



**MAKING IT POSSIBLE  
THROUGH SCIENCE  
#NSW2021**

## Webinar Invitation

# ***A perspective of how scholars perceive attitudes to science in policy making in South Africa***

**Thursday, 5 August 2021 11h00 – 12h00**

Policy makers are a vital group with whom scientific research should be communicated, especially when the reason for many research projects are linked to relevance for socio-political and economic management. Science communication has a vital role in transforming research into policy, and a core element of this process is understanding the target group, namely policymakers. Science and policy influence each other deeply, so researchers and policymakers should improve their understanding of each other and of the processes involved in both fields in order to better collaborate. Accordingly, an in-depth understanding of how scholars perceive policymakers is a precondition for scientists to achieve any desired management and policy impacts.

## Moderator

**Prisca Thobejane**

Environmental Control Officer (Myezo Environmental Management Services Pty Ltd).

## Panellists



**Babalwa Fatyi**

**Director of Myezo Environmental Management Services (Pty) Ltd.**

Babalwa Fatyi is a sustainability expert, who is a founder and Managing Director at Myezo Environmental Management Services (Pty) Ltd. Myezo is an advisory services company offering services that promote the protection of natural resources and respect for the planet in line with the universal adopted values as advocated under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Vision 2030 and South Africa National Development Plan. Babalwa is a registered professional natural scientist and an environmental auditor, with Master of Science (*Cum Laude*) (1999, University of the Witwatersrand) and BA Arts, Global School of Theology, USA.

Babalwa has shared her sustainability insights at various scientific national and international knowledge sharing platforms and has authored and co-authored publications in scientific journals such as Journal of Arid Environments and South and African Journal of Botany. She was honoured with SA Association for Advancement of Science Award for an outstanding MSc degree for the best thesis across South African Universities in the Faculty of Science in 1999. She is a multi-award nominee and winner from various esteemed organisations such as Africa's Most influential Women in Africa: Arts and Culture Sector (2015-2016); professional services (2017-2018); and later a regional winner for Southern African Development Community, south, Small and Medium Enterprises Sector 2019-2020. She has also been recognised by Hanell International, UK, as an international Environmental Achiever.

Babalwa is also an author and a poet, who uses poetry as a voice to challenge certain stereotypes, unjust practices or norms and advocate for paradigm shift within various sustainability and socio-economic development thematic areas such as advocating for recognition of indigenous knowledge in scientific settings, along with preservation of universal values, which influence ethical behaviours. She contributes to the advancement of the core principles of integrated environmental management sector as an environmental advisor and stakeholder engagement strategist. She is dedicating her time to spearheading science sector succession planning and unlocking human capital value, through mentoring, as a founding member of Myezo Growth and Development Institute, a non-profit organisation, dedicated to reducing youth unemployment. Her vision has supported several scientists to attain their professional scientific registration. She is the vice chairperson of Ladies of all Nations International, South African Chapter, a UK based organisation with representation in 150 countries, whose mandate is to promote inclusive economies through embracing diversity and empowerment of women. As part of her continued professional growth and development, she is affiliated with business and scientific professional bodies. In addition, she has been recognised as a philanthropist and was honoured with Doctor of Humanitarianism, honoris causa by the Global International Alliance, USA.

### Dr. Zethu Cakata

Associate Professor in psychology at the University of South Africa (UNISA)

Currently works as an acting Director of Scholarship Change, in the Department of Leadership and Transformation at Unisa. An Associate Professor in Psychology at the same university with scholarship interests in indigenous African ways of understanding human sciences, particularly psychology, African Psychology, Re-Africanisation of curriculum through language. Also explores phenomena such names and naming practices, ethics around studying indigenous phenomena and research methodology. She has published on the need to center African knowledge in higher education curriculum with titles on the spiritual meaning of what is today known as the 'bride price', the cultural embeddedness of African Psychology and the spiritness of African knowledge. In her work she also uses metaphoric language as the reliable site of African epistemology. Previously worked as a researcher and lecturer in institutions such as Statistics South Africa, department of Psychology in the University of Pretoria and Human Sciences Research Council.



### Nolwazi Mbongwa

PhD student at the Institute of Communities and Wildlife in Africa (University of Cape Town)

Nolwazi Mbongwa is a PhD student at the Institute of Communities and Wildlife in Africa (University of Cape Town) looking at the *Cultural value and sustainability of wildlife trade among traditional healers and muthi traders in South Africa*. Nolwazi completed her BSc., BSc. (Hons) (Cum Laude) and MSc. (Cum Laude) at the University of Witwatersrand. In 2014 she accepted her calling to be trained as a Sangoma (diviner), and this inspired her to do research that combines her social experiences with conservation. Thereafter, she did her MSc. in ethnobotany looking at the perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of

traditional healers and muthi traders about using cultivated medicinal plants. She has worked for Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) as a muthi market survey intern and a Medicinal Plant Biodiversity Management Plan research assistant, respectively. She is currently a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Southern African Plant Specialist Group. Nolwazi's love for the environment stems from a rural background where nature is not only loved for its aesthetic value, but it also holds cultural significance for its inhabitants. She is passionate about the collaborative work between resource users, scientists, and conservationists in achieving the sustainable use of traditional medicine and ensuring that African cultural values are respected and considered in conservation initiatives, so that conflict of interests is avoided, and communities can also take part in conserving the environment.

