



1st Nanotechnology Symposium in Health, Safety and Environment (HSE)

NRF/SAASTA, Pretoria, 10 February 2020

1. Background

Nanotechnology is the manipulation of matter at the nanoscale, i.e., a size so small that it is measured in nanometres (one billionth of a metre), to create new materials of any size that have new properties and functions. The technology is earmarked to contribute solutions to South Africa's development challenges, such as the provision of safe water, clean energy and innovative delivery of health services, in the promise to improve the quality of life. The adoption of this technology by South Africa has led to the manufacturing of engineered nanomaterials on varying scales for research, development and industrial purposes. The application of engineered nanomaterials can be seen in many industries such as in healthcare, clothing, cosmetics, construction and electronics.

In promoting responsible development of nanotechnology, the Department of Science and Innovation has established the Nanotechnology Health, Safety and Environment Research Platform to identify the potential risks associated with nanotechnology and mitigate those risks. However, the role of the platform in ensuring responsible development of nanotechnology is dependent on multiple stakeholders, and its work should be viewed as a value-added service enabling the production of safer engineered nanomaterials rather than an obstacle to nanotechnology development and innovation. The timely consideration of the Nano HSE aspects, especially at the infancy phase of nanotechnology will drive the sustainability of nanotechnology and ensure that investments and developments in this technology are on course to improving the quality of lives for all South Africans.

2. Programme and Objectives of the Symposium

The Nanotechnology HSE symposium will provide a platform for policy or decision makers, regulators, industry, scientists and researchers and science communication practitioners to discuss the sustainable development of nanotechnology. The objectives of the are:

- To discuss HSE policy and regulatory environment conducive for the sustainable development of nanotechnology and the role of the nano code of conduct.
- To provide a platform for researchers to discuss the latest research relating to the potential risks of nanomaterials to occupational health, safety and the environment.
- To discuss the role of science communicators in promoting balanced and fact based understanding of nanotechnology, especially in the era of 'post-truth'.
- To explore responsible research and innovation or 'upstream public engagement' as a broad policy to better align science and society, as integral to innovation in nanotechnology.

3. Reservations and Enquiries:

To attend the 1st Nanotechnology HSE symposium, kindly **RSVP on the link provided no later than 31 January 2020**. For any enquiries, you can contact us on info@npep.co.za or 012 392 9300/9347.



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