



NSTF Discussion Forum:

Research software as enabler and research output

in partnership with the NSTF Science Councils and Statutory Bodies Sector and
University of Cape Town (UCT) eResearch Centre



7-8 October 2026

The [National Science and Technology Forum \(NSTF\)](http://www.nstf.org.za) is hosting this discussion forum on '[Research software as enabler and research output](#)'.

Draft Programme

Day 1: 9:00-15:00

Time starting	Time ending	Topic	Speaker/ Organisation
09:00	09:15	Welcome to participants and introductions; programme, outputs, and intended outcomes	Ms Jansie Niehaus , Executive Director, NSTF
09:15	09:55	Research software as enabler and research output	Mr Peter Van Heusden , Senior Bioinformatics Scientist: South African National Bioinformatics Institute, University of the Western Cape (UWC); @UWConline AND

			Ms Anelda Van der Walt , Senior eResearch Analyst: UCT; @UCT_News
09:55	10:20	The missing middle - Who employs the people who maintain research software?	Prof Mattia Vaccari , Director: eResearch Centre, UCT; @UCT_News
10:20	10:30	Q&A	All
10:30	10:55	From Code and Platforms to Impact: Research Software in Biostatistics and Public Health	Prof Tarylee Reddy , Unit Director: Biostatistics Research Unit, South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC); @MRCza
10:55	11:20	Hardware is not enough: research software as enabler and output at South Africa's national HPC	Mr Mthetho Sovara , Senior Research Engineer: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR); @CSIR
11:20	11:30	Q&A	All
11:30	11:55	Beyond the Data Portal: From Scripts to Systems - Evolving Research Software for Environmental Science at SAEON	Dr Marc Pienaar , Data Science Team Lead: South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON), National Research Foundation (NRF); @Saeonews
11:55	12:20	Drop in the Digital Ocean: The Development of a Smartphone-based System for Water Quality Monitoring in South Africa using Machine Learning Techniques	Ms Sanet Witbooi , Software Engineer: Ninety One (previously at Water Research Commission (WRC)); @ninetyone_sa
12:20	13:00	Q&A and Break	All
13:00	13:20	Code for conservation: The data science evolution of South Africa's National Biodiversity Assessment	Dr Lize Von Staden , Senior Scientist: South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI); @SANBI_FBIP
13:20	13:30	Q&A	All
13:30	13:55	The role of research software at the Council for Geoscience	Dr Patrick Cole , Chief Scientist: Council for Geoscience (CGS); @CGS_RSA
13:55	14:30	Q&A	All

Day 2: 9:00-15:00

Time starting	Time ending	Topic	Speaker/ Organisation
09:00	09:15	Welcome to participants and introductions; programme, outputs, and intended outcomes	Ms Anelda van der Walt , Senior eResearch Analyst, UCT; @UCT_News
09:15	10:00	Unpacking the NRF's Role in South Africa's Research Software Development	Mr Alistair White , Senior Business Intelligence Specialist: NRF; @NRF_News
10:00	10:25	Shaping International Research Software Policy	Dr Michelle Barker , Director: Research Software Alliance (ReSA)
10:25	10:50	Policies concerning Publicly Funded Research Software in the Age of Artificial Intelligence	Dr Alan Paic , Senior Policy Analyst: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); @OECD
10:50	11:00	Q&A	All
11:00	11:25	Open Science Eco-System and its Implications on Research Software	Dr Adrian Tiplady , Deputy Managing Director, South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO); @SKA_Africa
11:25	11:50	The role of Research Offices in supporting research software as research outputs?	Ms Natalie le Roux , Manager: Research Support Services, UCT; @UCT_News
11:50	12:15	Repeatability and transparency, why code belongs in the main text	Dr Christel Hansen , Editor: South African Journal of Geomatics (SAJG)
12:15	12:30	Q&A	All
12:30- 13:30	Panel discussion		
	Prof Roger Deane , Director: Inter-University Institute for Data-Intensive Astronomy (IDIA); Professor: Astronomy, UC; Extraordinary Professor, University of Pretoria (UP); @UPTuks		
	Prof Vukosi Marivate , Professor: Computer Science; Director: African Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (AfriDSAI); ABSA UP Chair: Data Science, UP; @UPTuks		
	Mr Juan Steyn , Director of Operations: South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR); @SADiLaR_ZA		

		Dr Tshiamo Motshegwa , Director: African Open Science Platform (AOSP)	
13:30	13:55	From Research Data and Computational Methods to Policy Intelligence and Societal Impact at the HSRC	Dr Mercy Ngungu , Senior Research Specialist: Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC); @HSRCza
13:55	14:30	Q&A	All

Presentations, synopsis of the proceedings, and media release will be made available on the [event page](#).

Video clips will be posted to this event page, as well as the [NSTF YouTube platform](#) (see details below)

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- Independent non-profit stakeholder body and network
- Voice for the science, engineering, technology (SET) and innovation community
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