



 **Summary Report**
Canada-South Africa Partnership Mission
March 3-7, 2025 - Gauteng and Western Cape



Canadian Bureau for
International Education

Background

The Canada–South Africa Partnership Mission was jointly organized by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA)—South Africa's leading organization for advancing the internationalization of higher education—and the Government of Canada through the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) in Johannesburg.

This initiative facilitated a series of partnership-focused events in the provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape aimed at fostering deep, sustainable and mutually beneficial collaborations between Canadian and South African post-secondary institutions.

Held from March 3 to 7, 2025, the mission provided a valuable platform for institutional representatives from both countries to engage in strategic dialogue, explore new areas of cooperation, and strengthen existing partnerships. The five-day program featured two full-day partnership forums, networking events, and site visits to six South African institutions—all designed to expand bilateral collaboration in higher education.

With funding from the CanExport Associations program, 15 senior representatives from 13 Canadian universities and colleges participated in the mission. The participating Canadian institutions are listed in Appendix A.

As part of their preparation, the Canadian delegates received a pre-departure orientation, which included links to additional resources to support their engagement with South Africa institutions. A selection of these resources as well as other resources are included in Appendix B.

While in South Africa, the mission delegates engaged with representatives from 20 South African post-secondary institutions as well as 11 South African agencies and associations. These institutions and organizations are also listed in Appendix B.





The Program

Partnership Forums

Partnership forums were held in Pretoria and Cape Town, featuring panel discussions on collaborative initiatives followed by one-on-one B2B meetings. Each panel was curated to ensure balanced perspectives, while the B2B meetings – coordinated through Global Affairs Canada's matchmaking platform – enabled targeted discussions between institutions based on shared institutional priorities. Through the B2B networking platform, over 100 participants registered to connect for face-to-face as well as virtual meetings, enabling participation from institutions that may not have been able to travel to Pretoria or Cape Town.

The inclusion of institutions from beyond the two host cities and provinces was a key priority for the mission. Representatives from several provinces made the effort to travel in order to participate in the forums and engage directly with the Canadian delegation. At the same time, the virtual component of the networking platform played a vital role in ensuring broader accessibility, enabling institutions unable to attend in person to still benefit from meaningful connections with Canadian delegates.



Opening Remarks

The mission commenced on March 3 at the University of Pretoria's [Future Africa](#) Campus - a hub for collaborative, interdisciplinary research addressing Africa's most pressing challenges. Welcome remarks were delivered by Ms. Normah Zondo (President, IEASA), Ms. Karen Dalkie (Vice-President, Development and Partnerships, CBIE), and Prof. Wanda Markotter (Acting Director, Future Africa). Each speaker underscored the mission's significance in catalyzing innovation and fostering meaningful international collaboration.

The opening session reinforced the view that international partnerships are not solely about mobility and research collaboration, but also about building institutional resilience. Canada's approach to community engagement, institutional linkages, and innovation ecosystems was highlighted as a model with potential to inform and strengthen the development of South African institutions.

As a national organization, IEASA reaffirmed its commitment to facilitating strategic, equitable, and impactful institutional partnerships. It also emphasized the importance of embedding internationalization within the core of South Africa's higher education system.

Government perspectives were provided by Mr. James Christoff, High Commissioner-designate for Canada, and Dr. Marcia Socikwa, Deputy Director-General of University Education at South Africa's Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). Both underscored education and research as key pillars of the bilateral relationship and acknowledged IEASA and CBIE's commitment in organizing the mission.

In Cape Town, Dr. Tasmeeera Singh (Deputy President, IEASA) offered opening remarks, followed by a welcome message from Mr. James Vos, Councillor from the City of Cape Town. IEASA and CBIE also presented insights on the evolving international education landscapes in both countries, underscoring shared priorities, national strategies, and the unique value of reciprocal, ethical and sustainable partnerships.

Each forum convened a total of approximately 100 participants, including representatives from over 30 South African institutions, government departments, associations, and municipal stakeholders—demonstrating strong interest in deepening Canada–South Africa academic ties.

Panel Discussions

Panel sessions were co-developed by CBIE, IEASA, and the TCS to reflect diverse stakeholder perspectives. They progressed from national-level overviews to institutional strategies, providing both strategic context and practical guidance for international collaboration. The following section outlines the key focus areas of each panel forum. It is intended to provide a high-level overview of the topics and speakers, rather than a detailed summary of the specific points raised or discussed during each session.

From left: Dr. Meghna Ramaswamy, Director, International Office, University of Saskatchewan (moderator); Dr. Sandra den Otter, Vice Provost Global Engagement, Queen's University; Prof Jose Frantz, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, University of the Western Cape; Dr. Lesley Rigg, President, Brock University; Dr. Linda Mtwisha, Executive Director: Research, University of Cape Town. Cape Town Forum



Pretoria Forum

Panel 1: National Perspectives on Strategic Collaboration in Innovation and Research

This session examined national priorities, emerging opportunities, and challenges in driving collaborative research and innovation.

Moderator: Prof. Aldo Stroebel, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Internationalisation, University of Mpumalanga

Speakers:

- Mr. Michael Nxumalo, Acting Global Hub Director, National Research Foundation (NRF)
- Ms. Sikhonzile Sikhosana, Deputy Director: Americas and Asia, Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI)
- Dr. Kaven Naidoo, Group Executive, Business Excellence and Integration, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

Panel 2: Institutional Perspectives on Strategic Collaboration in Innovation and Research

Panelists shared best practices for establishing and managing successful international research partnerships.

Moderator: Mr. Ayanda Noma, Director: Innovation and Technology Transfer, University of South Africa (Unisa)

Speakers:

- Prof. Anil Chuturgoon, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, University of KwaZulu-Natal
- Dr. Speech Nelana, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Vaal University of Technology
- Dr. B. Mario Pinto, Vice-President, Research and International, University of Manitoba
- Dr. Sandra den Otter, Vice-Provost, Global Engagement, Queen's University

Participants at the University of Johannesburg with Prof. Refilwe Nancy Phaswana-Mafuya, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, speaking.





Cape Town Forum

Panel 1: Advancing the Internationalization Road Map: Aligning with the SDGs

This panel focused on integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into institutional internationalization strategies.

Moderator: Dr. Meghna Ramaswamy, Director, International Office, University of Saskatchewan

Speakers:

- Dr. Linda Mtwisha, Executive Director: Research, University of Cape Town
- Prof. Jose Frantz, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, University of the Western Cape
- Dr. Lesley Rigg, President, Brock University
- Dr. Sandra den Otter, Vice-Provost, Global Engagement, Queen's University

Panel 2: Advancing the Internationalization Road Map: Institutional Strategies and Best Practices

This session examined actionable approaches to strengthening institutional global engagement.

Moderator: Ms. Orla Quinlan, Director, Global Engagement, Rhodes University; President, IEASA (2019–2020)

Speakers:

- Mr. Robert Kotzé, Senior Director, Stellenbosch University International
- Prof. Dina Burger, Acting Director, Strategic Initiatives, Cape Peninsula University of Technology
- Dr. Preetee Gopee-Vandenbroeke, Director, Transnational Projects, Centennial College
- Mr. Werner Beylefeld, Associate Vice-President, International, Red Deer Polytechnic

From left: Mr. Robert Kotzé, Senior Director International, Stellenbosch University; Mr. Werner Beylefeld, Associate Vice President, Partnerships and International, Red Deer Polytechnic; Prof Dina Burger, Acting Director, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships and Director, Research Development, Cape Peninsula University of Technology; Dr. Preetee Gopee-Vandenbroeke, Director, Transnational Projects and Business Development, Centennial College; Ms. Orla Quinlan, Director Global Engagement, Rhodes University & President, IEASA (2019-2020) (moderator). Cape Town Forum



Institutional Site Visits

Two full days were dedicated to site visits in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, and Stellenbosch. South Africa's 26 public higher education institutions are categorized as traditional universities, universities of technology, or comprehensive universities. Additionally, distinctions between Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs) and Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) reflect the country's socio-political historical legacies.

In Gauteng, visits were hosted by the [University of Johannesburg](#) (comprehensive) and the [University of the Witwatersrand](#) (traditional).

In the Western Cape, visits were divided into two streams to align with Canadian participants' priorities:

- [Stellenbosch University](#) and the [University of Cape Town](#) (traditional universities)
- [Cape Peninsula University of Technology](#) (university of technology) and the [University of the Western Cape](#) (HDI)

These visits highlighted institutional strengths and surfaced numerous opportunities for collaborative research and program development.

Participants at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) with front row, from left: Ms. Caroline Bolduc, Trade Commissioner, Government of Canada; Professor Dina Burger, Acting Director, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, CPUT; Dr Tasmeera Singh, Manager, International Relations, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships Directorate, CPUT.



Key Takeaways

The mission reaffirmed the value of sustained academic engagement between Canada and South Africa. Notable insights include:



Strategic value of sustained engagement

The mission reaffirmed that consistent engagement—especially stemming from post-apartheid support—leads to meaningful, resilient partnerships. With partnerships shifting toward multilateral frameworks involving regional and global networks, expanding the reach and relevance of collaborations was highlighted.



Opportunities in the South African higher education landscape

South African universities are deeply embedded in international research, innovation, and problem-solving networks, with creative approaches to societal challenges. Canadian delegates found alignment with South African counterparts in several areas such as neuroscience, AI, health sciences, water management, and environmental sustainability.



Concrete collaboration opportunities

Canadian institutions already have a long history of decentralized faculty research collaborations in South Africa, especially in priority research fields. Opportunities for faculty/student mobility, internships, industry-linked programs, and work-integrated learning, as well as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and other accessible, cost-effective models were raised as scalable ways to deepen international engagement.



Evolving partnership models

South African institutions emphasized a move beyond traditional North-South collaborations, urging Canadian institutions to engage in Africa-wide educational development. It was noted that South African institutions, like their Canadian counterparts, face budget pressures; collaboration models must be realistic and resource sensitive.



Human connections

Face-to-face meetings and site visits were recognized as critical to understanding institutional strengths and potential areas for alignment. An unintended result was the connections between Canadian institutions, which created momentum for national collaboration and mutual learning in international engagement.



Participants at the Pretoria Forum

Conclusion

The Canada–South Africa Partnership Mission marks a significant step forward in deepening collaboration between the two countries’ higher education sectors. It builds on years of engagement and partnership between CBIE, IEASA, and post-secondary institutions in both countries, reaffirming a shared commitment to internationalization, knowledge exchange, and capacity building.

The mission created valuable opportunities for institutions to explore innovative models of academic cooperation, joint research, and mobility programs, while also addressing shared challenges in higher education. It builds on the establishment of the South Africa-Canada Universities Network (SACUN), which formalizes a longstanding relationship aimed at enhancing collaboration between South African and Canadian universities. The insights gained, relationships established, and networks strengthened during this mission will support the development of more strategic, inclusive, and sustainable partnerships. This is particularly significant in the lead-up to the first SACUN funding call, anticipated to be launched in summer 2025.

CBIE is proud to have facilitated this initiative with IEASA and the TCS and remains committed to supporting continued dialogue and collaboration that benefit students and researchers, faculty, and institutions in both Canada and South Africa.

For more information, email partnerships-partenariats@cbie.ca

Acknowledgments

CBIE extends sincere thanks to CanExport Associations for supporting this initiative to enable the participation of Canadian post-secondary institutions. Special thanks to the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA), in particular Dr. Samia Chasi (then Manager Strategic Initiatives, Partnership Development and Research) and Ms. Tohiera Bagus (Office Manager), as well as the Trade Commissioner Service in Johannesburg, particularly Ms. Caroline Bolduc (Senior Trade Commissioner) and Ms. Shuresse Jacobs (Assistant Trade Commissioner), for their unwavering collaboration and leadership.

CBIE also thanks all South African presenters, participants and host institutions for their insights, hospitality, and commitment to collaboration. And finally, a thank you to the Canadian delegates who represented their institutions, actively contributed to dialogue and knowledge exchange, and helped foster meaningful connections throughout the mission.

We look forward to building on the success of this mission and continuing to strengthen Canada–South Africa higher education partnerships.

Cover image: Dr Samia Chasi, Manager Strategic Initiatives, Partnership Development and Research, International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) (moderator) , Pretoria Forum





Appendix A

Participating Canadian institutions

The Canadian institutions participating in the mission included:

- [Brock University](#)
- [Centennial College](#)
- [Durham College](#)
- [Institut national de la recherche scientifique](#)
- [Kwantlen Polytechnic University](#)
- [Queen's University](#)
- [Red Deer Polytechnic](#)
- [University of British Columbia](#)
- [University of Lethbridge](#)
- [University of Manitoba](#)
- [University of Ottawa](#)
- [University of Saskatchewan](#)
- [University of Winnipeg](#)

Participating South African institutions

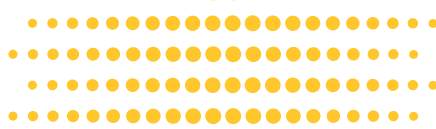
The South Africa institutions and agencies participating in the mission, either on the panel discussions, or in the networking sessions included:

South Africa post-secondary institutions

- [Cape Peninsula University of Technology \(CPUT\)](#)
- [Central University of Technology \(CUT\)](#)
- [Durban University of Technology \(DUT\)](#)
- [North-West University \(NWU\)](#)
- [Rhodes University](#)
- [Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University/SASOCP](#)
- [University of Johannesburg \(UJ\)](#)
- [University of KwaZulu-Natal \(UKZN\)](#)
- [University of Limpopo \(UL\)](#)
- [University of Mpumalanga \(UMP\)](#)
- [University of Pretoria \(UP\)](#)
- [University of South Africa \(Unisa\)](#)
- [Stellenbosch University](#)
- [University of the Western Cape \(UWC\)](#)
- [Tshwane University of Technology \(TUT\)](#)
- [University of the Witwatersrand \(Wits\)](#)
- [University of Cape Town \(UCT\)](#)
- [University of Zululand](#)
- [University of the Free State \(UFS\)](#)
- [Vaal University of Technology \(VUT\)](#)

South Africa agencies and associations

- [African Astronomical Society \(AfAS\)](#)
- [Agricultural Research Council](#)
- [Council for Scientific and Industrial Research \(CSIR\)](#)
- [Department of Science, Technology and Innovation \(DSTI\)](#)
- [International Astronomical Union \(IAU\) Office of Astronomy for Development \(OAD\)](#)
- [National Research Foundation \(NRF\)](#)
- [South Africa Council for Natural Scientific Professions \(SACNASP\)](#)
- [South African Medical Research Council \(SAMRC\)](#)
- [Universities South Africa \(USAf\)](#)
- [UVU Africa](#)



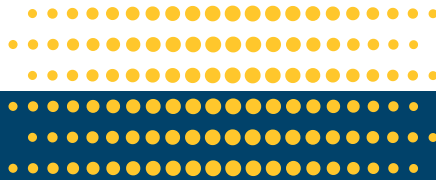
Appendix B

The following resources are available for further reading:

- The first national research study on internationalization of higher education in South Africa was conducted by IEASA in partnership with the British Council. A digital version of the research report, published in 2024, is available for download at: <https://ieasa.studysa.org/publications-study-sa>
- Study South Africa: The Guide to South African Higher Education is the only comprehensive publication on public HE and internationalization in South Africa. All 21 editions, published between 1999 and 2024, are available for download at: <https://ieasa.studysa.org/publications-study-sa>
- Announcement from the South Africa High Commission in Ottawa, Canada on South Africa and Canada moving forward with a renewed vision (January 3, 2025), available at: <https://www.southafrica-canada.ca/2025/01/03/sa-canada-renewed-vision/>
- Announcement from Universities South Africa on the South Africa-Canada Universities Network (SACUN) formalised long-standing relationship (September 18, 2024), available at: <https://usaf.ac.za/the-south-africa-canada-universities-network-sacun-formalises-a-long-standing-relationship/>



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