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VALTERRA	1,350.00	▲10.01%	IMPLATS	191.16	▲5.65%	MOMENTUM	42.44	▲4.22%
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science, technology & innovation
Department: Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BRANDSTORIES

NSTF-South32 Awards 2025/2026

Today's research ... tomorrow's innovation

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National Science and Technology Forum



SOUTH32

Recognising, celebrating and promoting excellence in science, engineering, technology and innovation in SA

THE hybrid gala events of the prestigious NSTF-South32 Awards took place on Thursday, July 16, 2026 for the 28th time. Famously known as the “Science Oscars” of South Africa, these events constitute the flagship project of the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF).

South African excellence in science, engineering, technology (SET) and innovation was celebrated, with 20 awards made in 16 categories.

Award winners

The finalists and awardees were announced, honoured and celebrated at the hybrid gala events held in Cape Town and Johannesburg simultaneously, and via live broadcast on the NSTF YouTube channel.

It is an honour to be nominated, an achievement to reach the finals and an exceptional milestone of excellence to be a winner. The NSTF and its sponsors congratulate the winners of the highly acclaimed 2025/2026 NSTF-South32 Awards.

The NSTF’s theme for 2026 is “Healthy Ageing” in recognition of the Decade of Healthy Ageing as proclaimed by the United Nations (UN).

The aims are to change the attitudes of society towards ageing, including creating age-friendly environments, delivering integrated and person-centred health care, and access to long-



Prof Kathleen Kahn and Prof Stephen Tollman were the recipients of the Special Annual Theme Award: Healthy Ageing. I Supplied

term care for those who need it.

In recognition of this theme, a Special Annual Theme Award was made to the team of Professors Kathleen Kahn and Stephen Tollman (Wits University) for their contributions to building evidence for healthy ageing across the life-course in South and sub-Saharan Africa.

Capacity showcase

The NSTF is the most representative multi-stakeholder non-profit forum in South Africa promoting SET and innovation for more than 30 years.

The largest SET and innovation awards in South Africa, the national NSTF-South32 Awards showcase the scientific research and innovation capacity of our nation. Established in 1998 in partnership with the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DST&I), they were the first science awards in the country after the change of government in 1994.

The excellent outputs of the winners support the country's advancement, economic growth and the social upliftment of our people.

An important aspect of the awards is the showcasing of South African SET and innovation to the public. This includes the NSTF Share 'n Dare Programme: a year-long engagement programme during which the award winners share their career knowledge and experiences with school learners, and “dare” them to follow in their footsteps.

The NSTF Brilliants Programme recognises at least two top performers in physical science and mathematics from Grade 12 from each province who have gone on to study in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field. The awards platform is used to expose these brilliant students to award winning scientists and the community, as well as careers.

For more information on the winners, go to: <https://nstf.org.za/current-winners/>

Prof Fortune Ganda earns acclaim for green finance research

FOR more than a decade, while the world searched for practical ways to confront climate change and build sustainable economies, Prof Fortune Ganda quietly dedicated himself to answering one question: how could countries pursue economic growth without sacrificing the environment?

That pursuit earned the iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu Professor of Accounting one of South Africa's highest honours in science and innovation – the 2026 NSTF-TIA Green Economy Award – in recognition of research that helped shape the country's transition towards a greener, more sustainable future.

For Prof Ganda, however, the accolade was about far more than personal achievement. He said it recognised the potential that existed within historically disadvantaged institutions and the young researchers determined to make a difference.

“Receiving this award is a profound endorsement of the ‘Green Finance-Environment Nexus’ framework I have spent the last decade building. On a personal level, as an academic leader at a historically disadvantaged institution (HDI), this recognition carries immense symbolic weight,” he said.

“It serves as a powerful message of representation to the post-graduate candidates I mentor, as well as the early-career researchers I strive to uplift; demonstrating that their voices and contributions to the green economy are seen, valued and capable of shaping South Africa's future.”

Prof Ganda's research pioneered sustainable finance models that equipped policymakers and businesses with practical tools to make informed environmental decisions. By developing measurable sustainability accounting frameworks, his work provided empirical evidence that supported initiatives such as South Africa's Carbon Tax and broader environmental governance.

Prof Ganda added that the national recognition also reflected Walter Sisulu University's growing contribution to global research. “It demonstrates that world-class, globally relevant science can be conducted at a rural HDI.”

Congratulating Prof Ganda, iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu Vice-Chancellor Prof Thandi Mgwedi said: “This notable achievement demonstrates the university turning the tide and deepening excellence in relevant research.”

Winners: NSTF-South32 Awards 2025/2026

Lifetime Award
Prof Rachel Jewkes

TW Kambule-NSTF Researcher Award (joint winners) | Sponsor: proSET
Prof Tjaart Krüger and Prof Musa Manzi

TW Kambule-NSTF Emerging Researcher Award (joint winners) | Sponsor: South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS)
Dr Edith Phalane and Prof Topside Mathonsi

Management Award
Prof Marcia Mkansi

Engineering Research Capacity Development Award
Prof Sudesh Sivarasu

NSTF-Water Research Commission (WRC) Award | Sponsor: WRC
Prof Patricia Forbes

NSTF-SAMRC Clinician-Scientist Award | Sponsor: South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)
Prof Llewellyn Padayachy

NSTF-TIA Green Economy Award | Sponsor: Technology Innovation Agency (TIA)
Prof Fortune Ganda

Science Diplomacy for Africa Award | Sponsor: Science Diplomacy Capital for Africa (SDCfa)
Prof Malik Maaza

NSTF-Agricultural Research Council (ARC) Award | Sponsor: ARC
Reel Life Food Security Programme, Reel Life NPC

Research Software Award (all scientific fields, including humanities and social sciences)
Cube Analysis and Rendering Tool for Astronomy (CARTA)

NSTF-SADiLaR Research Software Award: Human Language Technologies (HLT) | Sponsor: South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR)
TextAugment

Data for Research Award
National Biodiversity Assessment 2025 Core Data Team

Innovation Award: Corporate Organisation | Sponsor: National Intellectual Property Management Office (NIPMO)
JENano Research Group

Innovation Award: Small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) | Sponsor: NIPMO
AlrSynQ Systems

Communication Award
Prof Mike Bruton

Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Award
Advancing Knowledge NPC

Special Annual Theme Award: Healthy Ageing
Team Prof Kathleen Kahn and Prof Stephen Tollman

THE 2026 SAWISA FINALISTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Distinguished Women Researchers
Prof. Tanusha Raniga-WINNER
Prof. Agnes Chigona-1st Runner up
Prof. Nirmala Dorasamy-2nd Runner up

Distinguished Young Women Researchers
Prof. Xanthe Hunt-WINNER
Prof. Faheema Mahomed-Asmal-1st Runner up
Prof. Musawenkosi Saurombe-2nd Runner up

NATURAL (LIFE AND PHYSICAL) AND ENGINEERING SCIENCES

Distinguished Woman Researchers
Prof. Marietjie Venter-WINNER
Prof. Sheena Kumari Pillai-1st Runner up
Prof. Nelishia Pillay-2nd Runner up

Distinguished Young Woman Researchers
Prof. Tricia Naicker-WINNER
Dr Yaseera Ismail-1st Runner up
Prof. Muthumuni Managa-2nd Runner up

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH SCIENCE

Distinguished Woman Researcher
Associate Prof. Lynn Hendricks-WINNER

Distinguished Young Woman Researcher
Dr Hafsa Essop-WINNER
INNOVATION FOR IMPACT: WOMEN LEADING CHANGE

Distinguished Woman Researcher
Prof. Tebogo Mothiba-WINNER

Distinguished Young Woman Researcher
Associate Prof. Sabrina Kumschick-WINNER

DSTI-PROF. KEOLEBOGILE SHIRLEY MOTAUNG FELLOWSHIPS

Doctoral Fellowships
Ms Makwena Sebone
Associate Prof. Jane Ndlovu
Ms Nolwandle Khumalo
Ms Nondumiso Nkosi
Ms Vhuhwaho Tshavhungwe
Ms Victoria Hloko
Ms Annarlen Headley

Master's Fellowships
Ms Kayleigh Mathieson
Ms Mushayathoni Nwovhe
Ms Nasiphi Siguca
Ms Rebaone Mofokeng
Ms Yolanda Mngcongco
Ms Jos Jansen van Vuuren
Ms Ayesha Aswat



WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH. PRODUCED AT IYUNIVESITHI WALTER SISULU

Walter Sisulu's pioneering research in Green Finance is shaping South Africa's transition to a sustainable future - developing measurable frameworks that inform policy, including the Carbon Tax, and embedding ESG & 4IR into our postgraduate programmes.

Prof Fortune Ganda, a Full Professor of Accounting and Head of the Department of Management Accounting and Finance at iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu, won the prestigious NSTF-TIA Green Economy Award at the 2025/2026 [National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)]-South32 Awards.

“We are not merely consumers of global knowledge, but active participants, and producers of cutting-edge, context-specific solutions.”

iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu - A Technology-Infused African University



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