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NSTF e-Newsletter

S.E.T. for socio-economic growth

Innovation management for better lives

Opinion piece by Dr Mpho Lekgoathi

Countries that can take advantage of the rapid changes in technological innovation and adoption have a distinct advantage in the world. The Global Innovation Index shows that SA has a relative advantage in Africa, but what should be done to turn that advantage into economic development for the benefit of our people? [Read](#) the opinion piece.

NSTF News

Celebrating 25 years of the NSTF Awards, the 'Science Oscars of South Africa'

This year's Silver Jubilee of the [NSTF Awards](#) sees the highest number of nominations received since before the pandemic struck. Never before since 1994 has the scientific community in South Africa (SA) been faced with such challenging circumstances in which to do research and teaching. Through awarding excellence in science, engineering, technology (SET) and innovation, the awards aim to recognise, honour, promote, profile and encourage scientific inquiry in SA to find researched solutions to the prevailing social and economic challenges of our time. Thank you to all nominators and nominees for submitting your completed nomination forms. Look out for the announcement of nominees in your mailbox in April.

Special annual theme award

The NSTF's theme for 2023 is *Ocean science for sustainable development*. The [Special Annual Theme Award](#) for the 2023 NSTF-South32 Awards will be made for an outstanding contribution to SET and innovation from research and development in the ocean sciences for sustainable development.

What's new this year?

The NSTF-SAMRC Clinician-Scientist Award: The [South African Medical Research Council](#) (SAMRC) is a [new category partner](#). This award is for a clinician-scientist with a degree in medicine (MBChB) or dentistry (BDS) with a PhD who works in the academic, clinical and research sectors and has demonstrated the ability to conduct high-impact research in biomedical areas in conjunction with their own or other clinical practice for the purposes of enhancing life and improving the health of the community. Ten nominees are competing for this new award.

SAYAS as a new prize sponsor: For the first time, the [South African Young Academy of Science](#) (SAYAS) is partnering with the NSTF as new prize sponsor for the TW Kambule-NSTF Emerging Researcher category. Prizes of R20 000 will be awarded to the two winners to supplement their research funding.

A prize for an established category: The TW Kambule-NSTF Researcher category has a prize sponsor for the first time. [proSET](#) (the [Professional Bodies and Learned Societies](#)

[Sector](#)) of the NSTF is now sponsoring R20 000 prize money to supplement the winner's research funding.

Today's research ... tomorrow's innovation



Help the NSTF to fulfill its role as a non-profit company representing South Africa's science, engineering, technology (SET) and innovation stakeholders. NSTF provides platforms to promote SET and innovation, consult stakeholders with government, have vibrant discussions about currently relevant issues, celebrate the very top scientists and related professionals in SA, and do meaningful STEM outreach to the youth. Your tax-exempted Donation plays a crucial role in sustaining these efforts. See the donation form on our [website](#) for more information and to make your contribution.

NSTF Discussion Forum news

There are currently two NSTF [Discussion Forums](#) in the pipeline for the first half of this year:

- **Pitfalls of Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is first up on 18-19 May 2023 in collaboration with [proSET](#) (professionals in science, engineering and technology), the professional societies sector of the NSTF.
- The discussion of **South Africa's electricity crisis** is planned for 6-7 June 2023. In the meantime, consider the information shared at the '[Loadshedding and power cuts – what is really going on?](#)' Discussion Forum held in October 2021 for some background on the topic.

Watch your mailbox for the invitations.

Make your voice heard on SET-related topics!

Bursaries available

Visit the NSTF website for the latest bursaries in science, engineering and

STEMulator

[STEMulator.org](#) took part in an Engineering and Tech Week at [Sci-Bono Discovery Centre](#) in Johannesburg from 28 February to 3 March 2023. The STEMulator platform was showcased, and our new wall banner was prominently displayed. NSTF staff members demonstrated to teachers how the STEMulator can be used in the curriculum content in their classrooms. The learners, mainly from grade 9-12, enjoyed interacting with the platform. They especially liked exploring the career options on the website and found the information worthwhile. [Read more.](#)

Museum challenge

The team recently added the [museum](#) onto the STEMulator landscape. We challenge NSTF members to provide visual (and animated) content to populate the museum. Information on archaeologists, geologists, naturalists, those doing research into the history of humankind, transport, robotics and more can all add value to the STEMulator as an online learning platform.

Share your heroes

STEMulator established a relationship with the [IEEE \(USA\) Reach programme](#) during World Science Forum in Cape Town at the end of last year. IEEE Reach explores

technology (SET) in the NSTF [Bursary Directory](#). Currently available:

- [Barberton Mine Bursary](#) (Deadline: 18 March 2023)
- [Impala Platinum/Implats Bursary](#) (Deadline: 31 March 2023)
- [ASSMANG Manganese Bursary](#) (Deadline: 1 April 2023)
- [Astron Energy Bursary](#) (Deadline: 14 April 2023)
- [Alan Gray Orbis Foundation Fellowship](#) (Deadline: 30 April 2023)
- [Shoprite Group Bursary](#) (Deadline: 30 April 2023)

SET for life

technology and engineering history and the relationships they have with society, politics, economics, and culture. It gives credit to inventors such as Maxwell, Bell, Dunlop and Benz. How about profiling South African science, engineering technology and innovation heroes on STEMulator? Share your heroes with us.

Email [Ms Kgaugelo Pule](#) for more information on the [STEMulator](#).



**Visit [STEMulator.org](#) to Explore>Discover>Learn
Inspiring the next generation of STEM professionals**

Sad farewell to valued board member

Ms Mariana Purnell, a member of the [NSTF Executive](#) Committee since 2019, has resigned to focus on her other passions. She is a [consultant at eGrain](#). Mariana has been an adjudicator for the NSTF-South32 Awards since 2016. She wrote an opinion piece for the NSTF e-Newsletter in October 2022, titled "[Give us our daily bread](#)". We extend our heartfelt thanks for her valued contributions and wish her all the best for her future endeavours.

Career talks by NSTF-Sout32 Award winners

The NSTF's [Share 'n Dare programme](#) provides a platform for [NSTF-South32 Award winners](#) to act as role models and ambassadors for science, engineering, technology (SET), and innovation. The following new career talk videos of 2022 winners are now available:

Meet Transport Engineer: Prof Marianne Vanderschuren

The 2022 Special Annual Theme Award: Basic sciences for sustainable development, was made to transport engineer Prof Marianne Vanderschuren of the University of Cape Town. Her research focuses on transport improvements for vulnerable road users, resulting in more than 5 000 lives being saved since 2009. Watch the [video](#).

Meet Biomedical Researcher: Dr Wynand Goosen

Dr Wynand Goosen, biomedical researcher at Stellenbosch University, won the 2022 TW Kambule-NSTF Emerging Researcher Award for his leadership role in South African research on the surveillance of zoonotic tuberculosis in domestic cattle and wild animals. Zoonotic pathogens are potential sources of infections in susceptible people in rural areas. Watch the [video](#).

Meet Chemist and Innovator: Dr Kokkie Swanepoel

Thermtron Scientific CC, with Sponsor and Manager Dr Jacobus (Kokkie) Swanepoel, a chemist by training, won the Innovation Award for a Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) in 2022. Over the past 10 years, Dr Swanepoel and Thermtron Scientific CC have transitioned multiple mineral-processing and green technologies through all innovation stages, from laboratory through to pilots to commercially viable projects. Watch the [video](#).

Please distribute this news widely to create awareness of the wonderful South African work being done and career opportunities in these fields.

SET for knowledge driven solutions!



proSET (Professionals in science, engineering and technology) is a sector of the NSTF currently representing 43 professional and learned societies. This section shares news about [current members](#) and introduces new members of the [proSET sector](#).

- **New co-chair for proSET**

The proSET committee appointed Dr Bertus Smith as the new co-chair after the resignation of Prof Syamala Krishnannair. He represents the [Geological Society of South Africa \(GSSA\)](#) and science on the committee. He is employed as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geology at the University of Johannesburg. His alternate representative is Mr Tony Parry, representing the [Institute of Information Technology Professionals South Africa \(IITPSA\)](#) and information technology in general, on the proSET Committee. The Committee is composed of representatives of engineering, science, technology and STEM education.

- **proSET member booklet posted to NSTF members**

Printed copies of the [proSET member booklet](#) were posted to all NSTF members. The booklet is a handy information source and reference guide in easy-to-read format, aimed at facilitating an enhanced understanding of who is who of professional societies in science, engineering and technology (SET).

- **CESA responds to Cabinet reshuffle – Collaboration is key**

In commenting on the Cabinet Reshuffle by President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chris Campbell, CEO of [Consulting Engineers South Africa \(CESA\)](#) stated, “Our new Minister of Electricity, Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, needs to seize the opportunity for collaboration with the private sector for funding and with our member companies who have the technical knowledge and capability to deliver results with the speed that our country so desperately needs in order for economic growth”. [Read more](#).

- **How to get into IT – IITPSA experts point the way**

South Africa is crying out for IT skills, and for young people considering careers in the sector, there are many paths they can take to ‘get into IT’. This is according to experts participating in a webinar hosted by the [Institute of Information Technology Professionals South Africa \(IITPSA\)](#). The IITPSA webinar on Careers in IT was staged to give young people insight into the IT career options available, and the skills and qualifications required for careers in IT. [Read more](#).

- **Enter your school for the IITPSA Applications and/or Programming Olympiad**

The [Applications Olympiad](#) is a challenge for those who take CAT or the ICDL or are otherwise computer literate. Register [here](#) for the first round that takes place between 2

and 5 May 2023. The [Programming Olympiad](#) is a challenge for learners who can use a programming language like Scratch, Python, Java, C++ or Delphi. Register [here](#) for the first round that takes place between 24 and 28 July 2023.

- **Latest issue of *IMIESA* now available**

The latest issue of *IMIESA*, the official magazine of the [Institute of Municipal Engineering of Southern Africa](#) (IMESA) is now available. [Read](#) about building a capable construction sector, using data to fix South Africa's water challenges, and more.

- **Single Market of Engineers to be created**

The [Engineering Council of South Africa](#) (ECSA) announced that the Federation of African Engineering Organisations (FAEO), in the effort to harmonise standards and regulations for the engineering profession, will digitalise the engineering practitioners' database. This will be done to build a reliable and trusted source of engineering services data through professional engineering institutions in Africa. Click [here](#) to read the media statement.

- **Dedicated cruise deepens offshore research capacity in South Africa**

A team of marine scientists has embarked on a multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary offshore expedition to develop the capacity of young southern African scientists and to collect data in outer shelf and deep-sea habitats. The expedition was designed by the emerging researchers and will contribute to several post graduate theses. It is led by young marine biologist, Luther Adams, who first joined the [South African National Biodiversity Institute](#) (SANBI) as an intern seven years ago. [Read more](#)



SET-related policies currently open for public comment

Keep informed and have your say

- [Non-Profit Organisation Act: Regulations](#) (Comment by 21 March 2023)
- [Competition Act: Regulations: Block exemption for energy suppliers](#) (Comment by 23 March 2023)
- [Competition Act: Regulations: Block exemption for energy users](#) (Comment by 23 March 2023)
- [National Road Traffic Amendment Bill](#) (Comment by 27 March 2023)
- [National Land Transport Amendment Bill](#) (Comment by 27 March 2023)
- [Draft Water and Sanitation Services Policy on Privately Owned Land](#) (Comment by 31 March 2023)
- [Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act: Regulations: Labelling and advertising of foodstuffs](#) (Comment by 30 April 2023)

SET-related policy news

Some articles included in the section below are opinion pieces. The opinions expressed in these articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSTF Executive Committee, Directors, Secretariat or Members.

4IR and information technologies

- [‘Chronic ICT skills shortage’ deepens amid skills recycling](#) (itweb.co.za)
- [South Africa struggling to retain skilled tech workers, new SAP report reveals](#) (bizcommunity.com)

Climate change and environment

- [Great legislation, terrible landfills](#) (From ReSource, February 2023)
- [CSIR-led research uncovers multidecadal trend of increasing iron stress in Southern Ocean phytoplankton](#) (csir.co.za)

Energy

- [Electricity Minister launches Resource Plan to accelerate Energy Action Plan implementation](#) (sanews.gov.za)

Health and medicine

- [Maternal air pollution exposure puts unborn babies at risk in South Africa](#) (samrc.ac.za)
- [International Study gives the ‘thumbs up’ for the safe use of PREP in pregnant women](#) (samrc.ac.za)

Infrastructure

- [DWS’s ‘captain’ and his plan for 2023](#) (infrastructurenews.co.za)
- [Government must address individual infrastructure needs – says GIC](#) (infrastructurenews.co.za)

International Cooperation

- [South Africa and Uganda sign agreement on essential oils](#) (csir.co.za)



The events posted below are correct as far as we could establish at the time of preparing this newsletter. Please check the relevant websites for changes to dates and venues.

- The Department of Small Business Development and its agencies will be hosting the Youth Challenge Webinar. The webinar is targeted at youth SMME's who are in the green economy, technology and innovation industry, 23 March 2023, 10:00-12:00. RSVP via businessboost@sefa.org.za by 22 March 2023
- Water: Challenges in water infrastructure and treatment: Webinar, 29 March 2023, 14:00. Register [here](#).
- [Africa Automation Technology Fair](#): Johannesburg, 9-11 May 2023
- [International Grassland Congress](#): Soil, Animal and Human Health: Kentucky, USA, 14-20 May 2023
- [Nobel Prize Summit on Countering Misinformation and Building Trust in Science](#): Washington, D.C., and virtually, free and open to the public, 24-26 May 2023

- *Daily Maverick's* [The Gathering: Earth Edition](#): Cape Town (and online globally) where solutions-focused discussions will look at the effect of the climate crisis and ecosystem collapse across business, security, civil society, food production and much more. 26 May 2023, 09:00-18:00
- [Food Safety Summit 2023](#): Gauteng, 30-31 May 2023
- The inaugural [Township Economies Conference](#) and Expo, Gauteng, 13-14 June 2023
- [XXI Triple Helix Conference](#) on “Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities for Sustainable Development - Linking education, research and innovation to achieve the SDGs and ESGs”: Barcelona (Spain), 26-29 June 2023
- [23rd Congress of the Entomological Society of Southern Africa \(ESSA23\)](#): Stellenbosch. 11-14 July 2023
- [Grassland Society of Southern Africa Congress 58](#): Rustenburg. North Wes, 24-28 July 2023
- [31st International Cartographic Conference \(ICC 2023\)](#): Cape Town, 13-18 August 2023
- [Symposium on innovative teaching practices](#), organised by The Mathematics for the Future Project: Oxford University, UK, 14-18 August 2023
- [International Association for Impact Assessment South Africa \(IAIASA\) National Congress](#): Kruger National Park, 20-25 August 2023
- [12th International Congress of Plant Pathology](#): France, 20-25 August 2023
- [2023 SAAFoST Biennial Congress and Exhibition](#): Future Foods: Smarter and More Sustainable Solutions, Cape Town, 28-30 August 2023
- [Colloquium of African Geology \(CAG29\)](#): Namibia, 26-29 September 2023
- [SA Innovation Summit 2023](#): Cape Town, 27-28 September 2023. Theme: “Africa’s Innovation Frontier”. [Pre-registration](#) is now open.
- [International Conference on Industrial Engineering, Systems Engineering and Engineering Management \(ISEM2023\)](#): Western Cape, 2-4 October 2023
- [19th biennial International Conference on Accelerator and Large Experimental Physics Control Systems \(ICALEPCS\) 2023](#): Cape Town, 9-13 October 2023. Hosted by the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO), the conference will be preceded by workshops on 7 and 8 October 2023.
- [IMESA Conference 2023](#): Gqeberha, 25-27 October 2023. Call for abstracts opening January 2023



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Science Councils and Statutory Bodies

- **CSIR**: [CSIR connects with the world at African Mining Indaba 2023](#) (csir.co.za)
- [CSIR releases 2022 statistics on power generation in SA](#) (engineerit.co.za)
- **HSRC**: [Call for Nominations of Young Scientists as Members of the South African Young Academy of Science 2023](#). Deadline: 31 May 2023.
- **NRF**: [NRF bids farewell to Dr Beverley Damonse](#) (nrf.ac.za)

- [NRF-Nominated Young Researchers Meet Nobel Laureates in Japan](http://nrf.ac.za) (nrf.ac.za)
- **SANSA:** [Commemorating a 24-year legacy of the launch of SunSat-1](http://engineerit.co.za) (engineerit.co.za)
- **SABS:** [SABS cautions against unverified claims of degradable plastics](http://infrastructurenews.CO.ZA) (infrastructurenews.CO.ZA)
- **SAMRC:** The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) held its 9th SAMRC Scientific Merit Awards recently to recognise excellence in health research. [Read more](#).
- [BGI Group Donates Gene Sequencer to Support Capacity Building at South African Medical Research Council](http://samrc.ac.za) (samrc.ac.za)

Higher Education Institutions

- [Sol Plaatje University](#) announced the appointment of Professor Debra Meyer as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, with effect from 1 April 2023. Prof Meyer, then of the University of Pretoria, won the 2009-2010 NSTF TW Kambule Award for a senior black female researcher over the last 5-10 years for her research to developing novel HIV treatments, prognostic markers and vaccine components.
- [UCT's new eResearch director: Prof Vaccari](http://uct.ac.za) (uct.ac.za)
- Dr Adam Pantanowitz has been appointed as the inaugural [Angela and David Fine Chair in Innovation](#) and the first Director of the Wits Innovation Centre (WIC), and Letlotlo Phohole as the Centre's Senior Programme Manager. [Read more](http://wits.ac.za) (wits.ac.za)
- [Opening of the new Data Sciences and Innovation Hub at Wits Rural Campus](http://wits.ac.za) (wits.ac.za)
- [SU awarded R40 million NIH grant to develop HIV-prevention strategies for rural communities](http://sun.ac.za) (sun.ac.za)
- [Two UJ experts among the world's top researchers in the fields of electronics and electrical engineering](http://uj.ac.za) (uj.ac.za)
- [UJ launches 4IR Experience Lab in partnership with Schneider Electric](http://uj.ac.za) (uj.ac.za)
- [MSc sextet clinch a third position at the 5th International Water for Future \(W4F\) Hackathon in France](http://ru.ac.za) (ru.ac.za)

4IR and information technologies

- [What you need to know about ChatGPT and Copyright](http://engineerit.co.za) (engineerit.co.za)
- [Tech alone cannot create successful townships – Philippi village CEO Bushra Razack](http://biznews.com) (biznews.com)
- [Artificial Intelligence boost for SU research on long-Covid](http://sun.ac.za) (sun.ac.za)

Agriculture

- [UWC partners with and advises emerging farmers on climate resilience in Limpopo](http://uwc.ac.za) (uwc.ac.za)

Energy

- [South Africa's bailout of Eskom won't end power cuts: splitting up the utility can, as other countries have shown](http://theconversation.com) (theconversation.com)
- [South Africa's power crisis: going off the grid works for the wealthy – but could deepen injustice for the poor](http://theconversation.com) (theconversation.com)

Environment and Climate change

- [Managing the impact of the Benguela losing breath](http://uct.ac.za) (uct.ac.za)
- [Painting wind turbine blades to prevent bird strikes](http://energize.co.za) (energize.co.za)

Health and Medicine

- [Why burning coal for power in SA is killing people](http://energize.co.za) (energize.co.za)
- [Town planners & street vendors could ease hunger in cities](http://bhekisisa.org) (bhekisisa.org)
- [Excess Mortality Initiative underway to count every death as every death counts](http://wits.ac.za) (wits.ac.za)
- [Customised cochlear model pursues hi-fi hearing](http://up.ac.za) (up.ac.za)
- [UP-led study finds aloe plant could impede life cycle of malaria-carrying parasite](http://up.ac.za) (up.ac.za)
- [Sequencing of African population to enhance genomic dataset for disease diagnosis](http://nature.com) (nature.com)

Mathematics

- [Illustrating the Impact of the Mathematical Sciences](http://nationalacademies.org) (nationalacademies.org)

Plant health

- [Beetle pest spreading steadily](http://capetown.gov.za) (capetown.gov.za). For more information on plant health, visit the web page on the 2021 NSTF [Discussion Forum](#) titled [Plant health in South Africa – threats to biosecurity, biodiversity and food security](#). Here you will find a variety of articles and videos, as well as a press release on the topic.

Science engagement

- [UP-led project inspires African girls to engage in science](http://up.ac.za) (up.ac.za)
- [Hacks vs boffins – bridging the divide](http://mandela.ac.za) (mandela.ac.za)

Space science and astronomy

- [GEO and LEO satellite services – different distances from Earth, different applications on Earth](http://engineerit.co.za) (engineerit.co.za)
- [Odman Award recognises top female early career astronomer in Africa](http://uwc.ac.za) (uwc.ac.za)
- [MeerKAT discovers a distant galaxy has very large hydrogen atoms](http://sarao.ac.za) (sarao.ac.za)

Women in science

- [Breaking down barriers](http://nature.com) (nature.com)



Winners of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) President's Award: Professors **Valerie Corfield** and **Johan Louw**, respectively. (Prof Corfield had also been the winner of the 2012 NSTF-BHP Billiton Award for science communication.) She continues to serve in advancing research outputs and the research careers of academics in molecular and cell biology, health sciences and other disciplines. Prof Louw is a biomedical scientist who serves as the Senior Platform Director at the Centre and

Platforms Office. His expertise and focal research areas are in the Pathophysiology of metabolic disease, diabetes prevention, early diagnosis and treatment.

Among the awardees in the Gold Medal category, which is for researchers who have made substantial and influential contributions to health, is **Professor Bavesh Kana**. The Biomimicry Diagnostic Verification Controls team from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), represented by Prof Bavesh Kana, had also won the 2020/2021 Innovation Award: Corporate Organisation in the NSTF-South32 Awards.

The Bronze medals are awarded to scientists who have recently entered research, with not less than five years post PhD experience. Among the Bronze medal awardees is **Dr Wynand Goosen**, winner of the 2022 TW Kambule-NSTF Emerging Researcher Award. [Read](#) about all the 2023 SAMRC Gold, Silver and Bronze Medallists.

Opportunities

- **IYBSSD SA School Competition:** All South African schools are invited to enter one team each to participate in this school competition in support of the [International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development](#) (IYBSSD). Register for the competition by 31 March 2023 and stand a chance to win R10 000 for your school. **Teachers** are invited to join the **Information Session** on 22 March 2023 @ 15:00 SAST. [Click here](#) to register (via Zoom). This invitation is on behalf of the [SA Department of Science and Innovation](#) (DSI), the [Academy of Science of South Africa](#) (ASSAf), and the [National Research Foundation](#) (NRF), with support from the [Marang Centre for Mathematics and Science Education](#), Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. Click [here](#) for more information.
- Do you have a ground-breaking financial services business, either operational or in the ideation phase, that you are eager to catapult to the next level? The Southern Africa Innovation Bridge Portal (IBP) Fintech Challenge could be exactly what your business needs to progress and grow your business. Click [here](#) to find out more. Closing date for applications: 19 March 2023

About the NSTF

The National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF), established in 1995, is a broadly-representative stakeholder body for all science, engineering and technology (SET) and innovation organisations in South Africa, which seeks to influence policy formulation and delivery.

The NSTF Awards are unique in SA, recognising the outstanding contributions of individuals and groups to SET and innovation.

The science bursaries page provides information on bursaries and bursary providers for science, engineering and related studies.

STEMulator.org attracts learners and students to the exciting world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It provides a virtual world full of stimulating content to excite and inform the youth, including STEM career guidance. Established under the auspices of the NSTF proSET membership sector (*Professionals in science, engineering and technology*).

Disclaimer

The NSTF has taken all practical measures to ensure that the material contained in this newsletter is correct. The NSTF reserves the right to make changes as it deems necessary.

Privacy

Registration details submitted to the NSTF will be treated confidentially and will only be used by NSTF to communicate with its members and subscribers.

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