TIMSS SA NEWSLETTER

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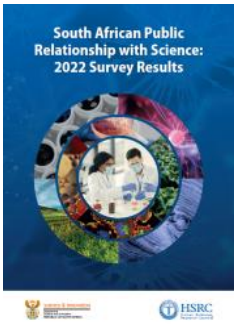
The South African Public Relationship with Science Survey

A strong relationship between science and the public plays a crucial role in keeping people informed about how science and technology can address developmental challenges. It also fosters democratic engagement, enhances quality of life and well-being, sparks interest in science-related fields and careers, encourages investment in research and development, and promotes greater public involvement in shaping science policy decisions.

The 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation recommended the development of an institutionalised survey on public perceptions of science to be conducted every five years. The first South African Public Relationship with Science (SAPRS) Survey was conducted in 2022 by the Human Sciences Research Council.

The report was officially launched by the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande, on 3rd December 2024 and a SAPRS Reflection Conference was held on 26 and 27th March 2025.

SAPRS 2022 Survey Results



The purpose of the SAPRS Survey is to measure the distance that South Africa has travelled on its journey towards a society that is more scientifically literate and aware. The 2022 results present the baseline values for the science knowledge, attitude and engagement measures which will be tracked every five years. The data is also used to identify the socio-demographic characteristics that promote knowledge, positive attitudes towards S&T, as well as higher science engagement actions and behaviours. Thirdly, we examine the inter-relationships between the knowledge, attitude and engagement measures.

Highlights of the SAPRS 2022 Survey Results

The highlights report provides a concise overview of the study's methodology, and the 27 measures related to science knowledge, attitudes, and engagement. It summarises the main findings and presents the average scores for the various measures. Additionally, it identifies the socio-demographic characteristics associated with higher levels of positive science knowledge, attitudes, and engagement.

This report has been translated into nine other South African languages: 1) Afrikaans 2) IsiXhosa, 3) IsiZulu, 4) Sepedi, 5) Sesotho, 6) Setswana, 7) SiSwati, 8) Tshivenda, and 9) Xitsonga.

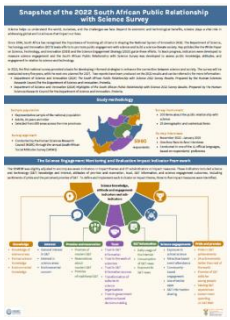
For the reports and other related resources, please visit the HSRC's SAPRS Survey page.

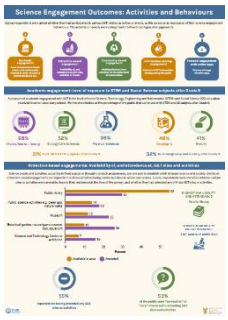
SAPRS Survey Framework

The SAPRS Survey Framework outlines the process and procedures underpinning the conduct of the survey and sets the template for the conduct of the repeated five-yearly survey.

The document provides the purpose and context of the SAPRS Survey; the overarching policy and theoretical rationale for the survey; the survey items and instrument; the survey sample; and the methodology for conducting the survey fieldwork.

Snapshot of the SAPRS Survey





The snapshot of the SAPRS Survey provides a broad overview of the survey and its key findings in a short infographic format.

SAPRS Reflection Conference

A SAPRS Reflection Conference was held in March 2025, with participants from key sectors of society, including STI-inclined government departments, business, labour, academia, civil society, youth, faith-based, and science councils, among others. The opening session was livestreamed and can be viewed here.

The aims of the conference were to:

1) Share the results of the 2022 SAPRS Survey, and
2) Elicit feedback on the report from key sectors of society to guide the DSTI's science engagement programme and identify issues to be considered in the next SAPRS survey, which will be conducted in 2027.

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