

How do publicly funded institutions contribute to sustainable socio-economic development?

an NSTF Discussion Forum in collaboration with the Science Councils and Statutory Bodies Sector

Day 2: 18 October 2023

Speakers' Biographies

Innovation and generating small business: How do publicly funded institutions drive innovation and the generation of business?

09:10-10:40



Ms Paballo Masite is the Director of Funds and Incentives Management Directorate within the National Intellectual Property Management Office (NIPMO), a specialised Service Delivery Unit at the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI). Prior to joining NIPMO in November 2015, she was based at the Offices of Technology Transfer at Tshwane University of Technology, the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) as an Intellectual Property Specialist. She also worked as a Projects Specialist for the National Research Foundation (NRF), BankSeta and Telkom SA. She holds an Honours degree in Computer Science from Multimedia University in Malaysia, a Law Degree (LLB) from the University of South Africa (Unisa) and Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management from the University of Cape Town (UCT). Her area of expertise includes Intellectual Property (IP) Protection and Management, Commercialisation of IP and Project Management.



Ms Malese Ndlhovu is a seasoned Innovation Management and Technology Commercialisation practitioner within the African region and international innovation ecosystem. Her current role is Senior Business Development Manager: Commercialisation at the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA). TIA is an entity of the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) that supports the development and commercialisation of publicly funded Intellectual Property (IP) artefacts and disruptive technology innovations. Malese holds a Master's degree in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) with 20 years exposure in private and public sectors. Her current role at TIA supports the commercialisation of publicly funded Intellectual Property assets emanating from Academia, SMMEs, Science Councils, Private Corporations, and individual innovators within the South African National System of Innovation (NSI) and Tech-entrepreneurship ecosystem. The role supports translating hightech innovations into early-stage startup ventures driven by novel discoveries and socioeconomic outcomes. This entails managing the Full Investment Lifecycle of TIA investment opportunities towards Commercialisation as New Products and services, New Venture Creation, IP Assignment or Licensing, including TIA Investment Redemptions and Exits. Malese previously served as Acting-Head of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector at TIA. Prior TIA, she held varied ICT and innovation practitioner roles in Telecommunications and Software Development, Research & Development (R&D), Strategic Human Capital Development, Transformation and Job Creation. Malese was awarded the prestigious Global Hasso Plattner Founders Award in Germany, 2017 for her contribution towards Transformation and Job creation for over 600 African ICT consultants (SAP Skills for Africa initiative)

The SET/society interface



11:00-11:30

Social science: The importance of social science research in sustainable socio-economic development

Dr Zaynab Essack is a research psychologist and chief research specialist who uses social science and humanities approaches to explore public health, research ethics, and human rights questions in Low- or Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). Her primary focus is on minimising health disparities related to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), violence, and substance abuse amongst vulnerable populations, particularly adolescents, women, and sexual minorities. Her work includes developing and evaluating interventions to address current social issues in high-poverty and high HIV-prevalence communities.

Dr Essack has conducted research and provided recommendations on adolescents' access to SRH in SA, including the implementation of relevant laws and policies. She is MPI on a study of decentralised community-based PrEP delivery and of a Master's Degree programme in Health Research Ethics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Zaynab is passionate about utilising alternative arts-based and community-based methodologies for socio-behavioural research. She is a member of the South African National AIDS Council's (SANAC) Prevention Task Team, and the Biomedical Research Ethics Committee at the UKZN.

Skills pipeline panel: The role of publicly funded research institutions in maintaining the skills pipeline for sustainable socio-economic development

11:30-12:30



Organisation: CSIR

Ms Pinda Sifunda is a Senior Manager in Learning, Capability Development, and Corporate Social Investment at the CSIR, where I play a pivotal role in developing and strengthening critical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) – the foundation of our nation's innovation ecosystem. Equipped with a Master's qualification in Science and later on a Master's degree in Business Administration and Leadership, I have assumed various roles within the national system of innovation. From my early days as a research scientist at Sasol to my tenure as a research and innovation policy administrator at the former Department of Science and Technology (now the DSI), I've always been dedicated to the advancement of science and technology in our country.

My initial role at the CSIR was to manage partnerships and resources for human capital development, which ultimately led to an expansive network that allowed the CSIR to leverage resources and broaden its skills development initiatives. Today,

as a Senior Manager for Learning, Capability Development, and CSI, my focus is on building and strengthening capacity, particularly in the critical domains of STEM. I am very passionate about skills development and my role allows me to contribute to the sustainability of the CSIR and the country by providing relevant skills to meet the challenges of the future.



Organisation: HSRC

Ms Bongiwe Moni is the Head for Capacity Development & Internships, overseeing interventions that address youth and graduate unemployment. She is also the Manager responsible for research coordination in the Office of the Deputy CEO. She holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and an Honours degree in Business Administration majoring in Public Administration and Public Policy from the University of Western Cape (UWC). She is currently studying towards a Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) in Community Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Her research interests are on youth access to the labour market, unemployment, poverty and inequality, skills development and youth pathways/trajectories post-schooling. She is also interested in issues of moral regeneration, ethics and good governance.