

1. Founding Statement

The STI Business Forum has been founded to position Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as a central driver of South Africa's socio-economic transformation. In pursuit of this endeavour, the STI Business Forum seeks to:

- a) Promote inclusive economic growth through Science, Technology and Innovation (STI); and
- b) Drive industrial innovation through STI as a catalyst for urban development and reindustrialisation.

2. Background

In 2019, the South African Government (Cabinet) approved the adoption of the White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). This White Paper, which is based on an extensive review of the National System of Innovation (NSI), sets the long-term policy direction for the South African government to ensure a growing role for STI in a more prosperous and inclusive society.

The White Paper emphasises the leveraging of STI to accelerate inclusive economic growth, improve competition in the economy, and enhance the daily lives of citizens. It aims to help South Africa to derive enhanced benefits from global developments such as rapid technological advancement as well as the unfolding shifts in geopolitics and demographics.

2.1. Formation of the STI Business Forum

The STI Business Forum was formed as a response to three transformative developments that could reshape and re-position the South African Science, Technology and Innovation ecosystem, with the original focus on the City of Ekurhuleni:

- a) On 29 May 2024, the outcome of South Africa's national elections ushered in a new era in the country's political landscape, resulting in the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU).
- b) On 23 August 2024, President Cyril Ramaphosa hosted a Presidential Imbizo at Tsakane Stadium in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, Gauteng. The theme of the Imbizo was "Let's Grow South Africa Together" while the sub-theme was "Leave No One Behind". At this Imbizo, the President announced the construction of the Ekurhuleni University of Applied Science and Innovation as one of the priorities for the 7th (seventh) Administration, since Ekurhuleni is the only metro without a University.
- c) On 13 March 2025, at the National Transformation Summit, a call was made to support the establishment the Ekurhuleni University of Applied Science and Innovation.

2.2. Core Aims:

The STI Business Forum is committed to:

- I. Championing the establishment and substantiality of the Ekurhuleni University of Applied Science and Innovation with a strong industry and entrepreneurial orientation, which could serve as a model and pilot for a new, innovative model of dual education universities in South Africa."
- II. Promoting a national urban innovation ecosystem anchored around South Africa's 8 (eight) metropolitan areas and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
- III. Advancing STI-driven Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) that accelerate growth and competitiveness.
- IV. Promoting and advocating for a dual education system.
- V. Promoting the Equity equivalent investment programme.
- VI. Promoting a Public venture capital fund.

3. About Us

The STI Business Forum is envisioned as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) with registration number 2025/700925/08. It is a business policy advocacy organisation formed to promote inclusive urban economic development through science, technology and Innovation (STI) as well as Industrial Innovation.

3.1. Motto

We cannot change the *past*. We can shape the *future*.

3.2. Vision

To develop a productive and competitive Science, Technology & Innovation ecosystem, and ensure interprovincial urban industrialisation for a more advanced and inclusive society.

3.3. Mission Statement

Championing urban regional industrialisation through Science, Technology and Innovation.

3.4. Purpose

To promote and engage in robust and progressive STI policy advocacy for regional economic development and to position Science, Technology and Innovation at the centre of our urban/regional industrial innovation strategies and policies.

3.5. Ethos

- Meritocracy.
- Diversity & Inclusion.
- Integrity.
- Open-mindedness.

4. Strategic Objectives

- Fostering industry-focused partnerships between Universities of Technology (UoTs), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) and the Business community.
- Advancing Science, Technology and Innovation policy advocacy for urban/regional economic growth.
- Promoting and sustaining the organisational flagship event – i.e. “University STI Lecture”.

5. Key Outcomes:

- Business-friendly Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies that promote competitiveness.
- Scalable STI startups and entrepreneurs.
- Strong UoTs /TVETs -business partnerships.
- Vibrant and connected STI-business eco-systems.
- Creation of sustainable, innovation-based employment opportunities.
- Strong and vibrant Dual Higher Education Model.

6. Policy Strategic Focus Areas

The STI Business Forum’s key focus is the adoption of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as the catalyst for inclusive economic growth. Members of the organisation may review and amend strategic focus areas at the annual conference. The initial strategic policy focus areas are:

- National Government STI policy advancements.
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) policy advancement.
- Urban regional STI Industrial innovation policy advancement.

7. Key Strategic Programmes

To ensure tangible results, the Governance Board oversees the identification of priorities and defines the key strategic programmes that the organisation must pursue and champion. The number and mandates of the programmes are determined by the Governance Board and executed by the Executive Management.

As part of their mandate, the Working Groups undertake advocacy work to support these programmes. The Governance Board has the authority to remove or add programmes in line with the objectives of the organisation, and the programmes are reviewed annually at the national conference.

The initial key programmes are:

- Academic studies focused on integrated workplace learning and practice.
- Urban/Regional STI Parks & SEZ's.
- Universities of Technology (UoTs) and TVET's Innovation Initiatives.
- Business Research and Development (R&D) investments.
- STI Public Private Partnership initiatives.

8. How STI Business Forum will work

- Our organisation is a member-based organisation which has four distinct Chapters; (1) Corporate, (2) Start-ups, (3) Academic Technology Institutions and (4) STI Professionals.
- The organisation's focus is on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).
- Members of the organisation are from the STI sectors i.e. corporate, business, entrepreneurship and academy technology Institutions.
- The organisation is non-discriminatory and aims to attract the best skilled and expertise irrespective of colour, race, gender and religion.
- The organisation is mandated by the Governance Board, which is elected by the members of the organisation.
- The organisation executes its work through Working Groups (WKGs), which are industry-focused and responsible for organisational policy positions and initiatives.
- There are 10 permanent Working Groups, which focus on industrial innovation.
- The organisation's key strategic programmes are aimed at attaining tangible outcomes and giving effect to the Working Groups' policy work.
- The organisation's core areas are provincial urban regions built around South Africa's 8 (eight) metropolitan municipalities.

9. Organisational Core Metropolitan Urban Regions

Urban regions are densely populated areas characterised by significant infrastructure, economic activity, and cultural diversity, playing a crucial role in modern society.

At the Inaugural Metropolitan Mayors' Meeting, held in Cape Town on 27 August 2025, the 8 (eight) metros gathered for the first time to hold a joint summit on city governance. The summit was convened by SALGA.

Together, these 8 (eight) cities represent 55% of South Africa's population and over 70% of South Africa's economic activity. SALGA highlighted the significant scale of infrastructure investment required to sustain urban growth, calling for the metros to collectively spend approximately R70 billion annually on capital projects over the next decade.

Taking conscience of the above, the STI Business Forum is therefore built around South Africa's 8 (eight) metropolitan areas and Urban SEZs:

- Ekurhuleni Metro (East Rand) – Main Hub
- City of Tshwane
- City of Johannesburg
- Cape Town Metro
- eThekweni Metro (Durban)
- Mangaung Metro (Bloemfontein)
- Buffalo City (East London)
- Nelson Mandela Bay (Gqeberha), and □ Special Economic Zones (SEZ) e.g. Vaal SEZ.

10. City of Ekurhuleni -Organisation's Main Hub

The City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality is one of South Africa's 8 (eight) metropolitan municipalities. Located in the province of Gauteng, Ekurhuleni is a dynamic region that plays a vital role in the country's economy. The municipality is characterised by a combination of industrial and residential areas, cultural diversity, and economic significance. It also serves as the Head Office of the STI Business Forum.

11. Organisational Structure

11.1. Governance Board

The highest decision-making body in the organisation is the **Governance Board**. The Governance Board will comprise of 11 (eleven) non-executive members of which 5 (five) will be elected as executive directors ("the Leadership Team"), together with 4 (four) Chapter Convenors who shall serve as *ex officio* members of the Governance Board by virtue of their positions as Chapter Convenors, resulting in a total of 15 (fifteen) Governance Board members.

The term of the Board is 3 (three) years and members are eligible to serve a maximum of 2 (two) terms. The Board should have fair gender representation.

To ensure continuity, there will at all times be a minimum of 5 (five) Board members, and Board membership is on a voluntary basis. The members of the board must exhibit the following attributes:

- Business Leadership and Experience.
- Science, Technology, and Innovation background or knowledge.
- Extensive business networks - Local and International.
- Entrepreneurship - proven experience.
- A passion for promoting economic inclusivity.

11.1.1. Governance Board's Role

The board is responsible for the overall functioning of the organisation and its public standing. The role of the board includes:

- Implementing the strategic direction of the organisation.
- Providing organisational and business leadership.
- Ensuring diversity and inclusion.
- Ensuring proper funding of the organization.
- Promoting the organisational policy mandate, i.e. formulation and advocacy work of the organisation.

- Providing access to local and global networks.

11.1.2. Leadership

The organisation is managed by the Leadership Team (Executive Directors), who form part of the Governance Board, such persons being the:

- a) Chairperson.
- b) Deputy Chairperson.
- c) Head of Policy.
- d) Treasurer.
- e) Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

11.2. Organisation Working Groups (WKG)

The work of the organisation is done through the Working Groups. There are 10 (ten) Working Groups approved by the Governance Board. Each working group has a chairperson. The purpose of the Working Groups is to deliver the key programmes of the organisations, as defined by the Governance Board. The Working Groups are reviewed and amended at the annual conference.

The initial Working Groups are:

- WKG 1- Business STI-Funding & R&D Investment
- WKG 2- High-Tech Industries & Smart Manufacturing
- WKG 3- Hydrogen Energy
- WKG 4- Integrated Work-Academic learning
- WKG 5- Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Emerging Technologies
- WKG 6- Aerospace & Aviation
- WKG 7- Logistics & Transport
- WKG 8– Start-ups Development
- WKG 9 – Digital Health
- WKG 10 – New University Planning.

12. Organisation's Annual Conference

The organisation holds an annual conference where members gather and discuss the strategic objectives of the organisation. The Governance Board is the custodian of the conference and its programme. The objectives of the policy conference include but are not limited to:

- Setting discussion papers based on the policy strategic focus areas.
- Reviewing the work and progress of the Working Groups.
- Discussions and interventions of the STI White paper.
- Discussing the national and regional STI Policies and strategic interventions.
- Reviewing the work and progress on strategic programmes of the organisation. □ Setting new priorities for the organisation and adopt policy resolutions.

Every 3 (three) years, the organisation holds the elective conference, where **Governance Board members**, are elected by the organisation's members. The Governance Board is the custodian of the elective conference through the election committee. **13. Organisation Design and Governance**

To ensure that the organisation operates smoothly, adheres to governance principles and meets its policy advocacy role, the organisation's governance framework is anchored in the following foundational artefacts:

- Organisational Business Case
- MOI (Memorandum of Incorporation) - approved and adopted by the members □ Membership Value Proposition.

14. Ad-hoc Advisory Committee

The organisation's Governance Board is supported by an Ad-hoc Advisory Committee which serves as a sounding board for the organisation and provides a strategic role and guidance. The Ad-hoc Advisory Committee is convened and chaired by the Governance Board's chairperson.

The members of the Ad-hoc Advisory Committee will be nominated and appointed by the Governance Board for a tenure of 3 (three) years. It is a permanent structure of the STI Business Forum drawn from members who are in good standing but not necessarily occupying a position in the governance structures of the organisation. The Ad-hoc Advisory committee is made-up of members who have extensive experience and knowledge in the following areas:

- South African business organisation advocacy work.
- Local government sphere of government.
- International STI bodies and organisations.
- Corporate governance.
- Political influence.

15. Organisation Chapters

The STI Business Forum has four main categories of members, which are (1) Corporates, (2) Start-ups, (3) Academic Technology Institutions and (4) STI Professionals. The categories are called Chapters. Each Chapter has a Convenor.

15.1. Corporate Chapter

The members of this chapter are South African and international companies that are invested in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation. These are companies that appreciate the critical role STI plays in socio-economic development. Furthermore, these companies are committed to advancing businessfriendly STI policies within South Africa

15.1.1. Membership benefits include:

- Access to R&D partnerships / facilities.
- Marketing & Promotion.
- STI Policy position and advocacy.
- BBBEE Scorecard.
- Social Impact.
- Industry Leadership.

15.2. Start-up Chapter

The members of this chapter are start-ups and entrepreneurs who operate in the science and technology sectors of the economy.

15.2.1. Membership benefits include:

- Access to R&D, partnerships and facilities.
- Marketing & Promotion.
- STI Policy position and advocacy.
- Industry value chain integration.
- Dual Education Learning.

15.3. Academic Chapter

The members of this chapter are the Universities of Technology (UoTs), and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVETs) and STI focused driven universities which join on a voluntary basis. **15.3.1. The benefits of membership include**

- Marketing & Promotion.
- STI Policy position.
- STI Advocacy.
- Industry Access.
- Dual Education Learning.

15.4. STI Professionals

The members of this chapters are highly accomplished individuals in the field of science, technology, engineering and innovation. The members include Professors, Executive Directors, Researchers, and Technical Professionals. The members must possess the following attributes:

- STI expertise.
- Professional status.
- Executive management experience.
- Network.

15.4.1. The benefits of membership include

- Board nomination.
- Access to strategic positions.
- Industry Access & advisory services.
- Access to high level job opportunities.

16. Organisational Membership

Members of the organisation must belong to specific chapters of the organisation (Corporates, Start-ups, Academic Technology institutions and STI Professionals) and fully participate in the Working Groups and all the organisation's activities.

16.1. Selection Criteria

The members of the organisation are selected based on criteria defined by the Governance Board. The board has the responsibility for approving membership to the organisation through the selection committee. The selection committee is the permanent structure of the Board, and its tasks include:

- Defining the selection criteria and process for membership.
- Defining rules and guidelines for membership.
- Defining membership benefits.

16.2. Membership Fees

The membership fees for the organisation are set by the Governance Board in consultation with the Ad-hoc Advisory Committee. Membership is reviewed annually to ensure that the organisation meets its members' obligations and expectations. The membership fee structure is as follows:

- Corporate Chapter membership fee: R50,000 per annum.
- Start-ups membership fee: R10,000 per annum.
- Academic Technology Institutions (UoTs & TVETs) membership fee: R20,000 per annum.

- Strategic Organisations membership fee: R 20,000 per annum.
- STI Professionals membership fee: R 5,000 per annum.

17. Partnerships

17.1. Government

This organisation, as part of its policy advocacy work, will maintain strategic collaboration and engagement with several government departments to ensure that the Government achieves its objectives as set out in the 2019 White paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). The STI Business Forum advocates for strong inter-government departments, which is key to delivering an optional Industrial and Innovation Policy.

Industrial and Innovation Policy refers to government strategies aimed at promoting economic growth by fostering innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of specific sectors.

The main strategic government departments as partners are

- a) Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI).
- b) Department of Higher Education (DHET).
- c) Department of Trade, Industry & Competition (DTIC).



Support government departments are:

- Provincial Government
- SALGA (Metro's Mayors Forum).

17.2. Business Organisations (South Africa)

The main organisations that STI Business Forum seeks partnerships and collaboration will include:

- Black Business Council (BBC).
- Business Unity South Africa (BUSA). □ Business Arts South Africa (BASA).
- Other relevant Business chambers

17.3. South Africa- International Organisation

The organisation also seeks collaboration and partnerships with international business chambers that share the same or similar objectives. These include but are not limited to:

- South African -Germany Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- EU Chamber of Commerce and Industry in South Africa.
- British Chamber of Business in Southern Africa.
- BRICS Business Council.

17.4. Strategic Organisations

The organisation will also seek collaboration and partnerships with local and international organisations that share some form of strategic alignment.

18. Events

In order to drive policy engagement and discussions, the organisation will hold several public events. The Governance Board and executive management are responsible for organising and coordinating these events regularly. The events include but are not limited to:

- Annual Ekurhuleni University STI Lecture.
- Working Groups' meetings.
- Roundtable Policy Discussion.

19. Ekurhuleni (East Rand) Region -Organisation's Main Hub



19.1. Ekurhuleni Major Economic Initiatives

Sustainable City Trajectory lies at the heart of the COE Growth and Development Strategy 2055. This trajectory will be managed through the following 5 (five) themes:

- Re-urbanise.
- Re-industrialise.
- Re-generate.
- Re-mobilise. □ Re-govern.

The economic strategy in Ekurhuleni is underpinned by initiatives aimed at attracting both local and international investors. The metropolitan has several future economic development projects, which will transform Ekurhuleni into a major Industrial Innovation hub, this includes but not limited to:

- A Digital City.
- Aerotropolis.
- Midfield Cargo Terminal.
- Gauteng Industrial Development Zone.
- ORT SEZ.
- Datacentres.
- Gautrain.
- Ekurhuleni Fresh Produce Market.

19.2. Ekurhuleni (East Rand) Structure

19.2.1. Core Members

- 19.2.1.1. Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council.
- 19.2.1.2. Industry Partners Chamber (IPC).
- 19.2.1.3. Ekurhuleni East TVET College.
- 19.2.1.4. Ekurhuleni West TVET College.
- 19.2.1.5. Ekurhuleni major companies (Corporate chapter).

19.2.2. Industry Partners Chamber (IPC)

The IPC serves as the **central structural pillar** for the university's Dual Higher Education Model. It lays the foundation for a permanent and dynamic bridge between academia and the world of work, ensuring that the institution remains deeply connected to the economic ecosystem it serves.

The IPC will support the promotion of a new model university within the post-school education and training system based on strong industry-orientation in design, management, governance, curriculum, programmes, teaching and learning, research and innovation and networks with the broader socioeconomic ecosystem in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province, South Africa and internationally.

The core principle of the dual study concept at Ekurhuleni University is the three-month rhythm, by which students alternate between university and their workplace training provider, i.e., between gaining theoretical knowledge and applying this knowledge in practice. Students are employed at a company or a social institution and receive a monthly salary, including social security benefits.



[Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University - Wikipedia](#)

[Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University Loerrach - Wikipedia](#)

The IPC is mandated by the Organisation Governance board with the primary responsibility for supporting the establishment of the Ekurhuleni University of Applied Science and Innovation.

Some of its key programmes include, but are not limited to:

- Ekurhuleni Science Park.
- STI Institute (Research centre).

19.2.3. Main organisation events hosted

- Annual Ekurhuleni University STI Lecture.
- STI Lecture Podcast.

Annual Ekurhuleni University STI Lecture



Background	The University STI Lecture serves as the reminder for the need for the university, and its importance in regional economic development and innovation.
Objective	The purpose of the lecture is to deliver thought leadership in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation, focusing on how universities drive regional innovation and economic development.
Examples of Themes (from literature)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Entrepreneurial Universities in Regional innovation. □ Entrepreneurial University: context & structure. □ How Universities promote economic growth. □ Hybrid University model. □ Innovative Universities.
Example of Case Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW). □ Skolkovo Institute for Science and Technology (Skoltech). □ University of California. □ Beijing Wuzi University, China □ Tokyo University.
Venue	e, g, Birchwood Conference Centre / ACSA -OR Tambo Indaba Conference centre.
Time	5pm – 8pm
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Global Guest Speaker □ Subject Matter Expert