

# **PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION OF DST-HSRC SEMINARS ON INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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## **PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION OF DST-HSRC SEMINARS ON INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (IID)**

This report presents a retrospective evaluation of participants in a selection of the IID seminars which were facilitated by the Research Use and Impact Assessment (RIA) Programme of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) on behalf of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) during the 2014/2015 to 2017/2018 financial years. Participants were requested to respond to questions about the seminar/s that they had attended during the preceding three to four years. The report comprises sections on the rationale for the seminars; the evaluation methodology; and analyses of responses to the different sections of the research instrument (respondent profile, reasons for participation in IID seminar/s, perceived impact of seminar/s, opinion about seminar logistics, suggestions for future IID seminars).

### **RATIONALE FOR IID SEMINARS**

The IID Policy Seminars are part of DST's efforts to strengthening the policy-research nexus. Together with Government Cluster Policy Workshops (GCPW) that DST commissioned the RIA unit at the HSRC to design and facilitate, the DST seeks to use these instruments to ensure that research feeds into active policy processes, that policy-relevant research results are disseminated, and that the capacity of researchers and policy makers is developed in ways that bear on public policy making.

These seminars emerged out of a concern that, despite various pilots, demonstration and technology transfer initiatives, there are still challenges faced by the introduction and integration of STI-based interventions to effectively and efficiently support the achievement of inclusive development. These challenges indicate a need for a holistic and systems level intervention that will ensure that innovation fully supports inclusive development. Such interventions would include providing guidance and strengthening the NSI to support the inclusive development agenda through appropriate mechanisms such as human capital development, financial and non-financial incentives, impact monitoring and evaluation, as well as hosting seminars.

The specific objectives of the IID seminars are:

- To disseminate scientific research findings and transmit a body of new knowledge (through an interactive process of critical dialogue and collegial critique);
- To provide an arena for the dissemination of knowledge, evidence, and data on the IID theme;
- To discuss and debate, including through comparative perspectives, policy measures and interventions in the field of IID;
- To reinforce the visibility of IID research and policy implications, and;
- To enhance wider public understanding of the IID concept including the value and status of both individual and team-based research.

RIA started to manage the IID seminars in the 2014/2015 financial year. The seminars conducted since then are listed in Table 1. This evaluation study reports on a survey of participants in a selection of these seminars (indicated in red and italic font in the table).

**Table 1: IID Seminars 2014 to 2018**

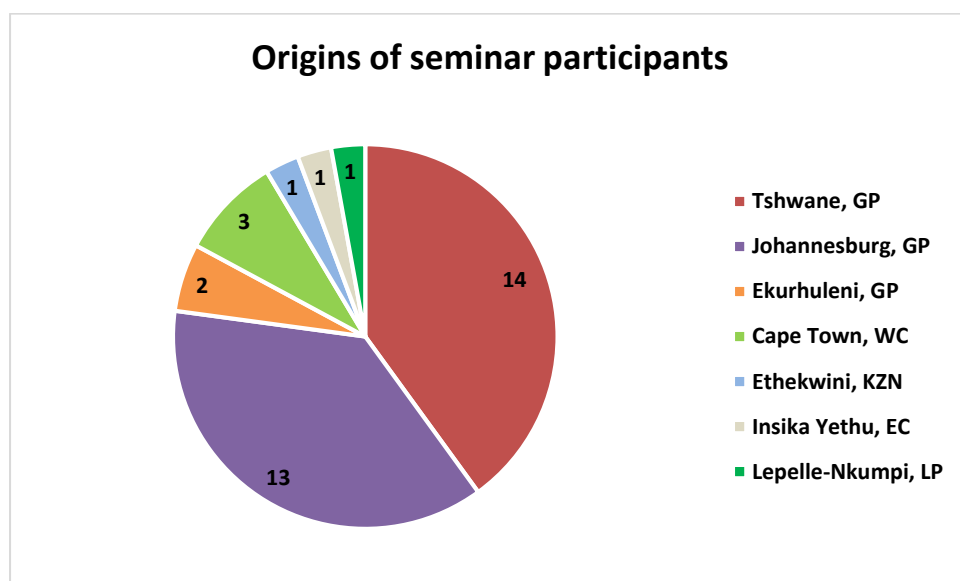
Date	Seminar Title	Location	Participant Number	Survey responses
<b>2014/2015</b>				
10 Mar 2015	<i>Built environment (Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission and Innovative Building Technologies)</i>		34	1
12 Mar 2015	Water and sanitation (the Accelerated Sustainable Water Service Delivery project)			
13 Mar 2015	<i>Understanding the role of universities in IID, with reference to the Community University Partnership Programme and rural universities</i>		39	2
25 Mar 2015	Establishing conceptual clarity for innovation for inclusive development			
27 Mar 2015	Measuring the impact of Innovation on Inclusive Development			
<b>2015/2016</b>				
28 Sept 2015	The Role of Information and Communication Technologies in Revitalising Agriculture			
05 Oct 2015	IBTs in human settlements delivery			
21 Oct 2015	Sustainable Livelihoods in Public Employment Programme			
11 Nov 2015	Innovation for Local Economic Development			
9 Feb 2016	The Higher Education Transformation Agenda: Opening the debate on innovation and socio-economic inclusion			
<b>2016 / 2017</b>				
16 Sept 2016	<i>SASTEP: Innovative Sanitation Technology Business Breakfast Meeting</i>	Pretoria	70	2
25 Oct 2016	<i>Why do development projects fail? Project Management for Innovation for Inclusive Development</i>	Pretoria	37	7
26 Oct 2016	<i>How ready is South African policy for 'Innovation for Inclusive Development'?</i>	Pretoria	15	4
3 Nov 2016	<i>Information and Communication Technologies in Basic Education</i>	Pretoria	36	6
1 Dec 2016	Innovation Partnerships for Rural development Programme Mid-term Review Workshop	Pretoria		
<b>2017 /2018</b>				
9-10 June 2016	Youth in Science and Innovation Indaba	Pretoria		
13 July 2017	<i>The Role of Civil Society and Non-Government Organisations in Innovation For Inclusive Development</i>	Pretoria	17	8
14 Sept 2017	<i>Point of Use water filtration device for rural household water treatment in Capricorn District Municipality</i>	Polokwane	10	5
19 Sept 2017	Interrogating agricultural innovation systems from small farmers' perspectives	Pretoria		
29-30 Nov 2017	SA Youth Chamber of Commerce	Bloemfontein		
23 Jan 2018	Towards A Framework for Measuring IID Innovation for Inclusive Development (IID) Policy Seminar	Cape Town		
8 Mar 2018	STI and Sustainable Human Settlements	Pretoria	*	
13 Mar 2018	Aquaculture – Unlocking The Oceans Potential Through Innovation For Inclusive Development	Port Elizabeth	*	
Total			358	35

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This evaluation was conducted by means of a survey questionnaire. The instrument (Appendix 1) contained both closed ended and open ended questions. An email which included an explanation and an electronic link to the online survey was sent to all participants in the eight seminars indicated in Table 1. Participants were sent the original email during November 2017 as well as three subsequent email reminders during the weeks that followed. In total, 35 unique responses were received and included in the analysis that follows. Additionally, participants in the two seminars that were held during March 2018\* will be surveyed during April 2018, and their responses will be included in an updated draft of this report.

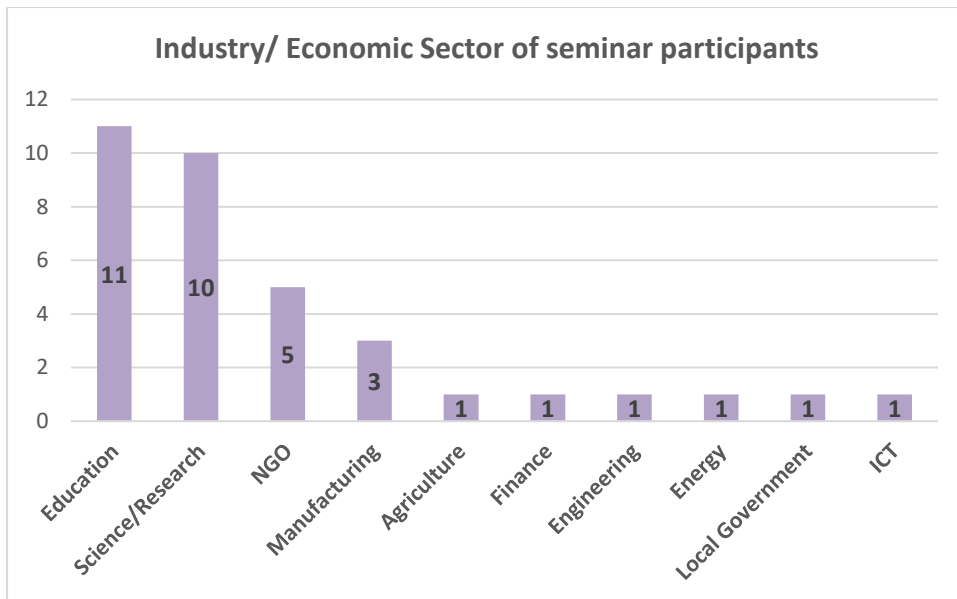
## SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE

Most likely owing to the location of the seminars in Gauteng, the majority of the respondents indicated that they were based in various parts of Tshwane (14), Johannesburg (13) or Ekurhuleni (2) in Gauteng, with the others from the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal or Limpopo.



**Figure 1: Origins of seminar participants**

In terms of the economic or industrial sectors in which the participants work, most were involved in either education (16) or science/research (10) (Figure 2), notably science councils, universities and government departments. Other sectors represented were NGOs, manufacturing, energy, engineering, ICT, finance, agriculture and local government. They were mainly public sector professionals, with a significant minority from the private sector. However, the sector representation did not always correspond as might be expected with the topic of the seminar. For example, NGO representation in our sample *for the NGO role in Science, Technology & Innovation* (July 2017) comprised one participant, with most other participants from the private sector (6 out of 8 respondents).



**Figure 2: Industry/ Economic Sector of seminar participants**

## REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN SEMINARS

Most respondents attended the seminars because of their professional interests (e.g. research interests of researchers; business or strategic opportunities or keenness to gain insights or solutions, amongst private sector participants; government participants engaging with policy implications. Three respondents mentioned that ‘benefit to society’ motivated their participation (2 of which attended the *Rural Water Filtration* seminar (Sept 2017). One respondent mentioned an intrinsic interest in learning: “I am interested in learning about this area for its own sake, and for better understanding of the context” (*Project Management, 2016*).

## PARTICIPANTS’ ASSESSMENT OF SEMINAR IMPACT

More than half (54%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the seminar they had attended, had changed their thinking. One quarter of the sample remained neutral, while the rest (20%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their thinking changed after their seminar. Table 2 indicates responses by individual seminars.

**Table 2: The ideas presented at the seminar changed my thinking**

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with this statement: The ideas presented at the seminar changed my thinking						
Seminar	1 strongly agree	2	3 neutral	4	5 strongly disagree	Total
Built environment (2015)		1				1
Role of universities (2015)		1	1			2
SASTEP (2016)	1	1				2
Project management (2016)	3	1	2	1		7
How ready is S.A? (2016)		3	1			4
ICT in basic education (2016)		3	2	1		6
NGO role (2017)	2	1	3			8
Rural water filtration (2017)	2			1	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>35</b>

By individual seminar, *Project management (2016)*, *How ready is S.A (2016)*, *ICT in Basic Education (2016)*, and *NGO role (2017)* seemed to attract the most positive assessment among our respondents (in terms of proportion of positive responses). The opinion on *Rural water filtration (2017)* was divided, however, with equal numbers of respondents expressing either strong agreement or strong disagreement that the seminar changed their thinking.

The overall assessment for whether the seminar influenced the way the respondents have subsequently done things was similar to that on their thinking. Slightly fewer respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the way in which they do things had been influenced by the seminar, and about a quarter were neutral.

**Table 3: The seminar influenced the way in which I have subsequently done things**

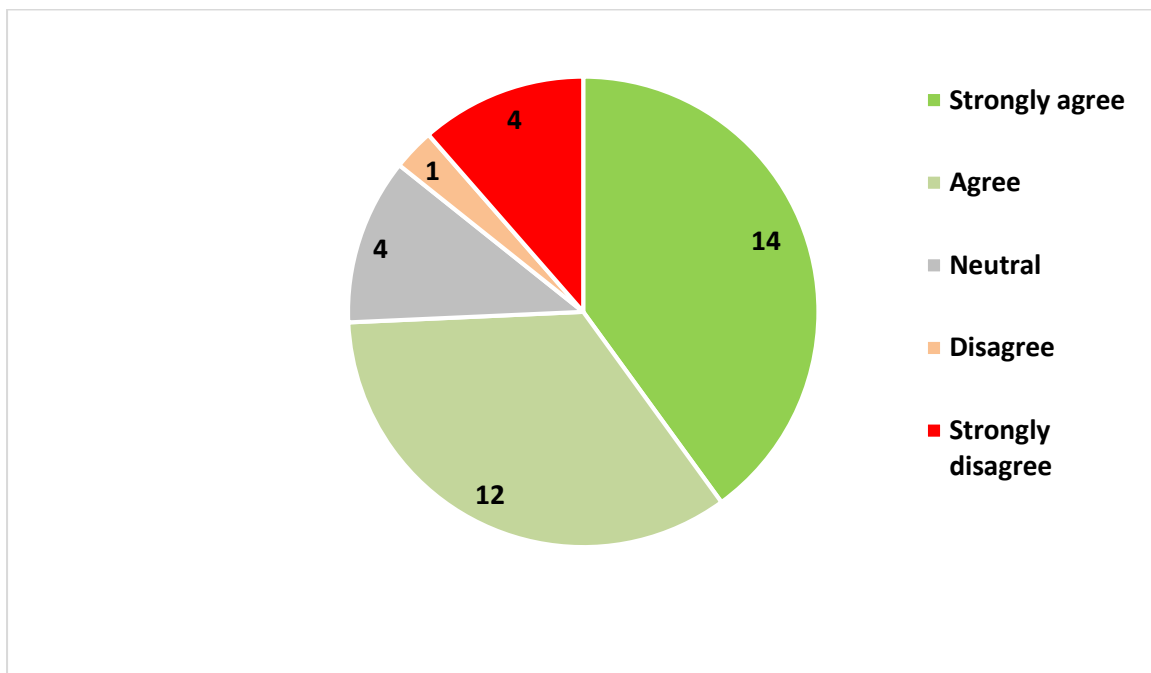
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with this statement: The seminar influenced the way in which I have subsequently done things						
Seminar	1 Strongly agree	2	3 neutral	4	5 Strongly disagree	Total
Built environment (2015)		1				1
Role of universities (2015)		1	1			2
SASTEP (2016)	1		1			2
Project management (2016)	3	3		1		7
How ready is S.A? (2016)	1	1	2			4
ICT in basic education (2016)			3	3		6
NGO role (2017)	1	2	2	2	1	8
Rural water filtration (2017)	1	1		1	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>35</b>

Again, *Project management (2016)* stood out as the seminar receiving the most positive assessment and *Rural water filtration (2017)* showed the least consensus. Explaining on how the seminars had changed their thinking, many respondents refer to the content of the seminars, especially the complexity or challenges of the issue at hand, as well as the

possibilities and alternatives that emerged. Some respondents had been pleased to hear “perspectives of all members of community on innovation”, and had mentioned that the “information sharing” had made them “better informed”. For other participants, the seminars might not have changed their thinking, but reinforced it. One participant specifically mentioned the discussion as the most positive aspect of the seminar (*Project management, 2016*); another found that gap identified at the seminar (*University role, 2017*) to be very useful. Two participants also mentioned the benefits of the opportunity of networking offered by the seminar.

### SEMINAR LOGISTICS

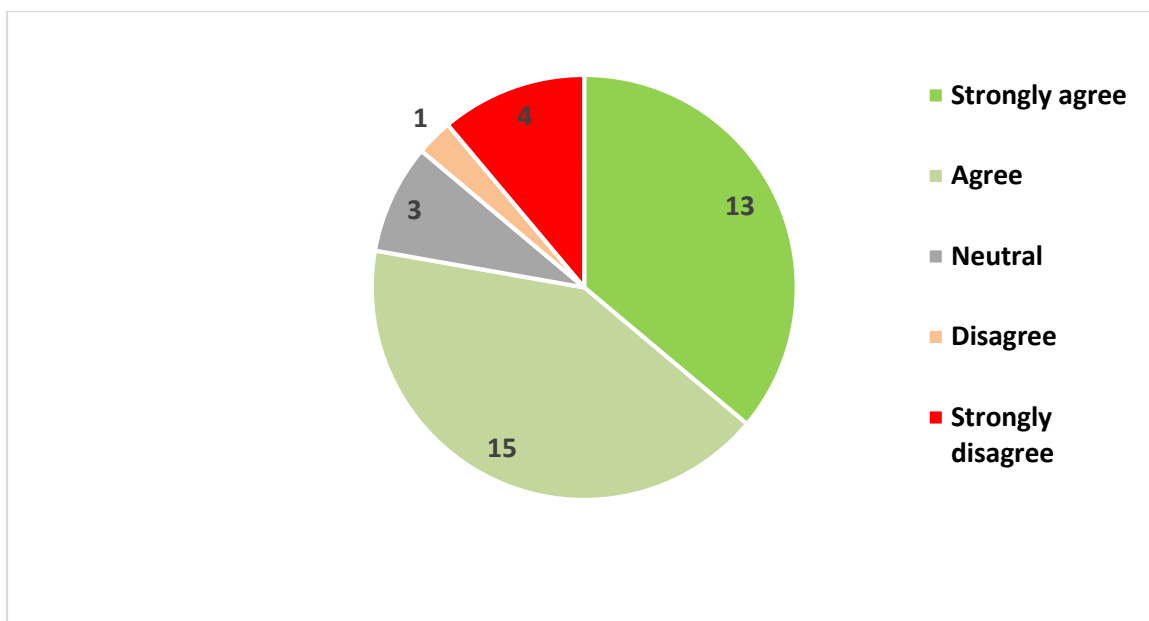
Respondents’ assessment on the convenience of the venue were mostly positive. *ICT in Basic Education (2016)* and *Project Management (2016)* received the greatest proportions of accolades. Conversely, consensus was low amongst the participants’ assessments of *NGO Role (2017)*, while opinion about *Rural Water Filtration (2017)* was divided (some participants scored it highest and others, the lowest).



**Figure 3: The venue for the seminar was convenient**

Similar positive assessment emerged in respect of the dates and times at which the seminars were scheduled. However, there was less overall consensus on this issue, with opinions on date and time for almost all seminars being much more divided.





**Figure 4: The time and date of the seminar were convenient**

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE SEMINARS**

A range of responses emerged to various questions about the positives and negatives of the seminars, as well as in respect of suggestions for future seminars.

Management of the stakeholders present at the seminars was raised by a number of respondents. Suggestions were made that when future seminars are arranged, more attention could be given to the inclusion of actual decision makers, or better representation from all relevant sectors (especially those from the community and practitioners on the ground).

The need for more time to be allocated for the seminars, especially the discussions, was raised by a number of respondents. Other suggestions focused on the need for better dissemination of the proceedings; better follow-up communication; follow up seminars on similar topics; more channels of dissemination (e.g. policy papers to capture emerging discussions); and more practical action plans with the assignment of specific tasks to specific individuals.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, several important conclusions can be made from the evaluation survey responses:

- Most participants travelled relatively short distances from within Gauteng to attend the seminars. Seminars convened in other provinces are therefore likely to attract more participants from those local environments.
- The seminars mainly attracted participants from the education and science/research sectors.

- Attendance was predominantly owing to professional interests or to pursue strategic and networking opportunities.
- More than half of the participants said that the seminars had changed their thinking.
- Cognitive change had been most effective as a result of the “Project Management for IID” and the “How ready is South Africa for IID?” seminars.
- Behavioural changes was most prevalent amongst participants in the “Project Management for IID” seminar.
- The convenience of the seminar venues, dates and times were satisfactory for most participants, and especially those who attended the “ICT in Basic Education” and “Project Management for IID” seminars.
- Suggestions for improvements in the quality of future seminars were that more effort should be placed on attracting relevant decision makers from all sectors; dissemination of seminar proceedings should be efficient; and follow-up on seminar decisions should be concretised practically.

## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

### Evaluation of HSRC/DST seminars on INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



Dear colleague

Our records show that you recently attended one of the INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (I.I.D.) seminars hosted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and Department of Science and Technology.

We are currently assessing the impact of these seminars and we would appreciate your responses to a few questions and statements about the seminar that you attended. Please click on "FILL OUT FORM" link to respond online. It should take no more than a few minutes to complete.

Yours sincerely

Dr Stephen Rule

HSRC ([srule@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:srule@hsrc.ac.za)) on behalf of the research team

Please indicate which seminar you attended, in the following list. (You might have attended more than one of these seminars. If so, please select one on the list and complete the questionnaire. After submitting your response, you may submit a second or third response about the other seminar/s that you attended).

Rural Water Filtration	NGO role in Science, Technology Innovation	ICT in Basic Education	How ready is SA policy for IID?	Project management for IID	SASTEP: Innovative Sanitation Technology	University role in IID-CUP rural programme	Built Environment	Evidence-based policy development	Sustainable Livelihoods
14 Sept '17	13 July '17	3 Nov '16	26 Oct '16	25 Oct '16	16 Sept '16	13 Mar '15	10 Mar '15	Apr-14	25 Apr '13
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In which industry or economic sector do you work or intend to work (if currently studying)?

In what ways are your work and interests related to the subject matter of the seminar you attended?

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with this statement:

The ideas presented at the seminar changed my thinking

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

If so, how did the ideas change your thinking?

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with this statement:

The seminar influenced the way in which I have subsequently done things

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

What was the most positive consequence of the seminar, for you?

Were there any negative consequences of the seminar that we should note? (if yes, please explain)

The venue for the seminar was convenient

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Agree				Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

The time and date of the seminar were convenient

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

Please tell us how such seminars could, in future, be made more relevant or useful for your specific area of work or interest?

In which municipality do you live?

Please provide your current email address so we can keep you up-to-date about future seminars