



The National Science and Technology Forum

The NSTF is the stakeholder body for all science, engineering, technology and innovation (SETI) organisations in South Africa, and a Section 21 Company.

The NSTF

- Organises the prestigious NSTF Awards;
- Plays a powerful consultative and lobbying role in SETI policy matters; and
- Implements the National Youth Service Programme on behalf of the Department of Science and Technology.

In existence since 1995, the NSTF has a proud history of involvement with SETI policy issues and the promotion of discussion about SETI matters, as well as experience since 1998 in organising the prestigious NSTF Awards.

Vision

A South African SETI system that is responsive to the needs of the nation.

Mission

To promote SETI and influence SETI policy in the interest of socio-economic growth.

Strategic Objectives

1. To influence and catalyse quality delivery of SETI policy;
2. To monitor and promote the health of the SETI system; and
3. To celebrate, recognise and reward excellence within the SETI sector.

Values

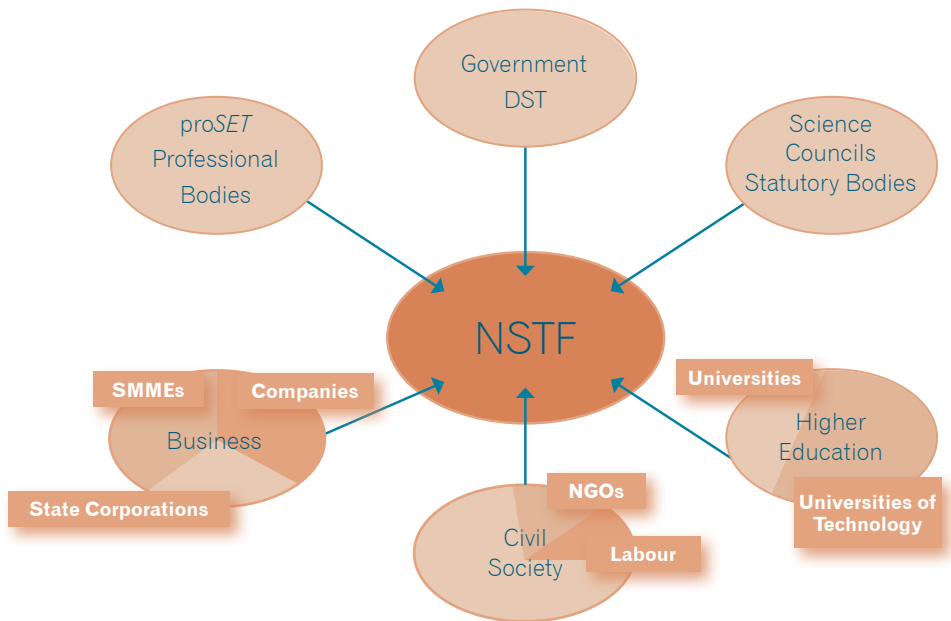
1. Espouses democratic principles as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;
2. Acts responsibly on behalf of members on matters affecting SETI;
3. Promotes open and honest exchange of views and opinions; and
4. Fosters co-operation on matters of common interest.

Structure

The NSTF comprises the following sectors which adhere to its Vision, Mission and Values:

- Science councils and statutory bodies;
- Small, medium and large businesses and state utilities;
- Civil society and labour;
- Higher education sector;
- Government sector; and
- Professional bodies and learned societies. The professional bodies and learned societies are represented by the Professionals in Science, Engineering and Technology (proSET), previously known as SETAG, which liaises with all sectors regarding professional matters.

Each of these sectors has one or two representatives on the NSTF Executive Committee (Exco). The Exco representatives are elected at a Plenary Meeting, which takes place twice a year.



Structure of the NSTF: the six sectors of membership

History

The pre-cursor of the NSTF, the National Science and Technology Initiative, participated in South Africa's landmark CODESA Convention. As a result of the findings and recommendations of this group, government founded the NSTF in 1995 to oversee implementation. The then Minister of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), Mr Ben Ngubane, made his intention clear by recognising the body as a SET forum for purposes of

consultation and addressing SET issues within the broad SET community. The Forum was established to oversee the restructuring of South Africa's national science system and to ensure an integrated approach to science and technology. On 28 March 1995, the first plenary meeting of the NSTF was opened by the then Minister of DACST. The mandate given to the NSTF by government was that it should act as the sounding board, communication channel and constructive watchdog of SET in South Africa. Integral to this mandate is the need to establish best practice norms, and to integrate and share the good and positive advancements currently being made in the fields of SET.

The NSTF continues to enjoy support from the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Department of Science and Technology (DST), and stakeholders at all levels, from the smallest of businesses, through all levels of education, to government. The Minister of Science and Technology, Mrs Naledi Pandor, is mentor and patron of the NSTF.

Current Projects

National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) Awards

The NSTF Awards honour and celebrate the outstanding contributions of individuals and teams to SETI through 10 different categories of winners. The NSTF Awards have been held annually for the past decade. They afford an opportunity for recognition to all practicing scientists, engineers and technologists across the system of innovation, reaching all sectors, levels of society, genders, races and ages. The Awards also profile role models through the winners and facilitate knowledge transfer in the scarce skills areas to encourage learners and students to pursue careers in SETI. Through the Education Recognition Programme of the Awards, schools, learners and educators who have achieved in SET subjects, are acknowledged and rewarded.



National Youth Service

The NSTF implements the National Youth Service programme on behalf of the DST, as part of the broader Youth into Science Strategy. Young graduates in the sciences and engineering are given the opportunity to gain practical experience in organisation, in science centres and in raising science awareness among the public and school learners. They are offered training to enhance various organisational skills, and are given guidance with regard to seeking further employment and study opportunities. In this manner the skills of SET graduates are put to good use, at the same time assisting graduates to remain in SET study fields and careers, or be suitably employed.

Youth Incentive Scheme

Another programme implemented on behalf of the DST, the Incentive Scheme aims to support SET students in various ways so that they are enabled and motivated to remain in SET fields of studies and careers.

FESTOC

The Federation of Engineering, Science and Technology Olympiads and Competitions (FESTOC) is an umbrella body of leading, national, SET Olympiad and Competition organisers. It aims to co-ordinate and assist the operations of these Olympiads and Competitions.

What can the NSTF do for your organisation?

- The NSTF is a vehicle for your organisation to give expert input to Government policy and a platform to express the views of your management, members and employees regarding SETI policies.
- Through the NSTF your activities in SETI can become more widely known.
- Through the NSTF you can keep updated on developments in SETI policy.
- The NSTF Awards allow your organisation to celebrate your achievements and attain public recognition for them, within the context of a wider SETI community.
- Through the NSTF you can get involved in activities that motivate and enrich the experience of learners of Mathematics and Science subjects.

How does it work?

- Your organisation joins the NSTF by completing the form on the website www.nstf.org.za, and pays a modest annual membership fee.
- Your organisation appoints a representative to act as a communication point with the NSTF office and to attend two Plenary meetings per year on behalf of your organisation.
- We communicate mostly by email and the Web, but if you want to be more involved there are many opportunities: the NSTF Awards are made in May every year, there is a programme of seminars and workshops (see www.nstf.org.za) and there are a number of committees your representative can serve on and render your organisation more influential.
- Although our offices are based in Gauteng, we will make every attempt to keep in touch and promote involvement in every region of South Africa.

If yours is a SETI organisation, it belongs in the National Science and Technology Forum - where your voice will be heard!



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