STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2021 - 2025

ADOPTED BY THE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
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Table of Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAU	Association of African Universities
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIEA	Association of International Education Administrators
AMPEI	Mexican Association for International Education
ANIE	African Network for Internationalisation of Education
AU	African Union
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COIL	Collaborative Online International Learning
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
DF	Directors Forum
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DHESI	Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DoL	Department of Labour
DoT	Department of Tourism
DSD	Department of Social Development
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
DST	Department of Science and Technology
EAIE	European Association for International Education
EU	European Union
ExCo	Executive Committee
FAUBAI	Brazilian Association for International Education
HAI	Historically Advantaged Institution
HDI	Historically Disadvantaged Institution
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IaH	Internationalisation at Home
IEAA	International Education Association of Australia
IEASA	International Education Association of South Africa
IF	Internationalisation Forum

IoC	Internationalisation of the Curriculum
ISASA	International Students Association of South Africa
MC	Management Council
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFSA	Association of International Educators
NDP	National Development Plan
NIEA	Network of International Education Associations
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARIMA	Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association
SARUA	Southern African Regional Universities Association
SAT	South African Tourism
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIO	Senior Internationalisation Officer
SRC	Student Representative Council
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCDP	University Capacity Development Programme
UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa
USAf	Universities South Africa

Executive Summary

This document is the first five-year strategic framework developed by the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA), a non-profit organisation established in 1997 to promote and support internationalisation of South African higher education. In developing the strategy, IEASA adopted a process of broad consultations with internal and external stakeholders.

IEASA's *Strategic Framework 2021-2025* is informed by reflections on the current international, regional and national context of higher education and higher education internationalisation as well as an evaluation of IEASA's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Based on these analyses, IEASA puts forward the following four areas of strategic priority over the next five years, starting in 2021:

- International and South African Engagement and Advocacy;
- Member Engagement and Services;
- Business Development and Partnerships; and
- IEASA Structures, Systems and Processes.

Areas of Strategic Priority	Goals	Objectives
International and South African Engagement and Advocacy	Represent and promote South African higher education internationally through enhanced international engagements and advocacy, raising IEASA's profile and reinforcing its role as an international advocate of higher education internationalisation	Strengthen existing and build new linkages and partnerships with a variety of international stakeholders
		Establish an Africa focus within IEASA to promote higher education internationalisation and build capacity across the African continent as well as to promote intra-Africa collaboration
	Influence and improve the framework and conditions of higher education internationalisation in South Africa, raising IEASA's profile	Intensify IEASA's advocacy role and increase its visibility
		Strengthen existing and build new linkages and partnerships with a variety of national and international stakeholders

	and reinforcing its role as national advocate of higher education internationalisation	
Member Engagement and Services	Increase the quality of existing services and expand offerings to enhance engagement with and benefits to IEASA members	Improve communication to facilitate knowledge management and information sharing, especially regarding the use of digital and online platforms and tools
		Enhance and expand external and internal marketing activities
		Provide opportunities for professional development and capacity building in higher education internationalisation for practitioners and leaders in the field
		Facilitate research on higher education internationalisation
		Develop and recommend desirable principles, policies and practices in higher education internationalisation
		Assist member higher education institutions in institutional policy and strategy development through peer support
		Provide opportunities to members to proactively and actively support IEASA's activities, thus supporting communities of practice and strengthening capacity across the sector
		Support IEASA communities of practice at national, regional and institutional levels
Business Development and Partnerships	Strengthen IEASA's financial position to ensure its long-term sustainability	Expand IEASA's membership
		Develop new income streams
IEASA Structures, Systems and Processes	Enhance IEASA's structures, systems and processes to ensure its long-term sustainability IEASA	Further clarify and define the roles and responsibilities of office bearers as well as their interactions
		Ensure adequate resourcing of the IEASA secretariat
		Enhance succession planning for IEASA's governing body
		Increase IEASA's accountability by improving monitoring and evaluation processes
		Establish an Internationalisation Forum to facilitate benchmarking by engaging with international thinkers and leaders in higher education internationalisation

IEASA recognises that these strategic priorities have been formulated at a time of great disruption, fluidity and change in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which is expected to bring about further shifts in higher education around the world. These shifts will continue to impact the environment in which IEASA operates as well as the ways in which it carries out its activities. It is therefore imperative that the strategic priorities presented here are consistently reviewed to ensure that IEASA continues adapting and responding to its shifting environment. To facilitate this, the implementation of the strategic objectives will be operationalised and monitored through a series of annual plans.

1   Introduction

1.1   Background to IEASA

The International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) is a registered non-profit organisation (NPO), dedicated to advancing the internationalisation of higher education (HE), which enhances the quality of teaching and learning, research and community engagement and contributes to enabling graduates, university staff and citizens to contribute constructively and ethically to local and global knowledge and debates. IEASA has grown to be globally recognised in international education circles as a voice promoting internationalisation from the perspective of South Africa, Africa and the global South.

With a total of 177 members (24 institutional and 153 individual members)[1], IEASA is small, especially in comparison to its sister organisations around the world. However, the Association's membership is representative of the South African public HE sector, as 23 out of 26 public universities are members[2], representing all categories of universities in the country, i.e. traditional universities, universities of technology and comprehensive universities.

Founded in 1997, IEASA has celebrated two milestone anniversaries. The experiences of the first decade were documented in a booklet entitled *10 Years of IEASA history,* published in 2007. In 2017, IEASA commemorated its activities and accomplishments over twenty years with a special 20th Anniversary Colloquium[3].

Since its inception, IEASA has operated independently with great fiscal responsibility. It has never been funded by the South African government. Instead, IEASA has generated income from membership fees, a medical aid project implemented in partnership with the private sector as well as key activities such as conferences and publications.

IEASA has maintained a small secretariat, with a complement of between one and three full-time staff members, and has largely been dependent on volunteers in carrying out its activities. Despite these constraints, the Association has consistently delivered on its two flagship programmes: between 1997 and 2019, IEASA hosted 22 annual conferences and produced 18

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[1] Membership numbers are as of August 2020.
[2] The following three South African HEIs are currently not members of IEASA: Mangosuthu University of Technology, Sol Plaatje University and University of Mpumalanga.
[3] For more information about the colloquium: http://studysa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Study-SA-17th-edition.pdf.

editions of the *Study South Africa Guide*, the only comprehensive publication on public HE and internationalisation in South Africa.

1.2 Background to the Strategic Framework

This document outlines IEASA's strategic framework for the period from 2021 to 2025. It is the first strategy of this kind developed by the Association and aims to outline the strategic priorities over the next five years, based on a comprehensive overview of IEASA's past and present activities.

As a member-based organisation, IEASA uses the expertise and experience of its members to advance HE internationalisation in South Africa and beyond. Prior to the development of this document, IEASA hosted strategic engagement sessions on an annual basis to provide its members with an opportunity to participate in discussions regarding the strategic direction of the Association for the upcoming year. In recent years, the need for a more long-term approach to strategy became increasingly apparent, and this Strategic Framework draws particularly on the deliberations of the following key meetings held in 2018 and 2019:

- Sustainability meetings in July 2018 in Durban and in August 2018 in Centurion;
- Strategic planning meeting in November 2018 in Port Elizabeth;
- Governance workshop in February 2019 in Johannesburg; and
- Strategic planning meeting in November 2019 in Pretoria.

In 2019, IEASA focussed its efforts on strengthening its governance and operations by reviewing and/or developing relevant policies and guidelines. Documents that have been adopted include a code of conduct for members of the Management Council (MC) and a conflict of interest policy. Documents that have been drafted and are in various stages of review include meeting guidelines, a handbook for MC members and a human resources (HR) policy. A comprehensive review of IEASA's Constitution will be completed by the end of 2020.

In July 2020, IEASA formally embarked on the development of this Strategic Framework. To lead this process, a strategy group was set up, consisting of the following members:

Name	IEASA Function	Position & Institution
Ms Orla Quinlan	President, 2019-2020	Director: International Office, Rhodes University
Mr Wiseman Jack	Deputy President	Executive Director: International Relations & Advancement, Vaal University of Technology

Dr Lavern Samuels	Treasurer and Chair of the Directors Forum (DF)	Director: International Education & Partnerships, Durban University of Technology
Dr Tasmeera Singh	MC Member	Principal International Advisor, University of KwaZulu-Natal
Ms Normah Zondo	MC Member	Acting Executive Director: Corporate Relations, University of KwaZulu-Natal
Dr Segun Obadire	MC Member	Acting Director: International Relations Office, University of Venda
Ms Janet Van Rhyn	MC Member (representative of Universities South Africa, USAf)	Manager, USAf
Ms Anisa Khan	Co-opted member of the strategy group	Manager: Global Partnerships and Internationalisation Support, Stellenbosch University
Mr Dingaan Booi	Co-opted member of the strategy group	International Officer, Rhodes University
Dr Samia Chasi	Convener of the strategy group	Strategic Advisor, IEASA

Taking input provided at the above-mentioned meetings into account, the strategy group developed a draft framework which was subsequently shared with a range of individuals and expanded upon iteratively. Consultation was with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, including IEASA members and other individuals in the South African HE sector as well as representatives of IEASA's partners and sister organisations. The IEASA membership at large was given an opportunity to review the draft framework and provide comments by participating in a feedback survey. IEASA would like to extend its sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the Strategic Framework.

2 IEASA's Vision, Mission, Purpose, Objectives, Value Proposition & Principles

2.1 Vision & Mission

IEASA's vision: Advancing internationalisation of HE with an African perspective in a global context.

IEASA's mission: IEASA will foster the interchange of knowledge and ideas, develop thought leadership and support strategic initiatives for maximum positive impact. IEASA will enhance services to members and the sector in South Africa and internationally, using multiple platforms.

2.2 Purpose & Objectives

IEASA's primary purpose is to seek out and bring together those engaged in international HE interchange to advance internationalisation and to optimise benefits to all participating individuals and institutions and HE in general, especially in South Africa. In doing so, IEASA aims to:

- Advocate for internationalisation across the HE sector and in society at large, including, where necessary, for changes to any national policies or measures that exclude or negatively affect international dimensions in the operating framework of South African HE;

- Develop and recommend desirable principles, policies and practices, benchmarked against international best practice;

- Provide a collective, independent voice of its members on internationalisation issues;

- Work with South African government departments and other relevant stakeholders to advance the internationalisation needs of South African HEIs;

- Facilitate opportunities for the professional development of those working in the field;

- Seek, develop and disseminate relevant information, as required;

- Collaborate with other associations, agencies, organisations and institutions concerned with international education;

- Represent South African HEIs and perspectives within the global HE internationalisation network; and

- Strengthening collaborations with African international education networks.

In pursuing activities to advance its purpose and objectives, IEASA has adopted the following core values: Professionalism, Excellence, Ethical Conduct, Commitment, Diversity, Collegiality and Sustainability.

2.3 Value Proposition

As the leading national South African organisation with a dedicated focus on HE internationalisation, IEASA is the South African expert in the field and serves as a first point of call for those who want to engage on HE internationalisation matters in the country. The Association offers its members a range of services and products, as indicated below, including aspirational services to be delivered over the next five years:

Advocacy	• Providing a collective, independent voice of its members on HE internationalisation issues, both locally and internationaly • Lobbying on behalf of SA HEIs and liaising with SA government departments and other relevant stakeholders to provide strategic input on policies and procedures linked to internationalisation • Collaborating with other relevant organisations in the field
Marketing	• Marketing South African HE, with a focus on digital and online platforms, via: • IEASA website, Study SA guides etc. • Study SA exhibitions at international conferences
Information & Knowledge Sharing	• Sharing information, knowledge and best practices on a wide variety of HE internationalisation topics via: • IEASA website, email distribution list and electronic newsletters • IEASA webinar series • Facilitating research on HE internationalisation • Representing SA HE at international conferences and events
Training & Development	• Facilitating training and development of international educators, practitioners & others involved in HE internationalisation, particularly in Africa, through: • IEASA conference sessions and workshops • *Short courses and learning programmes* • Leadership opportunities through involvement in IEASA structures • Induction and mentoring programme for new members
Products & Resources	• Developing products and resources, such as: • Medical aid project • Immigration procedure manual • Code of Ethical Practice • *Crisis management framework for HEIs*
Networking & Engagement	• Providing access to country-wide network of HE internationalisation stakeholders as well as sister organisations • Facilitating professional networking and engagement through annual conferences and other events (workshops, dialogues, etc.) • Supporting the development of regional and national communities of practice in HE internationalisation • Promoting an African focus in HE internationalisation

2.4 Overarching Principles

In implementing its activities, IEASA is guided by the following overarching principles:

- Innovation
  - To foster creativity and adaptability;
  - To use technology to enhance operations and offerings.
- Inclusion
  - To promote the equitable and ethical advancement of internationalisation in South African HE, drawing strength from IEASA's diverse membership base;
  - To increase and widen access to IEASA's resources and services.
- Engagement of young professionals
  - To include young professionals in IEASA's planning, structures and activities, harnessing the energy of young people interested in contributing to internationalisation activities;
  - To grow the next generation of international education practitioners, scholars and leaders.

3 Contextualisation

3.1 International Context: IEASA's Global Engagement

IEASA is well-embedded in global HE internationalisation networks. It is a founding member association of the Network of International Education Associations (NIEA), which aims to advance the internationalisation of HE and the global learning of post-secondary education organisations through exchange of information and dialogue, advocacy for international education, professional development and discovery of new approaches to international education. IEASA actively contributes to NIEA's work, most recently, for example, to a statement on the importance of internationalisation despite setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, published on 24 July 2020.

IEASA regularly participates in conferences hosted by its sister organisations around the world and represents South African HE at international study exhibitions under the 'Study South Africa' brand. It has established mutually respectful working relationships with several international education associations, most notably the following:

- AIEA: Association of International Education Administrators;
- ANIE: African Network for Internationalisation of Education;
- EAIE: European Association for International Education;
- FAUBAI: Brazilian Association for International Education and
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

Over the years, IEASA has become recognised by its sister organisations as an expert voice promoting internationalisation from the perspective of South Africa, Africa and the global South in the global discourse on internationalisation. As the first of its kind, IEASA hosted the Global Dialogue in 2014, emphasising the need for internationalisation to "be based on mutual benefit and development for entities and individuals in the developed, emerging and developing countries". The participants in the dialogue, representing nine national, six regional and nine other organisations from around the world, confirmed their commitment to this cause in the *Nelson Mandela Global Dialogue Declaration on the Future of Internationalisation of Higher Education*. In 2016, IEASA participated in the second Global Dialogue hosted by the Mexican Association for International Education (AMPEI) in Mexico. The third Global Dialogue, which IEASA's President was scheduled to facilitate, was due to be held in Argentina in 2020 but had to be postponed due to COVID-19 related restrictions.

3.2   African Context

Most broadly, IEASA's work in HE internationalisation is informed by global development goals, most notably the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as adopted by the member states of the United Nations (UN). This is also reflected in the African Union (AU)'s Agenda 2063 and its vision of inclusive growth and sustainable development, particularly regarding HE's role of supporting "economic development directly by generating new knowledge, building capacity to access the global storehouse of knowledge, and adapting knowledge for local use" (AU, 2015, p. 56). Another key document in the broader context of African HE is the *Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025* (CESA), a sector strategy for education and training aimed at developing the necessary human capital for the realisation of the AU's vision. Most notably, CESA's ninth strategic objective calls for the revitalisation and expansion of HE, research and innovation to respond to continental challenges and promote global competitiveness. This includes the promotion of international research as well as international cooperation based on continental interest and ownership.

At a regional level, IEASA and its member institutions are informed by the *Protocol on Education and Training for the Southern African Development Community* (SADC, 1997), particularly regarding the recommendation that member states reserve at least five per cent of their university admissions for students from other SADC countries

3.3   National Context

3.3.1   Political Factors
South Africa is a recent democracy and a postcolonial and post-apartheid society in transformation, and IEASA operates within the framework of the country's Constitution. The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 underscores HE's role to contribute to economic growth and development by developing intellectual capital.

3.3.2   Economic Factors
On the African continent, South Africa's economy is the second-largest after Nigeria. However, despite gains made after the end of apartheid in 1994, the country's economy is characterised by high levels of inequality, unemployment and poverty. As highlighted in a recent survey of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a sharp drop in South Africa's economic activity. After a decade of modest growth, the economy is going through a recession in 2020, and challenges such as persistent electricity outages, rising government debt and policy uncertainty are expected to continue to hamper investment and underscore low growth.

In the main, South Africa's public universities are financed through government subsidies, tuition fees and third-party income, to varying degrees. While enrolments and the level of spending on HE have increased over the years, government subsidies for South Africa's 26 public universities have been declining in real terms. The sector is generally underfunded, and additional challenges arise due to the differentiated nature of the sector, where, as a legacy of apartheid, historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) tend to be better equipped and resourced than historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs), with exceptions. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) supports access to HE by providing funding to students from poor and working class families who otherwise would not be able to afford further study.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the special adjustment budget cut for the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (DHESI) amounts to approximately ten billion Rand for 2020/2021, which represents a reduction of eight per cent compared to the original

allocation. Close to five billion Rand was reallocated to the reprioritising of expenditure towards COVID-19 related measures and activities.

3.3.3 Social Factors: Higher Education

South Africa is one of only a few African countries with a comprehensive HE system. The public sector consists of 26 universities, differentiated into eleven general academic universities, nine comprehensive universities and six universities of technology, at which a total of 1,036,984 students were enrolled in 2017 (CHE[4], 2019). Quality assurance in HE is promoted and regulated by bodies such as the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA[5]).

The South African HE sector is the most productive on the continent in terms of research outputs and international collaboration and has a number of HEIs consistently placed in the Top 200-500 of major international university rankings. It is worth noting in this regard that rankings systems are controversial in the South African context, as the sector faces major challenges regarding access and participation as well as throughput and equity, which are often interlinked. In the NDP, these challenges are addressed in the context of the following targets to be achieved by 2030:

- Increasing enrolments at universities by at least 70 per cent, to about 1.62 million from 950,000 in 2010;
- Increasing the percentage of PhD qualified staff from the current 34 per cent to over 75 per cent;
- Producing more than 100 doctoral graduates per million per year, which requires an increase from 1,420 in 2010 to well over 5,000 per annum and
- Expanding outputs in science, technology and innovation by increasing government and industry spending on research and development.

Inequality, as a legacy of apartheid laws which enforced racial segregation and discrimination against historically disenfranchised black South Africans in all spheres of life, remains a characteristic of the contemporary South African HE sector. The distinction between HAIs and HDIs reflects the different kinds of status and treatment HEIs received under apartheid and the lingering influence of that legacy to the present day. The extent to which a university is

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[4] Council on Higher Education, https://www.che.ac.za/#/main
[5] https://www.saqa.org.za/

advantaged or disadvantaged refers mainly to the (historic) availability of institutional infrastructures and resources, or the lack thereof.

As microcosms of South African society, universities are, to varying degrees, faced with a number of broader societal challenges such as the high prevalence of inequality, poverty, violence, including gender-based and xenophobic violence, as well as increasing prevalence of mental health issues, in keeping with world-wide trends. Other pertinent issues for South African HE include tuition fees and financial aid, university accommodation, institutional cultures and decolonisation, which have featured heavily in the transformation efforts of South Africa HEIs since 1994. It took student protest movements, notably #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMust Fall, to accelerate action, resulting in a political decision to change the eligibility criteria for NSFAS funding, which has widened access to HE by providing funding for more students previously unable to afford undergraduate studies at South Africa's HEIs.

3.3.4   Technological Factors

As sites of knowledge production and innovation, universities are at the heart of technological changes and advances, which affect not only the teaching, learning and research functions of universities but also their systems and processes in management and administration. To address the changing nature of HE, IEASA dedicated its 22nd annual conference in 2019 to exploring the topic of "Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) – Innovation, Diversity, Inequality and Inclusivity"[6].

In the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of existing inequality and poverty has been made starkly visible, most notably with regard to the focus on online teaching and learning in the wake of campus closures and suspension of face-to-face teaching. Underprivileged institutions and individuals continue to find themselves on the receiving end of the digital divide. In the case of students, the main burden of online provision falls on those who are poor and live in conditions that are not conducive to online learning, without access to computers and laptops, affordable data, reliable internet connectivity, electricity or a dedicated physical space for studying.

3.3.5   Environmental Factors

Energy shortages and water scarcity are important environmental concerns affecting South African universities. In remote and rural areas of the country, the availability of key services

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[6] The conference report is available at http://ieasa.studysa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/IEASA-Conference-2019_Report_for-website.pdf.

and facilities in that regard is often more limited or less reliable than in urban areas. The same applies to the provision and distribution of other services including sanitation, health and transport.

Globally, the contribution of international education to environmental degradation has been highlighted, most notably regarding the impact on climate change of carbon emissions caused in the context of international student mobility as well as numerous international education conferences. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, international travel has been considerably reduced, necessitated by border closures and travel restrictions. At the same time, a strong focus on virtual and online activities has emerged, which, if continued, may bode well for the sustainability of certain types of international education engagements.

3.3.6   Legal Factors

As a registered NPO, IEASA complies with relevant South African legislation and submits annual reports to the NPO Directorate of the Department of Social Development (DSD[7]). The financial statements of the Association are audited on an annual basis.

IEASA's operations comply with the provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) and its amendments as well as the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). Furthermore, IEASA is guided by general provisions in South African labour law, including matters relating to employment equity, labour relations and skills development, as well as tax law, in accordance with its status as a registered NPO and/or an organisation with a staff complement of less than five full-time employees.

3.3.7   Key National Documents Guiding IEASA's Work

Apart from the documents mentioned under 3.3.1 and 3.3.6 above, key national documents informing IEASA's work include the following:

- Immigration Act 13 of 2002 and its subsequent amendments (DHA[8]);
- National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008;
- Policy Framework for Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa (DHET[9], 2019);
- White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2014);

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[7] Department of Social Development: https://www.dsd.gov.za/
[8] Department of Home Affairs: https://www.dha.gov.za/
[9] Department of Higher Education and Training, now part of the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation: https://www.dhet.gov.za/

- White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (DST[10], 2019); and

- Strategic Framework, 2015–2019 (USAf, 2014).

IEASA participated in public consultations and provided commentary on relevant draft documents regarding the latest amendments of the Immigration Act as well as the country's first national internationalisation policy.

3.4   Higher Education Internationalisation in South Africa

Internationalisation has been a concern of increasing importance for South African HEIs since the end of apartheid, with its attendant international sanctions and academic boycott, in 1994. As documented by Jooste (2007), the first consultative meetings of the HE sector dealt mainly with the considerable influx of international students after the dawn of democracy, and IEASA was established in 1997 resulting from the sector's need to respond to international educational trends.

3.4.1   International Students in South Africa

South Africa is a popular destination for international students for both short-term studies and degree purposes. The majority of short-term students come from North American and European countries, whereas the majority of degree-seeking students are from SADC and other African countries. Factors contributing to the attractiveness of South African HE include the presence of several South African HEIs in major international university rankings, a well-established HE sector offering internationally recognised qualifications, the use of English as the main medium of instruction and relatively low costs of living. International students come to South Africa as free movers or in the framework of bilateral and multilateral partnerships including scholarship programmes.

In 2017, a total of 68,036 international students were registered at South African universities, approximately 6.5 per cent of the total student population of 1,036,984 (CHE, 2019). However, if these numbers are disaggregated further, it becomes apparent that almost 40 per cent of these students are not travelling to South Africa to pursue their studies but are registered for distance education programmes, mostly through the University of South Africa (UNISA), the country's dedicated distance education institution (IEASA, 2019).

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[10] Department of Science and Technology, now part of the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation: https://www.dst.gov.za/

The vast majority of international students in South Africa are African. In 2017, a total of 60,334 students enrolled at South African HEIs were from the continent, making up 88.7 per cent of international students. Out of the total international student population, 48,641 students came from other countries in the SADC region, making up 71.5 per cent of international student enrolments (CHE, 2019). Many of these students come to South Africa for a variety of reasons including political instability, economic hardship and negative impacts of climate change in neighbouring countries.

3.4.2 *Internationalisation in an Unequal and Underfunded System*
Internationalisation has not been advanced evenly across South African universities. While some initiatives, for example, the Erasmus Mundus programme funded by the European Union (EU), specifically targeted historically disadvantaged individuals and institutions, it has been recognised that HDIs still do not have extensive international relations and are not benefitting from internationalisation as much as they should (DHET, 2017).

The South African HE sector is generally underfunded, which means that internationalisation competes for limited resources with other institutional priorities and is often put on the back burner of institutional initiatives. Furthermore, IEASA operates in a competitive environment, where HEIs have to carefully consider institutional memberships in light of limited resources.

IEASA recognises that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to HE internationalisation in South Africa. The diversity of its institutional members manifests itself in different historical, geographical and operational contexts as well as in different institutional priorities and different levels of financial and human resource capacity allocated to internationalisation. In some universities, internationalisation remains the domain of international offices rather than being infused throughout the institution. In this context, it is imperative that internationalisation endeavours of universities are increasingly relevant and aligned to other institutional and national goals, contributing to transformation, nation-building and the public good. As noted in the recently adopted internationalisation policy, South African HEIs must design their internationalisation activities in such a way that priority is given first to South Africa's interests and "Thereafter, where possible and relevant, the following order of priority focus should be observed in terms of interests: the SADC states; the rest of the African continent; BRICS; the global South and emerging economies; and the world beyond" (DHET, 2019, p. 22).

3.4.3 National Internationalisation Policy

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South African universities have, for the most part, addressed HE internationalisation individually and variedly in the absence of a national framework. In April 2017, the DHET published South Africa's first draft national internationalisation policy for public comment.

In May 2020, IEASA called on the South African government to reaffirm its commitment to internationalisation of South African HE by adopting the policy and supporting its implementation across the sector (IEASA, 2020). The need for policy clarity on internationalisation was also highlighted in a recent report on "The Changing Size and Shape of the Higher Education System in South Africa, 2005-2017", particularly in view of calls to introduce quotas for the recruitment of international students and academic staff, creating political pressures on universities and funding bodies (Essop, 2020).

In November 2020, the adoption of the *Policy Framework for Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa* was announced. Its rationale for internationalisation of HE in South Africa includes, among others, the positioning of the country's HE sector to be competitive in a globalised world, the advancing of HE quality as well as the benefitting of society at large and enhancing opportunities for HE to contribute to the public good.

3.4.4 Higher Education Internationalisation in Times of COVID-19

In May 2020, IEASA published a position paper on *Higher Education Internationalisation in South Africa in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact on International Students* (IEASA, 2020). It highlights that measures implemented by the South African government in response to the global pandemic have negatively affected many facets of internationalisation activities of South African universities. However, it also notes that, despite creating numerous challenges, COVID-19 presents IEASA with an opportunity to reimagine internationalisation from the perspective of South Africa, Africa and the global South. This includes encouraging research on relevant topics to highlight the benefits and opportunities provided by internationalisation, while reflecting critically on the risks and challenges associated with its implementation in under resourced and unequal contexts. It is worth noting in this regard that changes brought about or accelerated by COVID-19 offer opportunities for a more equitable and inclusive advancement of HE internationalisation, particularly with a focus on strengthening internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) and internationalisation at home (IaH) dimensions. Such opportunities include, for example, the use of virtual exchanges and

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) to foster intercultural competence and multicultural learning and to internationalise the curriculum.

3.5 Organisational Context: IEASA's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

3.5.1 Strengths

IEASA is the main national organisation with a dedicated focus on HE internationalisation and is therefore uniquely positioned to lead, advocate, promote and support internationalisation in the country's HE sector. As the repository of knowledge on HE internationalisation in South Africa, it has, both internationally and nationally, earned a reputation in international education circles as the recognised South African voice in the field and acts as a first point of call for those who want to engage on HE internationalisation in South Africa.

IEASA engages positively and actively with international networks, most notably its sister organisations around the globe. It has established working relationships with several diplomatic missions in South Africa as well as well as international organisations working in international education such as the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Nuffic, whose representatives regularly attend and support IEASA conferences and other events. Furthermore, the Association has built strong relationships with several government departments, including the DHA and DHET, as well as with USAf. Working closely with such networks facilitated, for example, the active participation of IEASA members in workshopping and providing input on the draft national internationalisation policy, as published in 2017.

Because of prudent and transparent financial management of existing resources, IEASA stands on a sound financial footing in 2020 and has sufficient reserves to continue operations and service its members in the coming years. Working with South African universities through a network of institutional representatives, nominated by the respective Vice-Chancellors, usually the directors of international offices, IEASA adds value to its members through a variety of activities. Such activities include the promotion of networking and sharing of information, experience and best practice through key events such as annual conferences, webinars and, more recently, the IEASA DF WhatsApp group, which facilitates finding solutions to shared problems and building capacity across the sector. IEASA assists its members in their efforts to support international students, particularly on matters pertaining to immigration, and contributes to the building of South Africa's reputation as an international education

destination by promoting the country's universities internationally through Study South Africa guides and exhibitions.

As far as its membership is concerned, IEASA is representative of the South African HE sector, as it counts 23 out of 26 public HEIs amongst its members. Diversity is a core characteristic of IEASA's institutional and individual members who represent different types of universities and different internationalisation contexts. Thanks to the dedication, commitment and passion of its members, the majority of whom serve the Association in a volunteer capacity, IEASA has been able to consistently deliver its key projects.

3.5.2 Weaknesses
IEASA is over reliant on sources of income that are themselves subject to market forces. Focusing on 23 public HEIs, with a fixed number of professionals in the field of internationalisation, its membership numbers have levelled off in recent years.

IEASA's engagements in addressing its desire for a sustainable future revealed several weaknesses in its internal systems, processes and structures, which need to be clarified and modernised to allow the Association to be more adaptable, flexible and adequately responsive to changes in the environment in which it operates. This includes clarification of the governance and operational roles and responsibilities of the different members of IEASA's MC, the governing body, as well as more proactive succession planning. It also relates to the need to develop a medium to long term staffing plan for the IEASA secretariat. Further clarification on internal work flow, communication and delegation of authority is needed. To improve performance, operational implementation plans that give expression to IEASA's strategy and outline actions and deliverables as well as evaluation and monitoring processes need to be further developed and communicated on an annual basis.

3.5.3 Opportunities
IEASA can continue to contribute to the global body of knowledge on HE internationalisation and consolidate its role as a leader in this field by promoting research on internationalisation in the South African HE sector, including IEASA's role and impact. To facilitate this, IEASA can work more closely with members who are already conducting research and can reach out to academics based at member institutions. Strengthening links to academics and researchers and encouraging their participation in IEASA's activities can enhance the production and dissemination of knowledge in that regard. IEASA can also potentially collaborate with

relevant organisations such as the National Research Foundation (NRF), the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA).

COVID-19 has brought about many challenges for HEIs, but it also provides an opportunity to reimagine internationalisation. For example, with COVID-19 acting as an accelerator, IEASA can focus on finding ways to explore and promote innovative approaches to HE internationalisation in global South contexts. This includes increasingly using digital and online tools to support a more equitable and inclusive advancement of HE internationalisation in South Africa and positioning COIL as an example of best practice, especially in light of resource constraints and COVID-19 related restrictions.

Taking COVID-19 related disruptions and changes in working methods, including the recently established webinar series into account, IEASA can increase its focus on working digitally to enhance the delivery of its activities and services and foster communication, information sharing and capacity building by developing a digital strategy.

IEASA has an opportunity to raise its profile and reinforce its role as a national advocate of HE internationalisation by strengthening and expanding its existing networks. Relationships with key government departments such as the DHET can be used more strategically to lobby for support for HE internationalisation activities as well as the professionalisation of the field. Similarly, a more strategic relationship with USAf could facilitate direct engagement with senior university leaders on HE internationalisation. Learning from recent practices in the wake of COVID-19, IEASA has an opportunity to raise awareness of matters pertaining to the needs, interests and experiences of international students in South Africa by facilitating collaboration with and between a variety of national and international stakeholders. These stakeholders should include students, through linkages to organisations such as the International Students Association of South Africa (ISASA) or institutional Student Representative Councils (SRC).

In the international context, implementing a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ANIE provides IEASA with opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from across the continent to promote HE internationalisation in Africa, particularly regarding engagements on issues that are pertinent to institutions on the continent. In addition to working within existing networks, IEASA can explore opportunities of establishing new working relationships with government departments and organisations that are relevant to the HE

internationalisation agenda but do not yet have close links to IEASA, including the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), Department of Labour (DoL), Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) as well as the Department of Tourism (DoT), South African Tourism (SAT) and Brand South Africa.

IEASA's Constitution provides for an Internationalisation Forum (IF), which has never been set up. In the context of growing international engagements, the establishment of such a structure could further strengthen both the global and local engagements with external stakeholders, by providing a platform for interchange and advice on matters of strategic international and national importance and for assisting the Association with the benchmarking of its operations and activities.

The national internationalisation policy, to the development of which IEASA contributed, provides the Association with an opportunity to play a practical role in assisting the implementation of the policy across the sector, following its adoption in November 2020, thus improving the engagement with and support of its members regarding the practical implications of this important national framework. This includes increased engagement with academics to promote internationalisation of the academic project.

Drawing more proactively on the knowledge, experience, expertise and skills of its members, IEASA can increase guidance and support for the development of communities of practice at national and/or regional level to foster collaboration and capacity building within specific work areas or regions.

Furthermore, IEASA can take steps to ensure its sustainability over the next years and decades by developing a growth strategy and expanding its membership base. Finally, it is an opportune time for IEASA to explore new income streams, for example, regarding opportunities offered in the context of funding organisations and frameworks (e.g. EU, AU, DHET etc.) as well as in partnership with the private sector. This might entail strengthening IEASA's proposal writing capacity for resource mobilisation and reviewing its legal status.

3.5.4 Threats
In the ever-changing internationalisation environment, IEASA is vulnerable to several external developments and trends. For example, international student enrolments might drop as a result of COVID-19 or of the political situation in South Africa, with its pockets of nationalism and xenophobia.

Apart from such external threats, IEASA's long-term financial sustainability is threatened by an overreliance on limited sources of income that are themselves subject to market forces such as membership fees and institutional budgets as well as income generated from a project in partnership with medical aid companies providing services for international students.

Another substantial threat to IEASA's long-term sustainability is lack of capacity, both within IEASA's structures and amongst its members. For example, the pool of people from which the Association draws members for it structures is limited, particularly regarding the requisite experience and/or seniority required to serve on the governing body. In addition, the activities of IEASA's presidents have, to a large extent, been supported by their respective institutions, which means that the level of human and financial resourcing made available to the incumbent differs from one institution to another and might therefore either support or hinder his or her ability to act on behalf of the Association. Another challenge is linked to the capacity of members of IEASA's DF. They are not necessarily the senior internationalisation officers (SIOs) in their institutions and might therefore have limited authority and influence to make commitments on behalf of member institutions. They also have varying degrees of engagement with the senior executives of their respective institutions, which might impact the extent to which internationalisation is embedded in the core functions and units across the institution.

As the South African HE sector is generally constrained, the resources that HEIs can make available for HE internationalisation are limited to start with, and internationalisation competes for attention, time and funding with other institutional priorities. In the current financial climate, budget cuts at national and institutional levels might further reduce the size and resources of international offices, which, in turn, might negatively affect IEASA's activities, whose effective delivery already depends largely on the dedicated work and commitment of volunteers. Overreliance on volunteerism threatens IEASA's capacity to drive and deliver on its key objectives in the long term.

4   Strategic Priorities 2021–2025

As highlighted in the strategic planning meeting in 2019, IEASA must be fit for the purpose of a contemporary international education association. This means it must be clear on its purpose, serve its stated purpose, add value to its members, respond to their needs and represent South African HE internationalisation on national and international platforms. In doing so, IEASA will scan its environment consistently to be aware of, able to anticipate and respond to local

and international trends as well as operational requirements. IEASA will operate in a flexible, agile, cost effective and sustainable manner.

For the next five years, covering the period from 2021 to 2025, IEASA will focus its efforts and activities on maintaining and expanding the following four areas of strategic priority:

- International and South African Engagement and Advocacy;
- Member Engagement and Services;
- Business Development and Partnerships; and
- IEASA Structures, Systems and Processes.

Each of these priorities is further elaborated on in the sections that follow. IEASA recognises that the strategic priorities presented here have been developed at a time of great disruption, fluidity and change. It is expected that this will lead to fundamental shifts in HE in South Africa and beyond, which will simultaneously affect the environment in which IEASA operates as well as the way in which it carries out its activities. To implement the strategic framework, detailed operational plans with specific objectives, action points and success criteria will be developed and monitored on an annual basis. These annual plans will help the Association adapt to its shifting environment.

4.1 International and South African Engagement and Advocacy

Goal	Strategic Objectives	Potential Approaches
Represent and promote South African HE internationally through enhanced international engagements and advocacy, raising IEASA's profile and reinforcing its role as an international advocate of HE internationalisation	Strengthen existing and build new linkages and partnerships with a variety of international stakeholders	Deepen and expand existing working relations with sister organisations (NAFSA, EAIE, FAUBAI, AIEA) and other relevant stakeholders (British Council, DAAD, Nuffic NESO South Africa etc.)
		Explore new collaborations, for example, with sister organisations, regarding research
		Engage with international and national thinkers and leaders in HE internationalisation through the IF, once established
	Establish an Africa focus within IEASA to promote HE internationalisation and build capacity across the African	Implement MoU with ANIE
		Establish relationships with other relevant stakeholders, for example, the Association of African Universities (AAU), the Southern African Regional Universities Association

		(SARUA) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)
Influence and improve the framework and conditions of HE internationalisation in South Africa, raising IEASA's profile and reinforcing its role as national advocate of HE internationalisation	Intensify IEASA's advocacy role and increase its visibility	Provide commentary and publish position papers, statements and articles on topics of relevance and importance to HE internationalisation in South Africa
	Strengthen existing and build new linkages and partnerships with a variety of national and international stakeholders	Deepen and expand existing working relations with South African government departments (DHESI/DHET, DHA) and other relevant stakeholders (USAf)
		Establish new links and collaborations with South African government departments (DHESI/DSI, DIRCO, DoL, DoT, SAT and Brand South Africa), diplomatic missions in South Africa as well as student representative bodies (e.g. ISASA, SRCs etc.)

4.2 Member Engagement and Services

Goal	Strategic Objectives	Potential Approaches
Increase the quality of existing services and expand offerings to enhance engagement with and benefits to IEASA members	Improve communication to facilitate knowledge management and information sharing, especially regarding the use of digital and online platforms and tools	Enhance quality and functionality of existing channels such as the IEASA website, newsletter, member distribution list and social media platforms
		Develop a digital media strategy
	Enhance and expand external and internal marketing activities	Develop a brand and marketing strategy for external and internal use: • External: To enhance representation and promotion of South African HE internationally using the existing Study South Africa banner (guide, study exhibitions, etc.) • Internal: To enhance IEASA's profile and raise awareness on HE internationalisation at national, regional and institutional levels through targeted campaigns, member institution workshops/webinars on implementation of the internationalisation policy etc.

Provide opportunities for professional development and capacity building in HE internationalisation for practitioners and leaders in the field	Offer training workshops, seminars, dialogues etc., in partnership with members and other relevant stakeholders
	Develop and offer short courses and learning programmes, potentially in collaboration with other associations
	Explore opportunities for professional development within existing government initiatives such as the DHET's University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP)
Facilitate research on HE internationalisation	Setting up a research group within IEASA to set a research agenda, facilitating a critical analysis of traditional HE internationalisation definitions, concepts, models and practices and reimagining HE internationalisation from the perspective of South Africa, Africa and the global South
	Commission and/or conduct research on matters of national and international importance in HE internationalisation, in partnership with members and relevant external stakeholders (e.g. DHET, USAf etc.)
	Explore opportunities for research development within existing initiatives of government departments and international education organisations, including scholarship programmes
	Work more closely with members who are already conducting research and reach out to academics based at member institutions
	Explore opportunities for collaboration with organisations such as the NRF, CHE, HSRC and SARIMA
Develop and recommend desirable principles, policies and practices in HE internationalisation	Promote equity, inclusion and social justice in all dimensions of HE internationalisation
	Encourage transformative IoC and IaH
	Position COIL as a best practice example of HE internationalisation in resource constrained contexts
Assist member HEIs in institutional policy and strategy development through peer support	Facilitate requests for assistance, for example, through a skills directory

	Provide opportunities to members to proactively and actively support IEASA's activities, thus supporting communities of practice and strengthening capacity across the sector	Establish a directory of skills and expertise available within IEASA's membership
		Issue regular calls for IEASA working parties
		Showcase members and their areas of expertise via communication channels
	Support IEASA communities of practice at national, regional and institutional levels	Facilitate contacts and networking, share information using IEASA platforms

4.3 Business Development and Partnerships

Goal	Strategic Objectives	Potential Approaches
Strengthen IEASA's financial position to ensure its long-term sustainability	Expand IEASA's membership	Develop a membership growth strategy based on scenario plans for different approaches, including expansion within member institutions (e.g. academics and researchers as well as administrative units supporting institutional internationalisation endeavours), within the South African HE sector (e.g. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, private institutions) and within the region (e.g. SADC universities)
	Develop new income streams	Fundraising: Seek funding for projects from national and international donors and the private sector
		Friendraising: Build relationships with organisations with a view towards future financial support (e.g. Embassies)
		Business development: Develop income generating services and products, taking IEASA's NPO status into account

4.4 IEASA Structures, Systems and Processes

Goal	Strategic Objectives	Potential Approaches
Enhance IEASA's structures, systems and processes to ensure its long-	Further clarify and define the roles and responsibilities of office bearers as well as their interactions	Review existing roles and responsibilities of MC members
		Develop a delegation of authority document
	Ensure adequate resourcing of the IEASA secretariat	Develop a medium to long term staffing plan for the IEASA secretariat

term sustainability IEASA	Enhance succession planning for IEASA's governing body	Develop guidelines for succession planning of the MC
	Increase IEASA's accountability by improving monitoring and evaluation processes	Develop, communicate and report on operational implementation plans giving expression to IEASA's strategy and outlining achievable actions and deliverables on an annual basis
	Establish an IF to facilitate benchmarking by engaging with international thinkers and leaders in HE internationalisation	

5 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

In order to monitor IEASA's strategic performance and the implementation of this Strategic Framework, the President, in consultation with the Executive Committee (ExCo), the MC, the IEASA secretariat and external professionals, as required, will ensure the development of the following:

- Annual operational plans giving effect to the priorities in this Strategic Framework;
- A resource mobilisation plan for this Strategic Framework including annual budgets for the period 2021-2025;
- A measurement instrument with clear performance indicators which IEASA will use to assess its own performance on an annual basis.

The President will report annually on the implementation of this Strategic Framework to IEASA's governing body for discussion on the progress made and any adjustments, if required. The President will provide IEASA's general membership with annual updates, as part of the presidential report given at the Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

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