

SCIENCE FORUM South Africa

8–9 December 2015, Pretoria, South Africa



Science Forum: South Africa – 2015

Pretoria, 8 – 9 December 2015

Igniting conversations about science

Dear Colleagues and Friends

On 8 and 9 December 2015, the South African Department of Science and Technology, will be honoured to host the first edition of the Science Forum South Africa at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria. Organised as the initiative of South Africa's Minister of Science and Technology, Minister Naledi Pandor, the organisation of the Forum is inspired by renowned international events such as the European Science Open Forum (ESOF), the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the Science Agora in Japan. The objective of the Forum is to ignite a vibrant discussion on the role of science in society, between all stakeholders, the scientific community, government, industry and most importantly civil society at large.

The Forum programme will comprise of plenary lectures and discussions by and involving leading South African and international scientists, experts and thought leaders. A strategic focus will be to highlight and critically interrogate the role of science in advancing sustainable growth and development, especially in fighting poverty, inequality and unemployment; within the South African national, African continental, as well as global contexts. Harnessing science, technology and innovation partnerships to bolster Africa's growth and development agenda will indeed be at the heart of the Forum's deliberations.

In order to enable the Forum participants to engage with a comprehensive range of critical aspects related to the science and society interface, and to participate in a rich and diverse agenda with a multi-disciplinarian focus, which will maximise synergies between themes, sectors and areas of interest, the Forum Programme will also comprise of 24 individual short seminars, all 90 minutes in duration.

These sessions (short seminars) will be structured as part of six parallel thematic tracks, organised concurrently, which will cluster four sessions per track. Forum participants will, thus, be able to move freely according to their areas of interest between and participate in any of the sessions presented as part of the six thematic tracks. This will create a dynamic "marketplace" for discussion, the exchange of ideas and formation of partnerships.

The six thematic tracks are:

- **"Responding to societal challenges"** – Interrogating the socio-economic impact of STI, including within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and South Africa's National Development Plan;
- **"Skills for the knowledge economy"** – Focusing on the importance of and challenges for STI-orientated human capital development;
- **"Showcasing South Africa's best"** – A platform for highlighting flagship South African science success stories, especially those related to international partnerships;
- **"African eyes on the sky"** – Providing a public platform for discussion about various aspects of astronomy in Africa including the SKA project;
- **"Science agenda for Africa"** – A platform for discussing regional and continental partnerships to advance Africa's growth and development; and
- **"What does the scientist say"** – Interrogating the role of science in informing policy- and decision-making, including with regard to topics prominent in public debate.

Twelve of the 24 short seminar sessions (two per thematic track) will be selected through a competitive call for proposals, to which you are warmly invited and encouraged to respond. Details of the call for proposals, which involve the submission of an abstract of the session focus as well as short profiles of the proposed speakers, are available at: [Call for thematic session proposals](#). The deadline for submission is 14 September 2015.

Everything possible has been done to ensure the on-line submission of proposals will be user-friendly and not an onerous task. Your favourable consideration of the call and enthusiastic response would therefore be greatly appreciated. An independent panel of international experts will select the most innovative proposals for inclusion in the final programme. This selection will be based on the most provoking, stimulating and inspiring format and focus.

By soliciting input from all interested stakeholders this significant part of the Forum's programme will enrich not only the content of discussion but also underlines the commitment to ensure inclusive participation and indeed ownership of the science and society discourse. Thank you for your contribution to make this possible.

Further information on the Science Forum South Africa 2015 is available from the Forum Secretariat at info@sfsa.co.za. Please do not hesitate to engage!

The Department of Science and Technology looks forward to welcome you to Pretoria on 8-9 December 2015 for SFSA 2015!

With warm regards

Daan du Toit

Deputy Director-General: International Cooperation and Resources

Department of Science and Technology

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[Programme - Registration](#)

