



**International
Science Council**

The global voice for science

Dr. Vanessa McBride, South African astronomer, announced as the International Science Council's new Science Director

Paris, France

25 October 2023

The International Science Council (ISC) is delighted to announce that Dr Vanessa McBride will join its team as Science Director.

Dr. McBride brings over 15 years of international scientific experience to her new leadership role at the ISC. Previously, as deputy director at the International Astronomy Union's Office of Astronomy for Development, she used her expertise in astronomy to drive positive developmental change in marginalized communities across the globe.

“Astronomy connects philosophical, cultural and inspirational elements with the cutting edge of science and technology. Because of its transdisciplinarity, educational and imaginative values, the discipline is particularly suited to foster socioeconomic development and learning.”

Dr. McBride, previously Head of Research at the South African Astronomical Observatory, is an active researcher in the field of massive stars and serves as an adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Astronomy at the University of Cape Town. Her focus resides in the dynamics of stellar objects in binary systems, which in astronomy refer to two bodies, usually stars, that are gravitationally bound and orbit each other around a common centre of mass.

Passionate about the value that science can bring in Africa, Dr. McBride is a founding member of the African Network for Women in Astronomy, leading both the bid and the organizing committee of the International Astronomical Union's first General Assembly to be held on the African continent in August 2024.

Vanessa comes to the ISC with much leadership experience from her time at the Office of Astronomy for Development and as Head of Research at the South African Astronomical Observatory, where she initiated various interventions and capacity development needs as part of a “big picture” approach when working with policy-makers and researchers alike.

“Our rapidly changing geopolitical and technological landscapes mean that the contribution of science to society is crucial. I am looking forward to getting to know the ISC's member organizations, partners and other communities through its broad range of programmes and initiatives, and working with them to maximise the positive impact of the ISC.”

At the ISC, Dr. McBride will lead the Science Unit, leveraging her expertise in integrating natural and social sciences. Her role will encompass several key responsibilities, including shaping ISC's scientific priorities, overseeing the management of the science project portfolio, nurturing scientific collaborations and partnerships, and offering guidance and insights to the ISC leadership on a wide range of scientific matters and events, including international science summits.

The International Science Council (ISC) is a non-governmental organization with a unique global membership that brings together 45 international scientific Unions and Associations, over 140 national and regional scientific organizations including Academies and Research Councils and 60 international Federations and Societies, as well as Young Academies and Associations

In announcing the new appointment, International Science Council CEO Dr. Salvatore Aricò said, “We are thrilled to be welcoming Vanessa to the International Science Council. Her demonstrated experience in the practice of science and experience in science matters in both the Global South and Global North will bring clear value-add to the ISC portfolio of science activities, and the ISC as a whole. Vanessa’s positive outlook on the ability of science to contribute to public understanding of science by policy-makers and communities at large will also elevate the ISC’s standing within and outside of the ISC constituency. The ISC looks forward to welcoming Vanessa.”

Follow Dr. McBride on X (formally Twitter) [@astronovee](#)

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