



# ST&I BUSINESS FORUM

Reg. No. 2025/700925/08 | Non-Profit Company

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## INAUGURAL ST&I PUBLIC LECTURE 2026 CONCEPT DOCUMENT

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

In strategic partnership with  
**Mail & Guardian**

**Mail & Guardian**

## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Science, Technology & Innovation Business Forum is pleased to launch the 2026 Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture and the simultaneous official public launch of the Forum as a nationally significant policy advocacy organisation. The event will be held in the City of Ekurhuleni on 8 July 2026 (venue to be confirmed), from 17:00 to 20:00, in strategic partnership with the Mail & Guardian, and will convene approximately 400 distinguished delegates drawn from business, government, academia and civil society. The lecture will feature distinguished global speakers. One of the speakers will be from Princeton University Africa World Initiative.

Partnership opportunities are structured across three tiers: Platinum, Gold, and Silver with differentiated benefits including speaking opportunities, Mail & Guardian feature articles, and prominent brand placement. Sponsors are invited to align with a landmark occasion at the intersection of science, innovation, policy and business in South Africa.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) Business Forum proudly presents the 2026 Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture, the Forum's flagship intellectual and policy-engagement event. This Concept Document sets out the rationale, objectives, format, and partnership opportunities for what will be a landmark occasion in South Africa's science, technology and innovation calendar.

The STI Business Forum was established as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) with the explicit mandate to position Science, Technology and Innovation as a central driver of South Africa's socio-economic transformation. The Forum promotes inclusive economic growth and drives industrial innovation through STI as a catalyst for urban development and re-industrialisation which objectives that are directly reflected in the theme and programme of the Inaugural STI Public Lecture.

<b>Organisation</b>	Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Business Forum
<b>Registration No.</b>	2025/700925/08
<b>Type</b>	Non-Profit Company (Section 21), Companies Act 71 of 2008
<b>Vision</b>	A productive and competitive STI ecosystem ensuring inter-provincial urban industrialisation for a more advanced and inclusive society
<b>Mission</b>	Championing urban regional industrialisation through Science, Technology and Innovation
<b>Motto</b>	"We cannot change the past. We can shape the future."
<b>Strategic Media Partner</b>	Mail & Guardian

## 2. BACKGROUND & FOUNDING CONTEXT

In 2019, the South African Government approved the White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation which is considered a landmark policy document that set the long-term direction for an expanded role of ST&I in creating a more prosperous and inclusive South Africa. The White Paper emphasises leveraging ST&I to accelerate inclusive economic growth, improve competitiveness, and enhance the daily lives of citizens.

### 3. ST&I BUSINESS FORUM — MANDATE & CORE AIMS

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The ST&I Business Forum is a business policy advocacy organisation committed to promoting inclusive urban economic development through Science, Technology and Innovation, as well as industrial innovation. As a member-based NPO governed by a Memorandum of Incorporation adopted under the Companies Act (No. 71 of 2008), the Forum's dual mandate is to:

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

#### Six Core Aims

- Champion the establishment and sustainability of the Ekurhuleni University of Applied Science and Innovation: a model dual-education university with a strong industry and entrepreneurial orientation.
- Promote a national urban innovation ecosystem anchored around South Africa's eight Metropolitan Areas and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
- Advance STI-driven Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) that accelerate growth and national competitiveness.
- Advocate for a dual education system that combines classroom learning with practical workplace experience, enhancing graduate employability.
- Promote equity equivalent investment programmes that support STI initiatives.
- Promote a public venture capital fund to support and scale STI-driven enterprises.

### 4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PUBLIC LECTURES

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Public lectures have served as a cornerstone of public education, policy engagement, and intellectual discourse for centuries. In the South African context, such lectures provide a vital platform for connecting academic insight with business, government, and civil society, creating the conditions for ideas to translate into policy and action.

South Africa has a proud tradition of public lectures that enrich its cultural, policy and academic landscape, including the Raymond Mhlaba Memorial Institutional Public Lecture, the Royal Society of South Africa, and the Centre for Humanities Research. The Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture joins this tradition with a distinct and urgent focus on Science, Technology and Innovation as the engine of South Africa's future prosperity.

### 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE 2026 INAUGURAL ST&I PUBLIC LECTURE

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The 2026 Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture, presented in strategic partnership with Mail & Guardian, will pursue the following objectives:

- Presenting and advocating the Public-Private Partnership Model for Science and Innovation to a broad audience of business leaders, policymakers, and academics.
- Mark the official public launch of the ST&I Business Forum as a nationally significant policy advocacy organisation.
- Advance thought leadership on the role of STI institutions in driving South Africa's regional economic development and urban industrialisation.

## 5. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

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The 2026 Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture will produce the following tangible deliverables, each designed to extend the event's impact beyond the day itself and provide partners with concrete reference points for reporting:

- **Keynote Proceedings Report:** A professionally compiled report capturing the keynote address, panel contributions and key policy positions advanced at the Lecture. The report will be distributed digitally to all delegates, sponsors, and media partners.
- **ST&I Policy Brief:** A structured policy brief, formally addressed to relevant national government departments, summarising the Forum's recommendations on the PPP university model and ST&I-driven urban industrialisation. This brief will be submitted within 30 days of the Lecture.
- **Mail & Guardian Post-Event Coverage:** Editorial reporting in print and digital platforms covering the outcomes, keynote highlights, and commitments made at the Lecture.
- **Sponsor Impact Report:** A post-event report provided to all sponsors detailing delegate attendance, media reach, social media impressions, and a summary of KPI performance against targets.
- **Formal Commitments Register:** A public record of any formal commitments, pledges or partnership declarations made by speakers, sponsors and institutional partners at the Lecture.

## 6. 2026 LECTURE THEME

### ***A Public-Private Partnership Model for Science and Innovation***

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The Lecture is convened under the theme “*A Public-Private Partnership Model for Science and Innovation*”, a theme that gives direct expression to the urgent national imperative of placing science, technology and innovation not at the margins, but at the very heart of South African society and industry. It is the Forum's firm conviction that this principle, when translated into deliberate policy and organised private sector action, becomes the most powerful engine available to South Africa for achieving inclusive economic growth, regional competitiveness and sustainable urban industrialisation.

## 7. STRATEGIC PARTNER – MAIL & GUARDIAN

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The ST&I Business Forum has secured Mail & Guardian as the official strategic media partner for the Inaugural STI Public Lecture 2026. The Mail & Guardian partnership amplifies the reach and credibility of the ST&I Public Lecture far beyond the event itself extending your sponsorship investment into one of South Africa's most trusted and influential media platforms.

**Pre-Event Coverage** Mail & Guardian has been running editorial content in the lead-up to the Lecture, building national awareness around the event theme. This positions the event and by extension, its sponsors within a serious, high-quality editorial context.

**Sponsor Interviews & Feature Articles** Platinum and Gold sponsors receive a dedicated Mail & Guardian interview and feature article. Feature articles will be published in print and online, with digital distribution across Mail & Guardian's platforms.

**Post-Event Reporting** Mail & Guardian will cover the outcomes of the Lecture, including keynote address highlights, key policy positions advanced, and the commitments made by speakers and partners. Sponsors are named throughout this coverage, reinforcing their association with the event's legacy.

**Press Release Distribution** All official ST&I Business Forum and Mail & Guardian press releases relating to the Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture issued before, during, and after the event will name sponsors in accordance with their tier. These releases are distributed to the full South African media landscape.

## 8. LECTURE FORMAT & PROGRAMME

The 2026 Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture will feature four distinguished speakers, each addressing a critical dimension of the lecture theme. The event will run from 17:00 to 20:00.

<b>SPEAKER</b>
<b>Cabinet Minister</b>
<b>Global Speaker</b>
<b>Industry Speaker</b>

## 9. TARGET AUDIENCE, VENUE & DATE

The Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture will convene approximately 400 delegates drawn from across the business, innovation, policy and public sector landscape, including:

- Business executives and leaders across South Africa.
- Leaders of the national business community with an active interest in Science, Technology and Innovation.
- Members of professional bodies and industry associations.
- Government officials and policymakers from national, provincial and local spheres.
- Academic leaders

Seating will be structured in accordance with the sponsorship framework. Front-row seating will be reserved for sponsors, dignitaries and ST&I members.

<b>Date</b>	8 July 2026
<b>Time</b>	17:00 – 20:00
<b>Host City</b>	City of Ekurhuleni
<b>Venue Options</b>	TBC

## 11. PARTNERSHIP & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Inaugural ST&I Public Lecture presents a unique opportunity for organisations to align with a nationally significant platform at the intersection of science, innovation, policy and business. The event is structured around four sponsorship tiers, offering differentiated visibility and engagement benefits.

TIER	PARTNER BENEFITS
PLATINUM	Speaking opportunity at the event • Hosting engagement with keynote speakers • Full Mail & Guardian interview and feature article • Premium logo placement on all event material and collateral • On-site promotional opportunities • Social media mentions and digital profile • Website recognition • Inclusion in press releases • Active contribution to ST&I Business Forum's core programmes and activities
GOLD	Mail & Guardian interview and feature article • Speaking opportunity at the event • Interactive engagement with keynote speakers • Branded material and collateral • Logo placement across all event material • On-site promotional opportunities • Social media mentions and digital profile • Website recognition • Inclusion in press releases
SILVER	Logo placement across all event material • On-site promotional opportunities • Social media mentions • Website recognition • Inclusion in press releases

## 12. ST&I BUSINESS FORUM MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to South African and international companies, start-ups, Universities of Technology, TVET Colleges, and accomplished STI professionals who align with the Forum's mandate. Membership fees range from R5,000 per annum (STI Professionals) to R50,000 per annum (Corporate Chapter). For membership enquiries, contact [info@stibusinessforum.co.za](mailto:info@stibusinessforum.co.za).

### For Partnership & Sponsorship Enquiries

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