

# AFRICA WEEK 2023

## The role of research and innovation in accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA

Save the date

Venue: Future Africa Campus, University of Pretoria  
Date: 22 May 2023  
Time: 10:00 - 12:00

Click [here](#) to join on ZOOM



The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is an Intra-Africa Trade Agreement that seeks to catalyse and deepen economic integration by allowing for free movement of goods, people, investment and services in Africa. The secretary-general of the AfCFTA, H.E. Wamkele Mene, noted at the AfCFTA Start of Trading Ceremony webinar that the trade agreement is not meant to benefit big corporations in Africa, but rather that it is aimed at being inclusive of young Africans, women and African small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). AfCFTA provides an unprecedented opportunity to expand the African innovation ecosystem. With the African Union's theme for 2023 centred on accelerating the implementation of the agreement, this is also an opportune time to leverage the growth of the technology ecosystem to ensure better access to markets and attain commercialisation.

The African Development Bank White Paper on Entrepreneurship and Free Trade: Catalysts for a New Era for Economic Prosperity, posits that entrepreneurship must be at the heart of the transformation of Africa's economic prospects. The white paper also highlights the role of accelerators, incubators and technology hubs in creating a breeding ground for ground-breaking and disruptive ideas that promise to yield significant commercial and societal returns. This is evident in the establishment of technology incubators and accelerators in universities across the continent that seek to forge a culture of entrepreneurial innovations emerging from the higher education sector.

An underlying theme of the Department of Science and Innovation's recently approved Decadal Plan is sourcing new avenues of economic growth for a re-industrialised and modern economy. The approach of the Decadal Plan is to integrate new stakeholders, such as (SMEs) and innovators. The plan supports stimulating trade and STI synergies, encouraging intra-Africa trade and better integration, and promoting development of the continent .

Considering the aforementioned, the Department of Science and Innovation, in collaboration with the National Research Foundation, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Future Africa Institute of the University of Pretoria, seek to host this year's Africa Day celebrations under the theme "The role of research and innovation in accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA". The session will be held under the auspices of the Future Africa's Africa Science Week, which will be held from 22 to 26 May 2023. This is in line with the African Union's theme around accelerating the implementation of the trade agreement. This year's celebration will focus on the AfCFTA and how national systems of innovation could contribute towards its implementation and the growth of the intra-African trade ecosystem.

### Session objectives:

Interrogate the interface between science diplomacy and economic diplomacy in accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA;

Commemorate the AU's theme of accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA, thereby contributing to horizon-scanning for Africa's contribution to the implementation of the continental free trade area; and

Discuss with stakeholders their views on the possible contribution of research and innovation in accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA.



science & innovation  
Department:  
Science and Innovation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



AfCFTA

