

Integrity

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Department:
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





Dr Matshidiso Matabane Pr.Sci.Nat.
Acting Chief Executive Officer

“
PARTNERSHIPS
REMAIN CENTRAL
TO SACNASP.
THEY ENABLE US
TO REACH BEYOND
THE REGULATORY
FUNCTION.”

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

SACNASP continues to advance its mandate within a dynamic and evolving science, policy, and regulatory environment. As the organisation strengthens its strategic positioning, there is a clear shift from establishing frameworks and partnerships to demonstrating their impact across the natural sciences ecosystem.

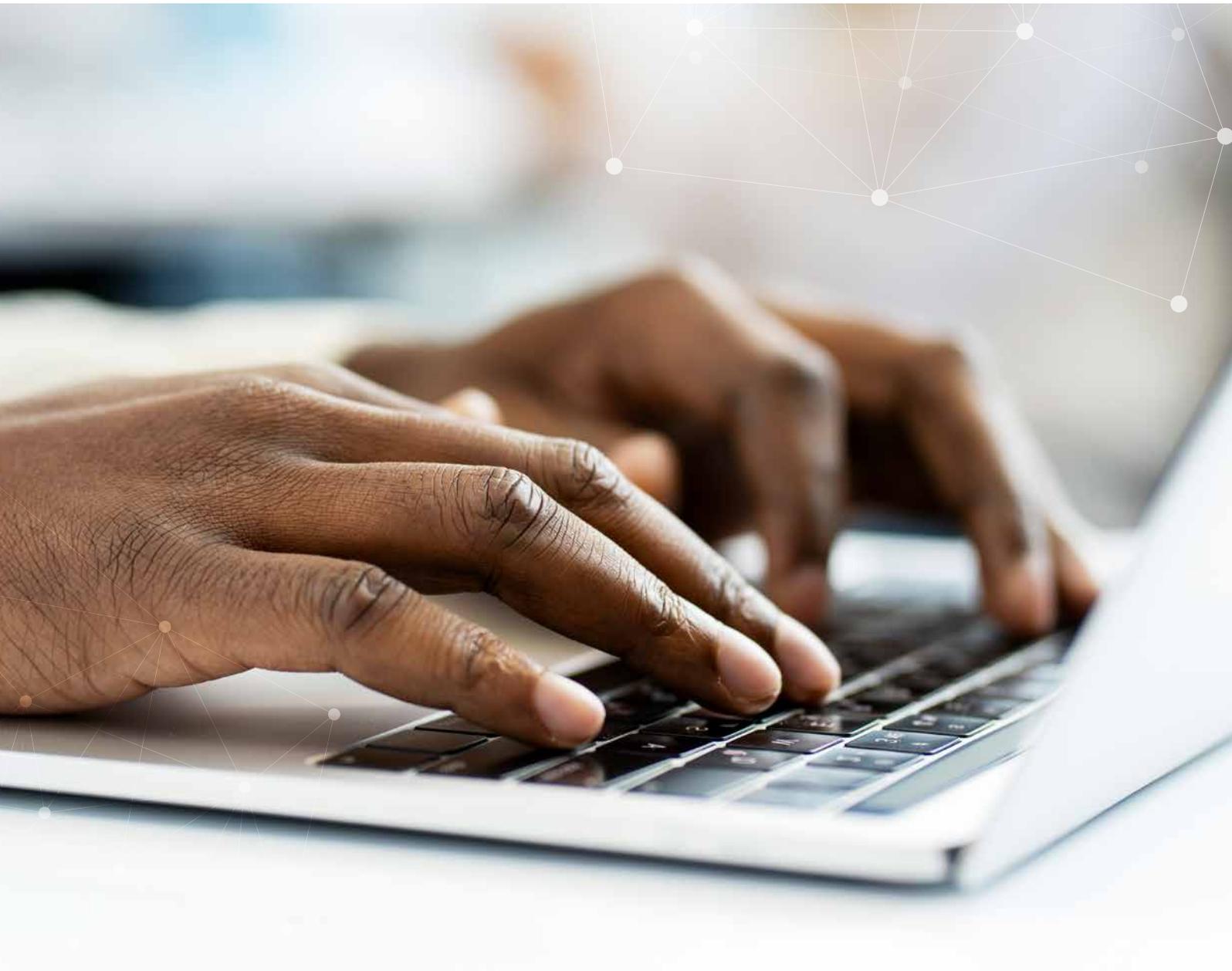
This edition reflects the progress being made in translating collaboration into tangible outcomes. Through initiatives such as SheSTEAM, the professionalisation of the public sector, and partnerships with industry and international counterparts, SACNASP is contributing to the development of a capable, ethical, and future-ready scientific workforce.

Partnerships remain central to this work. They enable SACNASP to extend its reach beyond its regulatory function, supporting education, strengthening institutional capacity, and facilitating global engagement. Importantly, these collaborations are aligned with national priorities, particularly the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation's vision of placing science, technology and innovation at the centre of government, education, industry, and society.

As SACNASP continues to implement its strategic objectives, the focus remains on ensuring that the natural scientific professions are not only regulated, but enabled to contribute meaningfully to South Africa's development agenda.

This edition highlights the collective efforts of partners, stakeholders, and professionals who are contributing to this shared vision. SACNASP remains committed to strengthening these partnerships and ensuring that they continue to deliver impact across all sectors of society.

Dr Matshidiso Matabane Pr.Sci.Nat.
Acting Chief Executive Officer



DELIVERING IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

SACNASP continues to advance a connected ecosystem of natural science professionals working across government, academia, industry, and society. Through these collaborations, science is increasingly shaping practical, real-world solutions that respond to national and global priorities.

As reflected on the cover, this work is grounded in a system of partnerships that is both interconnected and purposeful, supporting the delivery of impact across the natural sciences.

This edition highlights how these connections are being translated into action, strengthening the pipeline of future scientists, supporting professional growth, and contributing to a more sustainable and knowledge driven society.

Editor's Desk
Terrence Mangalana



SHESTEAM 2026: EXPANDING SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PRACTICE

The SheSTEAM Summit 2026 marked a significant evolution in SACNASP's flagship transformation programme, demonstrating how strategic partnerships are translating into measurable impact across the science education pipeline.

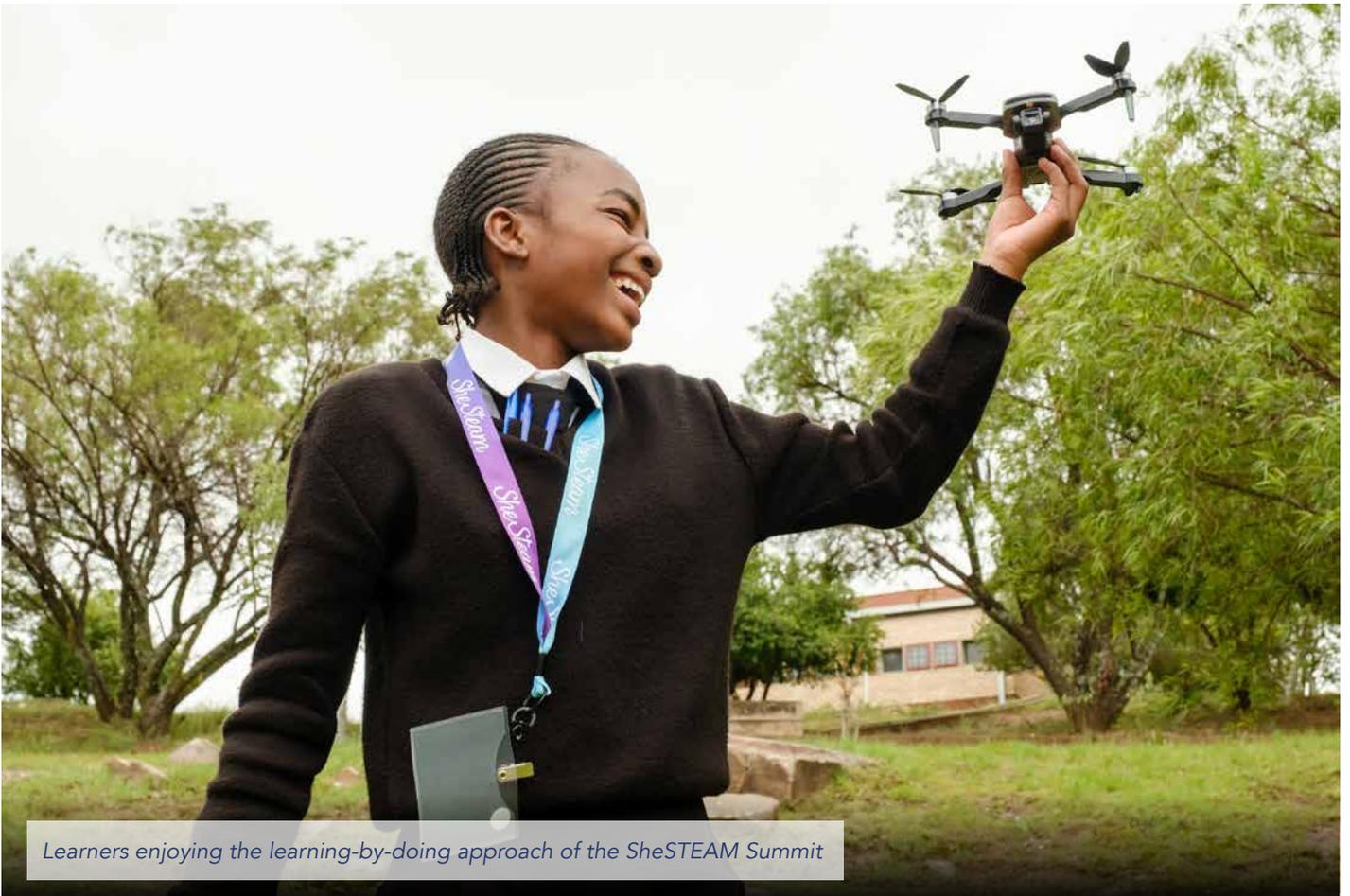
At the centre of this year's Summit was the strengthening of SACNASP's partnership with the African Research Collaborative (ARC), enabling a more structured and scalable approach to science engagement. This collaboration has expanded the reach of SheSTEAM beyond once-off exposure, positioning it as a sustained intervention that supports both learners and educators within the schooling system.

The Summit brought together learners, educators, and stakeholders through immersive, hands-on laboratory experiences designed to spark curiosity and deepen understanding of scientific concepts.

Alongside learner engagement, a key focus area was the capacity development of teachers, equipping educators with practical tools to embed inquiry-based learning within their classrooms.

This dual focus reflects a strategic shift in SACNASP's approach. By strengthening educator capability, the programme creates a multiplier effect, ensuring that the impact of the Summit extends beyond the event itself and into the broader education ecosystem.

Aligned with the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation's mandate of placing science, technology and innovation at the centre of government, education, industry, and society, SheSTEAM continues to strengthen the pipeline of future scientists, particularly among young women and learners from underrepresented communities.



PROFESSIONALISING THE PUBLIC SECTOR: BUILDING SCIENTIFIC CAPABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

SACNASP's work in advancing the professionalisation of the public sector continues to gain momentum through strategic alignment with national frameworks and institutional partnerships.

Central to this effort is alignment with the National School of Government framework for the professionalisation of the public sector, which emphasises the development of a capable, ethical, and skilled state. SACNASP's approach involves translating this national priority into a structured, science-specific implementation model that strengthens scientific competence, governance capability, and evidence-based decision-making across government.

This approach introduces defined competency pathways enabling scientists within the public service to develop skills in areas such as digital governance, infrastructure delivery, regulatory systems, and public financial management. Complementing this, SACNASP's Candidate Mentoring Phase (CMP) programme for the public sector, will provide structured development pathways aligned with workplace experience, ensuring a continuous pipeline from entry-level to professional leadership.

A key demonstration of implementation is SACNASP's partnership with the City of Cape Town, where the professionalisation framework is being operationalised at municipal level. The collaboration focuses on strengthening professional standards, supporting registration, and enabling continuous professional development among municipal scientists.

This partnership reflects a broader shift from policy development to practical application, where professionalisation is embedded within institutional systems. Through these partnerships, SACNASP is contributing to the development of a capable state by ensuring that scientific expertise is effectively integrated into governance, infrastructure planning, and service delivery.



A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK TOWARDS THE **PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR**



The National Framework for Professionalisation of the Public Sector published by the National School of Government.



The Biannual Professionalisation and Governance Work hosted by the City of Cape Town



SACNASP's meeting with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China

ADVANCING COLLABORATION THROUGH THE CHINA-AFRICA YEAR OF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES

SACNASP continues to strengthen its international partnerships through strategic engagement aligned with the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, positioning the organisation within global efforts to advance scientific collaboration and professional development.

During a recent engagement with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pretoria, SACNASP met with the Minister Counsellor for Science and Technology, Mr Chen Jingquan, and the First Secretary, Mr Yan Li, to explore opportunities for collaboration.

Discussions focused on how SACNASP can contribute to deepening cooperation under the existing Department of Science, Technology and Innovation and China Association for Science and Technology partnership framework.

A key outcome of this engagement is the identification of SACNASP's role in advancing people-to-people exchanges through its existing programmes. The SheSTEAM initiative presents an opportunity for youth-focused engagements for the SheSTEAM learners, while SACNASP's involvement in Youth Dialogues through its collaboration with the China Association for Science and Technology positions it as a platform for continued exchange on science for development.

These initiatives are aligned with the broader mandate of placing science, technology and innovation at the centre of society, with a particular emphasis on youth participation and international collaboration.

Through these engagements, SACNASP is contributing to structured international programmes and strengthening its role in science diplomacy and the development of globally connected scientific communities

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF NATURAL SCIENTISTS

SACNASP's Candidate Mentorship Programme (CMP) continues to demonstrate the value of partnerships in building a sustainable pipeline of natural science professionals.

Implemented in collaboration with Voluntary Associations, the programme facilitates structured mentorship between experienced registered scientists and emerging candidates. This partnership model ensures that mentorship is tailored to specific fields of practice while maintaining national standards for professional development.

The programme supports candidate scientists in developing both technical competencies and workplace readiness through a combination of mentorship, training interventions, and exposure to professional environments.

It also promotes transformation within the profession by increasing participation among women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Participation in the programme continues to grow, with increasing involvement from Voluntary Associations across multiple disciplines. The relaunch of the programme for the 2026 to 2027 cycle is expected to further expand this network, supported by targeted engagement and communication initiatives.

Through these partnerships, SACNASP is strengthening the long-term sustainability of the natural sciences profession by supporting the transition from graduate to registered professional.

A promotional poster for the SACNASP Candidate Mentorship Programme (CMP). The poster features the logos for SAAFoST (South African Association for Food Science & Technology) and SACNASP (South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions). The main headline reads "GROW YOUR Career IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY". Below this, it states "A mentorship programme for Candidate Natural Scientists in Food Science & Technology". The poster also mentions "SAAFoST and SACNASP are excited to bring you our newly launched Mentorship Programme". At the bottom, it says "Be mentored by a Professional Natural Scientist & Food Industry Expert in Food Science & Technology" and includes a call to action "Apply now!". The poster includes images of hands clasped together, a person working at a computer, and a woman in a lab coat.

A graphic featuring a wooden signpost with four directional signs pointing in different directions. The signs are labeled "HELP", "SUPPORT", "ADVICE", and "GUIDANCE". To the right of the signpost is a small inset photo of a man in a blue shirt. Below the signpost is the logo for GSSA (Growth, Skills, and Support Association) and SACNASP.

A photograph showing a group of people, including children and adults, standing in a field of tall grass. They appear to be engaged in an outdoor activity or field trip. A white text box at the bottom of the image reads "SACNASP CMP launching April 2026".

DRIVING PROFESSIONALISATION THROUGH THE EMPLOYER CHAMPION PROGRAMME

SACNASP's Employer Champion Programme (ECP) continues to demonstrate how partnerships with industry can advance professionalisation within the workplace.

The programme supports employers in promoting professional registration, continuous professional development, and ethical scientific practice among their workforce. By working directly with industry partners, SACNASP is embedding professional standards within organisational systems and supporting the ongoing development of scientific capability.

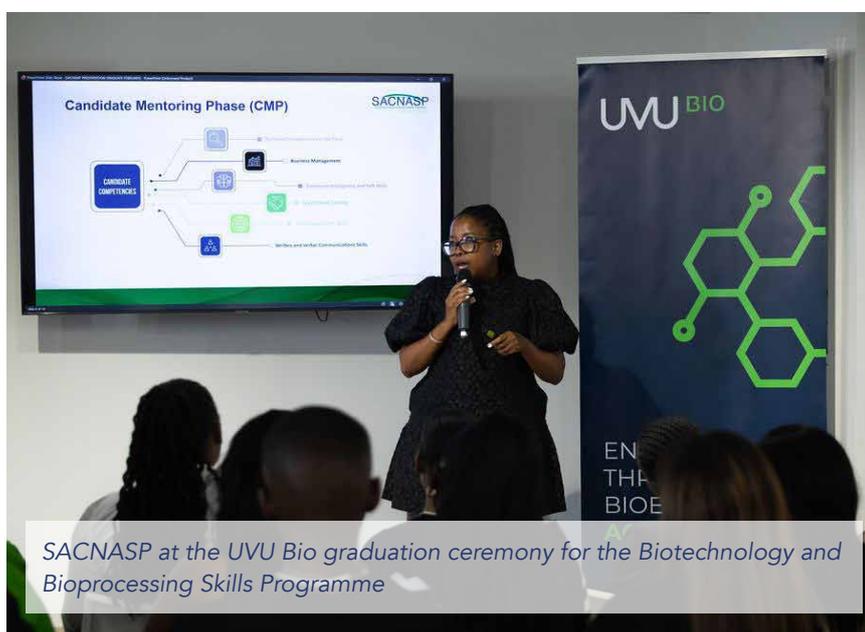
A recent example of this impact is SACNASP's ECP partnership with UVU Bio, whose skills development programmes have contributed to strengthening South Africa's biotechnology talent pipeline. Across multiple cohorts, graduates have developed technical capability, confidence, and pathways into further study and employment, with women comprising a significant proportion of participants.

Delivered in partnership with organisations such as GIZ, UVU Bio's programmes reflect a collaborative, ecosystem-driven approach to skills development that aligns training with industry needs and national priorities.

As SACNASP continues to expand the Employer Champion Programme across additional fields of practice, these partnerships will ensure that professionalisation extends beyond regulation into the workplace, where scientific skills are applied, developed, and sustained.



The four pillars of the SACNASP Employer Champion Programme



SACNASP at the UVU Bio graduation ceremony for the Biotechnology and Bioprocessing Skills Programme



FEATURED SCIENTIST

Shaping the Future of Science: Dr Gabriel Lekalakala Pr.Sci.Nat. on Technology, Skills, and Change



Dr Gabriel Lekalakala is a registered SACNASP Professional Scientist whose work sits at the intersection of science, policy, and the future of work. With over 16 years of experience, his expertise spans climate change, water systems, environmental science, and emerging technologies.

He currently serves as a Research Specialist at the Institute for the Future of Work at the Tshwane University of Technology, where he leads research on Fourth Industrial Revolution applications across sectors, including the integration of artificial intelligence into national systems.

His career includes roles within the Department of Water and Sanitation, the South African Weather Service, and the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, where he contributed to climate analysis, policy development, and national strategy processes.

His work forms part of SACNASP's partnership with the Institute for the Future of Work, which focuses on strengthening skills development, interdisciplinary collaboration, and preparing scientists for a rapidly evolving professional landscape.

IN CONVERSATION WITH GABRIEL

» **What inspired your journey into the natural sciences?**

My journey was driven by curiosity and a desire to understand complex systems and apply that knowledge to real-world challenges. The motivation has always been about living the science and using it to create practical solutions that respond to societal needs.

» **Your work focuses on the future of work and emerging technologies. What key trends should scientists be paying attention to?**

Scientists should pay close attention to the convergence of artificial intelligence, automation, and digital technologies, which are reshaping how work is done across all sectors.

There is a growing need for interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as the ability to contribute beyond academia into policy, innovation, and societal problem-solving. Future scientists will operate at the intersection of technology, society, and policy, particularly in areas such as climate change, water security, and sustainable systems.

» **How do you see the partnership between SACNASP and the Institute for the Future of Work contributing to skills development and the profession?**

The partnership has the potential to strengthen the scientific profession by aligning professional standards with future skills needs, promoting lifelong learning, and connecting academia, industry, and government. It creates opportunities for collaborative research, mentorship, and professional development, while supporting the integration of digital skills and interdisciplinary approaches into the profession.

» **What advice would you give to young or emerging scientists entering the field today?**

Emerging scientists should focus on developing both technical and adaptive skills, including digital capabilities, critical thinking, and resilience. It is important to remain curious, embrace interdisciplinary opportunities, and actively seek out practical experience through collaboration, mentorship, and real-world problem-solving. The future will belong to those who are willing to think beyond conventional boundaries and adapt to a rapidly changing environment.



THE FUTURE WILL BELONG TO SCIENTISTS WHO ARE ADAPTABLE, INTERDISCIPLINARY, AND WILLING TO THINK BEYOND CONVENTION.

CLOSING WORD

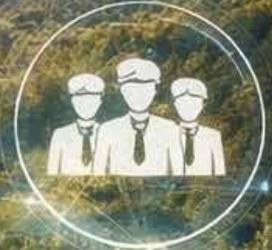
In this edition, the focus is on what has been put into practice across SACNASP's work. From classrooms and laboratories to government institutions and industry, the examples shared show how collaboration is being used to strengthen skills, support professionals, and connect science to real needs.

This work continues to grow through the contribution of partners, practitioners, and stakeholders across the system. It is through this collective effort that the natural sciences profession remains relevant, responsive, and positioned to support the country's development priorities.

SACNASP will continue to build on this momentum, working with its partners to ensure that these efforts remain practical, focused, and impactful.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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