



# Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (Abridged version)

## **Purpose Statement**

*The Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA) is a catalyst consortium that supports technology focused member institutions in achieving their mandates by:*

- ***Capitalising on the collective strength of the member institutions***
- ***Creating national and international partnerships for transformation in Higher education***
- ***Building capacity to achieve social and economic impact***

*Thus, enabling member institutions to conduct research and innovation with real-world impact and produce work-ready graduates and entrepreneurs who become creative contributors in a global society.*

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## 1. Executive Summary

The Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA) is the representative body for technology focussed member institutions in Africa. It exists to enable its partner institutions to respond to the challenges and targets set in the UN SDGs and the Africa 2063 Agenda, through Technological Education, Research and Innovation.

THENSA's guiding principles include, connecting minds, establishing networks for collaboration between smart institutions focussed on Technology and the world of work, having a key focus on promoting and advancing Science, Engineering, Arts and Technology Programmes and capitalising on the collective voice and funding opportunities of their members.

### Background

SATN was established in 2006 in South Africa by five South African Universities of Technology (UoTs), i.e. Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), Central University of Technology (CUT), Durban University of Technology (DUT), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), during a period of significant changes in the higher education policy environment in the country. The SATN Trust was registered in August 2008.

THENSA (previously known as SATN) has expanded its membership to eleven (11) members; including six (6) South African Universities of Technology, four (4) South African comprehensive Universities and one (1) African Universities. Ongoing discussions with the Commonwealth Association of Technical Universities and Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA) is underway to join THENSA.

THENSA is governed by a Board of Directors which consists of representatives of each of the member institutions and the CEO (ex-officio member). The operations of THENSA is managed by the CEO and the Office Manager with support from administrative and academic staff. In addition, projects are run by volunteer committees drawn from member institutions.

## 2. Vision

THENSA will be recognised as a vibrant, innovative consortium for advancing technology-focused institutions with a transformative societal impact.

## 3. Mission

THENSA's mission is to facilitate:

- Leadership, advocacy and best practice amongst its members and stakeholders;
- Quality education to support globally competitive, future-ready graduates and entrepreneurs;
- Impactful research and innovation toward sustainable societies; and
- The expansion of a national and global innovation ecosystem.

## 4. THENSA's Strategic Goals

- To provide transformative leadership and promote best practice;
- To act as an advocacy and lobbying agency for the consortium;
- To be a positive catalyst for sustainable socio-economic development;
- To promote and enable impactful real-world research and innovation;
- To mobilise mutually beneficial national and international education, government, business and industry ecosystems and networks;
- To promote quality, technology-based education and training for the world of work.
- To increase membership and funding sources to ensure sustainability of THENSA

## 5. THENSA's values

The THENSA's work is underpinned by the followed shared values:

- **Integrity**  
We conduct our work with honesty and the highest level of quality, and we have open and transparent engagements with all stakeholders
- **Respect**  
We have respect for the mission differentiation amongst our member institutions
- **Collaboration**  
We foster a collaborative ethos between our members, partners and networks
- **Innovation**  
We nurture a culture of entrepreneurship, agility and innovation within our sphere of influence
- **Responsiveness**  
We are responsive to regional and national imperatives.
- **Inclusion and Transformation**  
We promote inclusion and transformation within the sector
- **Commitment**  
We are committed to caring for our communities and ensuring that our activities contribute to a better world

## 6. Key Stakeholders

- Customers – Technology Focussed Universities and/or institutions
- Students
- DHET, NRF, CSIR and other government departments
- USAf
- Employees – CEO and Management
- Task Teams – Performance Indicator Task Team, HEQSF Task Team, Work Integrated Learning Task Team, Research, Innovation, Enterprise Committee (RIEC)
- THENSA Partnerships and Special Projects – DEA, DPSA, EWSETA, TIA, Dept of Labour
- Professional Bodies - SASCE
- TVET Colleges and SETA's
- Partnerships in Africa and Beyond
- Competitors (Other Universities, Private Universities, Distance Learning, E Learning etc)
- Business and Industry
- Government
- Media
- Communities

## 7. Strategic Goals, Objectives and Key Actions

### Strategic Goal 1: To provide transformative leadership and promote best practice

- Create an enabling environment for transformational and transformative leadership
- Promote the pool of next generation leaders in member institutions
- Promote best and next practice

### Strategic Goal 2: To act as an advocacy and lobbying agency for the consortium

- Enhance THENSA's brand equity/value proposition/perception
- Enhance engagement and lobbying with all relevant stakeholders

### Strategic Goal 3: To be a positive catalyst for sustainable socio-economic development

- Promote relevant national and international development plans within THENSA
- Capacitate members to operate sustainably
- Instill socio-economic development within the communities in which institutions operate

**Strategic Goal 4: To promote and enable impactful real-world research and innovation**

- Creating a platform to promote and share innovation and research initiatives
- Strengthen THENSA capabilities to source funding to support research and innovation

**Strategic Goal 5: To mobilise mutually beneficial national and international education, business and industry ecosystems and networks**

- Establish and maintain international linkages with similar global bodies, associations and institutions
- Establish and maintain mutually beneficial local partnerships and social compacts

**Strategic Goal 6: To promote quality, technology-based education and training for the world of work**

- Provide insights to institutions on the attributes that future-ready graduates will need in the real world
- Capacitate all staff to contribute to prepare future-ready graduates for the world of work

**Strategic Goal 7: To increase membership and funding sources to ensure sustainability of THENSA**

- Identify and increase membership of Technology focused institutions, associate members and strategic partner for sustainability of the organization
- Identify and submit funding proposals to national and international funding agencies to support programme activities of the THENSA
- Offer capacity building programmes, Skills programmes and commissioned research to Universities, Government, Business and Industry in SA and on the Continent
- Host the HERE programme on behalf of EU in SA

