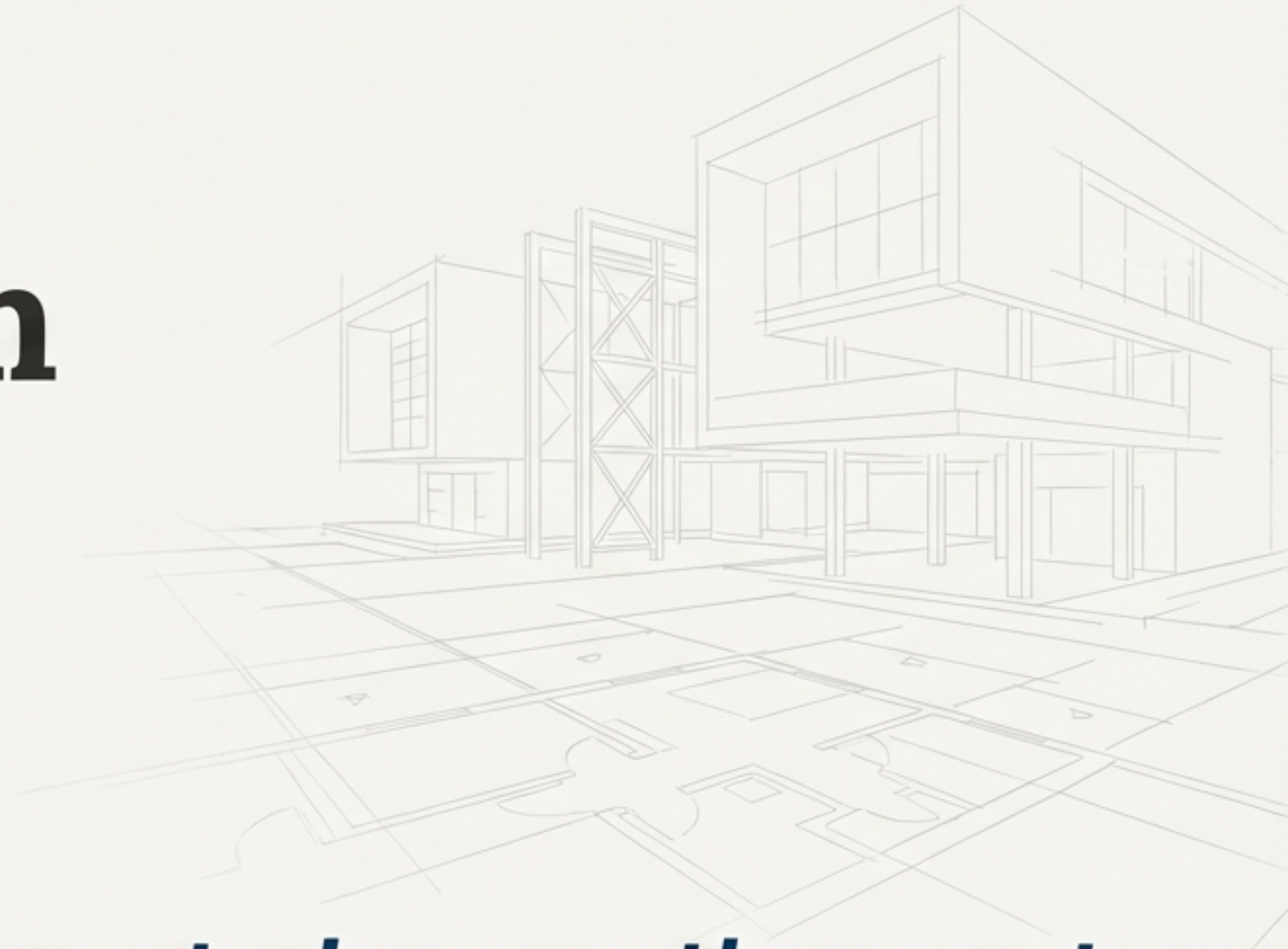


The STI Business Forum

A Blueprint for South Africa's
Socio-Economic Transformation

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



A Mandate for Change: The Impetus for the STI Business Forum

In 2019, the South African Government approved the White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), setting a long-term policy direction to leverage STI for a more prosperous and inclusive society.

A Confluence of Transformative Developments

The Forum was formed in response to a unique alignment of opportunities:



A New Political Era: The formation of the Government of National Unity on 29 May 2024, signaling a new collaborative landscape.



A Presidential Priority: The announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 23 August 2024, prioritising the construction of the Ekurhuleni University of Applied Science and Innovation.



A National Call to Action: The call made at the National Transformation Summit on 13 March 2025, to support the new university's establishment.

Our Purpose, Vision, and Mission

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 Forum seeks to:

- Promote inclusive economic growth through STI.
- Drive industrial innovation through STI as a catalyst for urban development and re-industrialisation.

Vision

“To develop a productive and competitive Science, Technology & Innovation ecosystem, and ensure inter-provincial urban industrialisation for a more advanced and inclusive society.”

Mission

“Championing urban regional industrialisation through Science, Technology and Innovation.”

The Pillars of Our Mandate



Championing the Ekurhuleni University of Applied Science and Innovation

Establishing a new model of work-integrated learning universities.



Promoting a National Urban Innovation Ecosystem

Anchored around South Africa's 8 metropolitan areas and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).



Advancing STI-Driven Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

To accelerate growth and competitiveness.



Advocating for a Dual Education System

Combining classroom learning with practical work experience to enhance employability.



Promoting Key Investment Programmes

Including the Equity Equivalent Investment Programme and public venture capital funds.

From Strategic Programmes to Tangible Outcomes

Key Strategic Programmes

To ensure tangible results, the Forum will pursue and champion key programmes:

- 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.



Key Expected Outcomes

Our work is designed to achieve measurable success:

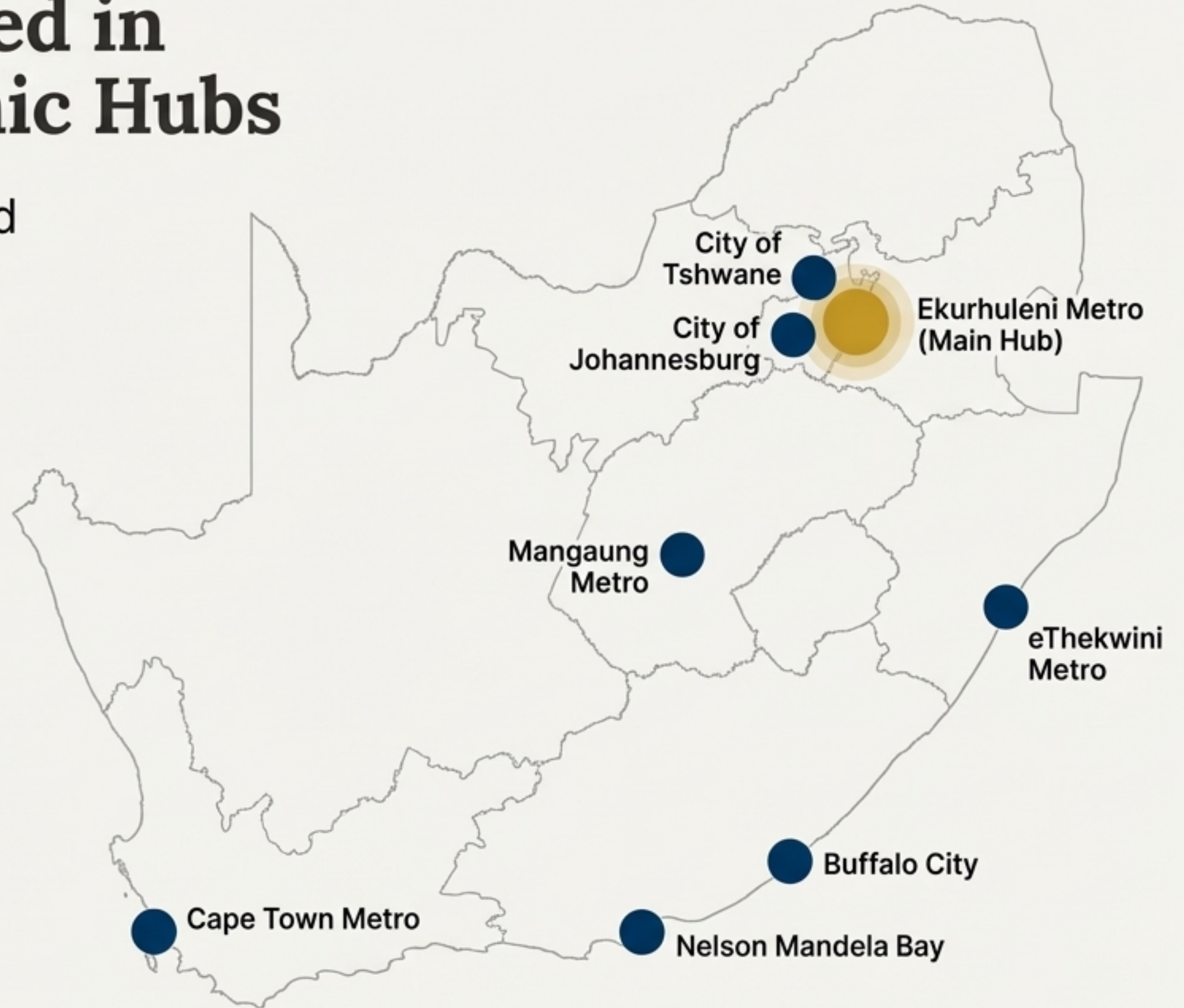
- ✓ Business-friendly STI policies that promote competitiveness.
- ✓ Scalable STI startups and entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Strong UoTs/TVETs-business partnerships.
- ✓ Vibrant and connected STI-business ecosystems.
- ✓ Creation of sustainable, innovation-based employment.
- ✓ A strong and vibrant Dual Higher Education Model.

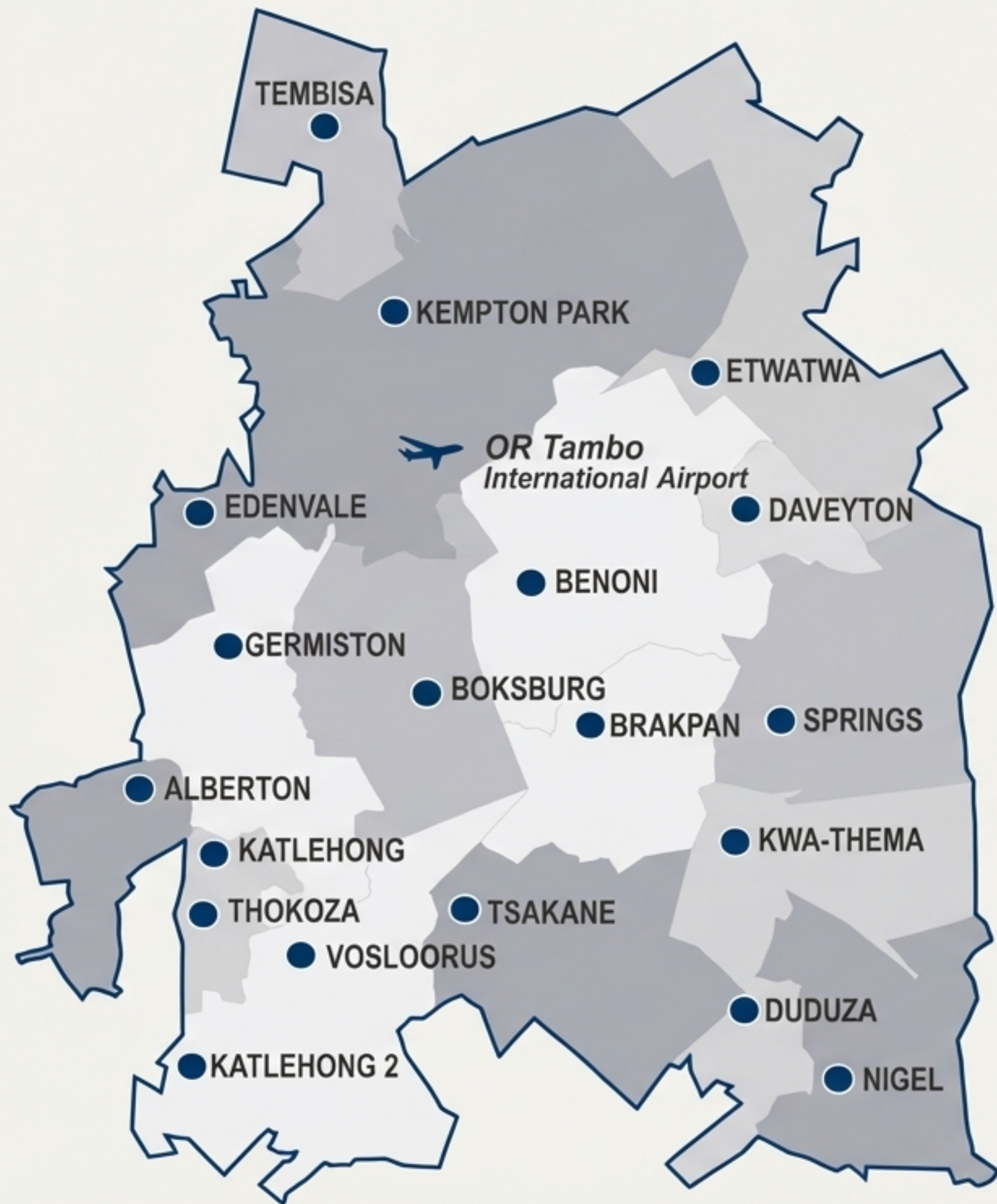
An Ecosystem Anchored in South Africa's Economic Hubs

The STI Business Forum is built around South Africa's 8 metropolitan municipalities, which collectively represent the nation's economic engine.

55% of South Africa's population and over **70%** of its economic activity.

Source: SALGA, Inaugural Metropolitan Mayors' Meeting, 2025





Ekurhuleni: The Epicentre of Re-industrialisation

The City of Ekurhuleni serves as the Head Office and main hub for the STI Business Forum. Its economic strategy is underpinned by major future development projects aimed at transforming the region into a major Industrial Innovation hub.

Key Initiatives

- A Digital City
- Aerotropolis
- Midfield Cargo Terminal
- Gauteng Industrial Development Zone
- OR Tambo SEZ
- Datacentres
- Gautrain Expansion

"Sustainable City Trajectory lies at the heart of the CoE Growth and Development Strategy 2055."

Championing a New Paradigm: The Dual Higher Education Model

A core principle for the new Ekurhuleni University is the dual study concept, which integrates theoretical knowledge with practical workplace experience. Students alternate between the university and a workplace training provider, ensuring they are employed and gain real-world skills.

Cooperative Higher Education: Academic Learning + Workplace Training

THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

Intensive 3-month
academic phases

**ACADEMIC
LEARNING**

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

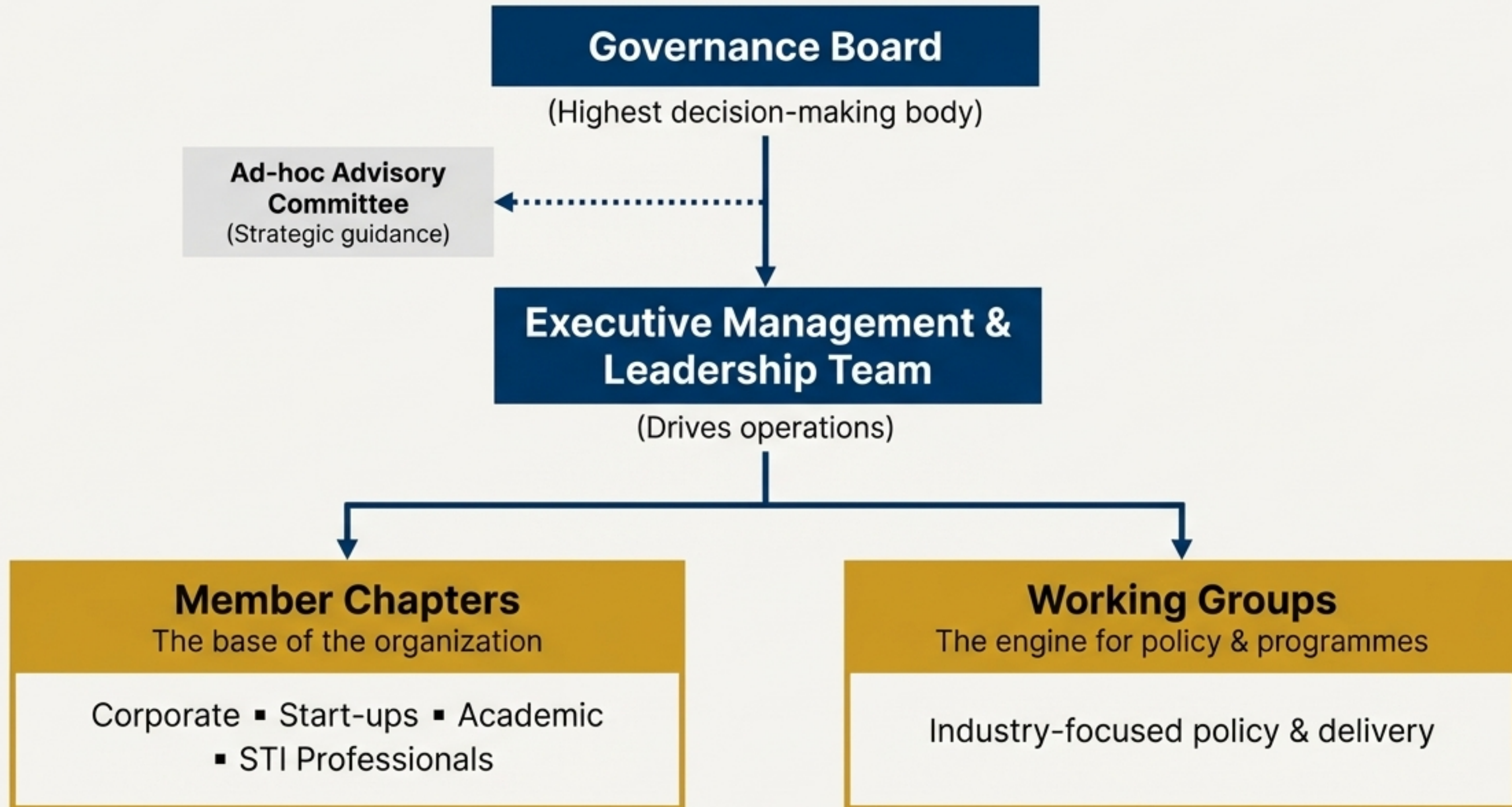
3-month work placements
with partner companies

**WORKPLACE
TRAINING**

Integration of Theory
& Practice in the
Curriculum

The model lays the foundation for a permanent and dynamic bridge between academia and the world of work.

Our Structure: Built for Governance and Impact



Professional Governance and Experienced Leadership

The Governance Board

11 non-executive members + 4 Chapter Convenors (as ex-officio members). Total of 15 members.

Term: 3 years, with a maximum of 2 terms to ensure continuity and fresh perspectives.

Required Attributes for Board Members:



Business Leadership and Experience



Science, Technology, and Innovation background



Extensive local and international business networks



Proven entrepreneurship experience



A passion for promoting economic inclusivity

The Leadership Team (Executive Directors)



Chairperson



Deputy Chairperson



Head of Policy



Treasurer General



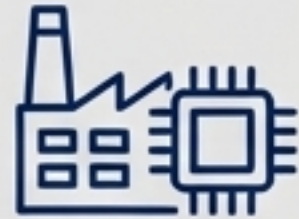
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The Engine Room: Member-Driven Working Groups

The policy and programme work of the organisation is done through 10 permanent, industry-focused Working Groups (WKGs). These groups are responsible for developing the organisation's policy positions and driving its key initiatives.



1. Business
STI-Funding & R&D
Investment



2. High-Tech
Industries & Smart
Manufacturing



3. Hydrogen
Energy



4. Integrated
Work-Academic
Learning



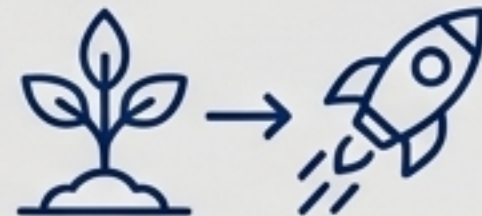
5. Artificial
Intelligence (AI) &
Emerging
Technologies



6. Aerospace &
Aviation



7. Logistics &
Transport



8. Start-ups
Development



9. Digital Health



10. University
Planning

Four Chapters: A Coalition for Innovation

Our member-based organisation is structured into four distinct Chapters, bringing together key players from across the STI ecosystem.



Corporate Chapter

For South African and international companies invested in STI and committed to advancing business-friendly policies.



Start-ups Chapter

For scalable start-ups and entrepreneurs in the science and technology sectors employing a minimum of 5 people.



Academic Chapter

For Universities of Technology (UoTs), TVETs, and STI-focused universities.



STI Professionals Chapter

For highly accomplished individuals in STI fields, including Professors, Executive Directors, Researchers, and Technical Professionals.

The Membership Value Proposition

Corporate Chapter



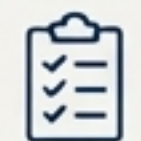
Access to R&D Partnerships/
Facilities



STI Policy
Advocacy



Industry
Leadership



BBBEE Scorecard
& Social Impact

Start-ups Chapter



Access to R&D and
Facilities



Industry Value
Chain Integration



Marketing &
Promotion



Work-Integrated
Learning Access

Academic Chapter



Industry Access



STI Policy Position
& Advocacy

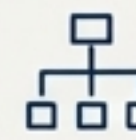


Work-Integrated
Learning
Partnerships



Marketing &
Promotion

STI Professionals Chapter



Board Nomination
Opportunities



Access to Strategic
Positions &
Advisory Roles



Industry Access &
High-Level
Networking



Access to High-
Level Job
Opportunities

Pathways to Participation

Annual Membership Fees

Corporate Chapter	R50,000
Start-ups Chapter	R10,000
Academic Technology Institution	R20,000
Strategic Organisations	R20,000
STI Professionals	R5,000

Selection Criteria & Governance

Membership is approved by a **Selection Committee** of the Governance Board.

The committee defines selection criteria, rules, and guidelines to ensure alignment with the Forum's **objectives and ethos**.

Membership fees are reviewed **annually**.

Shaping the Future Through Strategic Alliances

We work in strategic collaboration with government, business, and international organisations to achieve our national objectives.

Government

Dept. of Science, Technology & Innovation

Dept. of Higher Education

Dept. of Trade, Industry & Competition

SALGA

Business Organisations (SA)

Business Unity South Africa (BUSA)

Black Business Council (BBC)

International Chambers

SA-Germany Chamber

EU Chamber

British Chamber

BRICS Business Council

Join us in positioning Science, Technology and Innovation at the centre of South Africa's growth.