

African Society for Ecological Economics (ASEE): A Proposal for Inauguration

Submitted by ASEE Steering Committee¹

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1 Introduction

Since the 1970s, researchers from various economic, social and natural science domains have sought to formulate new approaches to questions of economic development in response to environmental challenges, increasingly framed as the problems of sustainable development. This new perspective has become known, since the creation of the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE) in 1987, under the name Ecological Economics.

Africa is a continent rich in natural resources (some still in pristine states, some under sustainable management and some rapidly deteriorating) covering a huge area and made up of many peoples, nations and countries with diverse historical, social, economic and cultural experiences, values and norms. Her rich and long history as a cradle of civilizations, conflicts and poverty contextualises the need for sustainable development discourse globally. Among the challenges Africa faces in the 21st century are the two central challenges of sustainable development: to live sustainably from the natural bounty of our environment and at peace with our fellows. There is a strong relationship between the basic interests of sustainability science and a great deal of research and development work going on in Africa. By forming an African Society for Ecological Economics (ASEE), it our aspiration to help codify and strengthen the existing body of Africa based ecological economics related research for the benefit of African countries and peoples and to provide a vehicle to support African researchers in sharing insights on, innovations in, challenges of and opportunities arising from ecological economics research with the wider international ecological economics community. It is envisioned that the ASEE would provide a networking infrastructure for bringing together the wide range of ecological economics oriented research taking place across the continent and would enable African researchers to draw upon Africa's rich and unique institutional, cultural, socio-economic and political histories and diverse value systems in furthering ecological economics research and teaching in Africa and through association with the ISEE, internationally.

With due regard for existing institutional structures and mindful of the international aspects of natural resource management and ecological economics issues, we find it only natural that ASEE should seek to establish itself as the African chapter of the ISEE. We believe the overarching aims of the two organizations: - dedication to advancing understanding of the relationships among socio-economic, cultural, institutional and ecological systems for the mutual well-being of nature and people, are compatible. As with all other regional societies formally affiliated with the ISEE, ASEE would be a non-profit, member-governed organization.

The purpose of the current document is to formally request that the ISEE Board and General Assembly endorse the current initiative as the African Society for Ecological

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Economics (ASEE), constituted upon the general grounds outlined below. The steering committee is firmly committed to ensuring that ASEE gains democratic legitimacy amongst African ecological economists, and with associated institutions in Africa, and will continue to strive to achieve this goal. However, we also recognize that the success the ASEE initiative depends upon the good will and support of ISEE and her existing regional societies. We believe that gaining a formal recognition by ISEE, would facilitate the committee's access to colleagues in Africa and in other regions where ISEE already holds chapters.

We therefore present the following proposals requesting the ISEE Board to present the ASEE initiative to the ISEE 8th biennial General Assembly for formal recognition as the African Society for ecological economics (ASEE) on the conditions specified below.

1.1 ASEE: A Society for Ecological Economics in, for and from Africa

ISEE supports the efforts of an expanding number of regional societies of ecological economics: Australia-New Zealand Society for Ecological Economics.(ANZSEE); Asociación Argentino Uruguay de Economía Ecológica (ASAUEE); Canadian Society for Ecological Economics (CANSEE); Brazilian Society for Ecological Economics (ECOECO – Brazil); European Society for Ecological Economics (ESEE); Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE); Russian Society for Ecological Economics (RSEE); and United States Society for Ecological Economics (USSEE). There is also a non-affiliated Chinese Ecological Economics Society. Discussions on the initiation of a Meso-American, Peruvian and Korean regional societies of ecological economics are on-going.

These regional chapters of ecological economics play vital roles in framing and forming the sustainable development agenda in their respective regions, continents and globally. Each chapter applies peculiar institutional, social, economic, cultural and historical experiences to explore what ways, and to what degrees the socioeconomic objectives traditionally associated with growth (within their region) can be reconciled with concerns for environmental quality and preoccupations with social justice and variety of cultural forms unique to their regions. By participating actively in ISEE activities, these regional societies contribute to and benefit from the synergies that the inter-regional and international networks within ISEE provide.

By formally affiliating as a regional ISEE chapter, ASEE will be able to link up with the international ecological economics community, opening up channels to support better international understanding and appreciation of the diverse social, economic, and biophysical aspects of sustainable resource management in Africa. ASEE will also provide a forum for African institutions (formal and informal), policy makers and researchers within the continent to add their voice to the debates that frame and form the global development agenda. Central to the ecological economics agenda is moving beyond the simple recognition of biophysical limits to economic growth (as in Environmental

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Economics), in order to explore how, in what ways, and to what degrees the socioeconomic objectives traditionally associated with growth can be reconciled with concerns for environmental quality and preoccupations with social justice and variety of cultural forms. The infusion of the African social dimension, including her institutional, social, political and cultural diversity and intra-generational preoccupations with “building social networks” and plural values into ecological-economic analyses and global sustainability agenda is therefore central to this initiative. Membership to ASEE would therefore span many different disciplines and fields of experience: opening up channels for co-operation between the various sciences concerned with aspects of the economy and ecology of human societies to each other’s insights and analytical techniques. Bringing African scholars contributions on these questions together, through an African society for ecological economics and the resulting discourse can improve the quality of sustainability science in Africa and globally.

1.2 A Brief History of the ASEE Initiative

It is important to note that the current ASEE initiative is a continuation of earlier efforts undertaken to establish sub-regional societies for ecological economics in Africa. In taking forward the current initiative, we view previous efforts as part of a necessarily iterative process, without which it could never have been possible to come to where we stand today. Several networks of scholars working in ecological economics oriented research have been taking shape across the continent within the past decade. The ASEE committee has been contacting these ecological economics associated networks in Africa to ensure continuity between these efforts and the current initiative¹. A brief outline of how the earlier efforts fed into the current proposal and our strategy for maintaining that continuity into the future is discussed below.

At the 7th biennial ISEE meeting in Sousse, Tunisia in March 2002 Ms Mogkadi Monamati and Ms Katharine Farrell met and along with other colleagues interested in Africa based research they began to discuss the possibility of establishing a South African Society for Ecological Economics (SASEE). Both Ms Monamati and Ms Farrell had worked with Dr Glenn-Marie Lange and they were joined in their deliberations by another student of Dr Lange’s from Namibia and a colleague from Mauritania. While they had been able to secure a small amount of funding, no institutional host was identified to receive the funds and the initiative remained largely at the level of email discussions.

The current iteration of this ongoing ASEE initiative was first presented to Prof. John Proops (then the ISEE president) by Dr. Kevin Urama at the Frontiers 2 ESEE conference in Tenerife, Spain (February, 2003). Dr Urama also met Ms Farrell at the Frontiers 2

¹ We recognise that the work of identifying and liaising with existing institutions will be an on-going process.

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conference at which time Ms Farrell told Dr Urama about her discussions with Ms Monamati in Sousse and about their efforts toward establishing African Societ(ies), perhaps beginning with a Southern African society (SASEE). Dr. Urama's discussions with Prof. Proops included reference to the initiative from Sousse and Prof Proops encouraged Dr. Urama to take the lead in contacting colleagues from the Tunisia conference and others to co-ordinate renewed efforts to form an African Society for Ecological Economics. Following this discussion, Dr. Urama, Prof. Spash, Ms. Farrell and Ms. Monamati continued to make contacts with relevant individuals and institutions in Africa to elicit interest in the society and also to continue to seek further funding for initiating the society². Dr. Glenn-Marie Lange of the Center for Economy, Environment and Society Columbia University, New York, New York also participated in this process.

In the process of eliciting interests in the formation of ASEE, we found that similar discussions were taking place among other African ecological economists at other conferences in tandem to the Tunisia and Tenerife initiatives. We received positive responses to the proposal from colleagues that we have been able to contact so far. These efforts following on from the Tenerife conference led to the formation of a steering committee (hereafter referred to as ASEE steering committee). Several e-meetings and phone discussions followed, leading to the first full meeting of the current ASEE steering committee, held in the Macaulay Institute, Craigiebuckler, Aberdeen, UK on the 25th of March 2004. Delegates from some leading institutions in the western, southern, northern and eastern regions of Africa; delegates from the European Society for Ecological Economics (ESEE) board; and the ISEE President participated in the steering committee meeting, the minutes of which are attached as ANNEX II³. It was at the meeting of 25th March, 2004, that the steering committee decided to propose ASEE for inauguration at the ISEE Montreal conference. The steering committee has worked together to develop this proposal.

In the next sections, the proposal sets out what we envision as the aims and objectives of ASEE, a provisional organisational structure and rationale for inauguration at this time. The visions for the future and plans for integration with other regional chapters of the society are also discussed.

1.3 *Rationale for establishing ASEE*

As noted above, Africa is a continent rich in natural and social capita but among the economically poor continents in the world. Africa's natural resources are fast depleting due partly to economic poverty and the struggle by African nations to grow their economies. For instance, Scherr (1999) reports that 65% of agricultural crop land and 31% of permanent pasture in Africa are estimated to be degraded with 19% of all land

² Names and addresses of individuals and institutions that have indicated their interest in joining ASEE are provided in ANNEX 1.

³ The steering committee meeting was funded by the Macaulay Development Trust and a Donor from Ireland, and we would take this opportunity to thank them again for their support.

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‘seriously degraded’. The experiences of the industrialised world suggest that growing per capita incomes does not necessarily translate to improved human well-being. Paradoxically, time series data from social surveys suggest that income growth in the years since World War II has not been matched by commensurate gains in life satisfaction in the world’s most affluent nations (Easterlin, 1974; Oswald, 1997). On the other hand, scholars reaching back to Aristotle through to Georgescu-Roegen and up to the authors of this proposal have argued that the economic system, the socio-political system and the bio-physical (natural) systems are not mutually exclusive. Instead, a strong nexus exists between the three forms of capital due to the non-linearities and multiple feedback mechanisms between the system components, defining the dilemma that “the sustainability agenda” presents, especially to the developing world. Following Serageldin, (1993, p.6) we argued that “keeping the poor in their misery, while protecting the environment,..., is not sustainable development”. Yet productivity boosting technologies that seek to alleviate poverty “asset strip” the natural systems of their capacity to sustain growth, and hence are not sustainable.

The dilemma presented, when we pose the question as a trade-off between poverty alleviation and ecosystem sustainability, is aptly described by Richard Norgaard:

“Correcting the unsustainability of development is not simply a matter of choosing different technologies for intervening in the environment. The mechanisms of perceiving, choosing, and using technologies are embedded in social structures which are themselves products of modern technologies” (Norgaard 1994, p. 29).

“...the dilemma is symptomatic of a larger problem, how economics and public discourse have coevolved in a particularly dishonest and morally vacuous way. Now I ask why the choice is between the peasant and the forest that our descendants might need? Where are the people driving BMWs today, or even those driving Fords, in this myth? Why is it that we have these debates between rich environmentalists and rich developmentalists over moral dilemmas where the rich themselves are absent?”(ISEE Presidential Address India 1998)

These questions form the context for the ongoing initiative to form an African Society for Ecological Economics. Ecological economics research questions are context-specific and models developed in one region may not provide sustainable solutions for other regions. ASEE will provide a forum to engage Africans (including the poor, rich, policy makers, and researchers) in framing and forming sustainable development agendas in their respective regions, continents and globally by sharing knowledge with existing regional chapters of ISEE. ASEE will seek to apply peculiar institutional, social, economic, cultural and historical experiences in the different regions of Africa to explore ways through which poverty alleviation strategies can be reconciled with concerns for

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environmental quality and preoccupations with social justice and variety of cultural forms unique to their regions.

1.4 Strategy for establishing ASEE

As should by now be clear, the challenges of establishing ASEE are significant. We, the steering committee are very encouraged by the response we are receiving from colleagues throughout Africa and believe that the initiative now has enough momentum to bring the society to formal inauguration. To consolidate all the work that has been invested so far, in the current and in earlier iterations of this initiative, we wish to take the opportunity of the 8th Biennial conferences of ISEE in Montreal, 11 – 14 July 2004, to propose the formal recognition of ASEE as the African society for ecological economics by ISEE general assembly. To set in motion the processes necessary to secure ownership of this initiative by African ecological economists and for the ASEE in good time to effect formal affiliation as a regional society of the ISEE, we hereby request the ISEE board to:

1. Formally present the ASEE initiative to the ISEE general assembly at the 8th Biennial conferences of ISEE in Montreal, 11 – 14 July 2004,
2. Permit the first general meeting of ASEE during the ISEE –Montreal conference. The aim of the first general meeting of ASEE members during the ISEE- Montreal conference will be to:
 - a. elect an interim committee for ASEE⁴. The eligibility to vote for interim committee membership and the remit of the interim committee is specified in section 3.1 of this proposal document,
 - b. discuss and approve the draft constitution for ASEE and agree on a suitable African state for formal incorporation of ASEE,
 - c. discuss the process towards the convening of an ASEE Ordinary General Assembly (AOGM) in Africa after formal incorporation in 2005, and
 - d. nominate membership to the ASEE Advisory Committee (AAC)⁵.

For the purposes of the current document it is important to note that the draft constitution reflects the contribution of the steering committee to an ongoing process, which is intended to lead, in the very near future, to the formal incorporation of the ASEE in an African state, as may be agreed at the meeting in Montreal. On that basis, the following

⁴ Attendance at this meeting will be open to all ISEE conference participants with a right of residence in Africa, to additional invited participants and to other interested parties, upon request, at the final discretion of the steering committee.

⁵ The eligibility for membership and role of the ASEE Advisory committee are specified in section 3.3 of this proposal document.

aims and organizational structures are presented as reflecting the overall spirit of the initiative as we find it at present, while final details and matters of technical, legal and practical logistics are expected to subject to further discussion and revision.

2 Proposed Aims of ASEE

The primary aim of ASEE is to advance understanding of the relationships among socio-economic, cultural, institutional and ecological systems within the continent (and globally) for the mutual well-being of nature and people. ASEE would provide opportunities for members to apply the peculiar institutional, social, economic, cultural and historical experiences of Africa to explore what ways, and to what degrees the socioeconomic objectives traditionally associated with growth can be reconciled with concerns for environmental quality and preoccupations with poverty alleviation, social justice and variety of cultural forms.

The specific aims of the ASEE are to:

1. Foster trans-disciplinary discourse and research among the social and natural sciences regarding problems of poverty alleviation, nature and environment interactions. Emphasis will be placed on how to manage African natural resources to improve sustainable livelihoods for humans and their ecosystem support structures.
2. Promote initiatives to bridge the gaps between science, policy and the people. Research aimed at learning from Africa's participatory culture will be encouraged to foster social inclusion in policy governance within the continent.
3. Produce and disseminate information on policies for sustainability locally, nationally, and globally through electronic, printed, oral and other publication means (e.g. newsletters, policy briefs, journals and books).
4. Provide an African network for activities in ecological economics.
5. Promote education, graduate research and research funding in ecological economics within Africa and by Africans studying and teaching outside Africa, through the inter-regional and international networks which membership to ISEE provides.
6. Be a chapter of ISEE which is open to all disciplines, policy makers and the public with the common goal of identifying, achieving and supporting the continuation of sustainable livelihoods in Africa.

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3 Proposed Organizational Structure of ASEE

As indicated above, it is the intention of the steering committee and of all members of the ASEE initiative that the society be member-governed through a democratically elected Board. Having given considerable thought to the special challenges of coordinating a pan-African society through a democratically robust structure, we are proposing that the ASEE Board election procedures take place through a federated structure and that, in addition to a democratically elected Board, the society would also have a democratically elected executive committee and an Advisory Committee appointed by the board.

3.1 *Board membership*

The democratically elected board shall comprise:

- A President,
- Two Vice Presidents,
- A General Secretary,
- A Treasurer,
- A Newsletter Editor, and
- A Web Manager.

The posts of President, Vice President, General Secretary, and Treasurer shall rotate among the four sub-regions of Africa: Western, Eastern, Southern and Northern regions in a sequence determined by the serving board members. Only individuals who are democratically elected as regional representative by members of the society within their own regions shall qualify to stand for these posts. Each sub-region shall elect regional representatives in the year preceding the general elections. In other words, only the actively serving regional representatives shall be eligible for nominations to stand for these positions in subsequent general elections. In turn active members of the society within each region shall democratically elect the regional coordinators. In this way, ASEE would ensure that each sub-region is represented in the board each term, and in turn, that the regional representative represents the interest of members within each region. All nationals of the same region shall qualify to stand for any of these positions when it is the sub-region's turn to stand, or at any such time that the board states otherwise.

The steering committee recognizes that the aim to ensure regional representation may prove logistically and operationally challenging. Finding suitable regional candidates will be a responsibility of the board, the committee and the regionally elected representatives. Provision for potential shortfalls in suitable available candidates from one or another

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region will be a matter requiring the attention of the Interim Committee and the first general meeting to be held in Montreal.

As noted in section 1.4 of this proposal document, election of an Interim Committee will take place during the specially convened general meeting to be arranged at the 8th biennial ISEE conference in Montreal 11-14 July 2004 as per section 1.4 of this proposal document. This meeting will be open to: those individuals in attendance at the 8th biennial ISEE conference in Montreal holding a right of residence in Africa; other individuals invited by the steering committee to attend; other individuals petitioning the steering committee, who upon review by the steering committee are permitted to attend and proxy representation for individuals with right of residence in Africa wishing to attend but unable to do so. Proxy holding shall be limited to two proxies, in addition to the own vote of any given participant and demonstration of right of residence of the proxied vote may be required. The remit of the Interim Committee elected in Montreal shall be to:

- Continue to publicize the society to ensure wider participation from all regions of the continent;
- Coordinate and lead final review of logistical, legal and technical matters relating to:
 - governance structures,
 - terms and conditions for incorporating the society in an agreed African state, and
 - effecting formal legal affiliation to ISEE as a regional chapter.
- Finalize arrangement for the legal incorporation of the society in an agreed African state by 2005,
- Plan for the first ordinary general assembly of the society, following formal incorporation, in 2005,
- Organize a formal election of ASEE board and committee members during the first ASEE ordinary general meeting (AOGM) in 2005.
- Finalize processes to affiliate ASEE as a regional society of ISEE subject to the above.

3.2 Committee membership

The procedure for election of the committee members will be decided by the board or by the first General Assembly of the ASEE, as part of the formal terms of constitution of the society. The committee members who will serve under the board would include:

- Conference & meetings committee,
- Fund raising & membership committee,
- Publications and publicity committee,

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- Education committee, and
- Research and policy advocacy committee.

3.3 *Advisory Committee*

The Advisory committee shall comprise experts in the field of ecological economics who are not eligible to join ASEE on the basis of a right of residence in an African country and are nominated by the ASEE board to provide guidance and advice to the board. Such experts must have active research interest in Africa and be active members of ISEE. Members of ASEE shall nominate potential candidates for the Advisory committee at the meeting in Montreal, and authorize the elected interim committee to approach nominated candidates for confirmation of availability to serve. The size of this advisory committee shall be limited and the number shall be decided by the Interim Committee or the General Assembly as part of the terms of constitution of the society.

3.4 *ASEE Membership Structure*

Wishing to ensure due regard for the existing networks of ecological economists operating throughout Africa and mindful of the size and diversity of the continent, we propose that ASEE's membership structure should include institutional memberships in addition to individual memberships. We anticipate that these institutional memberships will be of a different order and character, serving to ensure good coordination of existing networks and good relations between ASEE and existing associations with similar aims and objectives. On this basis, we do not envision that institutional memberships would serve as federated chapter affiliations and would therefore anticipate that individual members of other associations would need to join ASEE directly in order to receive the benefits of full membership in the Society. As with regard to the governance structures, the following membership terms are proposed, subject to review by the first general meeting in Montreal in July and the General Assembly meeting to be held in 2005.

Regarding the fee structure for membership in the society, recognizing that a zero membership fee is not sustainable but nonetheless cognizant that such a fee may be in the best interest of ASEE in its earliest stages of formal incorporation, the steering committee propose that there shall be a zero membership fee for 2004, and 2005 with a positive membership fee structure to take effect starting from July 2006. This fee structure shall be agreed by the general assembly at the first Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) of the Members of the Association, which we, the steering committee, anticipate will take place in 2005 at a venue and date to be arranged by the Interim Committee.

For the purpose of this proposal, *Association*: shall mean "The African Society for Ecological Economics" (also known as the "ASEE) and *membership* shall mean individuals or institutions who formally enrol as members to the association. ASEE membership shall comprise the following categories:

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Active Individual Members: shall mean those individuals who pay an annual subscription to the Association. All Active Members shall also be members of the ISEE. The membership fees and structure shall be as defined by the ASEE board. To be eligible to subscribe as an active individual member, the prospective individual must have a right of residence in an African country at the time of application. Africans in diaspora who have right of residence in an African country shall qualify for active membership, unless otherwise decided by the ASEE Board. Similarly, individuals from other continents who have a right of residence in Africa shall qualify for active membership. *Active Individual Membership to ASEE* shall be free until July 2006. We, the steering committee, note that our wish to provide membership privileges to Africans in Diaspora raises problems for ISEE membership structure, concerning individuals resident in full fee paying regions but with right of residence in Africa and this matter will be placed before the Interim Committee and the General Assembly in the context of terms and conditions of constituting the society.

Active Student Members: shall mean those individuals who are enrolled at least half time in higher education who pay an annual subscription to the Association. All Active Student Members shall also be members of the ISEE.

Student Members: shall mean those individuals who are enrolled at least half time in higher education, and are given dispensation from paying membership fees to the Association.

Active Institutional Members shall mean those organisations, bodies or businesses approved by the Board, which pay an annual subscription to the Association. Institutional membership shall not confer ASEE membership to individuals who belong to member institutions. Such individuals shall be required to pay appropriate subscription fees to become *Active Individual Members*

Honorary Members: shall mean those individuals proposed by the Board and approved by the Members at an OGM. Honorary Members are exempt from all requirements to pay subscriptions but otherwise have the same status as Active Members.

Life Members: shall mean those individuals or organizations who qualify as Active Members but who pay a lifetime subscription fee.

Members: shall mean the Active Members, Active Student Members, Honorary Members, Life Members and Institutional Members of the Association from time to time.

4 Services to be Provided to Members

Membership to ASEE shall have all the rights that accrue to members of the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE). Such services provided by ISEE to members include:

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1. ISEE provides service for fee management, where all membership fees are paid through the ISEE and then re-allocated, through ISEE to the regional societies. This means that membership to ASEE translates to membership of ISEE.
2. Members of ASEE shall be entitled to discounted subscription to the journal *Ecological Economics*.
3. ISEE can stimulate and support research and training programmes, provide access to resources to facilitate capacity building for members of ASEE where this is identified by ASEE as priorities.
4. Membership to ISEE provides strong links between the international society members and regional societies members and programmes. In this way, ISEE and other regional chapters shall complement the work of ASEE. This will offer members of ASEE the opportunity to share knowledge with members of the international society and her regional chapters listed above. The benefits to ASEE members and African Policy Makers of the synergies that the networking opportunities that ISEE provides cannot be over emphasised.

In addition to these services that membership to ASEE provides through the international society, ASEE shall also:

1. **Provide opportunities for policy relevant ecological economics research for African development:** ASEE shall provide opportunity for ASEE members to pursue cutting edge research and training programmes that are designed to focus on African policy questions. For instance, while “sustainable consumption” is the focus of environmental policies in the industrialised nations, choosing sustainable development paths (i.e. how to alleviate poverty in a manner that does not “asset strip” the ecosystem of the capacity to support human and ecosystem well-being) might be the relevant question for African ecological economists. ASEE shall provide an opportunity for African researchers to apply the diverse and unique institutional frameworks, culture, social norms, attitudes and beliefs, behaviour and experiences to ecological economics research and training in Africa.
2. **Capacity building and research networking** - ASEE shall provide opportunity for capacity building and research collaborations in the following ways:
 - ASEE shall create a web-based database of ecological economics research, training and jobs going on within the continent, by members in diaspora and other relevant international institutions. New calls for proposals and available research funding opportunities will also be posted to the database to which ASEE members will have access. This will help to bridge the information gap

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that hinders the progress of ecological economics research and training in the continent.

- ASEE shall identify and liaise with African institutions that already offer courses in ecological economics or related subjects (e.g. Environmental Economics, Ecological Economics, Natural resources Management, Agricultural Economics, Economic Policy and Governance, Applied Economics, Environmental Management, Environmental Science, Culture and Society etc) to foster ecological economics teaching,
- ASEE shall identify and liaise with foreign institutions of international excellence in ecological economics and that are willing to build links with African institutions for the development of ecological economics teaching and research in Africa.
- ASEE shall seek to introduce, support and strengthen ecological economics teaching and research in partner institutions in Africa.
- ASEE shall initiate and inform policy debate on ecosystem management in Africa: public forums, stakeholder workshops, policy appraisal workshops etc.
- ASEE shall provide support to members and policy makers networking to research into and implement sustainable development policies in Africa through journal publications, books, research papers, conference proceedings, policy briefs, and newsletters.
- ASEE shall seek to engage the public in policy making via public participation programmes, participatory education at local levels, organising public forums to close the gaps between scientists and policy makers and in-turn between the former and the public.
- ASEE shall also support members' research and teaching efforts through biennial conferences to improve networking and knowledge sharing between African researchers, policy makers and the public.

5 Meetings and Conferences

To achieve the goals stated as per the above, ASEE will hold biennial regional conferences on odd years to avoid conflict with ISEE conferences and encourage international participation. To encourage wide coverage of the vast nations in Africa, the biennial conferences shall rotate among the four regions as per above. The proposed venues for three consecutive conferences shall be fixed upon following on from each OGM [the one coming up, the next in preparation and knowing who and where the one after that will take place].

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6 Partnership and Relationship with other Organisations

Following formal incorporation as a legal entity in Africa, we envision that ASEE shall then seek to be fully integrated with the international and with other regional societies for ecological economics. In order to facilitate this process, ASEE shall adopt, from the outset, a membership management structure that is amenable to the terms and conditions of the ISEE structure and, upon formally affiliating with the ISEE where all membership fees are paid through the ISEE and then re-allocated, through ISEE to the regional societies. This means that membership to ASEE translates to membership of ISEE.

A draft constitution to be presented to the first ASEE ordinary general assembly (OGM) for discussion is attached as ANNEX III.

7 Conclusion

The ASEE initiative is predicated upon the desire to create a mechanism by which Africa, as a region, develops the capacity to fully engage in local and international dialogues in ecological economics. Such dialogue is increasingly informing policy formulation and implementation not only in continents where regional societies of ecological economics already exist, but globally. The evolvement of ecological economics as a discipline and the involvement of ecological economists in national, regional and international policy dialogue have facilitated a holistic perspective on global environmental sustainability, especially in regions where regional chapters exist. The formation of ASEE, like other regional chapters, is a realisation that the world is not a homogenous entity but a heterogeneous one with salient regional contexts and specifics. In issues of ecosystem sustainability, Africa is unique historically, culturally, socially, politically, ethically and morally. Africa and African researchers have unique potentials that are yet to be maximized. Regional chapters of ISEE now exist in many developed regions of the world (Europe, America, Australia, Canada etc). ASEE, like other regional chapters in the developing regions of the world, seeks to address the dilemma expressed by Richard Norgaard in 1998, by giving a voice to the silent on the issues that affects their development locally and globally.

It is the firm belief of ASEE steering committee that Africa has a lot to share with the international and regional societies of ecological economics. We believe ASEE is long overdue, particularly given the rapid process of globalisation, which is forcing regional alliances and co-operation on many frontiers. The neo-classical economics paradigm still dominates economic policy discourses in most African countries due partly to lack of alternative coordinated voices and / or the focus on poverty alleviation in growing economies. ASEE is the best platform to achieving effective knowledge sharing on the ecological economics agenda among African researchers and African researchers and

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researchers from other regions of the world. This will provide a forum for a better understanding and appreciation of the diverse social, economic, and bio-physical aspects of sustainable resource management in Africa and will make for a more robust, relevant and representative international discourse on ecological economics.

It is the desire of steering committee to have ASEE inaugurated at the 8th Biennial Scientific Conference of the International Society for Ecological Economics (ISEE), 11 – 14 July 2004, Montreal, Canada and formally incorporated in an African state and affiliated as a regional society within the next year.

ANNEX I: LIST OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS

Dr. Kevin Chika Urama, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Socio-Economic Research Programme (SERP), Macaulay Institute, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Professor Clive Spash, President of the European Society for Ecological Economics (ESEE), Head of Programme, Socio-Economic Research Programme (SERP), Macaulay Institute, Aberdeen, Scotland. Research Chair in Environmental & Resource Economics, Dept of Geography & Environment, University of Aberdeen.

Prof Rashid Hassan, Director, Centre for Environmental Economics and Policy in Africa, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Ms. Katharine N Farrell, PhD Candidate, Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research, Queens University Belfast, Northern Ireland

Ms. Mogkadi Monamati, Environmental Economist, National Conservation Strategy Agency (NCSA), Botswana.

Dr. Osita Ogbu, Executive Director, African Technology Policy Studies Network, Nairobi, Kenya

Dr. Eric Mungatana, Post Doctoral Fellow, Centre for Environmental Economics and Policy in Africa, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Dr. Eric Eboh, Executive Director, African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE), Enugu State, Nigeria.

Mr. Naoufel Mzoughi, Ph.D. Student in Economics, Université de Bourgogne, France.

Dr. O J Ebohon, Reader on Energy, Sustainability, and Development, & Director, Developing World Built Environment Research Unit, School of Architecture, De Montfort University, UK

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Dr. Jekwu Anthony Ikeme, Post-Doctoral Associate, De Montfort University, UK

Mr. Divine Ikenwilo, Research Fellow, Health Economics Research Unit, School of Medicine, University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

Dr. Ayele Gelan, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Socio-Economic Research Programme (SERP), Macaulay Institute, Aberdeen, Scotland

Ms. Rosemary Okoli, Ford International Fellow, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Mr. Kenneth Nwokoro, Arkleton Centre for Rural Research, University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

Ms Chahira Nouira, Universite du centre, Institut Superieur de Gestion de Sousse, Tunisia.

Faouzia Ben Joud, Universite du centre, Faculte de Droit et des Sciences Economique et Politique de Sousse, Tunisia.

Professor Francis Nyamnjio, Head of Publications and Communications, CODESSRIA, Avenue Chiekh Anta Diop, Dakar - Senegal

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Dr B. C. Arimah, Depart of Geography and Environment, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica

ANNEX II: MINUTES OF THE ASEE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE MACAULAY INSTITUTE, CRAIGIEBUCKLER, ABERDEEN, UK.

Insert the minutes of the Steering Committee meeting, here.

ANNEX III: Proposed ASEE Constitution

Insert Draft Constitution here

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