Review Panel

Prof Richard G Klein  
Department of Biological Sciences  
Stanford University  
United States of America  
e-mail: rklein@stanford.edu  

Dr Emma N Mbua  
National Museums of Kenya  
Nairobi, Kenya  
e-mail: enmbua@palaeokenya.org  

Prof Dirk D van Reenen (Convenor)  
Department of Geology  
University of Johannesburg  
South Africa  
e-mail: Dirkvr@uj.ac.za
## CONTENTS

Executive Summary ................................................................. 3

Background .................................................................................. 7
  Historical review of PAST .......................................................... 7
  Support provided by PAST .......................................................... 7
  Objective of the report ................................................................. 8

Retrospective view of the performance of PAST ............................. 8
  Fundraising ............................................................................. 8
  Students and other individuals funded ....................................... 9
  Public outreach ....................................................................... 11

PAST management structures ....................................................... 12
  Introduction ........................................................................... 12
  The Board of Trustees and management trustees ....................... 12
  The Operational Office ............................................................ 12
  The Scientific Advisory Committee .......................................... 13
  Comments and recommendations ............................................ 13

The future strategic direction and vision of PAST ......................... 15
  Actions .................................................................................. 15
  Comments ............................................................................ 15

Current status of palaeontological research in South Africa .......... 15
  Strengths ............................................................................. 16
  Weaknesses .......................................................................... 16
  Threats ................................................................................ 16
  Opportunities ......................................................................... 17

Key findings and recommendations .............................................. 17

Acknowledgements .................................................................... 18

Appendix 1: Review programme ................................................. 19
Appendix 2: Terms of reference .................................................. 24
Appendix 3: Response of the management of PAST ................. 31
Executive Summary

The PAST Review Panel, comprising Dirk van Reenen (Convenor), Emma Mbua, and Richard Klein, convened at the NRF on 19 March 2007. Over the next two days, the panel members were briefed by various interested parties, including members of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), staff of the National Research Foundation (NRF), selected members of the PAST Board of Trustees, members of the PAST Scientific Advisory Committee, representatives of the Higher Education Sector, representatives of museums, students and postdoctoral fellows who have received or hope to receive PAST support, persons involved in the scientific outreach activities of PAST, and finally representatives of the business community who have either advised PAST or provided operational donations. On the morning of 21 March 2007 the panel visited the Sterkfontein Cave in the Cradle of Humankind to gain a first-hand impression of research at a palaeoanthropological site that has benefited significantly from PAST support. In the afternoon of 21 March 2007, the panel reconvened to produce a draft report.

A brief history of PAST is essential to understand both its present state and its future. In 1994, prominent members of the South African business community founded PAST to support the Palaeoanthropological Research Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand in its internationally renowned research at Sterkfontein and other key South African palaeoanthropological sites. The founders were immediately successful in their fundraising and by 2000, annual private contributions to PAST approached R2 million. The trustees then decided to broaden the scope of PAST to include research on the more recent phases of human evolution and on the broader field of South African palaeontology, of which palaeoanthropology (human origins research) forms a part. CK (Bob) Brain joined PAST as its chief scientific advisor and he was supported by Janette Deacon, John Parkington, and Bruce Rubidge. Together with Brain, they presently constitute a Scientific Advisory Committee, whose primary function is to advise the PAST trustees on grant proposals that now address a wider variety of palaeontological and palaeoanthropological issues and that come from all South African
universities and museums engaged in palaeontological or palaeoanthropological research. In 2002, the DST recognized the achievement and importance of PAST with a contribution of R1 million. This was channelled through the NRF, and in 2006, the most recent year for which figures are available, the DST/NRF contribution totalled R2.5 million. In recognition of its deepening involvement in PAST, the DST decided to commission the review that underlies this report.

Today, PAST not only funds more than 90% of human origins research in southern Africa but also subsidizes major publications, including *Palaeontologia Africana* and the *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, and supports educational programmes, most notably annual lectures by prominent foreign and South African scientists and the Walking Tall Educational Theatre Workshop. The workshop has successfully brought an understanding of palaeoanthropology to tens of thousands of school children in Gauteng Province, and it will soon be reaching equal or larger numbers throughout South Africa and in other African countries. In its support of research, PAST is now the principal source of bursaries to students seeking advanced degrees in palaeoanthropology and palaeontology at South African universities. A significant and growing proportion of the students come from previously disadvantaged communities, and the panel was privileged to meet several whose knowledge and enthusiasm guarantee a strong future for palaeoanthropology and palaeontology in South Africa. In sum, PAST is a multifaceted funding agency, the existence of which could be justified by its success in any of its areas of operation.

In its meetings with various PAST stakeholders, the Panel encountered only admiration and no significant criticisms. In particular, grantees praised PAST for its flexible application procedures, with no specific deadlines and quick decisions, often within six weeks. PAST has sufficient funds to support all deserving postgraduate students, and the level of funding allows them to devote their time fully to study and research. PAST grants to researchers tend to be small, perhaps in part to ensure that the money is spread as widely as possible, but the recipients have an admirable publication and citation record.

The bottom line is that PAST is serving the interests of South African palaeoanthropology and palaeontology exceptionally well, and both its private supporters and the DST can take pride in its achievement. The Panel is reluctant to
make any recommendations for change, which could be seen as an attempt to “fix an agency that isn’t broken”. With this caveat in mind, however, we offer the following suggestions for PAST and the DST/NRF to consider:

1) If at all possible, the DST/NRF should increase its contribution to PAST to allow larger research grants and possibly larger bursaries, particularly for the students who must spend a large proportion of their bursaries on research as opposed to subsistence. At the same time, PAST should be encouraged to continue its remarkably flexible application procedure, which stands in sharp contrast to the more rigid and tedious procedures that are common at other granting agencies throughout the world.

2) PAST’s budget and the range of its funding activities have grown significantly in recent years, but PAST still has only one full-time employee, Ms Andrea Leenen. She is unusually capable and the Panel has no sense of work left undone. However, she is responsible for fundraising, publicity, and the day-to-day functioning of the granting process. Depending on her advice, the Trustees might consider hiring a second person to help with the substantial workload that is likely to increase. The second person could, for example, be a knowledgeable postgraduate student who worked half-day so that the added administrative cost would be minimal, and PAST’s enviably small “overhead” costs would not be increased significantly.

3) PAST should consider expanding its international fund-raising effort, stressing its success in bringing palaeoanthropology and palaeontology to a wide audience in South Africa, including members of previously disadvantaged communities.

4) PAST should perhaps explore joint funding of projects with agencies abroad, particularly the Leakey Foundation, whose stated research and education goals are remarkably similar to those of PAST. For projects in South Africa or projects in other African countries that depend on South African palaeoanthropologists, PAST could consider approaching the Leakey Foundation for partial funding. The synergy might allow larger projects with greater intellectual impact.

5) As PAST’s funding and mandate have expanded, it has begun to look outwards to other African countries. This makes sense intellectually since human evolution
knows no political boundaries, but unless PAST’s resources grow significantly, they should probably be concentrated on the needs of southern African palaeoanthropologists and palaeontologists. For the moment, PAST’s international role should be limited to helping South African scientists collaborate with their colleagues elsewhere in Africa and to supporting students from other African countries who want to pursue advanced degrees in South Africa.

6) PAST has an excellent Scientific Advisory Committee, but both its members and the Trustees need to formulate a mechanism for selecting their replacements when the time comes. Replacements could, for example, be chosen jointly by the present Committee members and the Trustees from a pool of the most successful professional PAST grantees.

7) The application form for grants and especially bursaries from PAST could perhaps be more formally structured to allow an applicant to list the funds needed for subsistence and research separately.
Background

Historical review of PAST

The future of palaeoanthropological research in South Africa was saved when, in 1993, a group of concerned businessmen started to raise funds to ensure that the Palaeoanthropological Research Unit (PARU) at the University of the Witwatersrand would not close due to the imminent retirement of the director, Prof Philip Tobias, at the end of that year. Their actions led to the establishment of a non-profit organization known as the Palaeoanthropological Scientific Trust (PAST), which was officially launched at the Anglo American headquarters in Johannesburg on 12 July 1994 with the sole responsibility to fund research on human origins. Gavin Relly was the first chair of the board of trustees. PAST and its public sector sponsors have since played a major role in funding palaeoanthropological projects in South Africa, and finally funded more than 90% of the national research on human origins in southern Africa. Extensive funding of the Sterkfontein operation led to the discovery of ‘Little Foot’ and other important hominoid fossils, and the widespread publicity that resulted from these important discoveries contributed greatly to the success of the South African bid to have the Sterkfontein Valley established as the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site.

In 2004 PAST signed a memorandum of agreement with DST, which led to a widening of PAST activities to also support research in the broader field of southern African palaeontology, of which palaeoanthropology and archaeology form a part, and to intensify its educational programme. This led to a name change (the Palaeontological Scientific Trust, or PAST). An important outcome of the partnership with the DST is the establishment of the ‘African Origins Platform’ because of South Africa’s internationally recognized fossil heritage. This is one of five areas of scientific endeavour identified by the DST where South Africa has a geographic advantage, and should be the best internationally. PAST also played a leading role in the establishment of the Institute of Human Evolution at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Support provided by PAST

PAST funds research at universities and museums in the fields of palaeontology, palaeoanthropology and archaeology; provides student support for honours, masters,
doctrinal, and postdoctoral studies; sponsors public outreach projects including keynote public lectures, conferences and symposiums as well as a young learner education project known as the ‘Walking Tall Educational Project’.

**Objective of the report**

The review panel was asked to determine the strengths, weaknesses and impact of PAST for the period March 2002 to April 2006 in terms of its mission, namely to raise funds from South African and international sources to

- Encourage and support palaeoanthropological and palaeontological projects in southern Africa
- Support the training of students in palaeontology, anthropology and archaeology through scholarships, bursaries and grants
- Assist and promote the education of the public, and especially young learners about the unique palaeoanthropological heritage, and
- Develop, preserve and protect South African hominid sites, and to encourage tourists to visit these sites
- In addition the review panel was asked to comment on
  - the future strategic direction and vision of PAST, and
  - the current status of palaeontology research in South Africa.

**Retrospective view of the performance of PAST**

**Fundraising**

PAST has been exceptionally successful in raising funds from donors from the private sector in South Africa to sponsor both scientific and public outreach projects. Major donors that have sponsored PAST during the previous five years include major mining companies, major financial institutions, and a variety of other important industrial partners. Fundraising efforts continue unabatedly, and several new proposals for funding have recently been submitted to large corporations.

Important conclusions are:

- Private donors agree that they will continue to sponsor PAST activities as long as the DST is also funding PAST.
• PAST fundraising efforts should focus primarily but not exclusively, on strategies to establish the future of scientific education in South Africa among young learners. Potential donors realize the urgent need to be involved with the scientific education of our youth as one of the cornerstones of the future economic growth and development of South Africa.

• PAST should have a strategy in place to build the necessary relationships that will allow PAST to target major international Philanthropic Corporations for major funding, such as the Mellon, Ford, and Carnegie Foundations.

Students and other individuals funded

Grant applications

PAST supports applications for grants to do research within the disciplines of palaeontology, palaeoanthropology, and archaeology. Support is specifically granted for fossil site excavations, scientific conferences, meetings and symposiums, academic publications, and bursaries to honours, masters, doctoral, and postdoctoral students.

Individuals funded for the period 2002 – 2005

a. Total number of individuals supported: 141 (M = 67; F = 74). This number includes 100 students and 41 research officials and technicians. There has been a significant increase in the number of Black female students from 5 in 2002 to 19 in 2005, but the field is still dominated by Whites:

   • White: male (48), female (54)
   • Black: male (8), female (12)
   • Indian: male (3), female (8)
   • Coloured: male (8), female (none)

b. Masters students supported (36)

c. Doctoral students supported (49)

d. Postdoctoral students supported 9 (none in 2002, up to 5 in 2005).

e. Honours students supported (6)

f. Others, i.e. research officials, technicians, etc (41)
Institutions represented by grant holders and bursars

Grant holders and students supported by PAST represent six universities (i.e. University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town, University of South Africa, University of the Free State, University of KwaZulu-Natal and University of Pretoria) and various museums in South Africa, including foreign postdoctoral students.

Performance indicators

Grant holders are required to submit annual progress reports, while students registered at the University of the Witwatersrand are also required to present the results of their research at annual departmental seminars. The high throughput rate of 95% of students that have successfully completed their studies is excellent.

Capacity building

PAST through its scientific and educational activities successfully created postdoctoral positions at universities and museums, and technical positions on both a permanent and semi-permanent basis at various excavation sites. PAST furthermore has been especially successful in attracting female Black students to post-graduate studies in the different fields of study. Capacity building has also taken place through the Walking Tall Educational Project where various positions for employment are available on an ongoing basis for performers in the show. Capacity building also occurred in the area of the exchange of skills and information via PAST-sponsorship of internationally recognized researchers to South African institutions and vice versa.

It is important to note that PAST also supports scientists at museums who cannot easily access other sources of funding, e.g. from the NRF. This has had a major impact on scientific activities at various museums in South Africa.

Comments and recommendations

PAST has a highly successful record of funding research in the fields of archaeology, palaeontology, and palaeoanthropology at universities and at museums at the ground level. This allows students and other individuals without a research track record to access funds that otherwise would have been very difficult to obtain (e.g. from the NRF).
Of the total of 85 masters and doctoral candidates sponsored since 2002, only two masters students and one doctoral candidate did not complete their thesis. The throughput rate in excess of 95% is excellent.

PAST also funds publications (e.g. archaeological publications), for which alternative sources of funding are not available. However, it is clear that if PAST is to further broaden its funding activities, greater rigour will have to be introduced to the grant application process. This topic will be further discussed below.

**Public outreach**

The highly successful *Walking Tall Educational Project*, which is an educational project that explains the concepts of human evolution to young learners, is annually offered to more than 50 000 learners, mostly from previously disadvantaged communities within the Gauteng province. In addition a further 50 000 learners are reached with performances at scientific festivals such as the SASOL Science Festival in Grahamstown, and Science Unlimited in Pretoria. This highly successful outreach project has resulted in requests to facilitate similar educational projects from other African countries.

PAST is presently working on a strategy to expand the Walking Tall Project into a nationwide project that will benefit disadvantaged learners throughout South Africa. Although the Walking Tall Project presently focuses on previously disadvantaged government schools free-of-charge, plans are already in place to also involve private schools and previous Model C schools, but at a minimal charge to these schools.

PAST also annually sponsors a highly visible series of keynote lectures by world-renowned scientists (e.g. Philip Tobias, Richard Leaky, Richard Dawkins) held in the Great Hall at the University of the Witwatersrand. PAST is also involved with the sponsoring of scientific conferences (e.g. the African Heritage Conference), meetings, and colloquia, and has played an important role in having the Sterkfontein Valley declared ‘The Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site’.
Comments and recommendations

PAST has been highly successful in taking the science of palaeontology from the academic classroom at universities to schools and the general public domain. The education of large numbers of young learners (50 000 annually) from previously disadvantaged communities through the ‘Walking Tall Educational Project’ has been exceptionally successful. The strategy to expand ‘Walking Tall’ into a nationwide project will in the future play an increasingly important role to provide scientific education not only to the previously disadvantaged youth of South Africa, but also to youths of other communities in the country.

It is strongly recommended that PAST should have a strategy in place to access additional sources of funding from the private sector, both nationally and internationally. Potential donors in the private sector are very much aware of the importance to also sponsor projects that focus on the scientific education of young learners in South Africa, and should react favourable if the DST is also sponsoring PAST.

PAST management structures

Introduction

The management structures of PAST consist of a Board of Trustees, an Operational Office, and a Scientific Advisory Committee.

The Board of Trustees and management trustees

The Board of Trustees is largely made up of prominent people from the business community, while the DST also has representation on the board. Daily responsibilities are delegated to the Managing Trustees who are responsible for the financial administration of PAST, the fundraising activities, educational programmes, and public awareness strategies. This committee meets on a monthly basis to execute the Board's strategic direction and vision.

The Operational Office

The Operational Office consists of one permanent staff member (Ms Andrea Leenen) who is responsible for the fundraising, administrative, and educational activities, as well
as interfacing and networking with the science, business, and government community. Ms Leenen also provides advice to the trustees, in addition to the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee.

**The Scientific Advisory Committee**

The Scientific Advisory Committee consists of four prominent members of the scientific community, one of whom acts as chairperson, and who represent three different institutions, namely the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Cape Town and the Transvaal Museum. The committee is primarily responsibility to oversee the grant application process. This process, which is kept as informal as possible, includes calling for applications, receiving applications and scrutinising and recommending support to the Management Trustees who are ultimately responsibility for the final decision regarding support.

**Comments and recommendations**

- The Management of PAST is a consensus of highly motivated and passionate like-minded prominent businessmen supported by a dedicated operational officer who through their vigorous and enthusiastic interactions successfully forged strong ties between the business and scientific community and government. PAST thus created a highly successful funding platform to support research in palaeontology and to create public awareness of the unique fossil heritage of southern Africa. The ability to forge strong ties between important role players is a major strength of PAST. Management structures and processes thus are well aligned, and appropriate to meet the mission and future strategic direction of PAST. At the same time there is a need for a strategy that will also target potential international donors as part of the future PAST fundraising activities.

- The Operational Office staffed by Ms Leenen is doing an admirable job of handling a huge number of responsibilities very effectively. However, if PAST is considering the option to further widen its many activities, serious consideration should be given to appoint at least one additional staff member to assist Ms Leenen with administrative tasks.

- The Scientific Advisory Committee has done an excellent job of overseeing the grant application procedure. This procedure is streamlined to allow candidates to
apply for grants throughout the academic year, with a rapid (± six weeks) response time. The success rate is high, generally more than 80%. Many stakeholders emphasized the fact that PAST is an excellent and efficient funding organization due to the hassle-free way in which grant applications are processed. Applications from universities and museums are handled equally, while young researchers with no track record have access to funds at PAST which otherwise would have been very difficult or even impossible to obtain from other sources (e.g. the NRF).

Should PAST consider widening its support of research projects, including the sponsoring of doctoral students from other African countries to do research at South African universities, the Board of Trustees will have to consider to

(i) broaden the Scientific Advisory Committee by adding at least one additional committee member, and if possible from an institution from abroad, and
(ii) introduce more rigour to the grant application procedure. Even though it is appreciated that the application process should continue to be kept as informal and flexible as possible, the following changes to the present procedure should be considered:

- The application form should have clear instructions as to particular areas/activities that are not funded, or that are preferably funded by PAST.
- Guidelines as to the value of bursaries/grants for different categories of bursaries should be included.
- Consideration should be given to provide a clear distinction between studentships/bursaries (to cover students’ cost of living) and research costs.
- The supporting letter from the study advisor/institution should not merely confirm that the student is registered for a specific degree, but should also include a short evaluation of the student and of the project.
- Students/applicants should supply enough background information, including past funding sources.
Finally, a strategy to appoint future members of the Scientific Advisory Board should be in place to ensure that the members of this important committee will in future continue to share the ethos that has made PAST a unique funding organization.

**The future strategic direction and vision of PAST**

**Actions**

PAST should continue to

1) assume responsibility to provide bursaries/scholarships for honours, masters, doctoral, and postdoctoral students and researchers in palaeoanthropology, palaeontology, and archaeology at universities and museums in South Africa. However, a strategy is also needed to attract postdoctoral students from abroad to continue with their research at South African universities and museums, especially candidates from other African countries.

2) address the issue of rectifying racial and gender inequalities prevalent in the sciences.

3) create public awareness of our common human heritage and of Africa as the birthplace of humankind.

**Comments**

PAST should continue to expand the above-mentioned actions. However, in view of the present funding situation, support of the Pan-African vision should focus on

(i) sponsoring students from African countries to study for their doctoral degrees at South African universities, and

(ii) sponsoring South African students registered at South African universities to do research for their doctoral degrees in African countries.

**Current status of palaeontological research in South Africa**

The document on the ‘State of Palaeontology Research in South Africa’ commissioned by the DST in 2004 highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities:
Strengths

The survey highlighted the following strengths:

- The rich palaeontological, palaeoanthropological, and archaeological record of South Africa provides a unique competitive advantage for the country to be a world leader;
- The excellent research productivity of South African scientists in these different fields of study as is reflected in the large number of peer-reviewed papers that are published annually;
- The large and valuable fossil collections housed at different universities and museums;
- The number of international scientists who visit South Africa annually to undertake research in the different fields of study, and the high degree of collaboration with these internationally recognized researchers.

Weaknesses

The survey listed personal conflict in the field of palaeoanthropology as a great weakness.

Threats

The survey among others listed the following threats to the future of palaeontology, palaeoanthropology, and archaeology in South Africa:

- Lack of funding has already resulted in the loss of job opportunities for researchers and technical staff at universities and museums, the aging of the research population as well as a lack of transformation, and will eventually result in the closure of museums;
- The permitting system is seen as inadequate and in need of major revision;
- The great ignorance amongst the learners and general public of South Africa concerning our unique fossil heritage, and the importance of Africa as the cradle of humankind.
Opportunities

The identified long-term goal is to create an awareness and pride in the palaeontological, palaeoanthropological, and archaeological heritage of South Africa through quality research, sustainable training that includes learners/students from previously disadvantaged communities, and vigorous public outreach programmes.

Key findings and recommendations

1) Role players and stakeholders all responded overwhelmingly that PAST must through scholarships and bursaries to honours, masters, doctoral, and postdoctoral students, continue to sustain and develop scientific research, including exploratory science in palaeontology, palaeoanthropology, and archaeology at universities and museums in southern Africa. The rectification of racial and gender inequalities is to remain one of the important responsibilities. However, universities should assume responsibility to ensure that the system is able to absorb the number of postgraduate students trained. PAST should also continue to sponsor the variety of important educational outreach projects that involve both learners and the general public. The strategy to take the ‘Walking Tall Educational Project’ nationwide is admirable and needs special support.

2) PAST’s fundraising efforts should also include strategies to establish the future of scientific education in South Africa among young learners. Potential donors realize the urgent need to be involved with the scientific education of our youth as one of the cornerstones of the future economic growth and development of South Africa. Partnerships between PAST and the DST must be in place if private donors are to continue sponsoring PAST activities, and the DST/NRF should increase its contribution to PAST.

3) Stakeholders agree that PAST should have strategies in place to target international Philanthropic Corporations (e.g. the Mellon, Ford, and Carnegie Foundations) for major funding.

4) PAST should be allowed to continue with the flexible and informal approach to the grant application procedure, but at the same time should also consider a mechanism that will introduce more rigour into the application process. This is
especially true if PAST is to widen its activities to also become involved with the Pan-African Vision through the sponsoring of students from African countries to study for their doctoral degrees at South African universities. At the same time, PAST should also fund South African students to carry out research for their masters and doctoral studies in other African countries.

5) The Scientific Advisory Committee should be broadened by at least one additional member if possible from abroad, and a strategy should be in place to ensure that scientists that support the unique PAST ethos will be available and ready to eventually replace the present members of this committee.

6) The Board of Trustees of PAST should consider appointing an assistant to assist the fund manager with administrative tasks. This is important in view of strategies to further broadening PAST activities.

7) Stakeholders also raised three matters of concern related to role of the DST and NRF in funding scientific projects in South Africa:
   • The DST is perceived as often bypassing the NRF as the formal funding organization to fund scientific research in South Africa.
   • Stakeholders perceive the NRF as becoming increasingly less flexible concerning the grant application process, and
   • The NRF is not adequately supporting established researchers.

**Acknowledgements**

The Review Panel wishes to thank Ms Andrea Leenen, fund manager of PAST, for her hard work that went into the preparation of the self-evaluation report for the period April 2002 to March 2006, and for arranging a visit to the Sterkfontein Caves to view ‘Little Foot’ with Ron Clarke at very short notice. The Panel also wishes to thank the NRF Evaluation Centre and, in particular, Mrs Desiree Sassman, Liaison Officer, for going out of her way to make the difficult and hurried review process as comfortable and pleasant as possible. Ms Anke Rädel of the NRF Evaluation Centre is also thanked for her assistance with the preparation of the final report.
Likewise the Panel appreciates the time given by all role players and stakeholders for consultation.
Review of the Palaeontological Scientific Trust (PAST)

Programme

19 – 22 March 2007

Reviewers:
Prof Richard G Klein, Stanford University, United States of America
Dr Emma N Mbua, National Museums of Kenya, Kenya
Prof Dirk D van Reenen, University of Johannesburg, South Africa (Convenor)
SUNDAY, 18 MARCH 2007

20:00 Informal meeting of review panel members to discuss review
Dr AM Kaniki, Executive Director: Knowledge Management and Strategy, NRF (to join review panel if available)
A light snack will be provided for supper

MONDAY, 19 MARCH 2007

08:00 Arrival of panel members at NRF
Photograph of panel to be taken by Ms Thandi Sindane Internal Communications Officer, Corporate Communications, NRF
Venue: NRF Boardroom
[Tea/Coffee]

08:15 – 08:30 Welcome by the NRF President
Prof Mzamo P Mangaliso

08:30 – 09:30 Briefing of the panel members by the Department of Science and Technology (DST)
Ms Anati Canca, General Manager, Human Capital, DST
Dr Tshepo Seekoe, Manager, Science Platforms, DST
Dr Gilbert Siko, Science Platforms Unit, Science and Technology Expert Services, DST
Mr Lebs Mphahlele, Manager, Science and Youth, DST
Dr Albert van Jaarsveld, Vice-President & MD of Research and Innovation Support and Advancement, NRF
Dr Andrew Kaniki, Executive Director, Knowledge Management and Strategy, NRF

09:30 – 10:00 Discussion of the review programme with NRF Evaluation Centre staff members
Dr Andrew Kaniki
Ms Gudrun U Schirge, Manager, NRF Evaluation Centre
Ms Anke Rädel, Professional Officer, NRF Evaluation Centre
Mrs Saloshna Naidoo, Professional Officer, NRF Evaluation Centre
Mrs Desireé Sassman, Liaison Officer, NRF Evaluation Centre

10:00 – 11:00 Review panel members meet to discuss their review strategy
[Tea/Coffee at 10:00]

11:00 – 11:30 Review panel discussions with Dr Gerhard von Gruenewaldt, former Vice-President, NRF
11:30 – 13:00  Interview with selected members of the PAST Board of Trustees
Mr Mike Nayler, Secretary/Consultant, Anglo American South Africa Limited
Mr Mark Read, Director, Everard Read Gallery
Mr Terry Timson, Chief Executive Officer, MTN Banking
Mr James Hersov, Anglovaal Limited
Mr Eric von Glehn, MD, JP Morgan Chase
Ms Anati Canca, Department of Science and Technology

13:00 – 14:00  Lunch with PAST members and the NRF Management
Venue: NRF Bateleur
Ms Candice Levieux, Manager, Knowledge Fields Development, NRF
Mrs Lynn Erasmus, Coordinator, Grant Management and Systems Administration, NRF
Ms Andrea Leenen, Fund Manager, PAST

Venue: NRF Boardroom

14:00 – 15:30  Interview with members of the PAST Scientific Advisory Committee
Prof Bruce Rubidge, University of the Witwatersrand (WITS)
Dr Bob Brain, Transvaal Museum (retired)
Dr Janette Deacon, National Monuments Council (retired)
[Tea/Coffee at 15:30]

15:30 – 17:00  Teleconference with stakeholders from abroad
[Did not happen]

17:00 – 18:00  Review panel members meet to summarise the day’s activities

TUESDAY, 20 MARCH 2006

08:00  Review panel arrive at the NRF
Venue: NRF Board Room
[Tea/Coffee at 08:00]

08:30 – 10:30  Interview with representatives of the Higher Education sector
Prof Belinda Bozzoli, Vice-Chancellor (Research), WITS
Prof Paul Dirks, Head, School of Geosciences, WITS
Prof Phillip Tobias, Professor Emeritus, WITS
Dr Lucinda Backwell, Bernard Price Institute of Palaeontology, WITS
Prof Ron Clarke, Director, Sterkfontein, WITS
Prof Judy Sealy, Head, Archaeology Department, University of Cape Town (will give her input by e-mail)
10:30 – 12:00  Representatives from Museums  
[Tea/Coffee at 10:30]

Prof Francis Thackeray, Acting Director, Transvaal Museum  
Dr Margaret Avery, Iziko Museum,  
Dr Pippa Haarhoff, Manager, West Coast Fossil Park  
Dr Billy de Klerk, President of the Palaeontological Society of Southern Africa and Curator of Earth Sciences & Palaeontology, Albany Museum  
Dr Rose Prevec, Rhodes University and Albany Museum Research Associate  
Dr James Brink, National Museum  
Dr Hamish Robertson, Director, Iziko Museums  
Ms Marlize Lombard, Curator, Natal Museum

12:00 – 13:30  Students and post-doctoral fellows  
Ms Tebogo Mothupi, masters student, WITS  
Ms Molebohang Mohapi, doctoral student, WITS  
Dr Tom Lehman, post-doctoral fellow, Transvaal Museum  
Ms Bonita de Klerk, doctoral student, WITS

13:30 – 14:00  Lunch  
Venue: NRF Bateleur

14:00 – 15:30  Scientific outreach  
Venue: NRF Boardroom  

Ms Jo Earle, Vice-President, South African Archaeological Society  
Dr Geoff Blundell, Curator/Director, Origins Centre, WITS  
Mrs Mary Leslie, Archaeologist, South African Heritage Resources Agency  
Mr Greg Melvill-Smith, Director, Walking Tall  
Ms Bonsiwe Makola, Nedbank

15:30 – 17:00  Business Community and Donors  
[Tea/Coffee at 15:30]  

Ms Tracey Henry, Tshikululu Investments  
Ms Mandie van der Spuy, Senior Manager: Arts Sponsorship, Standard Bank  
Dr Francis Gerard, Totem Productions  
Mr Rick Menell, President & CEO, TEAL Exploration & Mining Inc  
Mr Graham Lindop, CEO, Amtrad

17:00 – 18:00  Review panel members meet to summarise the day’s activities
WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH 2007 Human Rights Day

08:30 – 12:00  Andrea Leenen and Ron Clarke arranged a visit to Sterkfontein Cave to view 'Little Foot' with Prof Ron Clarke

13:00 - 19:00  Report writing at the NRF

THURSDAY, 22 MARCH 2007

09:00 – 10:30  Venue: NRF Boardroom
Report back session
Panel gives verbal report back and hands over draft report

Ms Anati Canca, DST
Dr Tshepo Seekoe, DST
Dr Gilbert Siko, DST
Prof MP Mangaliso, NRF
Dr Albert van Jaarsveld, NRF
Dr Andrew Kaniki, NRF
Ms Andrea Leenen, PAST
Ms C Levieux, NRF
Ms GU Schirge, NRF
Mrs S Naidoo, NRF
Mrs D Sassman, NRF
PAST Trustees

10:30 – 12:00  Debriefing session
Venue: NRF Boardroom
[Tea/Coffee at 10:30]

12:00 – 12:30  Reviewers depart for airport
1. ASSIGNMENT TITLE
Review of the Palaeontological Scientific Trust (hereinafter referred to as “PAST”).

2. BACKGROUND
The Department of Science and Technology (DST) identifies palaeontology as one of the priorities for scientific research. Funding is channeled through the National Research Foundation (NRF) to PAST to support research in this area. The 2004/2005 Memorandum of Agreement between NRF and DST states that NRF will be responsible for the review.

3. ASSIGNMENT PRINCIPAL
The assignment principal is the Department of Science and Technology (DST) represented by the General Manager for Human Capital. The NRF, represented by the NRF Executive Director: Knowledge Management and Strategy will be the Project Leader of the review.

The role of DST will be to:

- Approve the terms of reference;
- Approve the budget;
- Receive the final report by the review panel from the NRF together with the response of the management of PAST;
Accept the final report within two months of receipt from the NRF. The role of the NRF will be to:

- Appoint the review panel;
- Compile and manage the review programme;
- Receive the final report from the review panel and the response of the management of PAST; and
- Accept the final report within two months of receipt.

4. SERVICE PROVIDER
The Evaluation Centre of the NRF will act as the service provider. The responsibilities of the service provider are to:

- Develop a programme for the review, including a budget;
- Manage, coordinate and administer the entire review process, including logistics;
- Provide support to the review panel; and
- Source the necessary information from PAST and other stakeholders.

5. THE PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW
The purpose of the review will be to:

- Firstly and most importantly, provide a retrospective view on the performance of PAST in terms of its objectives namely:
  - Raising funds from South African and international sources to encourage and support palaeoanthropological and palaeontological projects in southern Africa;
  - Supporting the education of students in palaeontology and anthropology through scholarships, bursaries and grants; and
  - Informing the public about palaeoanthropological heritage, to develop, preserve and protect South African hominid sites, and to encourage tourists to visit them.
- Secondly, make recommendations regarding the future strategic direction of PAST.
- Thirdly, comment on the current status of palaeontology research in
South Africa.

6. THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW
The retrospective view will be covering the period from April 2002 to March 2006. The prospective view will cover the next five years but may also address long-term goals to which PAST should strive.

7. REVIEW DIMENSIONS
7.1. The review panel is requested to conduct the review and to determine the strengths, weaknesses and impact of PAST in terms of the aspects outlined below:

7.1.1. Performance of PAST
- Assess to what extent the objectives as stated in paragraph 5 above have been addressed;
- For benchmarking purposes, relate the performance of PAST, where appropriate to similar systems in other countries;
- Where possible, comment also on the appropriateness of the performance indicators (output, outcome and impact) used by PAST;
- Comment on the appropriateness and effectiveness of award-making processes; and
- Comment on the effectiveness of outreach activities.

7.1.2. Management of PAST
Comment on:
- The appropriateness of the management strategies, policies and objectives;
- Whether the management structures and processes were well designed and appropriate to achieve the objectives of PAST;
- The performance of the respective role players in the management of PAST;
- The effectiveness and efficiency in obtaining funding from national and international sources;
- The appropriateness and effectiveness of using financial and human resources; and
• The appraisal, monitoring and control of projects and activities supported by PAST.

7.1.3. **Capacity building**
Comment on:
• The capacity development of appropriate human resources;
• The impact PAST has had on the development of students, in particular postgraduate students; and
• The extent to which PAST contributed to transformation within the wider community of the National System of Innovation, including race and gender in terms of students.

7.2. Comment on the future strategic direction of PAST.

7.3. The review panel is also requested to comment on the current status of Palaeontology in South Africa under the following headings:
• Harnessing South Africa’s unique heritage in fossil/ferrous remains from earliest vertebrates to human origins;
• Supporting responsible exploration and discovery of the above;
• Strengthening palaeontology through quality research in the cognate disciplines of the field, to allow greater understanding and documentation of earlier life forms, their environments, and their evolution; and
• Supporting and promoting science-related activities, including education, public awareness and ancillary matters in respect of Palaeoanthropology.

8. **THE REVIEW PROCESS**

8.1. **The appointment of the review panel, preparations and programme**
• The project leader will appoint the review panel and its convenor;
• The review panel should comprise no more than three persons with appropriate experience and skills to conduct the review. Panel members should represent the spectrum of stakeholders in Palaeontology and Archaeology and should include a foreign expert;
• The resource documents for the review listed in the Appendix will be
available to the panel four weeks before the commencement of the review;

- The service provider will draw up a programme for the review in consultation with the Assignment Principal and the management of PAST. The review panel will have the opportunity to interrogate the proposed programme and to recommend amendments and additions should the need arise;

- The review panel will have the opportunity to interview members of the management of PAST, Government, the Higher Education Sector, and stakeholders from the Private sector, as well as student beneficiaries, etc;

- The review team will decide on and pursue its own line of questioning during interviews.

8.2. **Deliverables**

- Verbal feedback by the review panel to the Assignment Principal, representatives of the NRF as well as the management of PAST;

- A preliminary report by the review panel on the final day of the review programme;

- A final report within two weeks of completion of the review programme. The report should include:
  - an executive summary;
  - background to the review;
  - evaluation questions that were addressed;
  - key findings;
  - recommendations; and
  - appendices containing, e.g., terms of reference, persons interviewed.

- A response from the management of PAST within two weeks after receipt of the final report;

- Placement of the final report on the NRF website within ten weeks of receiving the response from the management of PAST;

- Consideration and implementation of relevant recommendations contained in the final report by the management of PAST.
9. **TIME FRAME**

- September 2006 – The review panel will be appointed
- January 2007 – Materials and schedules will be sent to the review panel
- March 2007 – Review takes place. Oral presentation of findings by review panel at DST
- April 2007 – Final report received by NRF
- June 2007 – Report sent to DST

The review will take place during November 2006 depending on the availability of suitable reviewers.

10. **BUDGET**

- The Evaluation Centre will submit a budget to DST for approval.
- The costs incurred for the review will be covered by DST.

11. **ENQUIRIES**

**LOGISTICS:**
Ms Desireé Sassman  
National Research Foundation  
Tel: 012 481 4199  
E-mail: desiree@nrf.ac.za

**OTHER:**
Tshepo Seekoe  
Department of Science and Technology  
Tel: 012 317 4367  
E-mail: tshepo.seekoe@dst.gov.za

The Terms of Reference may be amended should the need arise.
DOCUMENTS FOR THE REVIEW PANEL

Essential reading

- Self-evaluation report by PAST including a detailed financial report covering the review period
- A detailed status report from the NRF on PAST activities funded by the NRF
- Memorandum of agreement underlying the foundation of PAST between the NRF and PAST
- Memoranda of agreement between DST and the NRF of 2002, 2004/5 and 2006

Additional reading

- White paper on Science and Technology
- South Africa’s National Research and Development Strategy
National Research Foundation  
Ms. Desiree Sassman  
Liaison Officer: Evaluation Centre  
P O Box 2600  
Pretoria  
0001  

7 May 2007  

RE: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO REVIEW OF PAST - FINAL REPORT  

Dear Desiree  

Thank you for the final report we received on the 20th of April 2007. This letter serves to provide PAST’s management response to the report as requested. On behalf of the Chairman, Mr Rick Menell, and the trustees of PAST I would like extend our gratitude towards the Department of Science and Technology, the National Research Foundation and the NRF-appointed Review Panel for their
commitment and efforts in executing the considerable task of reviewing our organisation. We really are very grateful to all the involved parties who ensured that the process proceeded efficiently and effortlessly for us and all the stakeholders involved.

Chairman of the Managing trustees, Mr Mark Read, wishes to also thank everyone who has had an involvement in commissioning or executing the review which is and will continue to be of tremendous importance to PAST’s future strategy. A special thank you has to go to Ms Anati Canca who originally informed us of the review and guided us through the process and to the review panel who invested a large amount of time and energy into the compilation of the final report. Ms Sassman has been a constant source of information and guidance for which we are grateful.

As requested, PAST management perused the report individually and below I have collated management’s comments.

The report is overwhelmingly positive and trustees are pleased to note that the personal commitment and passion of each member of PAST is recognised as they firmly believe it is this passion that drives the organisation and will continue to do so.

In response to the Key Findings and recommendations commencing on Page 17:

Management is in agreement with all the major statements recorded under this heading.

Point number 3 was debated and it was strongly felt that our international fundraising efforts should be increased but that funding from other foundations would be unlikely and that our efforts should be concentrated on international corporations and even individual philanthropists.
Comments of a general nature:

On page 4, in the last paragraph it is felt that archaeology should be added as a discipline which PAST has served well considering our large support in this area.

The trustees have noted the comment on page 12 to introduce a more formalised application form and while they propose to give this recommendation serious consideration they wish to do so without sacrificing the flexibility of application procedures which received commendation on page 8.

PAST management otherwise concurs with the recommendations and findings of this report. A meeting is scheduled for the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of May to discuss the findings of the report and practical implementation of recommendations put forward by the panel.

There is no doubt that strong government support is crucial to PAST in order to maintain its private support base and to fulfil its goals. PAST, and indeed the entire palaeo science community are grateful for this commitment to education and research in our country and our continent.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further feedback.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Leenen
Fund Manager