



The South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS), the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and TWAS Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Partner (TWAS-SAREP)

cordially invite you to a webinar on

Exploring Opportunities for Young Scientists in Africa:
Building Research Careers through Capacity building,
Collaboration and Innovation

Strengthening the next generation
of African scientists through skills development,
interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovative research
ecosystems

Africa is home to a growing cohort of young scientists whose work is shaping the continent's response to global health, environmental, and socio-economic challenges. However, despite their potential, many young scientist, emerging researcher and early-career researchers face barriers such as limited access to research funding, mentorship, and international collaboration opportunities.

To strengthen the continent's scientific capacity and competitiveness, it is essential to create platforms that connect young researchers with institutions that support research excellence and innovation. This webinar “Exploring Opportunities for Young Scientists in Africa” seeks to bring together representatives from leading national, regional, and international scientific bodies to share available opportunities, programmes, and pathways for research career development.

Date:
5 June 2026

Time:
14:00 – 16:00
(SAST)

RSVP:
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to register

PROGRAMME

Session 1

14:00 – 14:05	- Opening and Welcome Remarks - Introduction of partners and stakeholders - Overview of webinar objectives and expected outcomes	Prof Maurine Rofhiwa Musie, University of Pretoria, Host and Webinar Convenor
14:05 – 14:20	Keynote address: Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) - The role of science academies and research councils in nurturing scientific leadership among emerging researchers - The uptake or limited uptake of existing opportunities available to young scientists across Africa; and recommendations for fostering mentorship and interdisciplinary dialogue that supports sustainable, long-term research careers	Prof Ishmael Masesane, NASAC, Botswana Academy of Science (BAS) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
14:20 – 14:35	The World Academy of Sciences Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Partner (TWAS-SAREP) - Research Capacity Building and Funding Opportunities for sub-Saharan Africa - Uptake of the opportunities in Africa (mobility and exchange programmes)	Prof Marcelo Knobel, TWAS
14:35 –14:55	National Research Foundation (NRF) Overview of funding schemes, fellowships, and capacity-building programmes for emerging researchers (NRT Thuthuka, BAAP, DSTI-NRF Postgraduate Scholarships, NRF-Sasol Young Academics Accelerator Programme (YAAP), International Collaboration & Seed Grants).	- Dr Moloko Mathipa-Mdakane, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Future Earth Africa Hub - Kholofelo Mampeule NRF, Future Earth Africa Hub
14:55 – 15:05	Q&A Session	Prof Maurine Rofhiwa Musie, UP & All

Session 2

15:05 – 15:20	Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) - Capacity building and international collaborations (Lindau, BRICS and IAP Young physicians) supporting emerging African researchers. - Discussion on barriers, enablers, and emerging opportunities for early-career researchers	Dr Tozama Qwebani, ASSAf
15:20 – 15:35	Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) - Opportunities for researchers (Women in Science, UNESCO, L'Oréal, Internationalisation of Science and International collaborations) - Discussion on barriers, enablers, and emerging opportunities for early-career researchers	Dr Maphuti Madiga, DSTI
15:35 – 15:50	Q&A Session	- Dr Gauta Gold Matlou, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, SAYAS - All speakers
15:50 – 16:00	- Closing remarks and way forward - Summary of key insights and call to action for young scientists - Vote of thanks to all stakeholders: SAYAS, ASSAf, DSTI, NRF, TWAS-SAREP, and NASAC	Dr Gauta Gold Matlou

PROGRAMME



Prof Ishmael Masesane is the Secretary General of the Network of African Academies of Science (NASAC), President of the Botswana Academy of Science (BAS) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC). He holds a PhD degree from the University of Durham, UK and MSc and BSc degrees from the University of Botswana. Ishmael Masesane is Professor of Organic Chemistry at the University of Botswana where he has served as Head of the Department of Chemistry (2015-2020) and Dean of the Faculty of Science (2021-2023). He a former president of the Botswana Chemical Society and inaugural Executive Board Member of Commonwealth Chemistry. Ishmael's research interests span both natural products chemistry and organic synthesis. He has published over sixty journal articles and four book chapters and has Scopus h-index of 15.



Prof Marcelo Knobel serves as executive director of TWAS.A distinguished physicist and science advocate, Knobel brings more than three decades of experience in higher education leadership, scientific research, and science communication. He previously served as rector of the University of Campinas (Unicamp) in Brazil from 2017 to 2021, where he has been a faculty member for 30 years. With more than 300 scientific publications and numerous prestigious awards, Knobel is internationally recognized for his contributions to physics research, educational innovation, and science popularization. He has received prestigious awards, including the 2022 CBMM Prize on Science and Technology (Brazil's most prestigious science and technology award), the 2019 José Reis Science Popularization Prize, and the 2013 Peter Muranyí Prize in Education. He is a Commander of the Order of Scientific Merit (Brazil) and holds a Doctor Honoris Causa from Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, Plurinational State of Bolivia.



Prof Maurine Rofhiwa Musie is an Associate Professor and Advanced Midwife Specialist in the Department of Nursing Sciences at the University of Pretoria. Her research focuses on sexual and reproductive health and the use of digital technology in maternal health. She was recognised as the youngest PhD holder at UP and, in 2015, became the first African student to graduate cum laude with a Bachelor of Nursing Sciences degree. Prof Musie received the 2025 South African Women in Science Awards Distinguished Young Woman Researcher award and was selected among the top 10 young scientists to represent South Africa at the BRICS Congress. She serves as Co-chair of the South African Young Academy of Science, Academic Editor at PLOS ONE, and holds leadership roles in several international and national nursing organisations. She has authored more than 20 peer-reviewed articles and a book chapter, supervised 18 postgraduate students across Africa, and has an H-index of 12.



Kholofelo Mampeule is a Liaison Officer in the International Grants and Partnerships department at the National Research Foundation, and communications officer of the Future Earth Africa Hub. Her work supports international collaboration and knowledge exchange. She coordinates the Future Earth newsletter and leads communications for the Future Earth Africa Hub, including managing the Hub’s website. Kholo has also contributed to strategic programmes such as the COVID-19 Africa Rapid Grant Fund and the NRF-AXA African Scientific Progress Award. Through her role, she supports the implementation of initiatives that strengthen collaboration, enhance research visibility, and foster engagement among researchers and stakeholders across Africa.



Dr Moloko Mathipa-Mdakane is an Information Scientist at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and a Policy Fellow at the National Research Foundation’s Future Earth Africa Hub. Her work focuses on research support, science policy, innovation, knowledge management, and evidence-informed decision-making. She has contributed to initiatives on research partnerships, capacity strengthening, sustainability science, and institutional collaboration, including work linked to the Future Earth Africa Hub. Her interests include research capacity development, science-policy engagement, research impact, and the role of networks, mentorship, and partnerships in supporting early career researchers. As a product of international collaboration, she brings a strong appreciation of how global partnerships, research networks, and capacity-building opportunities can shape academic and professional growth.



Dr Tozama Qwebani is Programme Officer for Africa and Overseas Partnerships at the Academy of Science of South Africa, where she coordinates strategic continental and global collaborations. She holds a PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand, a Science Leadership Certificate from the InterAcademy Partnership, and has served as a visiting scholar at Rutgers School of Dental Medicine. Dr Qwebani serves as an Emissary for the Science Diplomacy Capital for Africa and is a TechWomen Fellow. She previously served on an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development expert group and in a South African National Department of Health advisory role on Traditional Medicine. In 2022, she co-chaired the South African Young Academy of Science. Her career has included roles in academia, government research, and higher education institutions.



Dr Maphuti Madiga is Deputy Director at the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), where she oversees programmes that support emerging researchers, provides policy and strategic oversight, and promotes women's participation in science through her coordination of the South African Women in Science Awards (SAWISA). With more than sixteen years of experience in higher education, science councils, and government, Dr Madiga has built expertise in research management, grant making, project management, and stakeholder engagement. She holds a PhD in Public Health from Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University with over 15 peers-reviewed articles, 1 100+ citations, and a Google Scholar h-index of 8. Dr Madiga is committed to advancing systemic transformation and excellence in science.



Dr Gauta Gold Matlou is an emerging researcher with an NRF Y rating. Dr Matlou conducts his research in phthalocyanine chemistry and nanoparticle formulations for photodynamic antimicrobial chemotherapy (PACT) and photodynamic therapy (PDT). His research has generated publications in leading international journals, leading to a Google Scholar H-Index of 13, a Scopus H-Index of 12 and a Research gate H-index of 12. He works full-time as a senior scientist at the Electron Microscopy Unit of Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University. Dr Matlou also serves as a co-chair of the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) and an alumnus of the Lindau Nobel Laureates Meetings, Global Young Scientist Summit, and the Mail and Guardian Top 200 Young South Africans.