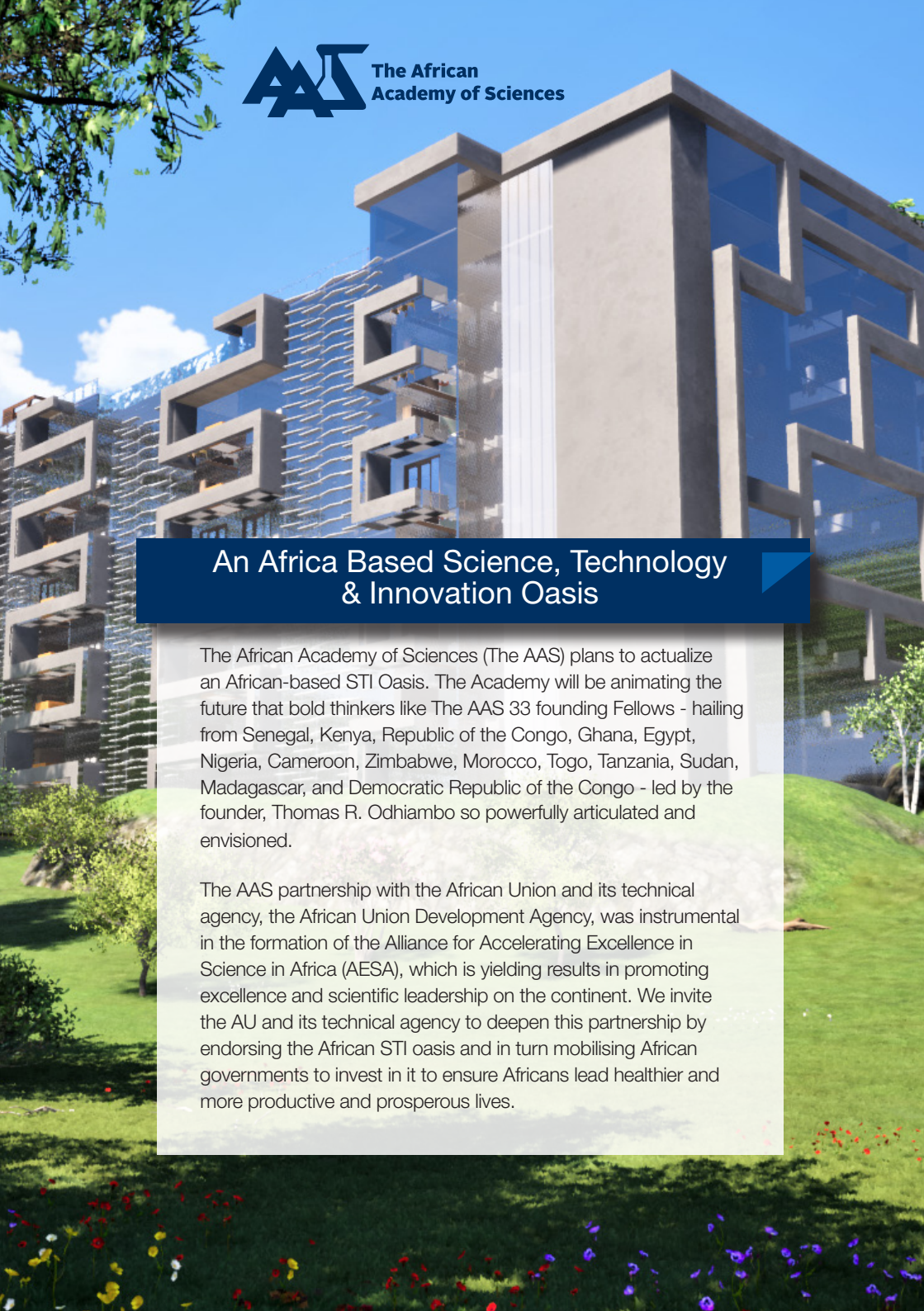
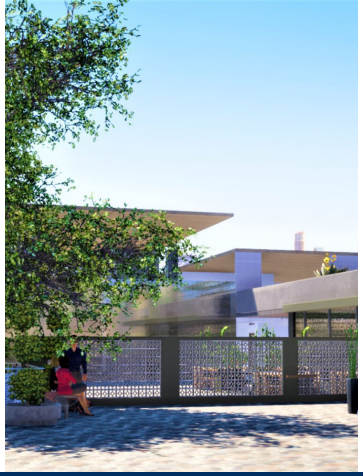


The African Academy of Sciences

An Africa Based Science, Technology & Innovation Oasis

The African Academy of Sciences (The AAS) plans to actualize an African-based STI Oasis. The Academy will be animating the future that bold thinkers like The AAS 33 founding Fellows - hailing from Senegal, Kenya, Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Egypt, Nigeria, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Morocco, Togo, Tanzania, Sudan, Madagascar, and Democratic Republic of the Congo - led by the founder, Thomas R. Odhiambo so powerfully articulated and envisioned.

The AAS partnership with the African Union and its technical agency, the African Union Development Agency, was instrumental in the formation of the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA), which is yielding results in promoting excellence and scientific leadership on the continent. We invite the AU and its technical agency to deepen this partnership by endorsing the African STI oasis and in turn mobilising African governments to invest in it to ensure Africans lead healthier and more productive and prosperous lives.


The AAS emerges from its chrysalis

The AAS is a pan-African organization headquartered in East Africa's STI command center, Kenya's capital city of Nairobi. The city's name is derived from a Maasai phrase meaning "cool water"; the capital is also referred to as the "Green City in the Sun." With those references to water, foliage and solar energy, it's no wonder that Nairobi's reputation as a technology and sustainability mecca is expanding globally.

But long before entering the technology sphere, Kenya like its fellow African nations was producing some of the finest scientific research on the continent. The Academy itself was founded in 1985 following a proposal presented by renowned Kenyan Entomologist Thomas Odhiambo at the inaugural meeting of The World Academy of Sciences in Trieste, Italy. Odhiambo led a taskforce on the creation of The Academy, which presented its recommendations at a meeting convened on 10 December 1985. Participants at the meeting unanimously adopted the recommendations, turned the gathering into a General Assembly and drafted as well as adopted the Academy's founding constitution, the 33 participants who attended the General Assembly became The AAS founding fellows.

The Academy has over the years developed and implemented science strategies focused on forestry research, biotechnology, healthcare and human well-being, soil and water management, improved food production and policy and advocacy. In 1988, The AAS launched its landmark journal, *Discovery and Innovation*, which focused on all areas of science and ran for more than two decades.

The Academy's vision is transformed lives in Africa through science. It has a three-part goal of pursuing excellence by recognizing scholars and achievers; providing advisory and think tank functions for shaping the continent's strategies and policies; and implementing key STI programs that can tackle developmental challenges.

Though a sturdy, collaborative foundation of partnerships involving a broad tier of multinational governments, corporations and philanthropies was established, the early years of The AAS were marked by a degree of stasis. The organization has endured periods of plenty and inertia, but after 30 plus years, adolescent awkwardness has fallen away, replaced by a robust level of maturity and self-awareness.

"The African Academy of Sciences has emerged from its chrysalis as a full-throated entity, ready to elevate the African-centred mandate of continent-created and propagated research to its rightful place in the global scientific pantheon"

Sustaining science in Africa: An African-based STI Oasis

The Academy's physical locale - is close enough to the epicenter of business, creativity and policy flowing through Kenya's capital, but separated by the serenity and tranquility of greenery, rolling terrain, fresh air and a flowing river that are the perfect setting for ideas and collaborations to germinate and flourish.

The plans for an expanded campus for The AAS were influenced by experiences from existing international science and innovation hubs such as the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center on Lake Como in Northern Italy, and South Africa's Stellenbosch University's Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS). These institutions have created incredibly dynamic microcosms where researchers, policy makers, artists, scholars, authors, et al have convened to nurture ideas and challenge their colleagues to push beyond seeming barriers.

At The AAS, the springboard for a parallel center is already in place. With the input of staff, consultants and key stakeholders, the engaged architectural firm has created a masterful blueprint for the ultimate pan-African STI Hub.

The expanded Academy campus would be ecologically sustainable, a place where recycling, solar energy and organic sustenance would prevail. Its futuristic design approach incorporates technologically-advanced buildings that could ably support state-of-the-art data generation and collation. That feature could ignite the fields of science covering, but not limited to, space, humanities, medical, policy, engineering, geological etc. that provide African governments with the trust-worthy, locally-relevant evidence needed to yield game-changing financial and philanthropic funding commitments from within borders.

Sleek modern indoor workspaces embedded in airy, light-filled, open plan offices would encourage a culture of relaxed engagement, where Academy fellows, visiting researchers and renowned scientists alike would feel a genuine sense of ownership.

World-class acoustic treatment would ensure that every voice resonates.

Such keen attention to environment could revolutionize the meaning of the term “learning spaces” in the African context when interaction with the environment through a long walk along the river, a strategy session in a garden or a hike along verdant trails would foster genial collaboration.

But woven in this idyllic setting is the framework for a revenue-generating arm that could bolster the Academy’s independence and dynamic functioning. That’s because the proposed new campus also includes lodging accommodation for 300 people, situated near a conference center that would attract stakeholders and collaborators from the region and from abroad. As each phase of the complex is completed, they will yield amenities including an exhibition space and an outdoor entertainment venue. All these facets could generate significant income that could reduce the need to look outward for operational funding, and potentially eliminate serious disruptions to African research’s growing eminence in climate change, agriculture and biosciences.

Those scenarios are not just pipe dreams. They are the future of The AAS, as the organisation strives to help burnish Africa’s healthy, thriving future.

The African Academy of Sciences

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