

SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICAN GEOGRAPHERS

Web site: <http://www.ssag.co.za/>



CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of the organisation shall be **The Society Of South African Geographers.**

ARTICLE 2 - OBJECTIVES

The Society of South African Geographers is a democratic, non-partisan, non-racial and non-sexist scientific organisation. Its objective is to advance the research and educational activities of all South African geographers by:

- (a) collectively representing the interests of South African geographers regionally, nationally and internationally;
- (b) encouraging and supporting high quality research and teaching in Geography;
- (c) providing a national geographic information resource for geographers and interested groups; and
- (d) stimulating awareness of geographic and environmental matters through academic collaboration with other intellectual communities and accountable interaction with the public at large.

The Society shall achieve these objectives by publishing and effectively disseminating scholarly research results in the South African Geographical Journal and other occasional publications, by presenting prestige lectures, by encouraging regional and special interest group activities and by performing other services. In all its activities the Society shall seek to assist in building a peaceful, democratic and environmentally sustainable South Africa.

ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Members

- (a) Persons sharing the objectives of the Society are eligible for membership. Classes of membership for persons shall be Honorary, Ordinary and Student. Persons who are full-time students at recognised educational institutions shall be eligible for Student Membership. The Council shall have the authority to accept or reject applications for membership.
- (b) Institutions, libraries and other scientific, educational or business associations sharing the objectives of the Society may be elected Institutional Members by the Council following invitation or application.
- (c) Special interest groups and student societies shall be entitled to seek affiliation to the Society at the discretion of the Council.

3.2 Membership Rights

Honorary, Ordinary and Institutional Members in good standing (paid up) shall have full rights to nominate candidates for national and respective regional offices, elect them and hold such offices if duly elected. All members in good standing shall be entitled to attend and participate under applicable rules in meetings, programmes, and other activities of the national organisation, shall receive all ordinary publications of the Society; and shall be entitled to request financial and other assistance from Council.

Affiliated groups shall not have the full rights listed above, but may participate in meetings, programmes and other activities at the discretion of the Council. They shall also be entitled to seek financial or other assistance from Council.

3.3 Liability of Members

The Society shall sue or be sued in the name of the Society. No financial claims against members shall exceed the fees or value of goods due by them to the Society.

3.4 Petition and Mail Vote

The Council will consider a petition by any member or group of members to initiate an action, or reconsider a previous action, taken by the Council or by an Annual General Meeting. Petitions or other matters of concern to the Society may be submitted by the Council to the Membership for a mail vote at any time. If the Council and members disagree on the necessity of a mail vote, members may approach the Council Ombudsman to resolve the matter.

3.5 Termination of Membership

After due enquiry and after due notice has been sent to the member concerned, the Council shall have the power to remove from the membership roll the name of any member whose activities are found to be inconsistent with the objectives and interests of the Society or who are no longer paid-up members in good standing.

ARTICLE 4 - OFFICERS, COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

4.1 - Officers and Councillors

The Officers of the Society shall be a President, a President-Elect, the immediate Past-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The President-Elect will automatically assume the Office of President at the conclusion of the President's two-year term of office. On election as President-Elect the period of service for which the said Councillor was elected to Council will be extended such that the officer will continue to serve on Council for at least two years after holding the office of President. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be officers of the Society appointed by the Council from among its members. The Councillors shall be ten elected at large, to represent South African geographers. The editors of the South African Geographical Journal and the Chairperson of the National Scientific Committee for Geography shall be *ex-officio* members, provided that they are not Councillors in their own right. No institution shall have more than two elected members serving on Council at the same time.

4.2 - Terms of Office

Terms of office of Councillors shall begin on the day following the Annual General Meeting of the Society and the period between Annual General Meetings shall be considered a one-year term. The terms of office shall be two years for President and President-Elect and four years for Councillors. The terms of office of the Councillors shall be arranged such that approximately one quarter of the Councillors elected at large shall return each year. Retiring Councillors shall be eligible for immediate re-election.

4.3 - Administrative Officer

An Administrative Officer appointed by and accountable to the Council shall maintain the Central Office of the Society, and perform such other duties as the Council may direct. The Administrative Officer may be in attendance at meetings of the Council, but shall not be a voting member. An honorarium, to be determined by Council, may be paid to the Administrative Officer.

4.4 - Council

The Council shall consist of the the Officers and Councillors elected under Clause 1 of Article 4. The Council shall be responsible for the business of the Society; shall have the power to establish committees and task groups, and to assign specific responsibilities to the

various officers and committees of the Society and to co-opt members to Council for specific duties, as the need arises. The Council may delegate to officers authority to sign contracts. The Council shall meet at least once each year at the call of the President and shall conduct by mail such other business as may be appropriate for the Executive Committee. A third of the Council shall constitute a quorum.

4.5 - Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be the President, the President-Elect, the immediate Past-President and at least one other Council member to be appointed by the Council for a period to coincide with the term of the President. The Executive Committee shall transact such business as the Council may determine and shall meet as necessary at the call of the President. Agendas and minutes of formal Executive Committee meetings shall be circulated to all members of the Council for comment. Decisions taken by the Executive will be reported to the next meeting of the Council.

Official actions of the Council and Executive Committee shall be reported to all members of the Society as promptly as practicable.

4.6 - Nomination and Election of Officers and Councillors

The Council shall appoint the electoral officer(s) to conduct the election for Councillors and the President-Elect. The election process shall coincide with the biennial conference of the Society, where possible.

4.6.1 - Election of Councillors

Nominations for Councillors to be elected at large may be made in writing by two members of the Society, with the consent of the nominee, to be received by the Electoral Officer on the due date. At least 30 days before the Annual General Meeting, ballots shall be mailed to all voting members to be returned by the due date for counting. In the event of nominations received being more than the vacancies available, the general membership of the Society shall cast their votes for Councillors. In the event of ties the President shall have a casting vote. Should insufficient nominations be received, those nominated will be declared duly elected, and further nominations shall be called from the floor. Council shall, as a last resort, have power to co-opt members to bring the Council to full strength. The term of office of a co-opted member of Council shall be for a two-year period or until the next Annual General Meeting, whichever is the shorter.

4.6.2 - Election of President-Elect

The Councillors shall appoint electoral officer(s), who shall invite nominations for the office of President-Elect. Members of the Society shall be entitled to submit nominations to the electoral officer(s), and only serving Councillors shall be eligible for nominations. The nomination and elections of the President-Elect shall coincide with the biennial conference of the Society, where possible. In the event that there is a single nomination, this shall be

ratified by Council. Where two or more nominations are made, the President-Elect shall be elected by members of the Society.

4.7 - Duties of the President and President-Elect

The President shall chair the Annual General Meeting and the meetings of the Council. It shall be the responsibility of the retiring President to deliver an address at the appropriate biennial conference. In the event of the President being indisposed or unavailable for any reason, powers vested in that person shall devolve upon the President-Elect or an officer nominated by the President.

4.8 - Editors of the Society's various Publications

Editors of the Society's publications shall be appointed by the Council and the appointments shall be reviewed bi-annually. The Editors shall submit to the Council an annual report detailing the disposition of manuscripts submitted to the Society for publication as well as the names of referees consulted.

ARTICLE 5 - MEETINGS

5.1 - Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Council may designate, with rotation amongst the different regions of South Africa. Five percent of the Society's membership shall constitute a quorum. Decisions shall be ratified by majority vote. Notification of time, place and business of the Annual General Meeting shall be mailed to members at least 30 days in advance.

5.2 - Special General Meetings

Special General Meetings may be called by the Council and must be called in response to written petition of at least 20 members. The time and place of such meetings shall be determined by the Council and notification mailed to members at least 30 days in advance. Five percent of the Society's membership shall constitute a quorum.

5.3 - Resolutions

All resolutions adopted at meetings of the Society or by the Council must fall within the scope of the objectives of the Society as stated in Article 2.

ARTICLE 6 - CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

6.1 - Constitution

Changes in the Constitution proposed either by the Council or by written petition of at least 20 members shall be made by affirmative vote on a majority of mail ballots received by the return date provided that 30 days notice of the proposed change has been given to members and at least 20 days are allowed for the return of official ballots.

6.2 - Amendments to By-Laws

By-Laws may be created, amended or repealed by a majority of members voting at an Annual General Meeting or special meeting, such vote to be followed by, and to take effect upon, ratification by a mail vote if the Council shall so determine.

ARTICLE 7 - DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution all the remaining assets of the Society shall be distributed to charitable, educational or ecclesiastical institutions of a public character and which are themselves exempt from tax. The onus of determining to which institutions such a distribution shall be made, will be with the Council in office at the time of dissolution and that Council shall inform the Receiver of Revenue of its action.

BY-LAWS

Section 1. Membership Fees

All members shall pay an annual fee as set by the Council and ratified at the next Annual General Meeting.

Section 2. Honours

The Society shall encourage achievements in Geography by awarding honours. Achievements recognised might be in research, writing, teaching, scholarship, administrative work, or in other aspects of geographic professional work. All awards of honours shall be approved by the Council. The following honours may, *inter alia*, be awarded by the Society:

- (a) Fellow of the Society of South African Geographers. In recognition of outstanding scholarship contributing to the advancement of Geography. The award shall carry with it honorary membership of the Society and shall be presented at the biennial conference.
- (b) The Society of South African Geographers Gold Medal. In recognition of meritorious contribution to Geography in Southern Africa. The award shall carry with it honorary membership of the Society and shall be presented at the biennial conference.

- (c) Thesis Medal. A bronze medal may be awarded annually for the outstanding thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for a research Masters Degree in Geography at a South African University.
- (d) *Certificate. A certificate may be awarded annually for the outstanding research project (mini-dissertation) submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the coursework Masters Degree in Geography at a South African University.*
- (e) Jubilee Bursary. For a student taking a recognised Honours course at a South African University.

An Awards Officer shall be appointed by Council, and the appointment shall be reviewed bi-annually. An Officer shall be eligible to serve consecutive one-year terms. Subject to the approval of Council, the Awards Officer shall convene a panel to adjudicate awards in terms of guidelines determined by Council. These guidelines shall be circulated among members at least once annually.

Section 3. International Societies

Contact with Geographical Societies outside South Africa shall be encouraged by Council. Where the Society is asked to nominate national representatives to international organisations, the following general procedures shall apply:

- (a) Council shall write to members requesting nominations, and may itself make a nomination. In cases where there are two or more nominations, members will be asked to vote for a national representative.
- (b) When the term of office of a national representative ends, that representative is eligible to serve another term, subject to the conditions in (a) above.

Section 4. Central Office

The location of the Central Office of the Society shall be determined by the Council.

Section 5. Publications

To implement its objectives and to promote excellence in the pursuit of knowledge in the field of Geography, the Society shall publish a flagship journal under the following guidelines:

- (a) The name of the journal will be The South African Geographical Journal / Die Suid-Afrikaanse Geografiese Tydskrif.
- (b) At least two issues of the journal will be published annually. The publication of additional issues will be subject to the availability of funds and suitable material.

- (c) Contents will be structured according to sections, but the core section will consist of refereed papers presenting the results of original research and/or informed enquiry.
- (d) The editor(s) shall be appointed in terms of Article 4.8 above. An Editorial Board shall be appointed by Council for a two year term, which may be renewed. The membership of the Board shall broadly reflect the membership of the Society.
- (e) The editors shall have powers of delegation and co-option, especially in running specialised sections of the journal.
- (f) The editors shall be responsible for formulating and implementing an editorial policy emphasising high scholarly standards, open and non-partisan procedures, equitable refereeing and a balanced representation of sub-disciplines.
- (g) As a national journal with international readership, the South African Geographical Journal shall seek to be inclusive of issues and viewpoints. Articles will be published in nationally recognised South African languages, but all abstracts will be in English.

Apart from the journal, the Society shall issue such additional publications as the Council may determine.

Section 6. Society Events

To further the objectives of the Society, the Council shall facilitate and, if necessary and affordable, sponsor regular events encouraging the exchange of views among geographers. These include:

- (a) A biennial conference hosted and organised by a South African institution of learning on a regionally equitable basis and open to all wishing to present and discuss a topic deemed important by peers practising the discipline of Geography.
- (b) An annual students' conference hosted and organised by a student geographical society at a South African institution of tertiary education.
- (c) An annual prestige lecture hosted by a Geography department in an institution of tertiary education and presented by a person of high intellectual standing on a topic relevant to geographers.
- (d) Workshops, either on a national or a regional basis, on issues and problems of concern to geographers.

Section 7. Signatures

The Council of the Society has sole right to designate persons eligible to issue cheques, sign other financial documents, or otherwise represent the Society as its agent.

Section 8. Accounts

The accounts of the Society shall be audited annually by an auditor appointed by the Council. The financial year shall end on the last day of December and the balance sheet shall be submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the Society.

Section 9. Election Officer(s)

The Council shall appoint from its ranks an Election Officer(s) each year to conduct the Society elections.

Section 10. Ombudsman

The Council shall appoint an Ombudsman each year to investigate queries or complaints by members relating to the Society and its activities.