

Date: Thursday, 3 December 2026

Time: 13:00–14:30 SAST

Venue: CSIR ICC (Garnet Room)

Host: Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

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AI is transforming how research is conducted, shared and applied, opening new opportunities for discovery and collaboration while raising questions about openness, trust, governance and equitable participation. This session explores how South Africa and the wider continent can build a trusted, inclusive and AI-ready open science ecosystem, guided by three questions: what should be open, what should be protected and what should be governed. An opening provocation, a multidisciplinary panel and audience engagement will examine how AI can accelerate discovery, strengthen reproducibility and widen access to knowledge, alongside challenges in data stewardship, intellectual property, infrastructure, skills and human oversight. Drawing on South Africa's National Open Science Policy and African and UNESCO frameworks, the session will identify priorities and collaborative actions to inform a proposed South African Action Framework for AI and Open Science.

Panellists	
Ms Eleni Flack-Davison	Research Integrity Office, University of the Witwatersrand
Dr Heide Hackmann	Chair in Science Futures, CREST, Stellenbosch University
Prof Tshilidzi Marwala	Rector of the United Nations University and UN Under-Secretary-General
Prof Francesco Petruccione (moderator and chair)	Stellenbosch University and the National Institute for Theoretical and Computational Sciences (NITheCS)
Assoc Prof Jonathan Shock	Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics and UCT AI Initiative, University of Cape Town

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