



S.E.T. for socio-economic growth

National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)

invitation

Research software as enabler and research output

7-8 October 2026

The **National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)**, in partnership with the **NSTF Science Councils and Statutory Bodies Sector (SciCom)** and the University of Cape Town (UCT) eResearch Centre, invites you to a discussion forum on '*Research software as enabler and research output*', to be held via Zoom on 7-8 October 2026.



NSTF Science Councils and Statutory Bodies Sector discussion forum,
in collaboration with University of Cape Town (UCT) eResearch Centre

Research software as enabler and research output



researchers and academics, research software developers,
stakeholders in public and private sectors and the interested public

Join the conversation and make your voice heard.
[Click to register.](#)

Research software (RS), including source code, algorithms, scripts, computational workflows, simulation models and executable tools developed during or for research, underpins an increasing proportion of contemporary research across disciplines. It enables modelling, data analysis, artificial intelligence (AI), high-performance computing, monitoring processes and engineering design, across various sectors and disciplines, including e.g. digital humanities scholarship, health research, and environmental monitoring.

Despite its central role in knowledge production, RS is often not systematically recognised in research evaluation frameworks, funding mechanisms or institutional support models. Challenges include sustainability beyond project funding cycles, limited career pathways for RS professionals, inconsistent quality and reproducibility practices, fragmented infrastructure, and limited national policy alignment.

Within South Africa (SA), the inclusion of [Research Software Awards](#) within the **NSTF-South32 Awards** portfolio reflects growing recognition of software as a research output. The **UCT eResearch Centre**, working with NSTF and in partnership with the **South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR)**, played a leading role in initiating and conceptualising this new award category, building the case for its introduction and helping to secure sponsorship.

Against this backdrop, NSTF and the UCT eResearch Centre, in collaboration with the NSTF Science Councils and Statutory Bodies Sector, are hosting a two-day online discussion forum to examine RS from complementary perspectives. The discussion forum will map the current landscape through a keynote address, institutional case studies from South African science councils, statutory bodies and national research infrastructure organisations; an overview of the international Research Software Engineering (RSE) movement and survey. It will also focus on national and international approaches to recognising RS and RS professionals, the place of software in open science policy and scholarly publishing, and cross-sector perspectives on future priorities. For more information, refer to the [concept document](#) on the NSTF website.

Purpose: Every year, the SciCom of the NSTF hosts a discussion forum on important issues affecting SA's research community. This year, in partnership with the UCT eResearch Centre, the forum will explore how RS is developed, used and supported across South African public research organisations; highlight key challenges and opportunities; connect local experience to the international RSE movement; examine RS as a recognised research output; consider policy developments; expectations around sharing code; and identify priorities and possible next steps.

Objectives:

- Position RS as an essential component of SA's research and innovation ecosystem
- Document and share examples of RS activity across various science councils and statutory bodies
- Increase understanding of the international RSE movement and RS workforce through evidence from the international RS survey
- Examine how RS and RS professionals can be more effectively recognised within national research, policy and reward systems
- Connect international policy developments with current policy discussions in SA
- Explore how the South African Open Science Policy and journal code-sharing requirements can support greater visibility, transparency and reproducibility
- Facilitate dialogue among researchers, practitioners, policymakers, infrastructure organisations, publishers, award recipients and other stakeholders on priorities for future action
- Build on the complementary leadership of NSTF and the UCT eResearch Centre to strengthen coordination and future RS capability development in SA

Themes:

- **RS in the South African research landscape:** The role of RS within the contemporary SA research ecosystem; institutional experiences from science councils, statutory bodies and national infrastructure organisations; common realities, opportunities, challenges and support needs across different research domains; and the relationship between RS, advanced computing, data-intensive research and domain research activity.
- **RS communities, skills and evidence:** The development of the international RSE movement; findings and perspectives from the international RS survey; RS engineers and other software-producing research roles; and the visibility and recognition of people who develop and sustain RS.
- **Recognition and policy:** National recognition of RS; RS as a first-class research output; RS professionals as critical skills within the research system; international policy work led by organisations including Research Software Alliance (ReSA) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); and implications of international developments for the context of SA.
- **Open science and scholarly publishing:** The place of RS within the South African Open Science Policy; requirements and expectations for sharing code underlying academic publications; the relationship between code sharing, transparency and reproducibility; and the responsibilities of researchers, institutions, journals and other stakeholders.
- **Cross-sector perspectives and future priorities:** Perspectives from the **NSTF-South32 Awards for RS** recipients and the award sponsor, **South African Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR)**; the role of the African Open Science Platform and other national or regional initiatives; opportunities to strengthen visibility, recognition and coordination; and priority considerations for continued national dialogue and action.

Outputs:

1. A media release will be issued which summarises the most important issues and conclusions
2. The following outputs will also be made available on the event page and/or **NSTF's YouTube channel**.
 - Video recordings of speakers' presentations (subject to the speakers' agreement)
 - Presentation slides (if available and subject to the speakers' agreement)
 - Speakers' biographies
 - Useful links (Feel free to let us know should you have any information that you would like us to consider posting here.)
3. NSTF will engage the media on possible interviews and/or articles
4. NSTF will post on social media before, during and after the event: on **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **X**, and **LinkedIn**

Delegate registration information:
Research software as enabler and research output

Date: 7-8 October 2026
Time: 09:00-15:00 (on both days)
Programme: Click [here](#) for the draft programme
Concept document: Click [here](#) for the background information
Register now (online on Zoom): You will receive an email to confirm your subscription, whereafter you will be diverted to a web page with the Zoom link. Click here to [register](#).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) points in collaboration with the following NSTF members (could be awarded to qualified attendees who are registered with the following organisations)

- **SACNASP** (South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions)
- **ECSA** (Engineering Council of South Africa), in collaboration with the Society for Automation, Instrumentation, Mechatronics and Computer Engineering (**SAIMC**)
- **IITPSA** (Institute of Information Technology Professionals South Africa)
- **EAPASA** (Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of South Africa)

For any other affiliations, please contact the NSTF office at enquiries@nstf.org.za.

Attendance and participation in this NSTF Discussion Forum is FREE to all those interested. Please note that if you do not register, the NSTF cannot be held responsible for any unforeseen changes or cancellations of programmes. Communications are sent only via e-mail or through notifications on the NSTF website.

About the NSTF: The NSTF is an independent non-profit stakeholder forum representing the science, engineering, technology (SET) and innovation community in SA. The **membership** consists of more than 150 organisations, and ranges from research institutions, universities and state entities to business, **professional societies (proSET)** and civil society. The NSTF promotes collaboration and critical thinking among a broad range of stakeholders. **NSTF Discussion Forums** gather stakeholders together, across the public and private sectors, to exchange knowledge and ideas, and put forward recommendations.

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
- gathers stakeholders around burning issues of national and global interest, across the public and private sectors, including matters of public policy
- includes a network of professional societies in SET and STEM education (STEM= science, technology, engineering and mathematics) - the NSTF proSET membership sector.
- recognises, awards and profiles the outstanding contributions of individuals and groups to SET and innovation through the prestigious NSTF Awards
- runs and supports collaborative projects and youth outreach, including recognition of top performance in mathematics and science, role modelling, bursary and STEM career information
- runs and supports the STEMulator.org which attracts youth and educators to Explore>Discover>Learn the world of STEM including careers. (Established by NSTF proSET)

For more information
www.nstf.org.za
E-mail: enquiries@nstf.org.za

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