South African National Survey of Research and Experimental Development

R&D SURVEY

Investment ▪ Insight ▪ Impact



SCIENCE COUNCILS

AT A GLANCE 2022/23

South African science councils are an essential component of the country's innovation system, each established by an act of parliament, and given a specific and unique research mandate. In accordance with their obligation, science councils spent the most on R&D in the areas of economic development, health, and education in 2022/23, closely mirroring national priorities in the country.

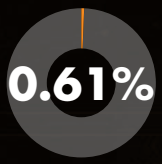
FACT SHEET NO. 65

Science, Technology and Innovation Statistics South Africa

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

THE BIG PICTURE

In 2022/23, **0.61%** of **GDP** was spent on **domestic R&D**.



Real gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) grew

from **R28.537 BILLION** in 2013/14

to a maximum of **R34.328 BILLION** in 2017/18,

after which it decreased each year to **R25.933 BILLION** in 2020/21 when **Covid-19** struck.

In 2022/23, GERD **increased** to **R28.282 BILLION**, a year-on-year growth of **1.9%**

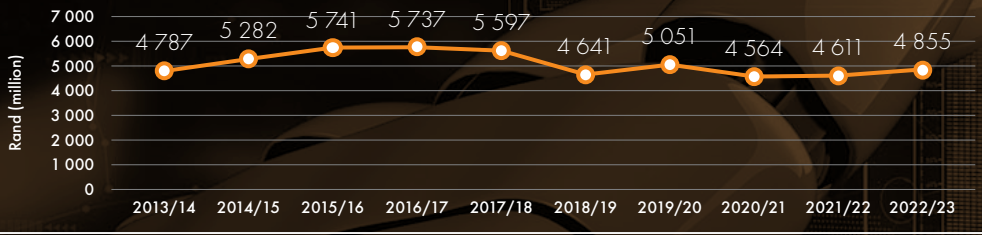


In 2022/23, science councils contributed **17.2%** to **GERD**.



Real R&D expenditure in science councils was R4.855 billion in 2022/23, not too dissimilar from where it was in 2013/14 at R4.787 billion.

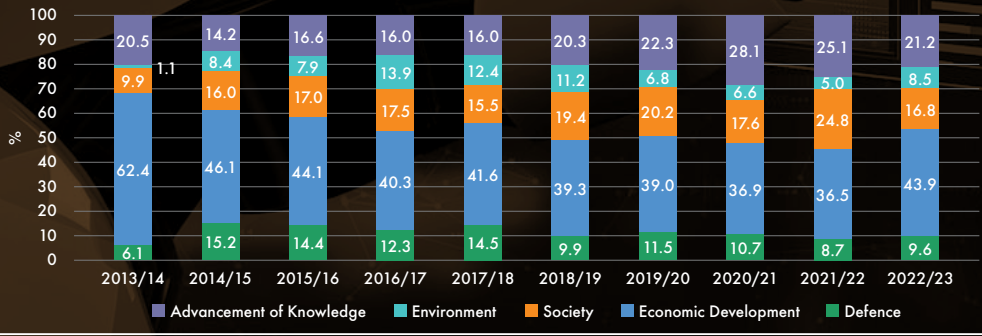
Science council expenditure on R&D in constant 2015 prices, 2013/14 to 2022/23



BENEFITS AND LOCATION OF R&D SPENDING

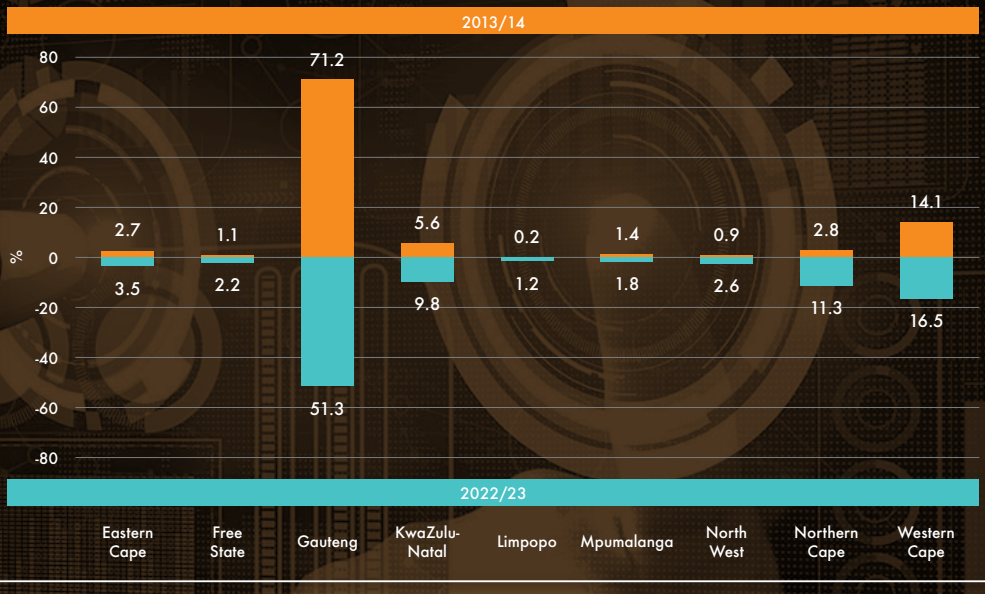
Socio-economic objectives refer to the aims of R&D and the areas of the economy or community that benefit from such undertakings. Economic development continues to serve as the central socio-economic objective guiding science council R&D expenditure, a focus that has remained steadfast since 2013/14. However, over the decade from 2013/14 to 2022/23, the proportion of total R&D spending allocated to economic development saw a significant decline, dropping by nearly 20 percentage points. The majority of this shift occurred between 2013/14 and 2014/15, reflecting a growing emphasis on societal and environmental priorities.

R&D expenditure in science councils by socio-economic objectives, 2013/14 to 2022/23



The Gauteng and Western Cape provinces led R&D activity in South Africa in thepast ten years. Over this period, R&D activity grew proportionally in all other provinces while decreasing in Gauteng.

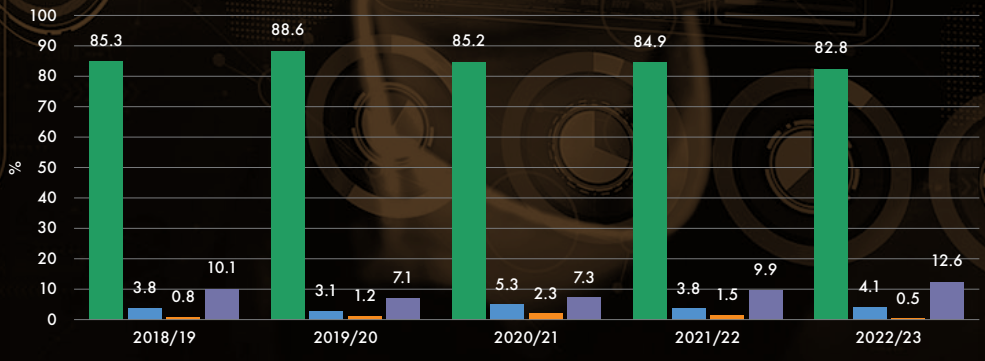
Provincial distribution of science council R&D, 2013/14 and 2022/23



FUNDING OF R&D IN THE SCIENCE COUNCILS

The majority of science council R&D funding is from government, consistently accounting for over 80% of total funding since 2018/19. However, R&D funding from government experienced a slight decline, decreasing by 2.5 percentage points between 2018/19 and 2022/23. At the same time, science councils have increasingly turned to foreign funding, with the proportion rising from 10.1% in 2018/19 to 12.6% in 2022/23.

Science council's sources of funds, 2018/19 to 2022/23



Note: Government consists of national, provincial and local government departments, government research institutions, museums, and science councils.

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

The annual South African National Survey of Research and Experimental Development (R&D Survey) is conducted by the Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators (CeSTII) at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), on behalf of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI). R&D statistics are collected in terms of the Statistics Act no. 6 of 1999, and are quality assured by Statistics South Africa. Data collected through the survey, and its historic data series, helps to inform decision-makers on investment planning, policymaking, advocacy, and research in South Africa. Data also adds to benchmarking and performance comparisons with international counterparts.

Access previous survey reports:
https://hsrc.ac.za/divisions/centre-for-science-technology-and-innovation-indicators/

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