

26 February 2026

Save the date: Workshops to update the Marine Research Plan and the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Research Plan

Dear Members of the Marine and Antarctic Research Community

The Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, together with the National Research Foundation is scheduling two independent Research Plan workshops at the end of March 2026 to bring together representatives of the research community with the objective of updating the Marine and Antarctic research plans. **The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Research Plan workshop will take place on 24-25 March 2026**, and the **Marine Research Plan will take place on 26-27 March 2026**. It is acknowledged that a small number of researchers are active in both research areas, and the option to participate in both workshops is made available as the inputs into each plan will be distinct.

Together these research plans implement the 2016 Marine and Antarctic Strategy and are updated every 10 years. The new research plans will cover 2026-2036. Input documents for the workshop will be as follows:

- The [2016 Marine and Antarctic Strategy](#). This document is for reference and will not change.
- The [\(2014-2024\) Marine Research Plan](#). Inputs into updating this document will take place at the Marine workshop.
- The [\(2014-2024\) Antarctic and Southern Research Plan](#). Inputs into updating this document will take place at the Antarctic workshop
- The [2022-2032 Decadal Plan](#). This document will guide inputs into the plans. All government funding needs to align to the imperatives contained herein.

The workshops will take the format of framing presentations from the DSTI and the NRF, breakaway groups for theme-specific discussions and feedback sessions, and group discussions for cross-cutting topics. We anticipate one full day and one half day per workshop. All sessions will be recorded and shared with a specialised writer as identified by the DSTI, who will produce the final version of each research plan. An agenda will follow in due course.

The Department does not anticipate significant changes to the themes as expressed in the 2014 2024 research plans. There is, however, a strong expectation that the new research plans pivot slightly to address the imperatives as detailed in the 2022-2032 Decadal Plan.

The workshops will be hosted in the Western Cape (venue to be determined). The National Research Foundation will assist with travel and accommodation for representatives from outside Cape Town. We have capped the participation numbers at 40 people per workshop due to financial constraints but encourage representatives from all institutions and all thematic areas to contribute both in preparation for the event, and during the event. We are hoping to have an option for virtual participation should the demand exceed to space/budget available. The colleagues that are managing the logistics elements at the NRF will suggest flight times to allow for group shuttles between the venue and the airport. This significantly cuts costs. Colleagues wishing to travel outside these timeslots will need to arrange their own transportation to the venue and back to the airport.

Physical participation in this event will be prioritised for established researchers. Institutional and thematic representation will inform final travel approvals should the numbers exceed the stipulated limits. We ask that you complete the registration forms below so that we can keep track of participants, both those requiring logistic support and those participating locally.

- Antarctic and Southern Ocean Workshop Registration Form [24-25 March]:
<https://forms.gle/ZYPTL7TQHZ5i5D289>
- Marine Workshop Registration Form [26-27 March]:
<https://forms.gle/5hothuks4zfGALrp7>

The link to participate virtually will be shared on request. All queries should be sent directly to me at TJ.Klarenbeek@risa.nrf.ac.za .

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the end of March 2026.



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