Natural Science Collections Facility

SOUTH AFRICA

ALBANY MUSEUM

Amathole Museum
isisele solwazi • treasure of knowledge

HERBARIUM BOLUSIANUM

ARC • LNR
Excellence in Research and Development

BAYWORLD

DITSONG
MUSEUMS OF SOUTH AFRICA
an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

East London Museum
Our Future through the Past

DURBAN NATURAL SCIENCE MUSEUM
A museum about the Earth, its history and life on Earth, both past and present.

iziko museums of South Africa

KwaZulu-Natal MUSEUM
an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

NATIONAL MUSEUM
BLOEMFONTEIN
an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

NRF
National Research Foundation

SAIAB
South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity

SANBI
Biodiversity for Life
South African National Biodiversity Institute

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

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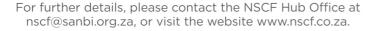
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An integrated collections facility for South Africa
and proud custodians of
South Africa's natural heritage for future generations.

The **Natural Science Collections Facility** (NSCF) was established
as part of the **Department of Science & Innovation's** (DSI)
Research Infrastructure Roadmap and is coordinated by the
South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI).

For further details, please contact the NSCF Hub Office at
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science & innovation
Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SANBI
Biodiversity for Life
South African National Biodiversity Institute

The Natural Science Collections Facility (NSCF) is **a network of South African institutions that hold natural science collections**, and is dedicated to the preservation, upgrade and promotion of research on natural science collections and associated data, to enable a sustainable, enriched life on Earth.

Why are natural science collections important?

South Africa is a megadiverse country with more than 100 000 species of plants, animals and fungi, that are essential for a healthy environment and for providing a range of goods, including food, shelter and medicines. Natural science collections can be considered as reference libraries for the country's biodiversity, with over 30 million preserved plant, animal, fungus and fossil specimens held in more than 40 museums, science councils and universities in the country. These collections have been built up over almost 200 years and they continue to be expanded through new exploration and research.

- The collections are essential as a reference to accurately identify materials for bioprospecting, agriculture and health sciences.
- They can be used to track pathways of disease and pest spread.
- They can be used to analyse past diets and movements of animal species, which is especially relevant for certain industries, such as fishing.
- Specimen data (what it is, where and when it was collected) can be used for modelling climate change impacts on economically important species and on timing of ecologically important events, such as pollination, as well as for spatial planning (where should developments like factories or houses or roads, or mines be situated to have the least impact on the environment).
- The specimens in the collections are used by local and international scientists for documenting and describing biological diversity, exploring its origins and evolutionary relationships, and for investigating various facets of global change.

The overall aim of the NSCF is to ensure that collections and associated data are used for high quality research and decision-making to address issues of socio-economic importance.

To realise this aim, the NSCF has five strategic objectives:

1. Collections secured and accessible, physically and virtually, for research.
2. Data from specimens in collections accessible and used for managing collections, research and decision-making.
3. Promotion of the use of collections and associated data for research and decision-making, especially where this is related to environmental sustainability and societal benefits.
4. Use of the collections as a reference for identifying biological specimens for agriculture, health, environmental management and academic sectors.
5. Developing and promoting understanding of the value of natural science collections for their contribution to society.

To achieve these objectives, the following enabling strategies are critical:

- Transforming the current situation where all institutions work in isolation to one where there is collaboration and there is recognition of the African and South African context.
- Ensuring that appropriate capacity to curate collections, manage data and research the collections is available and well qualified staff are retained.

As the custodians of South Africa's rich natural heritage, the NSCF is committed to the following values:

- We recognise and value our African heritage and context.
- We practice inclusivity through collaborations and decision-making, because everyone is unique and plays an important role.
- We practice honesty and moral principles.
- Our work is professional and based on best practice.
- We advocate for open access to collections, data, knowledge and services.

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