

**CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF  
ECOLOGISTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS  
(Amended March 2000)**

**1. NAME AND OBJECTIVES**

- 1.1 The name of the Institute shall be “The Southern African Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Scientists”.
- 1.2 The Institute is a body of Professional Members, Associate Members and Student Members and is established for the advancement of the science and practice of ecology and environmental science (encompassing both natural and non natural sciences), to represent ecologists and environmental scientists, to promote their interests and to uphold the status of the profession of ecology and environmental science.
- 1.3 For purposes of the registration of professional scientists, the Institute is centred in the Republic of South Africa. However, in all other respects it is dedicated to serving the needs of all professional ecologists and environmental scientists equally across political boundaries in Southern Africa.

**2. DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 Ecology is essentially a multidisciplinary science concerned with the relationship between organisms and between organisms and their environment, in which the emphasis may be on whole organisms populations, communities or ecosystems.
- 2.2 An ecologist is someone who has received an appropriate comprehensive training and has experience in biological studies and the analysis of the responses of organisms to the environment and to each other.
- 2.3 Environmental science is a multidisciplinary science concerned with the understanding and management of the interactions between the natural environment and the activities of environment and human activities, in which emphasis is placed on sustainable development.

- 2.4 An Environmental Scientist is someone who has received an appropriate multidisciplinary training covering both the natural and human environment, and has experience in environmental management, environmental assessment and related studies.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- 3.1 There shall be the following categories of member, each of which has to comply with the criteria set out in 3.2

3.1.1 Professional member

3.1.2 Associate member

3.1.3 Student member

#### 3.2 Eligibility criteria

- 3.2.1 The criterion for “Professional Membership” shall be:

Academic Qualifications: At least an honours degree (or equivalent) in an appropriate discipline, and a further postgraduate degree in ecology, environmental science, or equivalent, which has been examined and passed.

AND

Professional Experience: A minimum of three years professional experience as a practising ecologist or environmental scientist attested to by at least two professional members in good standing with the Institute.

- 3.2.2 The criterion for “Associate Member” shall be any person interested in the objectives of the SAIE&ES, who has partially met the requirements for Professional Membership of the SAIE&ES, and who pays the Associate Membership fee.

- 3.2.3 The criterion for “Student Membership” shall be any bona fide student interested in the objectives of the SAIE&ES who pays the student membership fee.

#### **4. CAPACITY**

- 4.1 The Institute shall be an association capable of suing and being sued under its corporate name and of performing all acts which are necessary for, or incidental to, the achievement of its aims.
- 4.2 No profits or gains shall be distributed to any person and the funds of the Institute shall be utilized solely for investments or for the objectives for which they were established.

#### **5. AIMS**

- 5.1 To advance the disciplines of ecology and environmental science.
- 5.2 To represent professional ecologists and environmental scientists, and promote their interests.
- 5.3 To improve and safeguard professional standards in the practice of ecology and environmental science.
- 5.4 To advise members on legal and professional aspects arising from the practice of ecology and environmental science.
- 5.5 To be a point of reference for professional advice on ecological and environmental matters.
- 5.6 To facilitate contact with other national and international ecological and environmental bodies and, as far as this is compatible with the Institute’s aims, to co-operate with other professional societies in the field of ecology and environmental science.
- 5.7 To promote interdisciplinary contact and debate amongst ecologists and environmental scientists.
- 5.8 To coordinate and integrate the various components of ecological and environmental science.
- 5.9 To promote responsible use of science as a tool to ensure sound environmental decision-making.

## **6. MEMBERSHIP**

- 6.1 Membership of the Institute shall be confined to Professional Ecologists and Environmental Scientists, Associate Ecologists and Environmental Scientists, and Student members.
- 6.2 The Board shall decide on the qualifications and eligibility criteria for Professional, Associate and Student membership respectively within the requirements set out in clause 3. Applications for Professional membership are evaluated on merit. In some special instances academic requirements may be waived where experience can be shown to substitute more than adequately for such qualifications. Should the application be based on such waiver the onus shall rest on the applicant to furnish full details to the Board of all 1 previous experience, and the Board may request full proof thereof if necessary. The final decision regarding the suitability of such experience and the eligibility thereof shall rest with the Board.
- 6.3 Only Professional and Associate members in good standing with the Institute shall have the right to vote.
- 6.4 Each candidate for election for membership of the Institute, or for transfer from one membership category to another, shall apply in writing to the Secretary supplying the required information. Each candidate shall be notified in writing of the Board's decision on the application, which shall be based upon the provisions of the Constitution and the guidelines in the By-laws.
- 6.5 Each Professional or Associate member in good standing with the Institute shall be entitled to designate him- or herself as either a Professional member or an Associate member of the Southern African Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Scientists as the case may be, provided that it shall be clear from such designation that the member is either a Professional or an Associate member. No other person or body, whether a member of the Institute or not, shall be entitled to use this or any other designation or abbreviation implying Professional membership of the Institute.

## **7. CONDUCT OF MEMBERS**

- 7.1 Every member of the Institute is required to order his professional and other conduct as to uphold the dignity of the profession and, in whatever capacity he may be engaged, to act in a manner consistent with the stature of the Institute and honour of the profession.
- 7.2 The Board shall be empowered to initiate any form of investigation and to take any disciplinary action against any member of the Institute it may deem advisable for breach of any of the clauses of this constitution, of the By-laws or of any conditions of membership or for any conduct which in the opinion of the Board is detrimental to the Institute. Such disciplinary action can take the form of a reprimand, suspension or termination of membership, alteration of membership category or any other action which the Board may deem fit.
- 7.3 Should the Board be of the opinion that the conduct of a member of any membership category become the subject of any inquiry, a special meeting of the Board shall be convened to conduct such an inquiry and to take such steps as it may deem adequate. The member concerned shall be entitled to attend the special meeting with or without an adviser and may give an explanation of his conduct and answer to the charge or charges made against him. If the Board does not find sufficient reason to take disciplinary action, no entry of the inquiry shall be made in the minutes.
- 7.4 Where the Board decides for whatever reason to take disciplinary action against a member, the member concerned shall be informed by registered letter of the Board's decision.
- 7.5 A member whose membership of the Institute is temporarily suspended for whatever reason shall forfeit for the period of suspension all rights relating to the Institute, but shall continue to be liable for all membership subscriptions and other fees. A member whose membership of the Institute is terminated shall forfeit all rights relating to the Institute and shall only be liable for membership subscriptions and other fees up to the date of termination of his membership.

## **8. PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS**

- 8.1 Subscriptions, professional registration, annual renewal and other fees for the different categories of membership shall be decided by the Board and be reviewed from time to time and shall appear in the By-laws.
- 8.2 Subscriptions-of new members and professional registration fees shall be due from the date of acceptance. Subscriptions and other fees for the remainder of a year up to 31 March shall be the same as for the whole year.
- 8.3 Subscriptions of all categories of membership shall be done on 1 April in each year. The membership of any member who has not paid shall be suspended on 1 May and terminated on 1 July The Board shall, however, have the power and discretion to reinstate any such member after all debt and obligations due to the Institute have been discharged.
- 8.4 The liability of members for the debts and financial commitments of the Institute shall be limited to the total of any unpaid subscriptions and other fees.

## **9. THE BOARD**

- 9.1 Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and in Conformity with the By-laws, the management of the Institute shall be vested in the Board.
- 9.2 The Board shall consist of eight members, including the Office Bearers, namely the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Honorary Secretary/Treasurer. The Board shall consist of four ecologists and four environmental scientists. The Office Bearers shall be elected annually by the Board and no member shall hold the same office consecutively for a period of longer than four years. The Board shall have power to co-opt a maximum of two members and to fill any vacancies until the next election or Annual General Meeting.
- 9.3 Only members of the Institute who are competent to vote shall be eligible to serve on the Board. No more than two members of the Board shall be Associate Members and the rest shall be Professional Members.
- 9.4 The Board shall have power to appoint secretarial and other staff and to remunerate them. Such staff shall hold office during the term of the Board and shall perform such duties as the Board shall require.

- 9.5 The Board shall frame By-laws, to be consistent with the Constitution, for the conduct of the business and the management of the affairs of the institute. The Board has to power to add to, repeat or amend the By-laws at any time and such additions and alterations shall be submitted to a following General Meeting for ratification. All members shall be notified of such additions and alternations to the By-laws.
- 9.6 No member of the Board shall be held accountable in his personal capacity for any consequences of the Board's proceedings, decisions or actions.

## **10. ELECTION OF THE BOARD**

- 10.1 An election of Board members shall take place annually by postal ballot. Members nominated for election shall only be considered to be eligible if they have indicated their willingness to serve on the Board if elected.
- 10.2 Except when situations arise as described in clause 10.3, members shall be elected to the Board for two consecutive years from 1 April to 31 March. Members of the Board are eligible for re-election, but a member serving a third consecutive term of office shall be ineligible to serve on the Board in the year to follow.
- 10.3 At least four members shall be elected to the Board each year. If for any reason fewer than four vacancies arise in a given year, then one or more Board members shall retire to bring the number of vacancies to four. The Board members to retire in this event shall be those who gained the, least numbers of votes in the previous election.

## **11. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD**

- 11.1 The Board shall meet not less than twice annually and shall appoint the dates for such meetings and regulate its own, proceedings.
- 11.2 The Chairman or, in his absence, the Vice-Chairman shall preside at meetings. In the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, the Board members present shall elect one of their number to preside.

- 11.3 Any five Board members shall constitute a quorum at a meeting and questions shall be decided by majority. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman or member presiding at the meeting shall have a casting vote.
- 11.4 In the event of a Board member not attending two successive meetings and not giving satisfactory explanation for his absence, the Board shall decide by simple majority of the total Board whether or not to declare the place of that member vacant and may elect another member to fill the vacancy.
- 11.5 Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the Board, the Institute and any committees.

## **12. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD**

- 12.1 The Executive Committee of the Board shall consist of the Office Bearers with such additional Board members as may be appointed by the Board.
- 12.2 The quorum at meetings of the Executive Committee shall be the Chairman, or a member nominated by the Chairman, and one other Board member.
- 12.3 The Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Board to deal with urgent matters.
- 12.4 All decisions and actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be submitted to the next Board meeting for ratification.

## **13. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

- 13.1 The Board shall appoint a Credentials Committee which shall consist of the members of the Board plus as many other Professional Members in good standing as are needed to ensure that there are two specialists in each of the fields of ecology and environmental science listed in the By-laws.

## **14. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

- 14.1 All assets, property and funds of the Institute shall be vested in the Board. The Board shall have power and discretion to buy, to acquire, to hire, to sell or to donate fixed and movable assets, to enter into contracts, to coiled, lend and borrow funds and to accept donations in furtherance of the Institute's objects.



- 14.2 The funds of the Institute shall be applied solely to the promotion of the objects of the Institute. Accounts shall be kept of all moneys received and expended by the Institute and of the assets and liabilities of the Institute. The Board shall have the power to open such banking and other accounts and make such investments as it deems fit. The Honorary Secretary/Treasurer shall be responsible to the Board for the sound administration and management of the funds and assets of the Institute and the implementation of decisions of the Board and the Institute's General Meetings.
- 14.3 The accounts of the Institute shall be audited annually by an auditor who shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting for the ensuing year. No member or officer of the Institute may act as the Institute's auditor.
- 14.4 Documents required to be signed on behalf of the Institute shall be signed only by persons duly authorized by the Board.
- 14.5 A Chairman's report on the activities of the institute, as well as a financial report on the income, expenditure and assets of the Institute shall be submitted to each Annual General meeting for approval.

## **15. GENERAL MEETINGS**

- 15.1 General Meetings of the Institute shall be held at such places and times as the Board may decide.
- 15.2 Annual General Meetings of the Institute shall be held to consider the Chairman's report and financial report, to announce the membership of the Board for the ensuing year and to conduct such other business as the Board may decide.
- 15.3 All business meetings of the Institute other than the Annual General Meeting shall be designated Special General Meetings and only such business as is specified in the notices convening these meetings shall be transacted. The Board may at any time convene a Special General Meeting and shall convene such a meeting within thirty days of the receipt of a written application from not less than ten members competent to vote provided the request specifies the business for which the meeting is required.

- 15.4 Notices convening General meetings shall be dispatched to members at their registered addresses not less than fourteen days prior to the date of the meeting. However, the accidental omission to give notice of a meeting, of the Institute to any member shall not invalidate any resolution passed at such a meeting.
- 15.5 At all General Meetings of the Institute a quorum shall consist of fifteen members competent to vote. If no quorum be presented within half an hour of the appointed time of commencement of an Annual General Meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned - to the same time of the same day four weeks later at a place to be determined by the Board, when the meeting shall be deemed to be Validly held, whether or not a quorum is present. If there is no quorum present at a Special General Meeting, the meeting shall be cancelled.

## **16. CONSTITUTION**

- 16.1 Any member of the Institute who is competent to vote may propose in writing to the Honorary Secretary/Treasurer any amendment to the Constitution. The Board shall then decide whether the proposal should be considered at the next Annual General Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting convened for that purpose, or whether it should be put-to a vote through the post.
- 16.2 For the adoption of a proposed amendment to the Constitution, it shall be necessary that not less than twenty five percent of the Professional and twenty-five percent of the Associate Members cast their votes and that not less than two thirds of the votes cast by both categories of membership be in favour of the amendment.

## **17. DISSOLUTION AND LIQUIDATION OF THE INSTITUTE**

- 17.1 The Institute may be liquidated and its affairs wound up, or it may be amalgamated with any similar body, after a resolution to this effect has been submitted to and adopted by a General Meeting of the Institute and has been subsequently confirmed by a simple majority in a postal ballot.

17.2 In the event of the Institute being dissolved, liquidated or amalgamated to another body, the Institute shall be obliged to give or transfer any surplus assets, after satisfaction of its debts and liabilities, to some other company, society or association with objects similar to its own. The Board shall decide the manner in which these assets are to be applied.

**ANNEXURE**  
**Constitution of the SAIE&ES**  
**Amended 30 October 1995**

**BY-LAWS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN  
INSTITUTE OF ECOLOGISTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS  
BEING THE STANDING RULES OF THE BOARD**

**1. Eligibility Criteria**

Any person who is currently registered as a professional or associate member (at the time of the amalgamation with environmental scientists), but does not qualify under the entrance requirements, as defined in the Amended Constitution of February 1994, will maintain their status and membership.

**2. Eligibility Criteria**

Any person who is currently registered as a professional ecologist, but who wishes to be registered as a professional environmental scientist, as defined in the amended constitution of February 1994, should apply in writing to the Board for reclassification.

**3. Eligibility Criteria (Professional Membership)**

Any person who has two Honours degrees is considered to have inadequate academic qualifications to qualify for professional membership. This further post-graduate degree should be a Masters or Doctoral Degree.

**4. Eligibility Criteria**

In the event that a person qualifies as a professional ecologist and professional environmental scientist, they may be listed on both professional registers.

**5. Membership**

Special Membership is open to anyone wishing to receive the Bulletin only, at an annual subscription the same rate as Associate Membership. Such persons will be called Corresponding Members.

**6. Subscription Payment**

Members in arrears with subscriptions will be charged at the current membership rate.

**7. Application Fee**

The Application Fee for Professional Membership shall be waived for Associate members of three years or more standing.

**8. Eligibility Criteria (Professional Membership) (Added May 1997)**

Eligibility for professional membership is assessed against the criteria laid out in Point 3. In special cases, however, the Board may waive the academic requirement of a higher degree. In such cases experience will be critically balanced against qualifications. Applicants must justify in their submissions the extent of their ecological/environmental science experience.