AfricaLics: Africa Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation and Competence Building Systems

INTERIM CONSTITUTION

(As Adopted on 22nd October 2018 at ASB meeting in Accra)

1. Preamble

AfricaLics is the acronym for the African Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence Building Systems. AfricaLics brings together scholars, researchers and policy analysts who study development, innovation, learning and competence building in an African context. It is currently not a legal entity.

The overall vision of AfricaLics is to facilitate the production and use of high-quality research in the field of innovation and development with a view to promote inclusive and sustainable development in African countries. As such, it works to support African scholars, especially early career researchers, to produce research in the field of innovation studies that is at the global frontier and is relevant for policy and practice including resolving developmental challenges of African communities.

The AfricaLics perspective is systemic, socio-economic, institutional, evolutionary, and policy oriented, seeking to support an inclusive development process. It recognizes that innovation and development are value-laden concepts, and provides a space for exploring the consequences of the choices made in the innovation process. It aims to promote inclusive and sustainable development in African countries.

AfricaLics provides a platform for collaboration between researchers, policy-makers and practitioners in all parts of Africa as well as with partners in the South more generally and with partners in the North.

The network emphasizes interactive learning and promotes plurality in terms of research approach, methodology and theoretical perspectives. AfricaLics fosters a culture where serious research discussions take place in an open and friendly atmosphere. Its activities are based partly on time and resources allocated by members of the network on a voluntary basis and partly on contributions to specific activities from other sources such as universities, government institutions, development agencies and foundations.

2. AfricaLics core activities

The AfricaLics network aims at achieving its vision/mission through a combination of three different types of activities:
1) Promotion of research training in innovation and development including promotion of innovation and development curricula (MSc and PhD level) in universities in Africa

2) Supporting research incubation and networking first and foremost between African scholars in the field of innovation and development but also between African and non-African scholars with an interest in innovation and development issues in Africa

3) Influencing policy makers through training and dialogue to adopt policies for innovation and development in Africa.

3. Regionalisation and Integration

Whilst AfricaLics is committed to the realisation of an integrated Africa, it also recognises that the continent of Africa is composed of five regions: Central Africa, Eastern Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa.

To ensure that AfricaLics advances the integration of Africa, the operations and functions of AfricaLics must accommodate, where appropriate and possible, regional diversity, specificities, linguistics and equitable participation.

4. Governance structure

Five elements (principal organs) make up the governance structure:

- The AfricaLics Scientific Board (ASB)
- The AfricaLics President and Vice-President
- The AfricaLics Secretary General
- The AfricaLics Secretariat
- AfricaLics Constitution Committee

**The AfricaLics Scientific Board (ASB)**

The ASB consists of up to 17 members. The composition of the Board shall take into account regional representation (defined as country of birth), gender balance and the profile of the different members of AfricaLics. Representation of all five regions on the African continent and of an equal number of female and male members is strived for. A country cannot have more than one member in the board. Some flexibility in these matters may be required in the initial years of the formalisation of the network. It is also likely that the board will be bigger than 17 members in the initial years of the interim constitution in order to ensure institutional memory is retained/ before all existing ASB members step down. The Secretary General participates as non-voting member of the Board.

The ASB will comprise up to 17 members made up of:

a) 2 members from each region of Africa (East, North, South, West, Central), ideally one male and one female from each region;

b) The Secretary-General (as a non-voting member);
c) Two additional members from the AfricaLics alumni fraternity (i.e. those who have attended an AfricaLics academy); one male and one female.

d) Up to four additional members from other regions of the world appointed by the ASB to provide additional balance to and competences on the board in terms of gender, research expertise and experience from outside Africa.

Functions of the ASB

The ASB is responsible for overseeing the organisation and functioning of AfricaLics.

The functions of the ASB are to:

- Appoint the AfricaLics President and Vice-President;
- Appoint the AfricaLics Secretary General and decide on location of the AfricaLics Secretariat;
- Discuss and decide on the overall policies of AfricaLics;
- Review and agree on changes to five-year planning schedule for AfricaLics conferences and academies (living document);
- Approve the work programme for the coming year including the location and programme of key events (AfricaLics Conferences every second year and AfricaLics Academies as often as funding permits);
- Approve the level of the AfricaLics conference fee;
- Work with the AfricaLics Secretariat and local organisers to support proper planning and preparations for the bi-annual AfricaLics conferences;
- Assist and advise the AfricaLics Secretariat in fund-raising and other matters of importance for the future development of the network;
- Take decisions concerning additional partnerships and activities in which AfricaLics should be involved and decide on the utilisation of the AfricaLics logo.

The ASB may establish relevant committees if deemed necessary. Appointed committees may hold additional meetings in order to fulfil their duties.

The ASB will meet at least once every year. The meeting will normally take place as a face-to-face meeting in conjunction with the AfricaLics Conferences where most ASB members are expected to participate. In the years where there are no AfricaLics conferences, the ASB may meet either back-to-back with the Globelics Conference or in conjunction with another major event. The quorum required for a valid meeting is 50% of the membership of the ASB including the President and/or the Vice-President and Secretary General. If it is not possible to ensure the conduct of a face-to-face meeting with quorum (e.g. due to funding constraints) a virtual meeting may be organised by the Secretariat.

The duties of the ASB’s members are to:

- Participate in the annual board meeting;
- Participate actively in committees created by the ASB;
- Participate actively in the review process for AfricaLics Conferences;
- Participate actively in AfricaLics Conferences e.g. by chairing sessions, acting as discussants on papers or organising thematic panels following agreement between ASB
and the local organisers;
• Assist in fundraising activities, both regarding funds for their own participation in AfricaLics activities and for implementation of network activities in a broader sense.
• Approve membership to the network
• Expel members in case of severe misbehaviour

**Election of the ASB**

Membership of the ASB is personal, honorary and without payment.

To qualify to be nominated as a member of the ASB and to become a member of the ASB, an individual must **as a minimum**:

• Agree with the objectives of AfricaLics and its wider spirit of openness, tolerance and lively intellectual construction;
• Have actively participated in the organisation of at least one AfricaLics conference/academy and have participated actively in one other event either in AfricaLics, Globelics or any of the affiliated regional and national LICS;
• Be active as a scholar/researcher and/or practitioner in the field of innovation and development.

Elections to fill vacancies of the first ASB under the interim constitution will take place prior to the ASB meeting scheduled for October 2019 in Dar es Salaam.

Members of the ASB will hold their post for a term of three years and can renew their position on the board for one additional term. To ensure continuity, a minimum of 1/3 of the members should stay on when new board members are elected.

Where a board member is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Board without justification or prior permission of the President, the position of the member on the Board shall be declared vacant by the Board.

Vacancies on the ASB shall be filled by a simple majority decision of the Board from a list of alternates using electronic voting system. The list shall take into account the region from which the vacancy occurred as well as the need to strive for gender balance in the board. Possibilities for also ensuring representation in terms of language will be considered. The list of alternates will be created by the Secretariat on the basis of nominations received for the vacancies. The Secretariat will announce vacancies in the Board and call for nominations from all/any members of the AfricaLics network at least three months before the next ASB meeting. The Secretariat will develop a short-list of names comprising at least two times the number of people necessary to fill the vacancies following vetting of the names received during the open call using the criteria outlined above.
**AfricaLics President and Vice President Positions**

The President and Vice President of AfricaLics shall be elected by the ASB among its members and by a simple majority of members present and voting in the annual meeting. However, if the number of members present is not considered adequate for election of the President or Vice President, the election may be conducted through written procedure (e-mail and/or electronic voting). The President informs the AfricaLics community about the outcomes of the elections.

All members of the ASB can nominate candidates for the positions. The President and Vice President shall not come from the same country and should preferably also come from two different regions of Africa.

The President must be a scholar that is well respected in the AfricaLics community and has a relevant background in Science, Technology and Innovation studies as a scholar and/or as a practitioner.

The President and Vice President serve honorary functions (without payment).

The post of President and Vice-President is to be a three-year term, with possibility for re-election (can serve a maximum of six years). After a period of six years of service, the President cannot be re-elected during the following six years.

The election of the first President and Vice President under the interim constitution will take place at the 2019 ASB meeting scheduled for October.

If the President or Vice President steps down or has to be replaced due to health reasons, the ASB will elect replacements for these positions based on consultations and consensus through e-mail. If agreement cannot be reached, the AfricaLics Secretariat will organise the voting procedure. The Secretary-General shall on receipt of letter of resignation from the President immediately notify the AfricaLics Scientific Board and arrange for election of a new President.

The functions of the Presidency team (President and Vice-President) are to:

- Act as representatives of AfricaLics;
- Carry out the policies and decisions of the ASB together with the Secretary General;
- Work closely with the Secretary General to prepare discussion documents for the ASB on matters of importance for AfricaLics;
- Prepare and present, together with the Secretary General, an Annual Report on AfricaLics activities to be presented to the ASB and shared with AfricaLics members through the web-site;
- Prepare, along with the Secretary General drafts on changes on the Constitution, at the request of the ASB or by their own initiative, to be submitted to the ASB for consideration.
AfricaLics Secretary General and Secretariat

The AfricaLics Secretary General is chosen by the ASB. The board decides on the election of the Secretary General and the location of the AfricaLics Secretariat on the basis of invited proposals from suitable individuals with institutional backing.

The criteria for election of the AfricaLics Secretary General and location of Secretariat are as follows:

- The AfricaLics Secretary General must be a person with proven leadership, managerial and fund-raising capabilities.
- Secretary General must be a respected scholar or practitioner in the field of Innovation and Development studies research and practice.
- The Secretary General should be supported by an organisation with a legal identity. The organisation should be in good standing and of relevance for the work of the AfricaLics network activities. It could be a university, a think-tank or other type of relevant organisation.
- Organisations offering to host the AfricaLics Secretariat must clarify what resources they are willing and able to make available to run the AfricaLics Secretariat. Such resources could be e.g. in the form of time made available for the Secretary General to work on behalf of the AfricaLics network; support staff for the Secretary General; ability to run the AfricaLics web-site and resources to help organise AfricaLics conferences and PhD academies among others.
- Proposals should include suggestions/plans for fundraising activities for financing core AfricaLics activities and costs related to running the secretariat.

The position of Secretary-General is voluntary and shall normally be compatible with the performance of other duties. Subject to availability of funding, the SG may however receive remuneration on a part time basis for her/his work on behalf of the network.

The AfricaLics Secretary General is the head of the AfricaLics Secretariat that administers AfricaLics. He/she serves a three-year term and is eligible for a maximum of two consecutive terms. In exceptional cases, the ASB may decide to extend his/her term by a third term/another two years. The Secretary General should preferably be able to document institutional support from his/her home institution for this period.

To ensure continuity in AfricaLics activities, the current Secretary General and location of the Secretariat will remain in place until 31st December 2021 or until the current Secretary General is no longer in post.

The Secretary-General shall uphold and protect the Constitution of AfricaLics; provide organisational leadership and direction to AfricaLics; represent AfricaLics in relevant fora; develop fund-raising strategy for AfricaLics for discussion with the ASB and help ensure sustainability of the organisation through multi-year planning of key-events and fundraising for these.
The Secretary General may accept and search for funding from various sources for the purpose of realising the AfricaLics vision and overall objectives in the name of AfricaLics with the approval of the ASB.

The Secretary General takes responsibility for all contractually bound activities of the Secretariat (e.g. receiving, administrating and reporting on use of funds received from funders for the purpose of AfricaLics activities).

In cases where other legal entities raise funds for AfricaLics activities approved by the ASB, the Secretariat may not be involved and, in such cases, will not take responsibility for contracts entered into by the legal entity in question.

The functions of the Secretariat are to:

- Act as representatives of AfricaLics;
- Work together with the ASB to raise funds for AfricaLics activities;
- Keep a close working relationship with the AfricaLics President and Vice-President;
- Jointly prepare with the AfricaLics President and Vice-President issues to be discussed by the ASB;
- Be responsible for preparing and taking minutes of ASB meetings;
- Assure good communication with the AfricaLics community;
- Disseminate information - newsletters, conference announcement, announcements of academies as well as funding options to encourage development of joint research projects among members of the network;
- Support local organisers in organizing and preparing the AfricaLics conferences and academies in collaboration with the ASB;
- Process operational issues regarding the membership application process and indicate results for ASB validation;
- Keep the membership database updated and in line with data protection regulation;
- Facilitate and oversee the election process for vacancies for the first ASB under the Interim Constitution in 2019 and future rounds of elections;
- Maintain relationships with Globelics and other regional and national LICs;
- Coordinate as necessary with the hosting organization of the Secretariat.

Membership of AfricaLics

Members of AfricaLics are expected to be supportive of the goals as they are set out in the preamble above and to act accordingly. They are also expected to take an active part in AfricaLics Conferences and - where relevant - in AfricaLics Academies and participate in other activities of the network. They will eventually elect members of the ASB.

Membership is individual. An individual becomes an automatic member of AfricaLics on attending an AfricaLics event (conference or academy). Anyone who wishes to become a member without attending the conference can apply in writing to the Secretary-General. In such circumstances, the individual will have to complete an application form affirming broad
agreement with AfricaLics aims and objectives. In addition, potential members will be expected to provide relevant personal and academic data. The ASB will make the final decision on the individual’s admission to the network.

Apart from payment of registration fees for conferences, membership of AfricaLics will be free unless agreed otherwise by the ASB.

Duties of the members:

- Support and promote the objectives of AfricaLics
- Promote AfricaLics and its activities and facilitate the execution of the AfricaLics’ activities and programmes in their respective countries and regions
- He/she should endeavour to participate in AfricaLics network activities (conference, academy).
- He/she must respect other members of AfricaLics and diversity of opinion. Members are expected to conduct themselves with integrity and honesty. Agree to abide by the byelaws and constitution of AfricaLics

Members have the right:

- To be included in the list of members on the AfricaLics website;
- To nominate candidates to the ASB;
- To be nominated for the ASB;
- To vote for members of ASB.

Membership does not expire, as long as the member fulfils the requirements for membership. All members will be asked to confirm their personal data once a year.

In case of severe academic misbehaviour or fraudulent or criminal activity (e.g. plagiarism, abuse of funds, etc.) that damages the reputation of AfricaLics, the ASB can decide to expel members.

**Constitution Committee**

In connection with adopting and implementing the constitution, the ASB appoints a Constitution Committee with the following tasks:

a) Overseeing and advising on the election process for those positions that are vacant
b) Advising on what suggestions for changes in the constitution should be considered minor vs. major (e.g. if a change has implications on the rights of the members it is considered a major change)
c) Advising the AfricaLics Secretariat and the ASB on procedures in all matters related to elections and how to interpret and implement the constitution.

The constitution committee is composed of a maximum of 3-6 members and is headed by the AfricaLics President or his/her appointee. For the ordinary members the following applies: they should have substantial experience of AfricaLics activities and be generally trusted in
the community; they cannot be members of the ASB and they should not be candidates for the Board in the next upcoming election. The Secretary General serves as secretary for the constitution committee.

The first Constitution Committee will be appointed during the ASB meeting in October 2019. The committee may be constituted by members of the ASB during the interim period to ensure continuity. They will serve for a period of three years.

Subsequent constitution committees will be elected immediately after the election of a new presidency.

Interim Constitution, Amendments and Revisions

The Interim constitution became valid from the time of its ratification, which took place at the ASB meeting in Ghana in October 2018.

This Interim Constitution will be made available on the AfricaLics web-site. It may be amended by a majority vote of two-thirds of the members of the AfricaLics Board present and voting in an ASB meeting, bearing in mind that decisions in the ASB are normally made on the basis of discussions and mutual consensus.

The ASB will deliberate – at its meeting in Dar es Salaam in October 2019 - on the time line for approval of a final version of the constitution.

Changes to the Constitution

Minor changes to the constitution will require a 2/3 majority of the ASB. Major changes require a 2/3 majority in the ASB and that a majority of ordinary AfricaLics members confirms the change through a network wide vote. The constitution committee - once established - decides if a proposed change falls in one or the other category.

Proposals to modify or review the Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Constitution Committee through the President at least four months before the annual meeting of the ASB.

5. Financial Contributions structure

As AfricaLics is currently not a legal entity, annual subscriptions will not be payable.

Through payment of the Conference Fee (agreed by the ASB), participants in AfricaLics conferences will automatically become members of AfricaLics unless they explicitly inform the Secretariat that they do not wish to become members. Conference fees will, however, be used to fund costs related to the conference in question and will not be transferred to the
hosting organisation of the AfricaLics Secretariat.

Subventions, grants and donations may be accepted by the legal entity hosting the AfricaLics Secretariat on behalf of AfricaLics for purposes that are consistent with the objectives of the AfricaLics under conditions approved by the ASB.

AfricaLics members who are interested in holding an event in collaboration with AfricaLics will be responsible for finding funding for these activities themselves. All activities that are to use the name and logo of AfricaLics must be agreed on by the ASB in writing. No event or activity will be granted retrospective use of the AfricaLics logo or name.