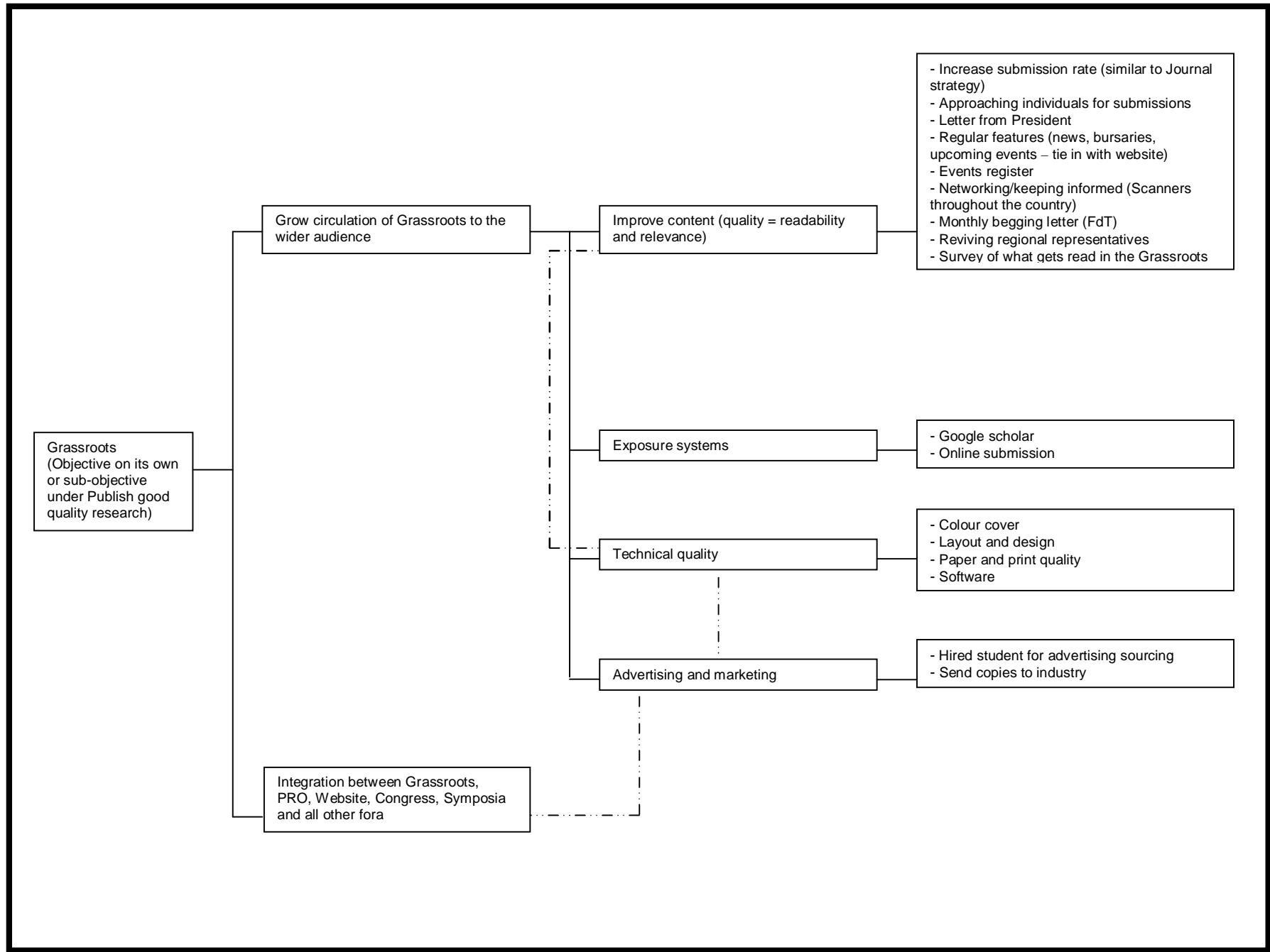
Way forward

- Make decision on a way forward (disbandment is possible)

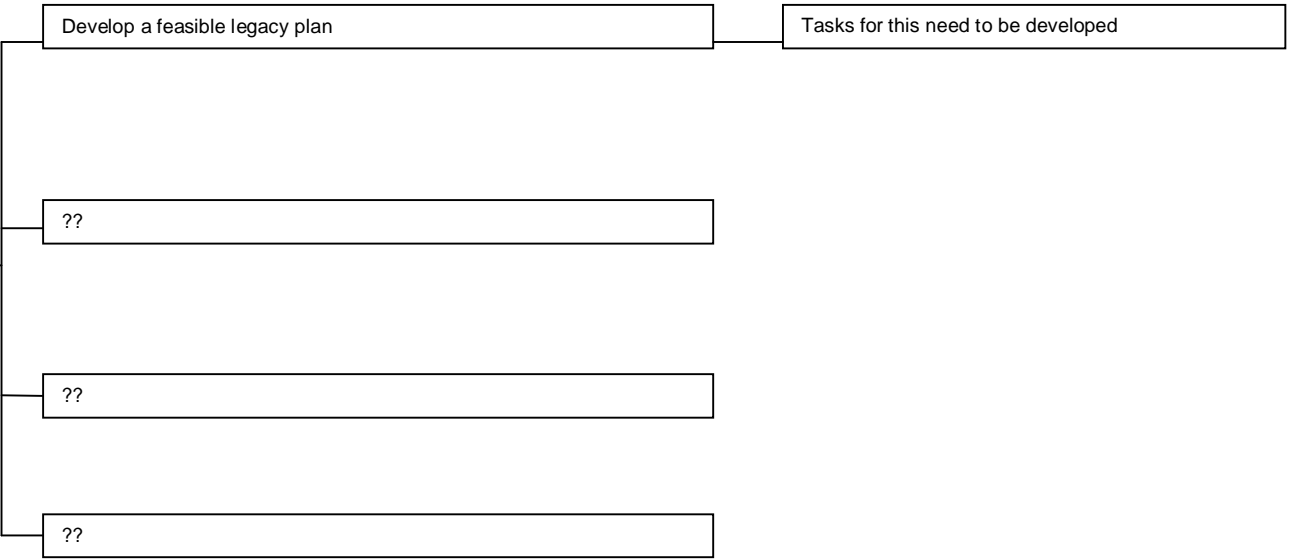
All of the above should be done in collaboration or co-operation with the professional members and should be done by the PAC themselves

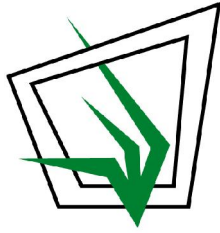






Maintain administrative
excellence





GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

COMMENTS FROM PREP WORK

Comments relating to the revision of the Strategic Objectives

- **NB** Need to ensure that the objective are achievable within the framework of the Mission and Vision and available capacity.
- I am not close enough to comment on the specifics. However, it seems that these activities remain relevant.
- Most of the objectives were met, some with bigger success than others.
- A lot of the strategic objectives listed above are not really so; they are more like means to achieving certain objectives. They may have appeared to be SOs when they were thought up, but I think most of them can be downgraded to things that need to be monitored to make sure things are running OK.
- The GSSA, and the PAC in particular, still needs better promotion to the broader community in southern Africa. It is acknowledged that ever-dwindling resources make this task more and more difficult as active members do not have the time to do this voluntarily.

Strategic Objectives
<i>To inform key role players in the environmental field of the GSSA</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not think that the GSSA should get formally involved in informing key role players in the environmental field. We should be visible and forward such information to our members and especially professional members. Giving an opinion could potentially harm us since we have members from a broad spectrum that could potentially oppose each other (e.g. agriculture vs. conservation) • But what are we going to do about it once they have been informed. • I think further marketing of the GSSA might also be considered. • Okay
<i>To ensure that Congress adopts a relevant theme each year through which it can promote the Society to a broader audience</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Congress theme tends to be quite general to ensure inclusiveness. Special sessions/symposia probably do more than the overall theme to set the tone/highlight important issues.
<i>To promote GSSA Congresses by ensuring that Congress announcements reach the broadest possible audience</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think further marketing of the GSSA might also be considered.
<i>To ensure the translation of technical and scientific information into articles accessible to the public</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs discussion – Grassroots may be the vehicle for this • Remove • Revise • This hasn't worked. I still think it is important to bridge the research/management/land user divide but we need to think clearly about the GSSA's role.
<i>Promote the discipline through providing links from the discipline to relevant radio and television media</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove • Revise • Revise • Promoting the GSSA through radio and TV has proved rather difficult to pursue. These media tend to look for more 'juicy' newsworthy information. I don't think we should pursue this objective any further, but we should encourage our members and the PRO to use opportunities that arise through these media channels to promote the GSSA. Most programs that we try to pursue are aired in the early hours of the day (before 6am). There are very few people who watch TV or listen to radio then except to listen to a specific program topic of interest that particular morning. • Promoting the discipline should go beyond media contact.

<i>Develop a protocol to promote the Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) to the broader environment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a protocol, but it will have to be updated on a regular basis. The marketing of the protocol is something that must be done once all aspects have been sorted out. • Revise • PAC: is there a need for this among members? How do the Prof members feel the GSSA should act for them. It seems like a perennial problem to get any more than the most muted action on this. Maybe any further action should be dropped unless the professional members drive the action
<i>Promote partnerships between the GSSA, SADC and researchers in other African countries</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to discuss the detail and develop achievable objectives • I think further marketing of the GSSA might also be considered • Remove – we are not in this business • Revise • Revise
<i>To get ISI rating for the Journal</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to set ourselves a target date by which time we want the journal to be ISI rated. A task team needs to be assigned to this strategic objective and report regularly on its progress. • Obtaining ISI rating for the journal is still a challenge. • Improve the quality of the journal by raising its impact factor
<i>To develop a new three-year contract with NISC</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that the last problems have been sorted out with NISC and would support continuing with them. We must however get clarity on increases and other issues that were problems earlier. • Need to discuss the detail and develop achievable objectives • The monitoring of the NISC contract should be an ongoing agenda item, but does not need to be on the strategy especially given that we have dealt with the major tension that existed between the GSSA and NISC • The relationship with the publishers is important. Who publishes should be based on an evaluation of NISC to date in comparison with practicable alternatives • NISC should not be on the strategic plan – rather discuss the future and relevance of the journal
<i>To develop an advertising/advertorial strategy for Grassroots</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to discuss the detail and develop achievable objectives • I think further marketing of the GSSA might also be considered • Revise
<i>Determine the portfolio of additional members</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining portfolios of additional members should be finalized and this matter removed from the strategy. • Additional council members should be encouraged to take up council activities, but not forced into portfolios that do not suit them since this can damage the Society. I see this as a testing ground for potential office bearers on Council. It is also valuable to ensure that there is a pool of people in the membership with some knowledge of how the GSSA runs, even if they do not serve again
<i>To ensure that key administrative responsibilities are executed timeously</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Society's administration is handled well and efficiently
<i>Ensure that if constitutional changes are necessary they are tabled at the April meeting for timeous circulation to the membership</i>
<i>Review the strategic plan at regular intervals</i>

<i>New objectives that should be included in the new Strategic Plan</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve more producers of forages and livestock in the GSSA • Target the pasture/forage industry – in terms of our current Mission and Vision • Make a concerted effort at developing partnerships with funding agencies to assist in achieving stated objectives that require additional funding • The GSSA should provide a forum for sharing of new ideas/technologies. It should form a link between research and adopters of knowledge (farmers, consultants etc.). This role was previously played by extension officers, but most EO does not have the capacity at present and it would be unacceptable for scientists that are gov officials to give new technologies directly to consultants. A proposed strategy to accomplish this will be presented by Conradie and Botha at the session on planted pastures. • Paying greater attention to opportunities that present themselves outside of South Africa.

- Awareness under GSSA members of the actual advantages of the Society? Thinking about the question below it struck me that many members, especially the new ones, see only the Congress and the Journal, but not the other “hidden” advantages of our Society. Maybe just a short discussion on this point?
- How to increase the number of researchers or scientists to publish in our AJRFS
- The GSSA must ensure that all scientists, practitioners and producers are members. For instance, government departments have many members who come to congress but are never members.
- The GSSA must ensure that particular province in which Congress is held receives a lot of attention prior to and after the Congress so that we can leave a strong and positive impression about the Society. We should take it as an outreach program to that particular province.
- GSSA representation in forums such as NAET for the promotion of education and training of grassland scientists.
- Promoting critical scientific research and thinking
- There is a dangerous age structure among researchers (as opposed to managers and other practitioners) where researchers are mostly aging, and over committed, in the grassland related disciplines, as well as all other sciences. Younger people who get MScs and PhDs tend to move quickly into non-research fields. This has now been recognized by Department of Science and Technology and the CSIR as a problem, one of using up old capital rather than developing new knowledge. It would therefore, seem opportune for the GSSA to drive for the development of more research capacity, and careers in research, so that the opportunity to develop the critical thinking of scientists is not lost in the helter skelter of other environmental initiatives that take up young scientists. Even though many in the GSSA see “grassland science” as a primarily practical field, it still needs to be based on critical science and research to conferences to show in practice how scientific debate can take place
- It is my opinion that the Council has lost its focus and is trying to do too many things. The GSSA should have 2 primary SOs (please refer to the Constitution): (1) promote a forum for its members to engage directly with each other and (2) promote/publish the work of the Society/discipline. The first should be achieved mainly through the annual congress and the second should be achieved mainly through the journal and the newsletter. While the congresses and newsletter are going along very well, not enough attention is being paid to the journal. Council should make it their mission to convince all members to think of the AJRFS as the first choice for publishing their work. Council can set the example by submitting more of their manuscripts to the AJRFS. A paid, part-time position (2 or 3 days per week) should be created to develop the journal according to certain objectives such as 100 mss per year, 50% rejection rate, ISI listing etc. The position could initially be for 2 or 3 years with annual performance reviews. The possibility of changing to a new publisher should be considered seriously. A large amount of money was allocated in 2007/2008 to upgrading the newsletter, which I believe was misdirected. Council did not respond to the issue when it was raised with the appropriate urgency and delayed making any real decision on this. That money plus a bit more should be going to developing the AJRFS, otherwise it will die a slow death
- Investigating the possibility of allocating funding to the appointment of a media/publicity agent, person or company (challenge is that they would not be totally familiar with the intricacies of the discipline)
- Reviving the old Policy Response Protocol and panelbeating it to fit the current political, social and economic circumstances of environmental decision-making in the country
- Forging closer formal linkages with the Grasslands Programme of SANBI
- What should the Society do for its members to ensure that it is worthwhile being a member?
- I feel that one of our greatest strengths is the support network the GSSA offers to students (this was my own experience), and I believe the great ‘intergenerational’ vibe at Congress and encouraging them to become members. This would include raising the profile of the Society in institutions/departments where students work on planted pastures and related aspects of our ‘neglected’ subdiscipline and ‘grow’ a new generation of active members with an interest in pastures

What do you feel the Society is actually doing for its members?

- Mouthpiece for members. Information on research
- Planning congresses and farmers days. Journal is very good. Grassroots is very good (Last week I got a request from Mexico about a paper on cactus pears published in Grassroots which I think is fantastic. The reading of Grassroots is surprising very wide. Do not under estimate Grassroots as a scientific newsletter). I am proud to be associated to the Society.
- Journal – good, Bulletin – good, Congress – good, these 3 aspects are the main functions of the Society. Other aspects, including many of those listed above, are secondary, even if they are important
- Successfully provides a forum for existing and new Professionals in Range and Forage Science through the

Annual Conference. Journal provides an avenue for Scientific publications. Newsletter keeps members informed as does the WEB site and Administrators office.

- A lot of which the most important is a home for 'similar' minded people
- The Society remains an important 'home' for grassland scientists in South Africa. It is unique in so far as both rangeland and planted pasture scientists are in one forum. This is appropriate for Africa.
- The Society has a lot of advantages. I consider the most important ones networking at congresses, our website and access to the journal and Grassroots. Other functions such as the professional register, interaction with other national and international organizations, etc. have not fully been realized by many of the members
- A Society provides a forum for discussion and information transfer. I think that the GSSA is doing this well, and continually improving.
- Members are always updated about the issues involving them
- Very much: Good website, good Congress, good journal and Grassroots
- Through Congress the Society provides a much needed setting for interaction and discussion between individuals from various geographical and scientific fields. The website is a very important aspect keeping the members informed about the activities of the Society.
- Conferences (good interaction, good speakers), journal (can be improved), website based information and updates
- I think the Society serves as a very useful networking function for those members who want to take advantage of the many forms this takes (newsletters, web, congresses etc.). The Society has raised its profile and appears on many stakeholder lists in the environmental field.
- The Society is doing what it promises to its members, i.e. it organizes an annual congress and it publishes a journal and a newsletter. However, the journal is stagnant and needs a lot of development to make it more competitive internationally.
- The Society is catering for its members adequately through its publications, congresses and other meetings, website and regular emailed news flashes. The old problem still remains, though, that outside of its membership, the GSSA is not well known and still has no teeth when it comes to environmental decisions that relate to rangelands.
- Arranging a good congress and makes a journal available – but is this the best way to go?
- The Society provides a platform for publishing ones work both through the journal and Grassroots. The platform provided through congresses to present work in grassland science disciplines is also very valuable.
- The Congress provides a fun and vibrant forum for students and researchers to meet. I have made many life long friends and found a supportive network of colleagues through the GSSA, and this is really what makes me come back every year and become involved in the Council. I think the student support is great, access to the journal with its back issues is a major bonus (as a researcher it's worth being a member just for that) and the Grassroots is a good read. The administrative support (Freyni) is friendly, helpful and efficient. I think GSSA members get a fantastic deal for R1 per day!

Please make any notes on the points below about which you feel strongly or have particular knowledge or responsibility. Council portfolios will be sent to each individual Council member for updating.

Point	Your Comments
Financial Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presently in a positive phase and well managed • Always important • More openly • Doing well so far. Could do better with occasional sourcing of funding from provinces that host the congress • Doing well, but see comments above • Handled well, improving • These are doing very well now – we must get a treasurer that is interested in doing the job properly • Looking good
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership appears to be stable. Need to encourage applications and grow • Needs to be built – look at SADC members • Regular updates • Doing well. Se point above about suggestion for a strategy item • Good • Increasing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think there are areas we could target to grow and diversify our membership – e.g. students from different disciplines, the pastures crowd.
President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must ensure that decisions are acted on by Council members – time constraints are a major issue • More communication • Good • Leadership for the Society
Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be required to assist the President to deal with specific issues that require inputs from the highest level of authority in the Society – time constraints are a major issue • Good • Future leadership
Immediate Past President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should finalize issues that were his/her responsibilities while in Vice President and President Portfolios – Time constraints are a major issue • What happened to the Past President Committee? • Must be given specific projects to pursue that resulted from his/her term so they don't feel they are just accompanying others to meetings • Good
Honorary Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains finances based on guidelines approved by Council. Essential that Treasurer works closely with Administrator – Time not too serious an issue • More open communication • Most of the knowledge in this portfolio rests with Justin. We need to have an additional member that he grooms • Doing well, but see comments above • Important job for Society to survive
Scientific Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints are a major issue • Very good work • Doing well. I sensed in the last meeting I attended in which we discussed Peter's letter that he was dissatisfied with the level of significance (which he equates to resources) we attach to the journal. We need to look at this more if we want our journal to be on international renown. • The Sci Ed can only do the absolute minimum required to get a few thin issues out each year. See comments above. A part time post is needed. • Has to be re-evaluated – this is the most time consuming job
Publications Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints are a major issue • Can improve • Needs serious review in light of the Strategic objectives of the GSSA to reach out to the broader public. I haven't had a lot of time to thing (dream) about the PRO portfolio as I would like to • Very good • Also a very time consuming job – how can we help?
Honorary Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to well organized to ensure timeous presentation of minutes • Good work • Good • How much time does it take?
Public Relations Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints are a major issue • Can improve • Good • Very important to have young active person running it
Chair of Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to keep on top of how the Trust is functioning – time could become an issue • Must be an old member of the Society with historic knowledge
Chair of PAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAC members need to drive the responsibilities of this Portfolio • Are issues in this portfolio difficult or is Lesley having a hard time delivering in this portfolio? • Very important position – has to look at how the Society can help with

	SACNASP registration
Website Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to keep Website up-to-date – time could become an issue • Good work • Doing a good job • Need a young enthusiastic person • It looks to me as if Freyni is still essentially fulfilling this role and this portfolio hasn't been fully resolved
Scientific Editor Honorarium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on inputs of Editor – online submission potentially reduces time inputs by editor but time constraints are a major issue • Good idea if we want to improve the quality of our publication • This is probably an option if it encourages the editor and if it's affordable to the Society – but I suspect that there are many who would not be swayed by a small honorarium to devote the time needed • Should be implemented as it is stipulated in the Constitution, but has not been done for the last 5 years. However, this will not be enough to grow the AJRFS. See comments above • Needs to be discussed – why only for the scientific editor – should be appoint someone part-time in this job – we buy the time?
Submissions to the Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor. Requires some form of rejuvenation • Getting more local scientist to submit is essential • Many authors publish here in a second or third language. Some good papers might be lost due to language problems. How are we equipped to help with translations/language problems? It is a thing that we should be concerned about/Is it our business or do we expect manuscripts to be checked before submission? • Good • Needs serious attention and should be included in the strategy • Poor. Need to be increased 3-4 times • Increasing from a wider scientific community; the quality of some submissions appears to have declined slightly • Should be encouraged on the basis of a quality journal
Prestige symposia and farmers days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be actively pursued as a means of promoting collegiality and interface with land users, public, other interested parties • Not many held. Need to have a dedicated organizer on Council if this is a priority • Tool to be used/could be co presented with gov institutes? • The seemed to have dwindled a little: brain drain? • Can improve in other regions, not only in KZN • I'm not sure any longer if we should concern ourselves with farmers days too much except to encourage our members to host and/or attend them. The prestige symposia should be pursued in the earnest and opportunistically as and when key national and international speakers are available in ones province or area or in the country for other business (research). • Good idea, but should not be too often • Probably still not enough, but then there are challenges in organizing these due to dwindling numbers of people with the time and ability to organize them • GSSA could make a large contribution • We need to give some thought to how we can promote these (i.e. getting people to arrange and attend them)
Trust Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require active management and additional funds could be solicited from benevolent funds • Very valuable resource should be used to promote the Society

Any other comments:

- We need to get around the time constraints that negatively impact on almost every activity and objective that the Society/Council accepts/undertakes.

- Coming with an open mind
- I think that we need to review the name of the Society. If we are serious about attracting people from the broader environmental field, then we need to define ourselves in a context that people can relate to; e.g. a name like “African Society for Rangeland Management” is interdisciplinary and geographically more inclusive. Our journal already deals with “topics related to range and forage science which contribute to the discipline in an African context’ (AJRFS Instructions to authors, NISC website). This suggests that we see ourselves addressing issues relevant to Africa and not only southern Africa and the SADC.
- Ultimately, if we are really serious about expanding into the rest of Africa, then we will have to take the congress to the rest of Africa. This is the only way to create an awareness and profile in Africa. Key to the success of this strategy is an ISI rated journal which gives the Society credibility.
- We reckon there are now probably not many more than 5 active planted pasture scientists in RSA and only about 5 active planted pasture technicians, myself included, capable of producing planted pasture papers for GSSA Congresses and Journal. Or have we under-estimated? – I hope so! There are of course numbers of planted pasture scientists, technicians and advisors working for the likes of Pannar and other seed, fertilizer and agricultural companies, some of whom attend our congresses. So, together with those few still active in planted pasture research, maybe we still have a core of planted pasture scientists, technicians, advisors, etc. who should, it could be argued, be encouraged to make a more meaningful contribution to GSSA than they have done so in the past.
- Concerning the above, there can only be positive comments to jobs well done.
- I am thinking of stepping down from my current position as PRO. I have become over committed to other work related responsibilities that I consider pressing, such as my research programme development. To a large extent they are temporary in that they required concerted effort now. I know that I will be available to serve on Council in the near future (i.e. within a few years). I am also sure Susi will be able to step into this task and carry forward the task. When I joined Council, I was able to meet all my deadlines on time but this has not been so lately. I am concerned that I am affecting our ability to fulfil our responsibilities as PRO and Council. This ineffectiveness is something I would not like to be associated with at any point in my life. I will remain one of the Assistant Editors for the journal.
- I hope the debate on the role and function of pasture scientists is fruitful and provides clear guidance as to the path forward. Not a flogging of a dead dog.
- I think the GSSA should continue to strive towards being an all inclusive society for all Grassland Scientists including pasture science. Pasture Science needs to be nurtured as there are very few pasture scientists left in South Africa and the discipline is also dwindling at Universities. At the same time the importance of pasture science is increasing in the face of world trends of increased pressure on agricultural systems due to biofuel production resulting in less grain and land available for animal production with increasing output required from the existing areas. In the absence of grain intensive animal production will have to be on pastures. The efficiency and sustainability of pasture systems in respect of climate change and emissions is also important and has assumed greater importance in research in other countries already. The GSSA could possibly assist in lifting the profile of pasture science amongst students and even school children to encourage more students to take up pasture science as their field of study. It would also mean lobbying the universities to offer comprehensive courses in this field to make it an attractive option to students.

Multiple-Sample Comparison

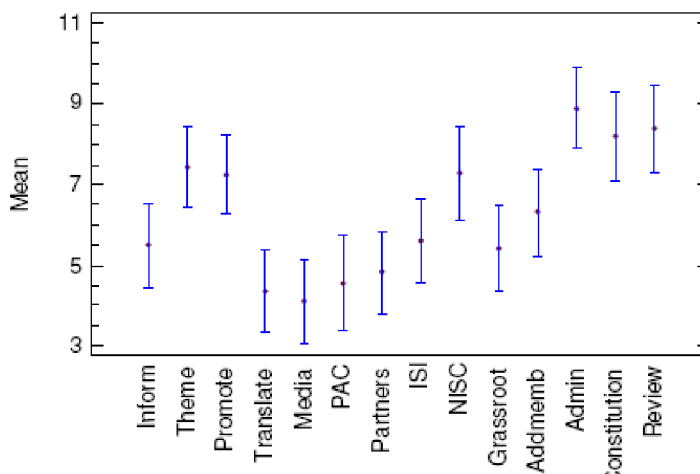
Sample 1: Inform
 Sample 2: Theme
 Sample 3: Promote
 Sample 4: Translate
 Sample 5: Media
 Sample 6: PAC
 Sample 7: Partners
 Sample 8: ISI
 Sample 9: NISC
 Sample 10: Grassroot
 Sample 11: Addmemb
 Sample 12: Admin
 Sample 13: Constitution
 Sample 14: Review

Sample 1: 18 values ranging from 2.0 to 9.0
 Sample 2: 19 values ranging from 2.0 to 10.0
 Sample 3: 19 values ranging from 4.0 to 10.0
 Sample 4: 19 values ranging from 1.0 to 7.0
 Sample 5: 18 values ranging from 1.0 to 9.0
 Sample 6: 14 values ranging from 1.0 to 10.0
 Sample 7: 18 values ranging from 1.0 to 9.0
 Sample 8: 17 values ranging from 1.0 to 10.0
 Sample 9: 14 values ranging from 1.0 to 10.0
 Sample 10: 17 values ranging from 2.0 to 8.0
 Sample 11: 16 values ranging from 4.0 to 9.0
 Sample 12: 19 values ranging from 8.0 to 10.0
 Sample 13: 15 values ranging from 6.0 to 10.0
 Sample 14: 16 values ranging from 6.0 to 10.0

The StatAdvisor

This procedure compares the data in 14 columns of the current data file. It constructs various statistical tests and graphs to compare the samples. The F-test in the ANOVA table will test whether there are any significant differences amongst the means. If there are, the Multiple Range Tests will tell you which means are significantly different from which others. If you are worried about the presence of outliers, choose the Kruskal-Wallis Test which compares medians instead of means. The various plots will help you judge the practical significance of the results, as well as allow you to look for possible violations of the assumptions underlying the analysis of variance.

Means and 95.0 Percent Tukey HSD Intervals

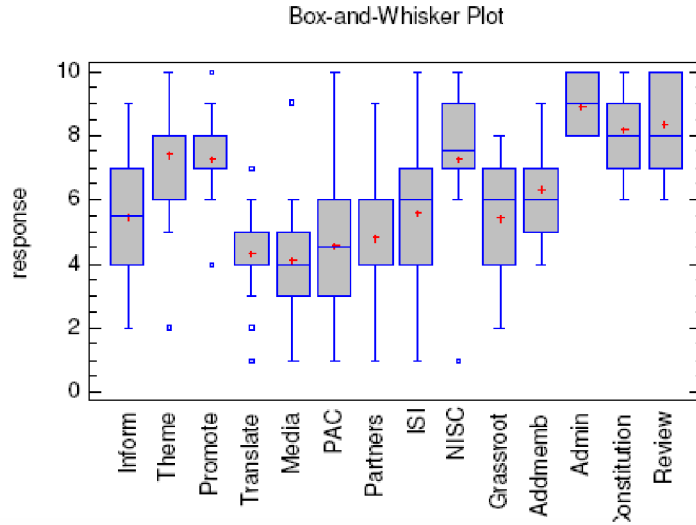


ANOVA Table

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P-Value
Between groups	577.24	13	44.4031	13.40	0.0000
Within groups	745.413	225	3.31294		
Total (Corr.)	1322.65	238			

The StatAdvisor

The ANOVA table decomposes the variance of the data into two components: a between-group component and a within-group component. The F-ratio, which in this case equals 13.4029, is a ratio of the between-group estimate to the within-group estimate. Since the P-value of the F-test is less than 0.05, there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the 14 variables at the 95.0% confidence level. To determine which means are significantly different from which others, select Multiple Range Tests from the list of Tabular Options.



Count of Response	Response					Grand Total
Code	?	No	Yes	Yes(-)	Yes(+)	
AddMemb		2	1	12	2	17
Admin				16	1	17
Constitution				14	2	16
Grassroots		4		10	3	17
Inform		1		15	1	17
ISI		1		15		17
Media		4	2	10	1	17
NISC		3	1	8	2	14
PAC		4		9	3	16
Partners		1	1	14		17
Promote				15	1	16
Review				17		17
Theme		1		15	1	17
Translate		2	1	13	1	17
Grand Total		23	6	183	18	232

