

RAPID PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2001

Introduction

The Rapid Product Development Association of South Africa (RAPDASA) was formally founded at the First Annual General Meeting of the Association on 8 November 2000, held in the CSIR Conference Centre in Pretoria. During the past year a firm base for the future activities of RAPDASA has been established under the leadership of its first Management Committee. All indications are that RAPDASA is increasingly being accepted as mouthpiece of the product development community in South Africa.

Management Committee

The Management Committee elected by the First Annual General Meeting was constituted as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Willie du Preez
Vice Chairperson:	Mr Deon de Beer
Secretary:	Ms Debbie Leeson
Treasurer:	Mr Hellmut Bowles
Members:	Prof Dimitri Dimitrov
	Ms Adrienne Viljoen
	Mr David Platt
	Mr Aldo Benetti

Management Committee meetings were held on 8 November 2000, 30 January 2001, 25 May 2001 and 13 November 2001. An Executive Committee meeting was held on 24 October 2001.

Projects

During the first Management Committee meeting the following responsibilities were accepted by committee members:

- Dimitri Dimitrov to drive the initiatives on Process Chain Selection and promotion of existing Rapid Prototyping facilities.
- David Platt to drive the promotion of RAPDASA in industry.
- Deon de Beer to drive the Materials Selection initiative and liaise between RAPDASA and the Global Alliance of Rapid Prototyping Associations (GARPA).

In subsequent meetings the Committee established the following five projects as first specialist focus areas of RAPDASA:

- Rapid Prototyping – promotion of the optimal utilisation and coordination of existing RP facilities in South Africa.

- Education – supporting the establishment of relevant training syllabi in Design and Product Development at educational institutions.
- Workshop Funding for Students – to enable more students to attend the workshops presented by RAPDASA.
- Student Design Fund – provision of funding to enhance the use of RP in design education.
- Tooling Design and Toolmaking – contributing to the visionary national initiative on improving the global competitiveness of the South African toolmaking industry, supplemented by a leading edge skills development programme.

Progress reports for some of these projects are attached as appendices to this report.

SA Design Week

The first South African Design Week was held from 10 to 17 September 2001. RAPDASA was represented by two of its members, i.e. the National Product Development Centre through a stand at the Design Africa Expo in the Sandton Convention Centre and the SABS Design Institute through its participation in the Design Education Forum of South Africa (DEFSA) conference. Design Week will become an annual event to promote general understanding of the importance of design for the South African industry. RAPDASA members are encouraged to actively participate in future Design Weeks.

Productdevelopment.co.za

In August 2001 the National Product Development Centre (NPDC) launched a South African product development internet portal, which should become the prime source of product development information for SA users, as well as an active platform for collaboration of service providers in the field. Known as *productdevelopment.co.za*, it offers links to most of the players and service providers to the product development industry in SA. It is recommended that the RAPDASA website be linked to this portal and that RAPDASA members actively promote this web portal and contribute towards continuously improving it.

GARPA

RAPDASA is affiliated to GARPA and acts as the host for Global Summit 2001 of the alliance. The annual meeting of GARPA was held on 12 November 2001 in Stellenbosch and six GARPA members also participated in the Second Annual Conference of RAPDASA.

Second Annual Conference

Dimitri Dimitrov and his colleagues of the Global Competitiveness Centre (GCC) in Stellenbosch organised the Second Annual Conference of RAPDASA, which took place in Stellenbosch on 14 and 15 November 2001. Through their efforts they have succeeded in drawing to the conference two keynote addresses and 28 other papers, of which 14 were by international presenters – quite an achievement! Representatives of nine countries came to South Africa to attend the second RAPDASA conference.

The conference was preceeded by two workshops, one on *Product Optimisation through Computer Aided Analysis and Simulation for Polymeric Components*, presented by Hellmut Bowles of Peninsula Technikon (Pentech) and Dr Nawaz Mahomed of ICE Mechanical, and the other on *Rapid Prototyping and Tooling – Advantages and Limitations*, presented by Prof Dimitri Dimitrov and his colleagues of the GCC.

Logo

The Management Committee has started a process to find a suitable logo for RAPDASA by individually approaching members to submit designs for this. The invitation is extended to all attendees of the Annual General Meeting to submit designs to the secretary by end December 2001. Thereafter members will be asked through an e-mail vote to select the logo of choice.

Finances

RAPDASA has maintained a healthy financial status throughout its first year and I want to express my appreciation to our Treasurer, Hellmut Bowles, for his work in this regard.

Sponsorship

On behalf of all our members I acknowledge with sincere appreciation the financial support that we have received from our sponsors for 2001, i.e. SASOL Polymers, NRF, GCC and Peninsula Technikon. Your support has enabled us to proceed with the pioneering work of our association in contributing to the improved global competitiveness of the South African manufacturing industry.

Conclusion

It has indeed been a privilege to lead RAPDASA in this first year of its existence and to experience the support of our members, stakeholders in industry and other collaborators. A special word of thanks goes to my colleagues on the Management Committee for their support and enthusiastic collaboration throughout the year. A start such as this holds the promise of an exciting and very awarding future for all of us!

Willie du Preez

Stellenbosch
14 November 2001