

## **Observers Committee report**

### **Introduction**

The Observers Committee is an intermediate body providing an additional link between the working groups and fora, and the Steering Committee. Members of this committee are people with experience in long term planning but also an outstanding involvement with projects in and with Africa.

Members participate in WG discussions, they help to review papers, attend meetings and participate in the editing of the reports together with the WGs they are assigned to follow.

The job of the Observers Committee during the first stage is to help the working groups get running efficiently and smoothly. At a later, the committee can help to review LOIs and White Papers, and with the editing of the Group Reports.

### **Hands-on**

The interaction between the Observers Committee and the WGs was reduced to a minimum. This has to do with the commitment of the committee members (together with an agenda that often did not fit the schedules) but also to a lack of visibility in the importance of an Observer Committee in such a major initiative.

In some specific cases, especially in the beginning of the ASFAP process, members of the Observer Committee facilitated initial contacts between the WG convenors and senior colleagues in their respective communities. This was arguably the most tangible benefit from the scheme, as at least perceived by individual Observers.

### **Next stage**

At this stage of the initiative, the Observers Committee is expected to bring its know-how to the project through the reviewing of the different documents that have been produced by the Working Groups for the final report. This role has been implemented and was useful at least in some WGs.

### **Comments**

The concept of inviting independent Observers with a broad background in science strategies is a very interesting approach. However, its effectiveness remained rather short of the initial expectations, and it has to be rethought for future strategy exercises. The Observers did in fact not interact formally among themselves, so no common actions were developed, nor was there any internal motivation generated that could have been useful. The Observer Committee actions remained with the initiatives of its individual members, both with respect to their assigned WGs as well as with the Steering Committee. Nevertheless,

given the willingness of individual Observers to enhance the ASFAP process, one may still underline some positive contributions overall.

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### **Reference**

<https://indico.cern.ch/event/1039315/contributions/4365534/attachments/2282501/3878422/African%20Strategy%20Town%20Hall%20-%20Observers%20Committee%20Talk%20-%20CA%20Lee%20v2.pdf>