



AUSTRALIA AFRICA
UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

Strategic Plan 2026-30

Foreword

As Co-Chairs, and on behalf of the Board and Steering Committee, we are delighted to present the AAUN Strategic Plan 2026-30, setting out the vision, core initiatives and measurable outcomes for our flagship international network over the next five years. Now 15 years old, AAUN has evolved to represent 29 member universities and delivers a range of inclusive and impactful collaborative research, professional development, and engagement programs across the two continents. Our work contributes to addressing shared challenges, develops and connects the next generation of leaders, and deepens Australia-Africa cooperation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Mickler'.

A/Prof David Mickler

AAUN Co-Chair (Australia)

Curtin University

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aldo Stroebe'.

Prof Aldo Stroebe

AAUN Co-Chair (Africa)

University of Mpumalanga

AAUN's Vision

AAUN is the flagship institutional network bringing together member universities from across the Australian and African continents through equitable, innovative and impactful partnerships. Established in 2012, AAUN facilitates quality collaborative research and policy advocacy to address common and comparative challenges facing science and societies, builds knowledge and research capacity in people and institutions, and pursues academic diplomacy and science communication through engagement with key stakeholders to support the deepening of Australia-Africa literacy and cooperative relations.

Our Strategic Objectives

1.

To serve as the flagship platform promoting equitable, innovative and impactful university partnerships between the continents of Australia and Africa.

2.

To facilitate quality collaborative research and policy advocacy to address common and comparative challenges facing science and societies across Australia and Africa.

3.

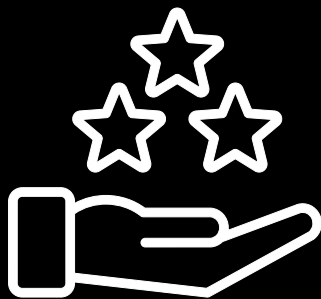
To build knowledge and research capacity in people and institutions across Australia and Africa, including the next generation of scholars.

4.

To utilise academic diplomacy and science communication through engagement with key stakeholders in academia, government, industry, and communities to support the deepening of Australia-Africa literacy and cooperative relations.

5.

To maintain network sustainability through demonstrating value and impact, securing external support and partnerships, a managed evolution of membership, and practicing collegial, inclusive, active and transparent leadership and governance.



Our Core Values

Our values underpin our collaborative partnerships and are core to who we are and how we operate as an international network

- Equal leadership and co-governance
- Knowledge and innovation co-creation
- Reciprocity and mutual benefit
- Academic diplomacy and policy impact
- Supporting emerging scholars and leaders

Member Universities



Australian
National
University



Bahir Dar University
"Wisdom at the Source of the Blue Nile"



Charles Sturt
University



Curtin University



Yunivesithi
Walter Sisulu
In pursuit of excellence



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



MU **Murdoch University**



NAMIBIA
UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY



RMIT
UNIVERSITY



Tshwane University
of Technology
We empower people



UNIVERSITY
BOTSWANA



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
ITYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD



UNIVERSITY
OF GHANA



UNIVERSITY OF
MAURITIUS



UNIVERSITY OF
MPUMALANGA



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA



UNSW
SYDNEY



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA



UNIVERSITY of
RWANDA



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Priority Collaborative Research Themes

Our research is pursued through building and supporting collaborative teams to address five research clusters of mutual priority

- Environment, climate, resources, and energy
- Equality, security, and governance
- Public health and human wellbeing
- Sustainable food, water, and ocean systems
- Artificial intelligence and digital futures



Strategic Initiatives

Our network activity is focused on delivering six strategic initiatives to achieve high impact and value

AAUN Annual High-Level Forum and Conference

Our annual high-level network gatherings in Africa and Australia bringing together universities, governments, industry and communities to collaboratively discuss topical themes and issues.

AAUN Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) Seed Grants

Our annual internal competitive funding scheme to seed new partnerships and collaborative projects between network members and other partners on priority research themes.

AAUN Early Career Researchers (ECR) Group

Our platform for supporting the mentoring, professional development, and international networking of early career academics from member universities across the two continents.

AAUN Annual John Hearn-Cheryl de la Rey ECR Prize

Our annual scheme to encourage, recognise and reward research excellence among early career academics across the network, named after the AAUN Co-Founders.

AAUN Emerging Leaders in Australia-Africa Diplomacy (ELAAD) Program

Our platform for bringing together the next generation of diplomats shaping the future of Australia-Africa relations via a structured professional development and networking program.

AAUN Annual John Hearn Memorial Lecture (JHML)

Our annual high-profile public lecture on Australia-Africa higher education and research partnerships to mark and advance the legacy of AAUN Co-Founder Professor John Hearn.



Strategic Pathways

Our strategy over the next five years is to evolve the network through innovative thinking and practice, sustainably enhancing our impact

From networking to mission-driven collaboration

Scale up an Australia-Africa Research and Innovation Platform

Pursue global leadership in academic diplomacy

Develop a Future Scholars Programme

Demonstrate value by measuring and communicating impact

Key Performance Indicators

The impact and sustainability of our strategic objectives and initiatives will be measured against a set of agreed indicators to ensure relevance and progress.

Strategic Objectives, Initiatives and KPIs	Annual Fora & AGM	PRDF	ECR Group & Prize	ELAAD Program	JHML
Strategic Objective 1 To serve as the flagship platform promoting equitable, innovative and impactful university partnerships between the continents of Australia and Africa.	# forum attendees # media & social media hits Profiles of keynote speakers # annual host bids	# and distribution of eligible applications	# webinars # active members	# annual nominations Level of representation of members and posts	# attendees # media & social media hits Profile of keynote speaker # annual host bids
Strategic Objective 2 To facilitate quality collaborative research and policy advocacy to address common and comparative challenges facing science and societies across Australia and Africa.	# forum thematic outputs	# PRDF quality outputs	# ECR-led PRDF applications	# policy impact of reports	
Strategic Objective 3 To build knowledge and research capacity in people and institutions across Australia and Africa, including the next generation of scholars.		# ECR-led PRDF applications	# ECR SC professional achievements	trends in program evaluation	# ECR and student attendees

Strategic Objectives, Initiatives and KPIs	Annual Fora & AGM	PRDF	ECR Group & Prize	ELAAD Program	JHML
Strategic Objective 4 To utilise academic diplomacy and science communication through engagement with key stakeholders in academia, government, industry, and communities to support the deepening of Australia-Africa literacy and cooperative relations.	# policy-makers, diplomats, industry and community partner attendees			# diplomat panel speakers	# policy-makers, diplomats, industry and community partner attendees
Strategic Objective 5 To maintain network sustainability through demonstrating value and impact, securing external support and partnerships, a managed evolution of membership, and practicing collegial, inclusive, active and transparent leadership and governance.	# sponsor attendees # Board/SC attendees # external recognition of impact & excellence # external partnerships formed trends in network membership trend in results of membership survey gender balance represented	# and distribution of grants awarded \$ co-funding secured \$ follow-on grants won gender balance represented	# ECR prizes awarded \$ external prize sponsorship gender balance represented	\$ external travel sponsorship gender balance represented	\$ external lecture sponsorship \$ host co-funding secured gender balance represented

Contact us



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YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@AAUNetwork>



LinkedIn pages ([AAUN](#), [ECR Group](#), [ELAAD Program](#))

