



S.E.T. for socio-economic growth

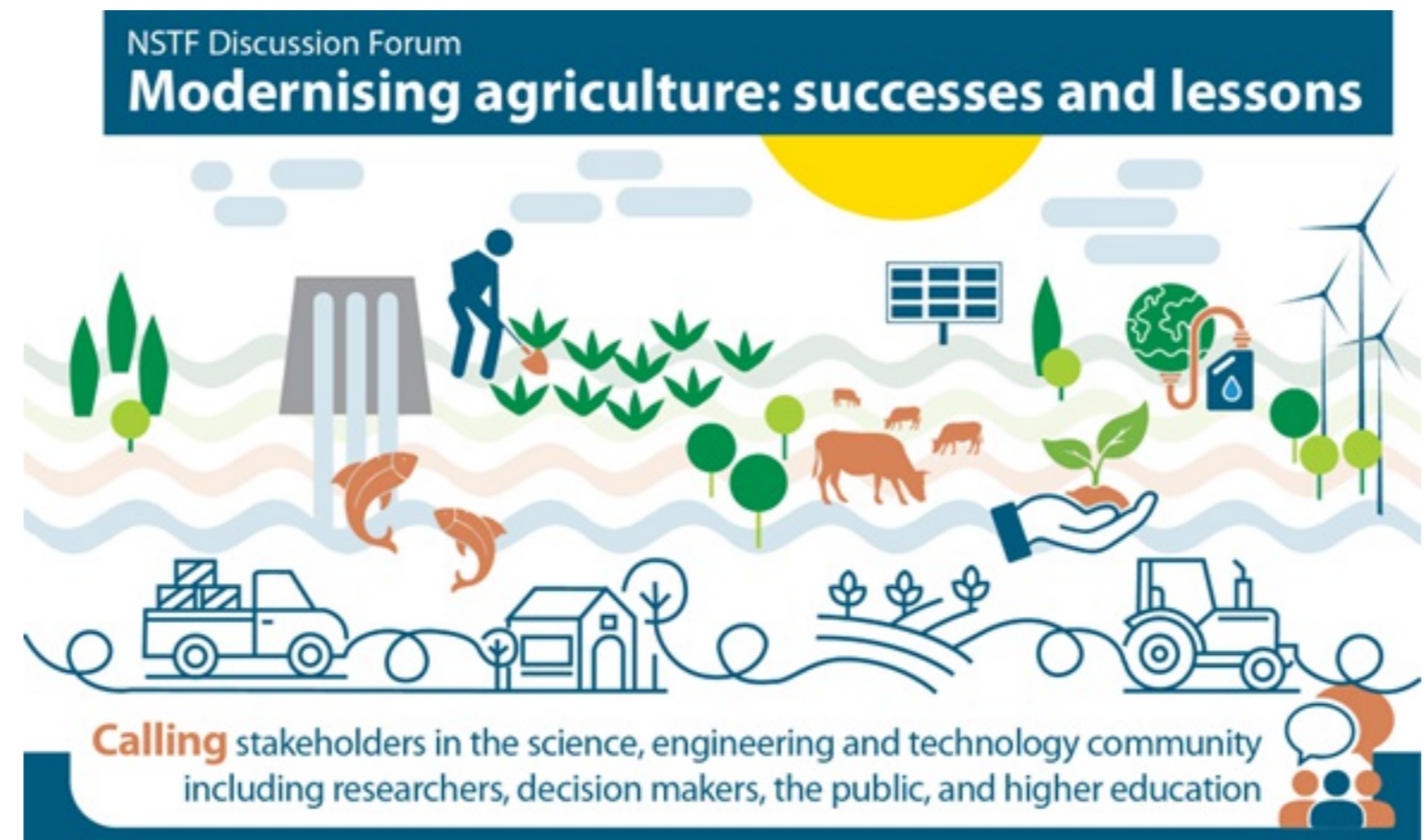
National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)

discussion forum

Modernising Agriculture: successes and lessons from the Agricultural Bio-economy Innovation Partnership Programme (ABIPP)

8 November 2024

The **National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF)** invites you to an online presentation by Dr Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl, Acting Deputy Director-General (DDG): Technology and Innovation of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) on 'Modernising Agriculture: successes and lessons from ABIPP' on 8 November 2024.



Join the online conversation and make your voice heard!
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Background:

The need to provide physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to all people in South Africa (SA) has become a great challenge. SA faces problems ranging from high unemployment and poverty to the ongoing energy crisis and rising costs of living. These impact negatively on SA's state of food security by making food expensive and inaccessible to many and increasing the number of people and households experiencing malnutrition and hunger. A study on [food inadequacy and hunger in SA](#) conducted in 2021 by Statistics SA (Stats SA), found that 21% (3,7 million households) of the population had little to no access to food.

As such, there is a need to encourage household participation in agricultural activities or in production of their own food so that they can increase food accessibility and employment opportunities. It is also essential to invest in innovative farming techniques that will increase the production yields from farming and reduce environmental harm. This can be achieved through biotechnology, economic and societal development based on renewable sources.

The DSTI in collaboration with other public and private stakeholders developed the [Agriculture Bio-economy Innovation Partnership Programme \(ABIPP\)](#). According to this document, the aim of this strategy is to use the advancements of scientific and indigenous knowledge and natural biological resources to develop new, globally competitive products that are responsive and relevant to the needs of South Africans. The strategy has the potential to create job opportunities thus addressing issues related to unemployment, poverty, inequality, food security and human health. More importantly, the strategy aims to contribute to the country's GDP by 5% by 2050. See also: [Rapid implementation evaluation of ABIPP \(dst.gov.za\)](#)

Dr Ramoutar-Prieschl will present the ABIPP and share any relevant developments with members and stakeholders.

Purpose and objectives: NSTF Discussion Forums provide platforms for scientists, professionals, government officials, industry and the public to share their insights on issues related to science, engineering, technology (SET) and innovation.

The programme:

Time starting	Time ending	Topic	Speaker/ Organisation
12:30	12:35	Welcome to participants and introductions	Ms Jansie Niehaus , Executive Director: NSTF
12:35	13:30	Modernising Agriculture: successes and lessons from ABIPP	Dr Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl , Acting DDG: Technology and Innovation, DSTI @dsigovza
13:30	14:00	Q&A	All

Outputs:

As is usual for [NSTF Discussion Forums](#), a media release will be issued which summarises the most important issues and conclusions. The following outputs will also be made available on the [event page](#) and through social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)):

- Video recording of the speaker's presentation
- Presentation slides
- NSTF will engage the media on possible interviews and/or articles, and post on social media before, during and after the event.

Delegate registration information

Date: 08 November 2024

Time: 12:30-14:00

Register (online event): The event is held online via the NSTF Zoom platform. 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: CPD points will be awarded to attendees who are registered with [SACNASP](#) (South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions). For 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.

Speaker's Background:

Dr Ramoutar-Prieschl holds the position of Acting DDG: Technology and Innovation at the DSTI. She is seconded to this role from her permanent position as Head: Research Capacity Development at the University of Pretoria (UP) where she is responsible for (i) grants management, (ii) early career training and mentorship, and (iii) strategic partnerships that support staff doctoral candidates. She is also a research associate in the Faculty of Humanities and holds grants from the National Research Foundation (NRF), Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and US Embassy to name a few.



She is the architect of the UP Women in Science annual event that celebrates the achievements and advancements made by women researchers.

Dr Ramoutar-Prieschl holds a Doctorate in Business Management and a master's in biotechnology. Prior to joining UP, she led the Research Infrastructure portfolio for 11 years at the NRF. During her tenure she advocated for a number of policies, strategies and frameworks that provided the foundation for establishing, nurturing and sustaining a number of research and innovation (RI) platforms in the country. She also published a book that assists countries in the global south to frame their own national research infrastructure roadmaps; and it is therefore not surprising that she was appointed the chair of the South African Research Infrastructure Roadmap Mid-Term Review Committee. She has authored on behalf of the Association of African Universities, three manuals for Phase 2 of the Science Granting Councils Initiative in Southern Africa: (i) research & innovation excellence; (ii) research ethics; and (iii) digital grants management systems, which advocates for the safeguarding of intellectual property and know-how whilst complying with best practices in the said research areas.

Over the course of her career, she has lectured, tutored and mentored a number of researchers and university staff across several African universities, spanning Botswana, Kenya, Ghana and Malawi, in addition to supporting capacity development needs at Historically Disadvantaged Institutions in SA. Furthermore, she has also been part of the expert team identified by the African Academy of Sciences and the Association of Research Managers and Administration in the United Kingdom (UK) to lead training in the International Research Management Development Programme across universities in Africa and the UK. In recognition of her work she was awarded the 2022 SARIMA Excellence Award for making a distinguished contribution to the research management profession in Southern Africa. Finally in May 2022, Dr Ramoutar-Prieschl participated in the United Nations Science, Technology and Innovation Forum on *Building Structural Equity and Inclusion in Open Science Practices* and is a strong advocate for the equitable, fair and inclusive access to information wherein she coined the concept #UbuntuforOpenScience.

Dr Ramoutar-Prieschl's work extends beyond research management into fields like vaccine development, and she has held management roles in organisations such as the Desmond Tutu TB and HIV Centre. She is a strong advocate for gender equality in STEM, frequently addressing the systemic challenges women face in the scientific community, particularly around work-life balance and career progression. Her advocacy focuses on the importance of mentorship, gender-sensitive policies, and creating systemic changes to promote women in leadership roles.

On a side note, Dr Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl, plays a key role in the community and has been the chairperson for Child Welfare SA Roodepoort for the maximum period of two-terms spanning six years. During her time, she has steered the board of trustees with transparency, accountability and good stewardship, which is reflected by the various policies & organisational profile that she has developed whilst working closely with the Department of Social Development. She has held a number of fundraising initiatives such as the COVID Emergency Distress Call for child-headed households; as well as the Annual Easter and Christmas collection drives where children and vulnerable groups from 26 communities that fall within the mandate of the NPO were supported.

Currently Dr Ramoutar-Prieschl is a Committee Member of the Southern African Research & Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), and the Executive Committee Member for the Organization for Women in Science for Developing Countries (OWSD).

About the NSTF: The NSTF is a non-profit [stakeholder forum](#) representing the SET and innovation community in SA. The [membership](#) consists of more than 130 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 give feedback to government and relevant authorities.

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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