



வார்டிக வார்டாவ
ஆண்ட றிக்கை
ANNUAL REPORT

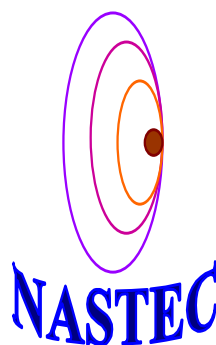
2021



சாதிக விடிவா னா தாக்ஷக கௌதிகத் ததாவ
விஞ்ஞான ஢ற்றும் ததாழில்நுட்ப ஆணைக்குழு
National Science and Technology Commission

National Science and Technology Commission

Annual Report 2021



Acknowledgement

The Management would like to express its gratitude to the Ministry of Technology and State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation for providing facilities and financial assistance for the activities of NASTEC. The Chairperson and the Members of the Commission appreciate its Staff Members for the cooperation and assistance extended by them in carrying out the activities of NASTEC.

About NASTEC

NASTEC has been designated as the apex policy formulating and advisory body on Science and Technology matters to the Government of Sri Lanka. The Commission is comprised of seven members who are appointed by H.E. the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.



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Auditor General's Department

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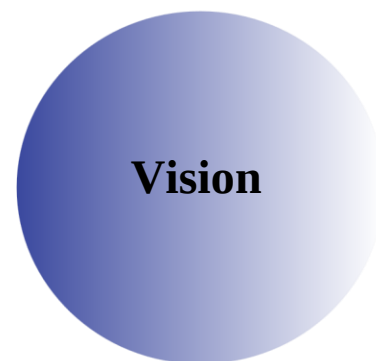
Functions as Mandated by Science and Technology Development Act (No 11 of 1994)



The National Science and Technology Commission (NASTEC) was established by the Science and Technology Development Act No. 11 of 1994 and came into operation in August 1998. It was formally inaugurated on 06 December 1998 and became a functional Commission in January 1999.

Our Vision

"To be an excellent advisory body to the Government on the potential and use of Science and Technology to enhance the well-being and prosperity of the people of Sri Lanka."



Our Mission

"To furnish the Government with policies, strategies, and plans to build high national capabilities in Science and Technology for application for the sustainable development."

Figure 1: Act & Legislation, Vision and Mission

■ To advise the Government on policies and plans for the development of science and technology including policies and plans relating to:

- The application of science and technology to stimulate economic growth;
- The impact of science and technology on the efficiency and competitiveness of industry, agriculture, services and the economy;
- The impact of science and technology on health, nutrition, and poverty alleviation, to improve the quality of life of people;
- The development of human and other resources needed for science and technology, in consultation with the authorities responsible for education, training and research;
- The development and management of the natural resources of Sri Lanka;
- The identification and prioritization of science and technology areas that are likely to be of national importance;
- The creation of a climate conducive for the buildup, retention, and attraction of Science and Technology expertise;
- The establishment of management strategies conducive to the productive application of science and technology;
- The allocation of funds for science and technology, including the priority of funding research and development in science and technology institutions;

■ To submit a report annually, to the government, reviewing the Science & Technology activities in Sri Lanka in the preceding year, and on the effectiveness of measures for the development of human resources, the performance of Science & Technology institutions, the effectiveness of public spending on Science & Technology and the use of Science & Technology by public sector undertakings;

■ To review the progress of science and technology institutions in relation to the objects set out in section 2 of the S & T Development Act.;

■ To consult relevant science and technology institutions before advising the government on policies and plans relevant to those institutions;

■ To convene the Sri Lanka Conference on science and technology biennially, with the prior approval of the Minister, and to provide a forum for the discussion of Science and Technology in Sri Lanka in relation to the objects set out in section 2 of the Act; and submit a report to the Minister on such discussions.

NASTEC Profile

- *The Chairman heads the Commission.*
- *The Director is the Chief Executive Officer.*
- *Senior scientists and scientists work with stakeholders and consultative fora to develop and produce sectorial policies, strategic plans, and other S&T-related documents.*
- *NASTEC mobilizes experts in relevant fields to undertake Institutional Review of S & T Institutes as mandated by the Act.*

Organizational Structure

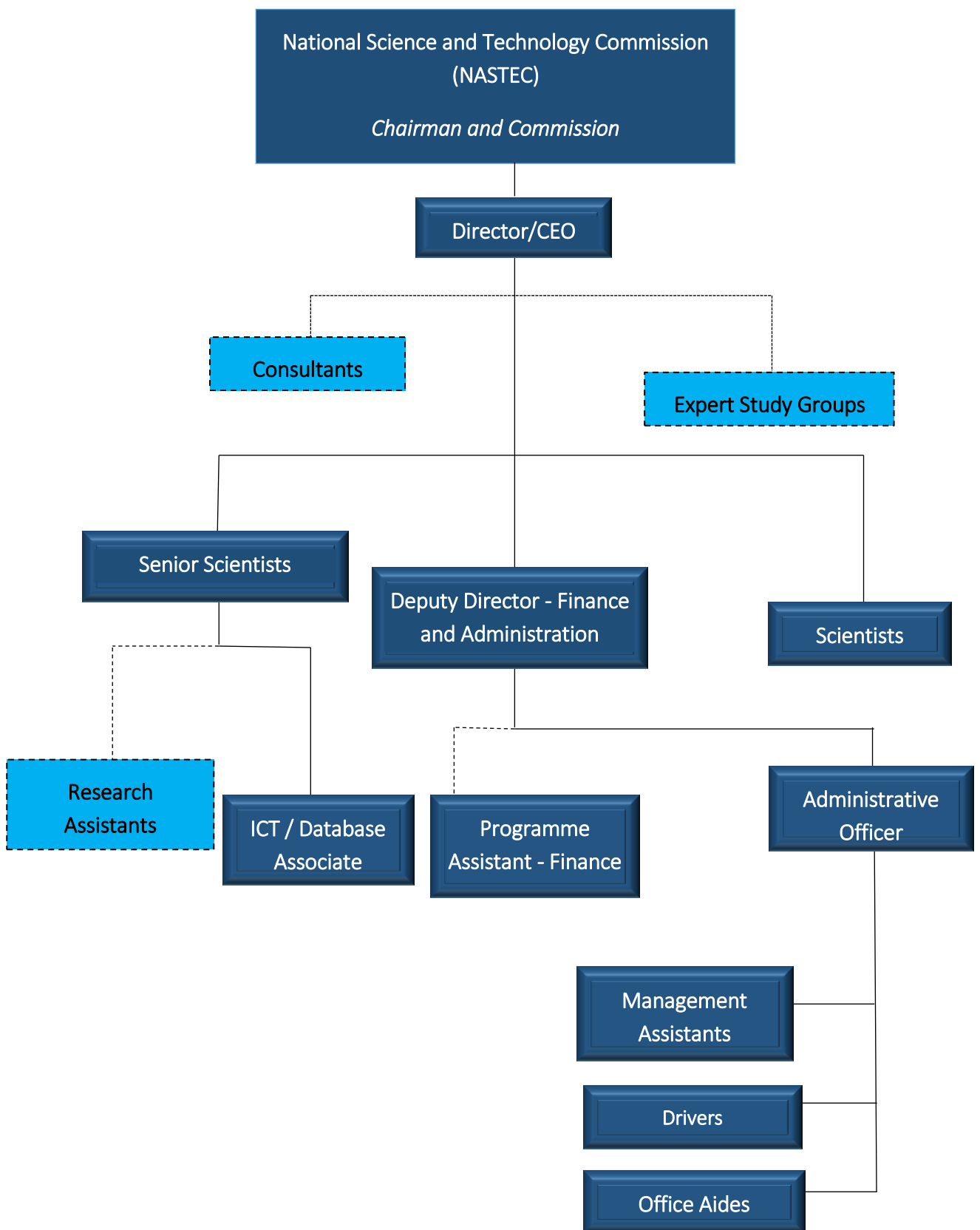


Figure 2: Organizational Structure

Chairperson's Review

The National Science and Technology Commission (NASTEC) being the apex policy formulating and advisor body to the government on science and technology matters play a vital role in taking Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) initiatives to forefront specially for a technology-based economy. NASTEC's functions are mainly organized under five thematic areas namely; advising the government on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) affairs, Institutional Reviews of S & T Institutes, Preparation of a S & T Status Report, mobilizing scientists and engineers through different Consultative Fora to promote S & T and Biennial Conference of Science and Technology (BICOST). In addition, NASTEC continues its international collaboration through the Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S & T Centre)

Although NASTEC planned to undertake several economically important STI initiatives in line with the National Policy Framework, COVID 19 epidemic made a severe impact on continuing the activities as planned. However, with many challenges including COVID 19 outbreaks, NASTEC was able to achieve remarkable progress during 2021.

As part of its policy advisory role, NASTEC continued to identify priority policy areas in line with the National Policy Framework. Accordingly, action was taken to revisit the National Policy on Science and Technology

(S&T Policy) that was developed in 2008 and the National Research and Development Framework (NRDF) which was developed in 2016. Based on the review a new Science, technology and Innovation (STI) Policy and a strategy will be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders. In addition, NASTEC has also proposed for a need of Domestic Seed Policy and a revision to the National Health Policy to include the indigenous aspects so as to develop an Indigenous Medicine/Ayurveda Pharmacopeia. These policy recommendations are based on the institutional review undertaken by the NASTEC.

I am happy to state that despite the repeated lockdowns and transport restrictions, NASTEC was able to complete five institutional reviews and initiating another review during 2021. Although more than ten requests were sent to different R & D institutes no response was received. It is to be noted that major hindrance in continuing the institutional reviews is inadequate response from R & D institutes in submitting the Self-Assessment Report which is the base document to initiate the review. Delays in submitting final validation from respective institutes is also another factor that leads to slow progress. A legal mandate to the NASTEC in this regard will empower the entire review process while improving the performance of the STI sector.

Mobilizing scientists and engineers through different Consultative Fora to promote STI is one of the important functions carried out by the NASTEC. Mobilizing young scientists and engineers in S&T activities is done through the Young Scientists Forum (YSF) of the NASTEC. During 2021 NASTEC was successful in organizing the 9th YSF symposium providing space for young scientists to publish 51 extended abstracts through seven parallel Technical Sessions. In order to encourage young scientists in demand driven R &D a new

award for Research and Technology was also approved by the Members of the Commission. In addition, Senior Scientists Forum (SSF) of the NASTEC which was inactive for 10 years was reactivated with the main objective of mobilizing them to support in identifying policy needs in line with national priorities.

NASTEC is the focal point of the Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned Movement and other countries (NAM S & T Centre). The NAM S & T Centre is represented by 47 member countries spread over the African, Asian and European continents and Latin American countries to promote South-South cooperation in science and technology. Through this intergovernmental mechanism, mutually beneficial STI collaboration among member countries are promoted while creating linkages with national and regional scientific networks among member countries. Sri Lanka had the responsibility of hosting the 15th Governing Council (GC) of the NAM S & T Centre in 2021. NASTEC was able to successfully host the 15th GC meeting on 24th February 2021 which was graced by H.E. the President. The 15th GC was conducted virtually with the participation of 20 member countries and the Secretary to the Ministry of Technology of Sri Lanka was appointed as the President of the 15th GC from 2021-2023.

Although NASTEC was able to perform its mandate amidst many challenges, ongoing internal disciplinary inquiry is an issue that needs to be handled as a matter of priority since there is a dire need for a full time CEO to fulfill the mandate. In the meantime, it is very unfortunate that the NASTEC did not have a chairman for the entire year and a member position was also vacant from January to December. As a result, the Commission was not in a position to make many policy decisions which hindered the progress remarkably.

I place my sincere appreciation to the Members of the Commission for their continuous support and advise and the NASTEC staff for their active contribution in completing the activities during 2021.

Nazeema Ahamed

Actg. Director/CEO

For Chairperson

Members of the Commission



**Prof Sirimalie Fernando,
Commission Member**

Prof. Sirimali Fernando is a Senior Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.



**Prof. Sudath Rohan Munasinghe,
Commission member**

Prof. Rohan Munasinghe, a Chartered Engineer, is attached to the Department of Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering of the University of Moratuwa.



**Dr. Ravi Liyanage, Commission
Member (From 23rd January 2020
15th December 2021)**

Dr. Liyanage is the Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Kingdom of Raigam, one of the leading food, personal care and furniture manufacturing and distribution companies in Sri Lanka.



**Prof. Renuka Nilmini, Commission
member**

Prof. A. H. L. R. Nilmini is the Dean of the Faculty of Technology of the University of Sri Jayawardenepura.



Chairperson and one member position of the Commission are vacant from 01st January 2021

**Mr Ruwan Kukulevithana,
Commission member**

Mr. Ruwan Kukulewithana is the Chairman / Managing Director of the RH Steel Building Systems (Pvt) Ltd.

Treasury Representatives



**Mrs. Tharshinie Prassanth,
(From 21st February 2021 to
22nd September 2021)**

Mrs. Tharshinie Prassanth serves as the Treasury Representative at the NASTEC Commission up to 22nd September 2021



**Dr. D. G. G. S. Dayanath
(From 22nd September 2021)**

Dr. D. G. G. S. Dayanath serves as the Treasury Representative at the NASTEC Commission from 22nd September 2021.

NASTEC Staff – 2021

Vacant from 01st January to December 2021	Chairperson
Mrs. Nazeema Ahamed	Acting Director/CEO (From 01 st June 2020)
Mr. Seyed Shahmy	Senior Scientist
Mrs. G.C. Kumari Peiris	Deputy Director - Finance and Administration
Ms M. D. Thilini	Scientist
Mrs Rasitha Perera	Scientist
Ms. U.K.D.L.H.K. Udugama	Administrative Officer
Mr. S.A.D.S.P. Senanayake	ICT/Database Associate Officer
Mr. R. M. T. Ratnayake	Programme Assistant - Finance
Mrs. G. M. C. N. Maharage	Management Assistant
Mrs. W. M. I. K. Wedamulla	Management Assistant
Mr. Anil Hettiarachchi	Driver
Mr. Jayashantha Prabath	Driver
Mr. Eranda Pradeep	Driver
Mr. A.D. Danapala	Office Aide

Performance Highlights - 2021

NASTEC FUNCTION (1): Advise the Government on policies and plans for the development of Science & Technology

01. Science, Technology and Innovation Action Plan for Agriculture Sector Fruits and Vegetable Crops in Sri Lanka - 2021-2025

A collaborative project in consultation with the Science and Technology Policy Institute of Korea (STEPI) in 2020 - 2021 to develop STI policy instruments for identified priority areas. As a result of COVID 19 and its negative impact on agriculture, NATSEC and STEPI agreed to work on the agriculture sector with a special focus on improving productivity, process, and entrepreneurship development. Accordingly, NASTEC initiated work with Korean consultants and three local consultants to develop action plans for the improvement of agricultural productivity, process, and entrepreneurship development. As a result, plans of action were developed by local consultants in collaboration with NASTEC staff. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, NASTEC was unable to secure the required services within the timeframe. This was despite the fact that it was originally planned to include Korean strategic tools. The draft plan was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture to consider implementation.

02. Incorporating indigenous perspectives into National Health Policy

The panel of reviewers who were engaged in reviewing the Bandaranaike Memorial Ayurvedic Research Institute (BMARI) concluded that there is a need to incorporate Indigenous health/Ayurveda policy features into the National Health Policy. As stated in Saubhgyayae Dekma; National Policy Framework, this will provide provisions for the development of an Indigenous medicine/Ayurveda Pharmacopeia. Based on the findings and recommendations made by the Review Panel, NASTEC has already informed appropriate authorities in the health sector on the proposed policy needs and has initiated discussions with the Ministry of Health and the Department of Ayurveda on the formulation of the proposed policy.

NASTEC FUNCTION (2): Submit a report annually to the Government, reviewing the Science and Technology activities in Sri Lanka

NASTEC is mandated to submit a report annually to the Government, reviewing the science and technology activities in Sri Lanka in the preceding year. This report includes the assessment of the effectiveness of measures for the development of human resources; the performance of science and technology institutions; the effectiveness of public spending on science and technology; and the use of science and technology by the public sector and private sector undertakings.

01. Science and Technology Status Report 2019-2020

The process of data collection for 2019-2020 was delayed as a result of a decision taken at the review meeting held with the Secretary of the subject Ministry. This includes changes to the data collection format, changes to the methodology of data collection, combining the data collection with other similar institutes, and the reporting format, etc. Accordingly, the new report format and the data collection tools were adapted and finalized. The adapted data collection tools were sent to nearly sixty S&T institutions to gather the required data. The data collection was not up to the expectation as a result of repeated lockdowns and office closures, and the publication of the report was also delayed as a result. This compelled NASTEC to postpone the report's publication to 2022.

NASTEC FUNCTION (3): Review the progress of Science & Technology Institutions

NASTEC has been mandated to review S&T institutions in relation to the objects set out in Section 2 of the Act.

The reviews are conducted by external panels appointed by the NASTEC with the approval of the Commission and consisting of experts in the relevant fields to evaluate the quality, cost-effectiveness, relevance, and impact of the S&T activities carried out by these institutions to ensure that they meet the national priorities and targets. The review is undertaken based on the manual and the self-assessment report (SAR) submitted by the respective institutes. Additional information is collected from the stakeholder consultations.

The review process has four distinctive phases.

- Preparation for review
- Visits by the review team to institutions
- Preparation of draft report by the review team
- Validation and submission of the final review report by the review team to NASTEC

The COVID-19 pandemic situation significantly impacted the performance review of science and technology institutions in 2021, as this process is based on field observations and discussions.

Lockdowns, travel limitations, and in person meeting limits all had a substantial impact on the review process. As a result, S&T institutions experienced various delays, particularly in responding to comments for factual verification and approving the final document. However, NASTEC was able to continue and complete the following institutional reviews, which began in the second half of 2020.

1. The National Engineering Research and Development Centre (NERD)
2. The National Science Foundation (NSF)
3. Sri Lanka Institute of Nanotechnology (SLINTEC)
4. The National Aquaculture Development Authority of Sri Lanka (NAQDA)
5. The Industrial Technology Institute (ITI)
6. The Rubber Research Institute (RRI)
7. The Office of the Registrar of Pesticides (ROP)

The above reports will be submitted to the Commission for approval in 2022.

Details of the performance review of science and technology institutions are as follows:

1. The National Engineering Research and Development Centre (NERDC)

NASTEC initiated the review of NERDC in September 2020, and the following panel members have been appointed to review

1. Prof. Ananda Jayawardane (Chairman)
2. Mr. Shiromal Fernando
3. Prof. Buddhika P. Jayasekara

The panel submitted the draft report in April 2021, and after considering the comments received during the factual verification, the panel submitted the review report to the NERDC in June 2021 for final approval. With the final approval of the NERDC, which was received in December 2021, NASTEC will submit this report to the Commission for approval in 2022.

2. The National Science Foundation (NSF)

NASTEC commenced the review process of NSF on 20th August 2020, The Review Panel includes,

1. Prof. (Dr.) Manjula PS Magamage (Chairman)
2. Prof. Theodore Alexander Fernando
3. Mr. Shantha Weerasinghe

The panel submitted the draft report in October 2021, and the NSF responded in December 2021 with their comments. In 2022, this project is expected to be completed.

3. Sri Lanka Institute of Nano Technology (SLINTEC)

The SLINTEC review started on August 12th, 2020, with a panel of experts consisting;

1. Prof. R. M. G. Rajapakse (Chairman)
2. Prof. P.G.R. Dharmaratne
3. Dr. Athula Senarane

The draft review report was received by the review panel in May 2021, and SLINTEC provided comments in June 2021. Several discussions were held between the panel and SLINTEC's senior management, and a final decision was reached in December 2021. After receiving approval from the NASTEC Commission, this report will be finalised in 2022.

4. The National Aquaculture Development Authority of Sri Lanka (NAQDA)

NASTEC initiated the review of NAQDA in September 2020, and the following panel members were appointed for this purpose.

1. Prof. J.M.P.K. Jayasinghe (Chairman)
2. Prof. Upali S. Amarasinghe
3. Prof. K.H.M. Ashoka Deepananda

The review panel submitted the draft report in May 2021, and the institution submitted comments in August 2021. Following discussions with NAQDA management and the review panel, the final report was submitted in November 2021. This report will be submitted to the NASTEC commission for final approval in 2022.

5. The Industrial Technology Institute (ITI)

The review panel of ITI consists of the following members.

1. Dr. Chandra Embuldeniya (Chairman)
2. Prof. Priyani Asoka Paranagama
3. Mrs. D.A. Sriyani Sakunthala Tennakoon

The review panel submitted the draft report in February 2021, followed by a discussion with senior management and the panel, and the final report was submitted to NASTEC in May 2021. A commission subcommittee was formed to finalize the report. The report was accepted by the subcommittee in principle.

6. The Rubber Research Institute (RRI)

The review of RRI was initiated on September 15th, 2020, by the following panel of experts.

1. Dr. Mrs. I. J. de Zoysa (Chairman)
2. Dr. Kumudini Gunasekare
3. Mr. A. A. M. T. Adikari

Since the panel was unable to conduct review visits in 2020 due to COVID-19, the review was successfully completed in 2021. The panel was able to conduct several field visits and discussions with RRI staff.

In September 2021, the panel submitted its draft report. After receiving comments for factual verification and conducting discussions with senior staff and the board of management, this review was completed in December 2021. The review report will be approved by the NASTEC Commission in 2022.



Figure 3 : Rubber Research Institute (RRI) Performance

7. The Office of the Registrar of Pesticides (ROP)

The review of ROP was initiated in January 2021 by the following panel of experts.

1. Prof. Veranja Karunaratne (Chairman)
2. Dr (Mrs) I . J. De Zoysa
3. Prof. Prathiba Aruni Weerasinghe

The ROP office in Peradeniya, as well as its laboratory at the Horticultural Crop Research and Development Institute, were visited by the panel. ROP staff were invited to a number of meetings. A special meeting with the Director-General of Agriculture and certain senior officials of the Department of Agriculture was also conducted. This review is scheduled to wrap up in the second quarter of 2022.



Figure 4 : Office of the Registrar of Pesticides (ROP) Performance Review

NASTEC FUNCTION (4): Consult relevant science and technology institutions before advising the Government on policies and plans relevant to those institutions.

Advice to the Government on policies and plans for the development of science and technology (S&T)

- **Mobilizing scientists, engineers, and researchers to identify policy gaps and needs**

01. The Senior Scientist's Forum (SSF)

The Senior Scientists Forum (SSF) is one of the consultative forums initiated by the NASTEC with the objectives of encouraging and strengthening cooperation in the science and technology sector among scientists in Sri Lanka and involving scientists in the formulation of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) related policies and reviews. The SSF, which was inaugurated in 2001, was active for a decade until 2010. Due to various challenges, the SSF was not operational for the period from 2011 to 2020.

The workshop was held on April 8, 2021, at the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration to reactivate the SSF. Approximately 80 scientists attended the meeting in person and via Zoom and expressed their views on reactivating the SSF. Among them, 14 volunteers were selected to serve in a temporary working group (WG) to formulate the initial documents and ordinance of the SSF that would pave the way for the appointment of a Steering Committee (SC) through a formal Annual General Meeting (AGM). In line with this, three WG meetings were conducted virtually, to draft a constitution for the forum. The draft was submitted to the Commission for approval. The AGM of the forum will be held in 2022 to formally endorse the WG as the first SC of the forum.



Figure 5 : Senior Scientists forum Workshop

02. The Young Scientists' Forum (YSF)

The Young Scientists Forum (YSF) of Sri Lanka is being hosted by NASTEC since 2000 to provide an opportunity for young scientists in Sri Lanka to create a platform for knowledge sharing while creating a space for networking. YSF currently consists of more than 400 members in different disciplines.

I. The Steering Committee of the Young Scientists' Forum (YSF)

The YSF consists of a Steering Committee (SC) comprised of 13 members. The Steering Committee is led by a Chairperson, who is assisted by two Joint Secretaries. Each year, a new SC is elected during the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The 2021 Steering Committee was elected during the AGM held on 01st of March 2021 as a virtual meeting due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation in the country.

II. YSF Annual Research Symposium

The YSF Research Symposium, which was initiated in 2012, has become a popular event with the main objective of providing a platform for young scientists to promote collaborative research by sharing research findings and research interests in different fields while creating a space for networking and techno-entrepreneurship development.

NASTEC planned its 10th Annual Research Symposium 2021-2022 to be held on March 18th 2022 as a virtual event, celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the symposium. Both Extended Abstracts (EA) and Full Papers (FP) were accepted. In response to the call for research papers, NASTEC received 58 Extended Abstracts (EA) and 22 Full Papers (FP) from YSF members in 2021. Each paper was evaluated by two senior scientists in a double-blind review process. By the end of 2021, the review process was ongoing, and they expected to complete the review process and then the symposium by March 2022.

III. Awareness webinar series on national priorities and issues in the country

The YSF organized a series of webinars online as part of the YSF activity plan for 2021. The main objective of these webinars is to create awareness and disseminate knowledge amongst young scientists about current and emerging scientific affairs in the country. Based on the above objective, five awareness webinars were organized within the year 2021.

i. YSF Webinar on Invention and Protection of Intellectual Property

The first Webinar by YSF was held on April 22, 2021. The webinar was focused on “Inventions and Protection of Intellectual Property” and Mrs Geethanjali Ranawaka, Director General of the National Intellectual Property Office (NIPO), addressed the

online audience as the guest speaker and resource person. The webinar concluded successfully after a Q & A session.

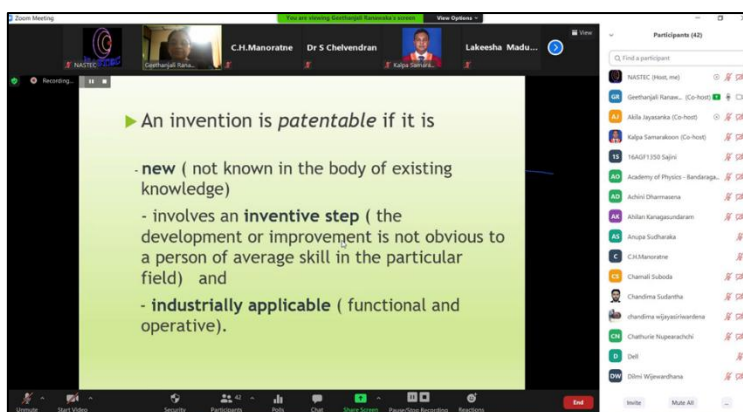


Figure 6 : YSF Webinar on Invention and Protection of Intellectual Property

ii. YSF Webinar on Ocean Plastic Pollution and the Impacts of Micro-plastic Ingestion on Aquatic Fauna

The 2nd webinar by YSF was held on July 21st, 2021. The webinar was focused on ‘Ocean Plastic Pollution-Impacts of Micro-plastic Ingestion on Aquatic Fauna’ and Prof. U.P.K. Epa, Professor in Zoology & Environment Management, Department of Zoology & Environmental Management, University of Kelaniya, addressed the online audience as the guest speaker and resource person. The webinar concluded successfully after a Q&A session with the participation of around 65 participants.

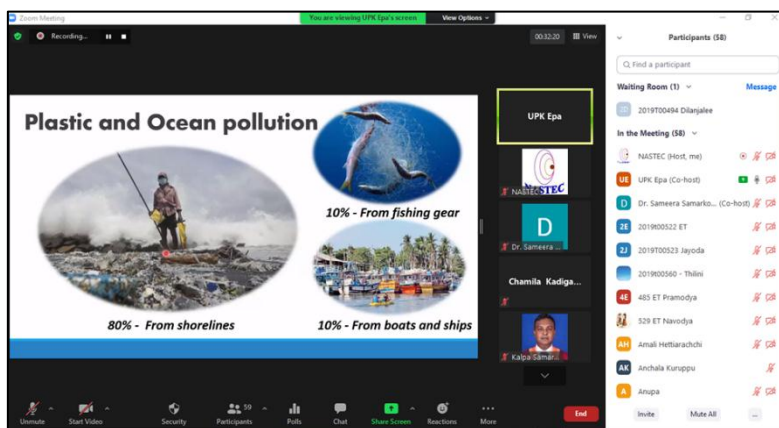


Figure 7 : YSF Webinar on Ocean Plastic Pollution and Impacts of Micro-plastic Ingestion on Aquatic Fauna

iii. YSF Webinar on COVID-19 vaccines and variants: when can we collectively be safe?

YSF hosted its third webinar, "Covid 19 vaccines and variants: When can we all be safe?" on August 10th, 2020. As a guest speaker and resource person, Prof. Neelika Malavige, Professor and Head, Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, addressed the online audience. The webinar was completed successfully with roughly 85 people in attendance.

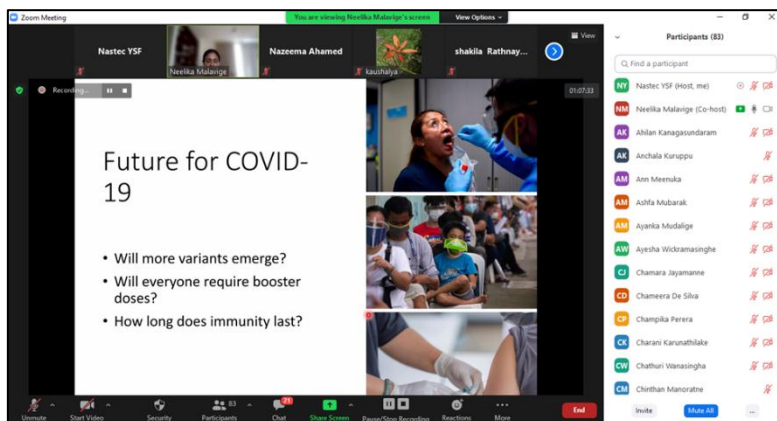


Figure 8 : YSF Webinar on COVID-19 vaccines and variants

iv. YSF Webinar on How to Secure National and International Grants

The fourth webinar by YSF was held on 24th November 2021. The webinar was focused on 'How to Secure National and International Grants' and Mr J.G. Shantha Siri, Head, International Affairs Division, National Science Foundation, addressed the online audience as the guest speaker and resource person. The webinar concluded successfully after a Q&A session with the participation of around 90 participants.

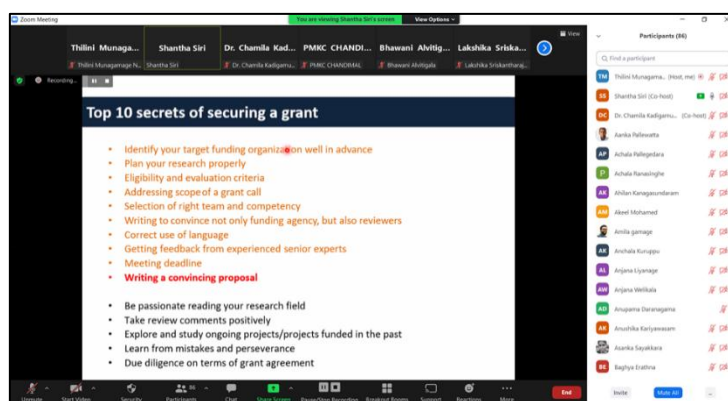


Figure 9 : YSF Webinar on How to Secure National and International Grants

v. YSF Webinar on Nuclear Complexities in South Asia

The 5th webinar by YSF was held on December 09th, 2021. The webinar was focused on ‘Nuclear Complexities in South Asia: Sri Lanka’s Security Concerns under the Nuclear Shadow’ and Dr. Sanath de Silva, Senior Lecturer, Department of Strategic Studies, Faculty of Defence & Strategic Studies, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, addressed the online audience as the guest speaker and resource person. The webinar concluded successfully after a Q&A session with the participation of around 50 participants.



Figure 10 : YSF Webinar on Nuclear Complexities in South Asia

IV. YSF publication series on national priorities and issues in the country

The YSF initiated publishing a chapter e-book as one of its key activities in 2021. The main objective of this e-book is to provide a comprehensive review of the information available on an identified topic and to identify policy gaps. Based on the review, recommendations for policy implementation/interventions and new policy areas will be highlighted to incorporate scientific aspects into policy formulation and implementation processes while creating a space for young scientists to become part of the policymaking process.

The title of the e-book is “Environment sustenance and food safety: the need for more vibrant policy initiatives for Sri Lanka” and 20 book chapters on various topics under the above title have been received from YSF members, which will be compiled into a chapter e-book after a thorough review process. The E-book is to be launched at the 10th YSF Symposium to be held in March 2022.

The YSF also requested newspaper articles that highlight national priorities and current S&T-related issues in the country, from its members, to be published in newspapers by next year.

V. Young Scientist Award

NASTEC honours the Young Scientist (YS) Award to an outstanding young scientist selected from the Young Scientists Forum (YSF) each year. As per the decisions of the sub-committee appointed by the Commission, it was decided to present the YS Award in two categories; “Young Scientist Award for Research”, and “Young Scientist Award for Technology” from the year 2021, mainly to promote demand-driven research. For this process, after revising and finalizing the selection criteria marking schemes for two awards, NASTEC called for applications from young scientists in Sri Lanka to apply for the awards. A total of 42 applications were received by December 2021, which will be shortlisted as per the eligibility, and one awardee in each category will be selected based on their ranking by an expert panel appointed by the Commission. The two YS Awards will be presented at the upcoming 10th YSF Symposium to be held in March 2022.

International Affairs

The Center for Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre)

The Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre, www.namstct.org), an inter-governmental organization located in India since August 1989, is very active in promoting South-South cooperation in Science and Technology. Sri Lanka is one of the 47 esteemed member countries of the Centre spread over the Latin American, African, Asian and European continents. It provides the privilege of collaboration with mutual benefits among scientists, technologists, and scientific organizations that are non-aligned with other developing countries. NASTEC acts as the focal point of the NAM S&T Centre for Sri Lanka.

So far, the NAM S&T Centre has organized around 84 international workshops and 40 training courses in various developing countries on a range of scientific and technical topics, including seven such international events held in Sri Lanka. These events have benefited a large number of researchers and professionals from across the globe, including a large number from Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has hosted the Bureau Meetings of the NAM S&T Centre Governing Councils three times in the past, in 2004, 2010 and 2018. The 15th Governing Council Meeting of the NAM S&T Centre was scheduled to be held in September 2020 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, but was re-scheduled and held on February 24, 2021 as a hybrid programme due to the prevailing situation in the majority of member countries due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

I. 15th Governing Council Meeting of NAM S&T Centre

The 15th meeting of the Governing Council (GC) of the NAM S&T Centre held on 24th February 2021 in Virtual Mode was hosted by the NASTEC which was graced by His Excellency the President as the Minister of Technology, Sri Lanka. Ninety-six delegates from 24 countries including representatives from the diplomatic missions of four countries - Maldives, Oman, Romania and Turkey which are not Members of the Centre; Chief Executives and senior officials of various Sri Lankan Ministries and Scientific Agencies; and representatives of the NAM S&T Centre Secretariat attended the meeting. The Inaugural Ceremony and the Working Committee meeting were held at Miloda Academy of Financial Studies, Colombo with the participation of around 20 Sri Lankan delegates participating in person, and other national and international delegates joining via the Zoom conference platform.

During the Inauguration, Prof. Rohan Munasinghe, Commission Member, NASTEC, welcomed the delegates, and the Chief Guest, His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the President, and the Hon. Minister of Technology, addressed the gathering through a video message. H.E. the President emphasized that Sri Lanka has established a separate Ministry of Technology to introduce new technologies in all sectors that are feasible. H.E. proposed that the NAM S & T Centre could play a larger role in identifying member countries' common interests and developing a collaborative mechanism that benefits all. H.E. also expressed his desire to consider how best we can collaborate to achieve our sustainable development goals within this pandemic situation, particularly in the area of climate change.

During the working committee meeting, Mr. Jayantha De Silva, Secretary, Ministry of Technology of Sri Lanka, was elected as the President of the 15th Governing Council.



Figure 11 : 15th Governing Council Meeting of NAM S&T Centre

II. 1st Bureau Meeting of the 15th Governing Council

The 1st Bureau Meeting of the 15th Governing Council of the NAM S&T Centre was held on September 20th, 2021 in Virtual Mode, which was hosted by the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT), Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt. 43 delegates from 20 countries, including Focal Points of NAM S&T Centre in Member Countries, participated in this meeting, including NASTEC as the focal point of NAM S&T Centre for Sri Lanka. Mr. Jayantha De Silva, Secretary, Ministry of Technology, Government of Sri Lanka and President of the 15th GC of the NAM S&T Centre, chaired the inauguration and working-level meeting.

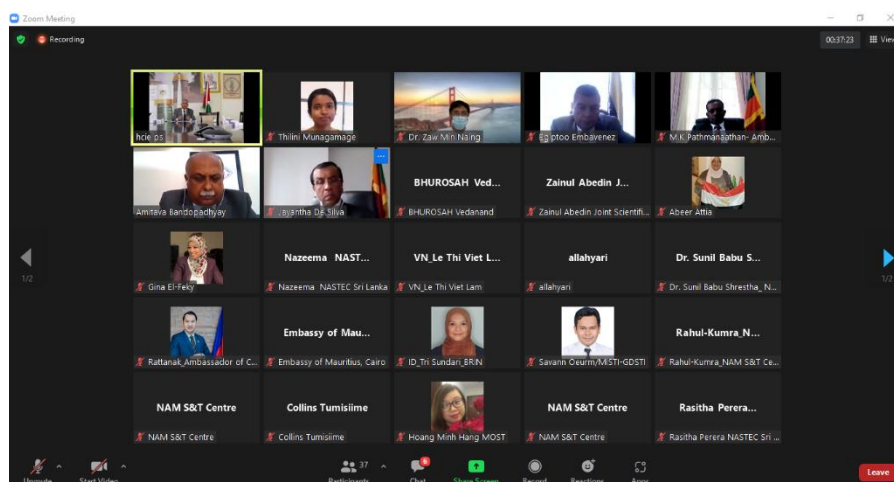


Figure 12 : 1st Bureau Meeting of the 15th Governing Council

The NAM S&T Center provides opportunities for scientists and other officials to participate in workshops, seminars, conferences, and other short-term and medium-term training programmes organized by the member countries of the Centre. Due to the prevailing COVID situation, the events organized by the NAM Centre in 2021 were held in virtual mode and the following Sri Lankan scientists had the opportunity to participate in NAM Centre events:

International Workshop on "Smart Agriculture for Developing Nations: Broader Perspectives and Special Challenges for Island States" 31 March - 1 April 2021 (In Virtual-Mode)

1. Dr. Uvasara Dissanayeke, Senior Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
2. Dr. Kandiah Pakeerathan, Head & Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Jaffna
3. Dr. G.V.T.V Weerasooriya, Senior Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Engineering and Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

International Roundtable on “Policy Development in Lightning Hazard Mitigating Strategies in Countries with High Ground Flash Density” during 11-12 May 2021 [Virtual Mode]

1. Ms. Anoja Seneviratne, Director (Mitigation Research & Development), Disaster Management Centre
2. Eng. D.T. Rupasinghe, Deputy Director - Monitoring & Evaluation, Department of Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management.

International Workshop on "Energy Security and Energy Access: Health Implications of Poor Energy Quality in Developing Countries", 26-27 July 2021 [In Virtual-Mode]

1. Dr. T.M.M. Marso, Senior Research Scientist, Petroleum and Lubricant Testing Laboratory (PLTL), Industrial Technology Institute (ITI).

NAM Joint International Workshop on "Technology Transfer and Commercialization" (in Virtual mode), 7-8 December 2021

1. Dr. K.G. Anoja Attanayake, Senior Lecturer & Head, Dept. of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna
2. Dr. A.K. Ranaweera, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Physics and Electronics, University of Kelaniya
3. Dr. Pradeep W. Samarasekere, Senior Lecturer & Director of University Business Linkage Cell, Faculty of Computing and Technology, University of Kelaniya
4. Mr. P.C. Abeyesiriwardena, Deputy Director (Planning), State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation

Human Resource Management

NASTEC is designated as the apex body for policy formulation and advisory body on science and technology matters to the Government of Sri Lanka. To fulfill the above task, NASTEC plays a vital role as a team in achieving organizational goals and objectives and strives toward the development of science and technology in the country. As per the organizational structure of NASTEC, the Chairman acts as the Head of the Commission. The Director is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Senior Scientists and scientists assist and collaborate with stakeholders and consultative fora in developing and producing sectorial policies, strategic plans, and other S&T-related documents.

Under the direction of a Deputy Director, the administration and financial management of NASTEC is carried out. The supporting staff comprises an Administrative Officer, two Program Assistants (i.e., Program Assistant-Finance & ICT Database Associate), five Management Assistants, two Office Aides, and three Drivers. Research Assistants and Consultants are outsourced for specific tasks and assignments on a demand basis with the approval of the Commission.

Summary Information on Staff Strength as at 31.12.2021

Staff Category	Approved Cadre	Existing Cadre
Senior Manager (HM 2-3)	01	01
Academic & Research Officer (AR -2, AR – 1)	04	03
Middle Manager (MM 1-1)	01	01
Junior Manager (JM 1-2)	01	01
Associate Officer (MA – 3)	02*	02
Management Assistants (MA- 1-2)	05	01
Primary Level (PL 3 & PL 1)	05	04

02* The position of Programme Assistant-Finance is personal to the holder.

Staff News

- Seyed Shahmy, the Senior Scientist, was honoured with Chartered status by the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) as a Chartered Statistician (CStat). A Chartered Statistician is the RSS's highest professional qualification; It provides formal recognition of a member's qualifications in statistics, professional practice of statistics at an advanced level, technical standing, and a commitment to remain at the forefront of statistical theory and practice throughout their professional career.
- Mr. Seyed Shahmy, the Senior Scientist, was honoured with the National Research Council of Sri Lanka's Merit Award 2021 for one of his collaborative health policy research works – "Clinico-epidemiology of arthropod stings and bites in primary hospitals of the North-Western province of Sri Lanka", which was published in a highly indexed peer-reviewed medical journal.
- Ms Nishanthi Maharage resigned from her post as the Management Assistant on December 21st, 2021.

Capacity Building/In-house and Outbound Training Programmes

- Ms. Thilini Munagamage, a scientist, took part in a virtual international training programme on "STI Policy for Socio-Economic Development (SPED)" hosted by the International Science, Technology, and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation (ISTIC), Malaysia, from August 30th to September 4th, 2021.

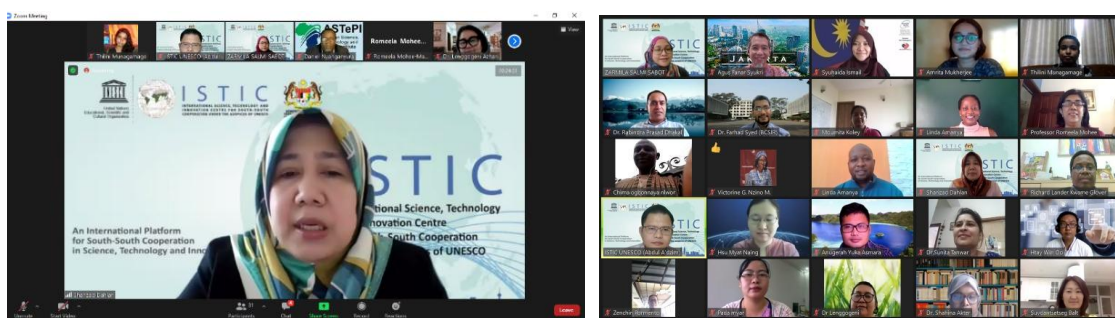


Figure 13 : virtual international training programme on 'STI Policy for Socio-Economic Development (SPED)'

- Ms Lakmini Udugama, Administrative Officer, participated in an online seminar on "Developing Soft Skills for Managing People in Diversity" conducted by Miloda Academy of Financial Studies on August 31st, 2021.

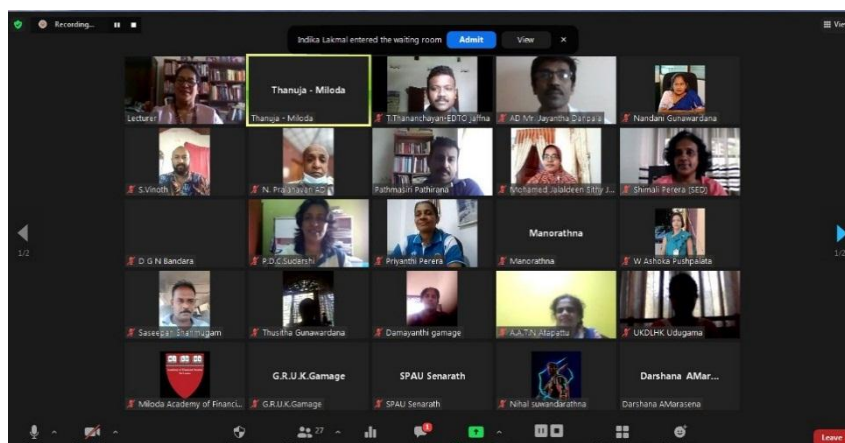


Figure 14 : online Seminar on “Developing Soft Skills for Managing People in Diversity”

Welfare Activities

The following are the programs and events carried out by the Welfare Society of NASTEC during 2021.

Regular Activities

A sum of Rs. 25,000 with a low-interest loan facility was provided for each officer for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year.

Participation in Foreign Trainings / Workshops / Seminars / Symposiums

Mr. Seyed Shahmy, the Senior Scientist, presented "New Horizon for data-driven Science for Policy – A proposed system to generate robust scientific evidence" at the studio session "Innovation in Science Advice" at the 4th Conference on Science Advice to Governments, which took place virtually from August 30th to September 2nd, 2021. The International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA), the Office of the Chief Scientist of Quebec, and the Government of Canada collaborated to put on the event.

Financial Statement

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2021
(all amounts are given in Sri Lanka Rupees)

	Notes	2021	2020
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	1	1,023,097	2,203,844
Inventories / Stocks	2	96,453	81,905
Prepayments	3	7,551	19,009
Staff Loans - Short-term	4	243,833	223,195
		<u>1,370,934</u>	<u>2,527,953</u>
Non - current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	1,642,696	1,690,478
Refundable Deposit	6	75,500	75,500
Staff Loans - Long-term	7	484,500	264,948
		<u>2,202,696</u>	<u>2,030,926</u>
Total Assets		<u>3,573,630</u>	<u>4,558,879</u>
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Accrued expenses	8	9,862,883	7,330,862
Non - current liabilities			
Differed Income	9	758,012	783,915
Provision for Gratuity	10	4,244,226	4,002,944
		<u>5,002,238</u>	<u>4,786,859</u>
Total liabilities		<u>14,865,121</u>	<u>12,117,721</u>
Total Net Assets		<u>(11,291,491)</u>	<u>(7,558,842)</u>
NET ASSETS/EQUITY			
Accumulated fund		1,907,459	1,907,071
Revaluation Surplus		3,741,947	3,763,824
Reserves		<u>(16,940,897)</u>	<u>(13,229,737)</u>
Total Net assets/equity		<u>(11,291,491)</u>	<u>(7,558,842)</u>

The Accounting policies on pages 01 to 02 and Notes on pages 07 to 11 form an integral part of these Financial Statements. The members of the Commission is responsible for the preparation and presentation of these Financial Statements. These Financial Statements were approved by the members of Commission and signed on their behalf.

1. Member of the Commission

2. Member of the Commission

Actg. Director

Deputy Director -
Finance and Administration

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021
(all amounts are given in Sri Lanka Rupees)

		2021	2020
Revenue			
Recurrent Grant		19,029,100	25,264,065
Capital Grant - Research and Development		1,619,000	1,096,000
Capital Grant - Capacity Building		-	-
Amortization of Government Grants - Depreciation		551,393	3,056,029
Income	11	30,728	101,358
		<u>21,230,221</u>	<u>29,517,452</u>
Expenses			
Personal Emoluments	12	10,120,018	13,361,306
Traveling	13	2,734	15,531
Supplies and consumables used	14	297,765	320,496
Maintenance	15	656,690	677,742
Contractual services	16	7,412,177	6,663,219
Transfers	17	4,486,086	4,443,935
Research and Development	18	1,333,158	2,948,607
Meeting Expenses	19	81,360	997,519
Depreciation and amortization expenses	5	551,393	3,056,029
Total expenses		<u>24,941,381</u>	<u>32,484,384</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) from operating activities		<u>(3,711,160)</u>	<u>(2,966,932)</u>
Financial Cost			
Gain on sales of property plant and equipment		-	(341,104)
Net surplus/(deficit) for the period		<u>(3,711,160)</u>	<u>(3,308,036)</u>

Report of the Auditor General

15th August 2022

Chairman
National Science and Technology Commission

Auditor General's Report on Financial Statements for the year ended on 31st December 2021 and other legal and regulatory requirements of the National Science and Technology Commission in terms of Section 12 of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018

1. Financial Statements

1.1 Opinion

The Financial Statements for the year ended on 31st December 2021 of the National Science and Technology Commission consisting of the Statement of Financial Position as at 31st December 2021, and the Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Change of Equity for the year ended on that date, Cash Flow Statement and Notes for Financial Statements for the year ended on that date, summarized significant accounting policies were audited under my direction in terms of provisions in the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018 to be read together with Article 154(1) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Finance Act No. 38 of 1971. My report in terms of Article 154(6) will be tabled in Parliament in due course.

Except for the impact of the facts given in the part titled 'the basis for qualified opinion' in my report, it is my opinion that Financial Statements of the Commission reflect a true and fair situation with regard to financial position as at 31st December 2021, its financial performance during the year ended on that date and cash flows, in compliance with accounting standards of the public sector in Sri Lanka.

1.2 Basis for Qualified Opinion

Though the cost of the Commission had been fully depreciated by property, plant and equipment worth Rs. 20.4 million, the estimated defect on the effective lifespan of assets costing Rs. 16.7 million already in use had not been revised and adjusted in Financial Statements in terms of Sri Lanka Public Sector Accounting Standard 3.

I conducted my audit in conformity with Sri Lanka Auditing Standards (SLAuS). My responsibility under these auditing standards have been further explained in the section titled Auditor's Responsibility on Auditing Financial Statements in this report. I believe that audit evidence I have gathered are sufficient and appropriate to form a basis for my qualified opinion.

1.3 Other information in the Annual Report – 2021 of the Commission

Other information means information contained in Annual Report – 2020 of the Commission scheduled to be handed over to me after the date of this Audit Report and, however, not included in my Audit Report on the subject. The Management is responsible for these other information.

Other information is not covered by my opinion on Financial Statements and I do not make any certification or express any opinion on it.

My responsibility in terms of my audit on the Financial Statement is to read other information identified above when available and to consider whether other information does not comply quantitatively with Financial Statements or my knowledge gathered at the audit or in any other form.

If I were to conclude in my reading of the Annual Report – 2021 of the Commission that it contains quantitative misrepresentations that information should be communicated to administrative authorities for due rectification. If misrepresentations remain further unrectified, they will be included in the report to be tabled in Parliament in due course in terms of Section 154(6) of the Constitution.

1.4 Responsibilities of the management and administration on Financial Statements

The management is responsible to determine an internal administration required to enable preparation of these Financial Statements in conformity with Sri Lanka Public Accounting Standards and their fair presentation and preparation of Financial Statements without quantitative false statements likely to occur due to frauds or faults.

The Management is responsible to decide continuous running of the Commission in preparing Financial Statements and, except when the Management intends to liquidate the Commission or intends to do so when there is no alternative, the Management is also responsible for keeping accounts on continuation basis and revealing facts pertaining to continuation of the Commission.

Parties of administration are responsible for checking financial reporting process of the Commission.

Registers and reports should be properly maintained on its revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities enabling preparation of annual and timely Financial Statements of the Commission in terms of Sub-Section 16(1) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018.

1.5 Responsibility of the Auditor on auditing Financial Statements

My objective is to issue a fair confirmation that Financial Statements, on the whole, are devoid of quantitative misstatements occurred due to frauds and faults and to issue the Audit Report containing my opinion. Although a fair certification is a high standard certification, it will not be a confirmation that quantitative misstatements will always be uncovered in conducting the audit in terms of Sri Lanka Auditing Standards. Quantitative misstatements might occur due to individual or bulk influence of frauds and faults and its quantity depends on its impact on economic decisions to be taken by users based on these Financial Statements.

I have acted with professional judgement and professional doubt in the audit as part of the audit in terms of Sri Lanka Auditing Standards. Further,

- Proper, appropriate and timely auditing procedures were formulated and implemented in order to identify and assess the risk of arising quantitative false statements likely to occur in Financial Statements due to frauds or faults in forming a basis for the audit opinion stated. The impact of a fraud is more serious than that of a quantitative misstatement because they occur due to complicity, preparation of forged documents, wilful negligence, false representation or deviating from internal administration.
- An understanding of the internal administration was gathered in order to prepare timely audit procedures though not with a view to expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal administration.
- Appropriateness of accounting policies used, fairness of accounting estimates and connected revelations by the management were evaluated.
- Relevance of the use of basis of continuation of the institution for the accounting was decided based on audit evidence gathered on whether there is a quantitative uncertainty on the continuation of the Commission due to events or situations. If I were to conclude that there is a quantitative uncertainty, I have to pay attention in my audit report to related revelations in the Financial Statements and my opinion should be audited if those revelations are not sufficient. However, the continuation may come to an end based on future events or situations.
- The appropriate and fair inclusion of transactions and events which formed the basis of structure and contents of Financial Statements and the total presentation of Financial Statements including revelations were evaluated.

Parties of the administration will be informed of significant findings of my auditing, vital shortcomings of internal administration and other facts.

2. Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

2.1 Special provisions on following requirements are contained in the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018.

2.1.1 Except the impact from the facts explained in the part ‘Qualified Opinion’ in my report, I have received all information and explanations required for the audit in keeping with requirements in Section 12 (a) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018 and the Commission had maintained proper financial reports as appears in my observation.

2.1.2 As per the requirement in Section 6(I) (D) (iii) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, the Financial Statements of the Commission correspond to the previous year.

- 2.1.3 As per the requirement in Section 6(I) (D) (iv) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, the recommendations I have made last year are contained in Financial Statements presented.
- 2.2 Nothing worthy of making following statements attracted my attention based on measures adopted and evidence collected and due to restriction to quantitative matters.
- 2.2.1 As per the requirement in Section 12(D) in the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, any member of the Board of Administration of the Commission has a direct or indirect connection, which is outside general business nature, with any agreement affiliated to the Commission.
- 2.2.2 As per the requirement in Section 12(E) in the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, action has been taken in contrary to any relevant written law or any other general or special provisions issued by the Board of Administration of the Commission, except following observations.

**Reference to rules and Observations
regulations/ direction**

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) Para. 6.6 of the Enterprise Operation Guidelines of the Department of Public Enterprises dated 16 th November 2021 | Though account reports should be submitted for auditing within 60 days of the end of the Accounting Year, accounts for year 2021 had been submitted with a delay of 03 months and 15 days, i.e., on 15 th June 2022. |
| (B) Section 6.5.3 of the Public Enterprise Circular no. PED 12 of 02 nd June 2003. | Though the Annual Report of the Commission should be tabled in Parliament after 150 days of the end of the Accounting year, Annual Reports for years 2019 and 2020 had not been tabled in Parliament. |
| (C) Section 1 (E) of the Treasury Circular No. 1/2010 of 10 th December 2010 | Though it has been given that Senior Level Executive Officers in Public Enterprises having completed a period of service of 12 years are qualified for a duty-free vehicle permit, the Director of the Commission, on the contrary, had imported a vehicle on a duty-free vehicle permit on 08 th June 2011. However, his date of appointment fell on 31 st July 2003 and he had completed only 8 years in service by the date of importation of the duty-free vehicle. In spite of the inquiry conducted in this regard spending Rs. 1,568,485, the Commission had failed either to complete such inquiries or take required |

disciplinary action or to recover the loss incurred from the responsible officers.

2.2.3 That, as per the requirement in Section 12)G) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, action has been taken contrary to powers, duties and functions of the Commission except following observations.

- a) Although public and private sector enterprises should submit an annual report to the government with a review of science and technology activities performed during preceding year in Sri Lanka on the use of science and technology in terms of Section 5 (b) of Science and Technology Development Act No. 11 of 1994, the reports pertaining to years 2019, 2020 and 2021 had not been submitted even by the date of audit in December 2021.
- b) Though progress and science and technology institutions relevant to corporate objectives should be reviewed in terms of Section 5 (c) of Science and Technology Development Act No. 11 of 1994, reviews have been conducted and reports submitted so far pertaining to only 22 institutions for a period of ten years (within the period of 2010-2020) by December 2021 out of 66 institutions identified as coming under the category of science and technology institutions. The relevant institution and the Commission are responsible for the action taken for implementation of recommendations in these reports in terms of guidelines of evaluation and it was observed that reports have not been prepared by checking whether such recommendations were implemented, accepted and whether they were beneficial.
- c) Though convening Science and Technology Convention biennially under prior approval of the minister in terms of Section 5 (e) of Science and Technology Development Act No. 11 of 1994, holding discussions on science and technology in line with objectives in Section 2 of the Act and submission of a report on such discussions to the Minister should be carried out, no action had been taken to hold a Convention after 2016.

2.2.4 That, as per the requirement in Section 12)H) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, assets of the Board have not been procured and used economically, efficiently and effectively during the relevant periods of time in terms of relevant rules and regulations.

2.3 Other facts

- a) 06 posts remained vacant in the Commission. It was observed that 05 out of 06 posts remained vacant for a period between 09 months to 03 years and no recruitments had been made to those vacant posts even by the audit date in June 2022.
- b) 05 policies and 06 review reports prepared and submitted between 2018-2021 by the Commission during previous years to fulfil functions of the Commission and reach its objectives were observed to be at draft level even by the end of

year 2021 and no steps had been taken to prepare them as final reports and submit to relevant institutions.

W.P.C. Wickramaratne
Auditor General

Auditor General's Report of the National Science and Technology Commission in terms of Section 12 of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018 on Financial and other Legal and Regulatory Requirements for the year ended on 31st December 2021 – Answers

2.2.2

- a) The Account Reports for year 2021 of the Commission were prepared by January 2022 and submitted to the Audit and Management Committee held on 22nd February 2022 with a view to forwarding to the National Audit Office by 28th February as was the practice during previous years. Since one of the two members of the Commission representing that Committee resigned in February, 2022 and another member of the Commission who represented the Committee at that time was abroad, the Account Reports for year 2021 were submitted to the National Audit Office on 15th June 2022 after getting the approval of the said member who returned after the visit abroad.
- b) The Annual Reports for 2019 and 2020 were referred, by letter dated 16th June 2022, to the Ministry of Education for the approval of the Line Ministry in order to table them in Parliament. Further steps will be taken in this regard upon receipt of Ministry approval.
- c) A formal disciplinary inquiry is in place in the institution to look into the matter, and the inquiry, which is at its final stage, is scheduled to be finalized by September 2022. Further action will be taken upon the recommendations of that tribunal.

2.2.3

a)

Science and Technology Status for year 2018

As per Science and Technology Development Act No. 11 of 1994, the NASTEC should annually submit a report on the science and technology position of the preceding year. As a result, data for the relevant year are collected this year (Data for the 2018 report are collected in 2019, while data for 2019 are collected in 2020, and data for 2021 are collected in 2022).

The NASTEC, at its meeting held on 11th June 2019, decided to prepare the Science and Technology Status Report – 2018 according to a new plan utilizing secondary data, deviating from the structure adopted in previous years. Accordingly, it was decided to prepare that report and submit it during the year 2020. Because of this decision, the data collection questionnaire was not in progress as it had been in previous years. As such, a subcommittee consisting of three members of the commission was appointed to guide the preparation of that report based on a new strategic plan. Accordingly, the relevant questionnaire was submitted to the institutions in August 2019. The process of collecting data through this questionnaire was postponed until January due to data delays from certain institutions.

The quality of the report depends on the data provided by number of institutions. As a result, the NASTEC had to wait until the majority of institutions provided their data before conducting a proper statistical analysis. Accordingly, data for the report for 2018 was collected from August 2019 to June 2020, and thereafter, the compilation of the status report on science and technology for the year 2018 commenced after analyzing such data. However, since institutional operations had to be performed from home with effect from March 2020 due to Covid-19 outbreak, it took a considerable amount of time to prepare the final report. The final report was submitted to the Commission for approval in April 2021. Though the Commission should take action to study it and approve it, it was unable to do that due to various complications that prevailed from 2021 up to date (such as the non-availability of a permanent chairman, no quorum for meetings due to resignations of members, etc.).

As a result, the draft Science and Technology Report—2018 is set to be published following Commission approval. Further, instructions from the Secretary to the Ministry of Education were sought in the letter dated 17th June 2022 for this purpose due to the delay in appointing the Commission. This draft has already been uploaded to the website of the institution.

Science and Technology Status Report for years 2019 & 2020:

Data for year 2019 were not collected during year 2020 according to a recommendation given at the progress review meeting of the NASTEC held in the Ministry on 15th June 2020, by the Secretary to the then Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation, and it was decided to submit a report after collecting data for both years of 2019 and 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic that prevailed in 2020 and 2021 placed severe restrictions on the workability of the maximum potential government offices, and many institutions informed the NASTEC of the difficulty to collecting data pertaining to our questionnaire in a work-from-home situation. As a result, the collection of data for years 2019 and 2020 was initiated in October 2021 when the country was reopened to work under a “new normal” situation. So, the data collection process pertaining to those reports has been finalized by now, and the final report will be prepared after analyzing such data. One questionnaire consists of 14 pages, and it takes some time to complete the report since data for the two years have to be inserted after verifying their accuracy. Accordingly, steps have been taken to complete this report soon under relevant approvals.

b)

As per Section 5(C) of the Science and Technology Development Act No. 11 of 1994, the NASTEC is empowered to review the progress of science and technology institutions in terms of Section 2 of the Act. Further, this review is conducted in terms of guidelines in the NASTEC Review Manual. NASTEC do not have the authority to issue orders to implement recommendations under this Act. However, the Act empowers the Commission to monitor the progress of implementation of these activities. The primary objective of these reviews is to identify issues pertaining to science and technology, give appropriate policy recommendations, measure the contribution of relevant institutions to the economic and social development of the country, and inform relevant institutions about appropriate action as a

policy formulating body. Therefore, we have raised at the national level the policy issues identified during this review process.

Ex: Updating the cabinet-approved policy framework of the National Research and Development Framework (NRDF), the newly proposed policies of the National Seed Policy, and the National Traditional Medicine Policy.

Though the institutional review process had commenced in 2011, very often the review had been made on 1-3 institutions per year in view of the provisions granted up to 2018 and the limited human and physical resources of the institution.

The NASTEC initiated the implementation of a number of steps in 2018 to make this process more efficient based on the recommendations of the then Secretary to the Ministry.

- Accordingly, a pool of external resource personnel was created to appoint expert committee members for institutional review.
- Mapping of state funded Science and Technology Institutes as per the international science and technology classification. 66 institutions were identified from the studies conducted in 2018-2019.
- Since the NASTEC is not entrusted with the authority of implementing recommendations given by relevant institutions at the institutional review, there was a discussion in 2020 with the Government Audit Department to prepare a mechanism for the purpose. Accordingly, the Audit Department agreed to conduct an audit to implement those institutional review recommendations in its routine audit practices.
- The Sri Lanka Council for Agricultural Research Policy (SLCARP) also engages in institutional review practices in the agriculture sector. A series of discussions was held between NASTEC and SLCARP to identify a joint mechanism to promote the reviews of agricultural institutions that are reviewed by NASTEC.

A subcommittee of the Commission was appointed in 2021 to update the review process of science and technology institutions by the NASTEC, resolve existing issues after studying them, and oversee the implementation of recommendations given by relevant reviewer institutions. That subcommittee notified the current (Financial and Human) positions of the NASTEC and, after a lengthy study of this process, determined these changes must be introduced only after the appointment of a permanent chairman to the NASTEC. Accordingly, it is scheduled to perform this function on recommendations granted after the appointment of a new chairman upon the recommendations of the subcommittee of the Commission. Throughout the years 2021 and 2022, relevant Secretaries to Ministries have made numerous requests to appoint a permanent chairman for required approvals to work in accordance with the Act.

c)

The Biennial Conference on Science and Technology, IX (BICOST IX), conducted by the National Science and Technology Commission should be held bi-annually in terms of the Act,

and accordingly, it was scheduled to be held with the participation of the Hon. President as Chief Guest in the BMICH on 08th and 09th November 2018.

As a result, the NASTEC made all necessary arrangements for the BICOST in 2018. However, the conference had to be postponed at the last moment, i.e., on November 05th, 2018, under the verbal instructions of the Secretary to the President, due to the situation that prevailed at that time. This was officially notified to the staff at the staff meeting chaired by the former chairman of the institute. Accordingly, the cancellation was notified to all invitees.

Following that, a Commission Paper was submitted regarding the temporary postponement of this conference to the Commission's 199th meeting on December 10, 2018. Accordingly, the Commission decided to conduct the above conference during the first quarter of 2019.

However, the Commission in operation at the time was dissolved in December, 2018. Thereafter, the conference was postponed again up to 2020 by the 200th meeting of the Commission, held on 14th March 2019, with the participation of newly appointed members. The officers had to abide by the decisions of the Commission at that time.

This activity had to be postponed until further notice due to the Covid outbreak in 2020. Though this matter was taken into consideration continuously at Commission meetings, the relevant activities did not commence as per instructions of the Commission due to the prevailing Covid epidemic situation as well as the vacancy in the post of the Chairman of the Commission from January, 2021 up to date. The absence of a chairperson for this Commission since January 2021, up to date, has had a direct impact on the inability to commence this activity. Therefore, these activities will be scheduled with the appointment of a chairman.

2.3

a)

Post of Senior Scientist (01 vacancy)

The senior-level position of Senior Scientist became vacant on December 21, 2020, and was referred to the Department of Management Services for approval.

On the whole, instructions have been issued by the State Ministry of Digital Technology and Enterprise Development to act in terms of Cabinet Memorandum No. CP/134/304/1596/21 dated 28th August 2021 submitted by the Minister of Finance on “Review of Public Expenditure”. Instructions have also been issued by Budget Circular 03/2021 of 21st December 2021 to temporarily suspend recruitment of new staff.

Management Assistant Post (04 vacancies)

The Ministry of Finance temporarily suspended recruitments to public institutions in its letter no. DMS/Policy/Recruitments of 20th November 2019. However, the Commission requested the State Ministry of Research and Innovations, in writing, on 19th February 2020 for a special

approval to fill secondary level vacancies for speedy performance of duties in the Commission, and the Ministry referred the same to the Department of Management Services on 17th June 2020 for approval also with a copy to the Commission. Accordingly, the Department of Management Services granted approval only for two posts on 25th September 2020. Publishing paper advertisements to recruit for those two posts got delayed due to the Covid outbreak in the country. However, paper advertisements were published on 24th January 2021 for relevant recruitments and recruitments, got delayed again due to the Covid pandemic and travel restrictions.

Office Assistant (01 vacancy)

The Ministry was informed on 21st September 2020 to get approval to fill primary level vacancies that the Ministry had referred for approval to the Department of Management Services on 15th October 2020 also with a copy to the Ministry. However, recruitments into Primary Service Category in all institutions have been suspended in terms of the letter no. DMS/Policy/Recruitments of the Secretary to the Treasury and the Management Service Circular No. 01/2020 of 21st February 2020. Further, a decision has been taken to fill vacancies in the Primary Service Category as instructed by the Ministry, and, therefore, the relevant application was referred also to the Ministry on 21st October 2020.

Further, a request has been made through the Ministry for a special approval of the Department of Management Services by the letter no. NASTEC/07/CADRE of 09th February 2022 to make relevant recruitments for the sound operation of the institution as well as to perform duties in terms of the Act.

All recruitment has been temporarily suspended by now in terms of Public Enterprise Circular No. 04/2022 of 08th August 2022.

b)

Approval for the 05 policies drafted:

Owing to changes in the Chair and members of the Commission from time to time from year 2018 to 2021 (where 05 Chairpersons and 03 Commissions were in place at different periods during 2018-2021) and the absence of a full-time Chairman for the Commission during year 2021, final approval could not be taken for the reports for further action on views and comments raised from time to time in the Commission on draft policies and review reports. As such, this activity is scheduled to be performed on the recommendation to be given after the appointment of a new chairperson.

Approval for the 06 draft review reports:

It was only during the latter part of the final quarter of 2021 that the institution received the relevant completed review reports. The Commission did not meet because a quorum was not present. It is necessary to obtain the approval of the Commission for further steps in terms of

the review protocol. Relevant approval could not be taken according to the current situation. Letters were sent on 14th December 2021 and 22nd April 2022 to the Secretary of the then Ministry of Technology for instructions in this regard. No proper reply was received in that regard, and instructions were sought in the letter referred on 27th June 2022 on this issue to the Secretary to the Ministry of Education, under the purview of which the NASTEC falls. Accordingly, it is expected to take future steps based on those recommendations.

Janaka S. Geekiyanage
Acting Director/ CEO
For Chairman