

# *SARBIO Network*

## *Challenges and the way forward.*



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# SARBIO

- Southern African regional network for biochemistry, molecular biology and biotechnology =>SARBIO.



# Need for SARBIO

- To increase co-operation between scientists in *Sub-Saharan Africa*
- To increase support for research and training regionally



# History

- Inception: 1995, Prof JA Hasler, UZ/ZW
- Currently 5 members on board  
(CA+MW+TZ+ZA+ ZW)

Prof V Titanji

Natural products

Prof J Saka

Food biotechnology

Prof A Kivaisi

Biotechnology

Prof M Parker

Medical biochemistry

Prof YS Naik

Environmental biochemistry



# Focus

- Basic science                      gene manipulation
- Medicine                              parasitic diseases  
(HIV/malaria *etc.*)
- Agriculture                            animal diseases  
GMOs
- Environment                          natural products  
& pollutants



# Sponsored areas

- Exchanges (short-term < 2 months) previously within Southern and East Africa but now in Sub Saharan Africa
  - Researchers- working in biochemistry, molecular biology and biotechnology. [post graduate students (<30 yrs); academic staff (<40 yrs); technicians (<40 yrs)]
- Conference/workshop participation
  - ad hoc and individual



# “Partners”

- University of Limpopo –ZA
- University of Dar es Salaam-TZ
- IFS - se
- FASBMB (Federation of African Societies of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology)
- PAEMS (Pan African Environmental Mutagen Society)
- NAPRECA (Natural Products network for East and Central Africa)
- SFRR-Africa (Society for Free Radical Research- Africa)



# Progress (1995-2008)

- Attendance at conferences/workshops by post-graduate and academics to advance their careers > 120
- Exchange (regional) of young academics or technicians to conduct research/training visits to advance their careers > 10
- Post graduate and technical expertise developed
- Contribution to other ISP network activities (ANCAP/NAPRECA/AFASSA)



# Challenges

1. Insufficient advanced notice of relevant meetings and courses/conferences
2. Inability to monitor **impacts** of SARBIO support (student and staff movements)
3. Insufficient exposure to other potential beneficiaries
4. Communications interruptions



# Overcoming challenges

1. a) Subscribe to mailing lists of organisations  
b) Identify new contacts with existing contacts  
c) Increased participation of Board members at relevant meetings
2. Measure impacts through better assessment tools
3. Increase exposure through website (now operational [www.nust.ac.zw/sarbio](http://www.nust.ac.zw/sarbio) which will be linked to others *e.g.* ISP/IFS/FASBMB/ SASBMB *etc.*
4. More frequent Board meetings



# Future plans

- Continue with similar priorities and plans
- Increase interaction and exposure within region (West Africa)
- Increase interaction with other ISP sponsored networks (NAPRECA/AFASSA) and others
- Provide greater interest on hosting focused “SARBIO” workshops and courses (bioinformatics/biomonitoring, *etc.*)
- Stakeholder awareness workshops in “SARBIO countries”



# Outputs

- ✓ Trained and relevant young scientists and staff for govt/academia/NGOs
- ✓ Increased interaction with other networks
- ✓ Literature generated (publications)
- ✓ Greater interaction with other projects and networks in Sub Saharan Africa



# Outcomes

- ✓ Informed decision making by trained persons deployed in academia, industry and government
- ✓ Increased awareness of issues related to biotechnology in society



# Acknowledgements

- ISP/IPICS
- Board members

