

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf),  
the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and  
the Department of Science and Technology (DST)  
cordially invite you to the

**INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (IID) SEMINAR SERIES**

on

**The Smart City Initiatives in South Africa and Paving a Way to Support Cities to  
Address Frontier Issues Using New and Emerging Technologies**

**Date:** 21 August 2019

**Time:** 8:30 – 14:30

Refreshments will be served afterwards

**Venue:** Future Africa Conference Centre, University of Pretoria, Gauteng

**RSVP:** [Click here](#) to register by 12:00 on 16 August 2019

The Programme will be sent to participants.

**BACKGROUND**

The world is increasingly becoming urbanised, and the cities across the globe have to develop measures to deal with this phenomenon. Urbanisation occurs largely due to rural to urban migration and migration from poor countries to highly industrialised countries. Eremia, Toma and Senduliac, (2017:12-9), maintain that cities occupy 2% of the planet's surface, accommodate 50% of the world population and consumes 75% of the total energy generated. As the planet becomes more urbanised, cities have to become smarter in terms of their operations and the manner in which they respond to the challenges posed by urbanisation. Urbanisation requires new methods and ways to administer the complexity of the urban life, overpopulation, energy consumption, resource management and environmental protection.

In recent years, the role of digital technologies has become increasingly important in urban development. Ubiquitous sensor networks, big data, open data, internet of things, virtual reality as well as data accessibility, privacy and accountability are becoming more common as part of urban development, both in the global north and south. New technologies create opportunities to develop new urban services that have the potential to improve cities' operational performance, provide greater transparency and more interaction with citizens, and reduce the local environmental impact. Local, regional and national Governments and citizens have come to recognise the increased relevance of new technological advancements to the achievement of Agenda 2030. Urban leaders have begun to tap into new streams of data on the state and performance of their cities, often in real time, to realise a forward-looking vision of a "smart city".

Smart cities put data and digital technology to work to make better decisions and improve the quality of life, including health, safety, the environment, cost of living etc. But many city leaders struggle to understand how to best invest in intelligent infrastructure to improve the complexity of the urban life. At the same time, the concept of the smart city has grown controversial, in that, proponents argue that smart city innovations can have huge positive impact on sustainable city development, while sceptics fear that prioritising "fancy" technologies over less exciting but more important urban development will distort crucial investments. Nevertheless, technological developments, including big data, autonomous vehicles and sensors are having an impact on our cities, and urbanists need to consider their impact on urban planning, governance, service delivery and financing.

According to the recent World Development Report: Digital Dividends, governments are allocating significant sums on smart city projects, including in the developing world. China, for example, has launched a reported US\$70 billion “smart city” credit line and a US\$8 billion investment fund. The World Bank argues that, for individual “smart systems” to add up to a “smart city,” innovations must be on a citywide scale. This requires contributions from commercial firms, governments and citizens. It is particularly important that city leaders need to take cognisance that smart city efforts and initiatives are inclusive, taking into consideration the needs of all residents, including marginalised groups, gender, geography, age, and income dimensions.

It is against this background that the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), the Department of Science and Technology (DST), and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) are hosting a seminar on the “Smart City Initiatives in South Africa and Paving a Way to Support Cities to Address Frontier Issues Using New and Emerging Technologies” The objectives of the seminar is:

- To reflect on on-going SA smart city initiatives;
- To establish consensus on the definition of smart cities in the South African context;
- To define policy requisite, technical and institutional interventions from government and the private sector necessary to support on-going SA smart city initiatives.

Target participants are from business, government (local, provincial and national), public research institutions, higher education institutions, media and civil society, among others. In view of your interests and expertise, you are cordially invited to participate as a guest stakeholder. We would be greatly pleased if you would accept this invitation to participate. If you have any queries about this seminar, please contact Dr Tebogo Mabotha at [tebogo@assaf.org.za](mailto:tebogo@assaf.org.za).