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ஆண்டறிக்கை  
Annual Report

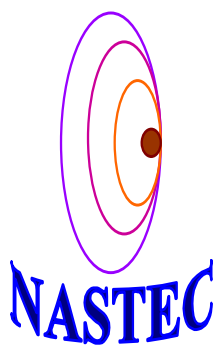
2020

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தேசிய விஞ்ஞான மற்றும் தொழில்நுட்ப ஆணைக்குழு  
National Science and Technology Commission



# National Science and Technology Commission

Annual Report 2020



## 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.



### The Premises' Address

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Bank of Ceylon, Hyde Park



Auditor General's Department

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## FUNCTIONS AS MANDATED BY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT ACT (NO 11 OF 1994)

### **Act & Legislation**

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."

### **Vision**

### **Mission**

### **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 sectoral 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

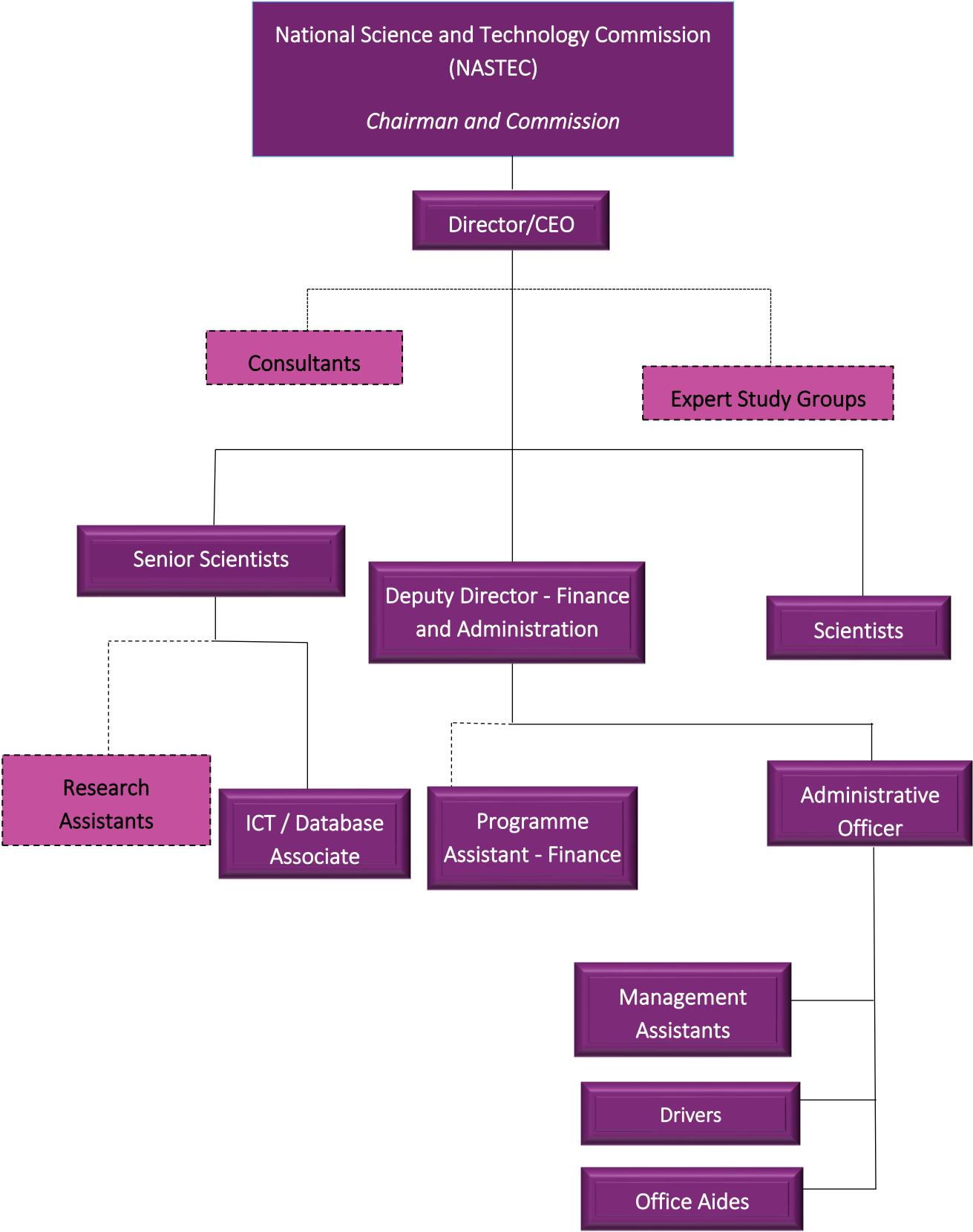


Figure 2: Organizational Structure

## CHAIRPERSON'S REVIEW



As the Chairperson, it gives me a great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the National Science and Technology Commission (NASTEC) for the year 2020.

Having assumed duties as the Chairperson of NASTEC on the 16th of January 2020 and since March 20th the country was under lockdown due to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even during lockdown period NASTEC work was carried out through online discussions to ensure smooth operation of the organization. Ten Commission Meetings were held of which 5 were on the Zoom platform.

In general, development of a country is strongly associated with the growth of its science and technology. Hence in many countries, science policy and its implementation are given the highest priority to advance agriculture, health and in general citizens' quality of life. It is indeed heartening that the Ministry of Technology is now under H.E. the President giving high priority in economic agenda. The current pandemic with COVID-19 more specifically has laid bare the importance of scientists, be they be microbiologists, virologists, epidemiologists or mathematicians.

In accordance with the powers conferred on it by the Science and Technology Development Act No. 11 of 1994 (S&T Act of 1994), NASTEC is mandated to advise the Government on policies and plans for the development of science and technology, to submit a report annually to the Government by reviewing the science and technology activities in Sri Lanka in the preceding year, to review the progress of Science and Technology (S & T) institutions, and to convene the Sri Lanka Conference on Science and Technology biennially. Also carrying out other relevant activities assigned to the NASTEC by the Hon. Minister in charge of the subject of Science, Technology and Research.

In 2020, NASTEC initiated performance review of the following 07 science and technology institutions: National Science Foundation, Industrial Training Institute, Sri Lanka Institute of Nano Technology, National Engineering Research and Development Centre, National Aquaculture Development Authority of Sri Lanka, Office of Registrar of Pesticides and the Rubber Research Institute amidst COVID situation. A special committee consisting of commission members selected the expert panels for this review process. NASTEC would like to acknowledge the support given by the expert panels and the institutions, despite the COVID-19 pandemic situation, and adhering to the health guidelines and conducting virtual mode discussions with stakeholders and other relevant parties.

As the continuation of the collaborative Official Development Assistance (ODA) project in partnership with the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI), Korea, NASTEC commenced to develop a road map for agriculture policy document having 3 criteria: 1) Agriculture with novel technology for quality mass scale productions-productivity improvement, 2) Value addition to Agri-produce -Food technology-process improvement, 3) Small medium agribusiness entrepreneurship by rural sector and Apps for agriculture production and marketing-entrepreneurship development.

Based on the National Policy Framework and to address the Post COVID impact, agriculture sector has been identified as the priority area under three thematic initiatives. By undertaking this system study, it is intended to produce an implementable action plan for the sector which will address country's Food Equity and Security, Agribusiness & Entrepreneurship for SME and value additions for Agri product using modern and advanced technologies. The consensus was to develop a pilot project working with the ground level community to identify the required S & T policy up to implementation and establishment level.

Being Sri Lanka's National Focal Point of the Center for Science and Technology of the Non – Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre), NASTEC was associated with providing several training opportunities for Sri Lankan scientists & science administrators through NAM S&T Centre.

NASTEC conducted a highly successful 9<sup>th</sup> Symposium of Young Scientist Forum (YSF) on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Mrs. Padma Rajapaksa, Secretary, State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, and Research & Innovation addressed the young scientists. Dr Ravi Liyanage, a Commission Member delivered the keynote address on the role of young scientists as entrepreneurs. Prof Meththika Vithanage spoke on her research program. 51 research papers were presented in 4 parallel sessions, having all on zoom platform. This was the first ever NASTEC conference held on a zoom platform. The hard work of Dr. K.W.L.K. Weerasinghe, Chairman/YSF and Dr M K Meegahakumbura & Dr U S Liyanaarachchi, joint Secretaries and NASTEC Scientist Ms Thilini Munagamage under the guidance of the Actg. Director contributed towards its success.

Since 2017, there was an internal issue hindering the progress of the NASTEC. Having cleared major obstacles, it was possible to commence the final inquiry where the Director was on compulsory leave with full pay resulting in loss of government funds. Also disturbing the progress at NASTEC. At present the final inquiry is being conducted.

The effective cooperation extended by the State Minister Hon Thilanga Sumathipala, the present State Minister Hon Dr Seetha Arambepola, the Secretaries Mr Anura Dissanayake and Mrs. Padma Rajapaksa, State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovation and the other officials of the Ministry are gratefully acknowledged.

I thank the Commission Members for their guidance given to take forward the NASTEC. I also wish to acknowledge Ms Nazeema Ahamed, Acting Director for her unfailing assistance, and the staff at NASTEC for their effective teamwork.

Professor Kshanika Hirimburegama  
Chairperson  
National Science and Technology Commission  
16<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020

## MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION



**Prof Niranjani Ratnayake,  
Commission Member**

Eng. Prof. (Mrs.) Niranjani Ratnayake is an Emeritus Professor in Civil Engineering at the University of Moratuwa.



**Prof Sirimalie Fernando,  
Commission Member**

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



**Dr. Ravi Liyanage, Commission  
Member**

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. 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.



**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.



**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, Commission member**

Mrs. Tharshinie. Prassanth serves as a Treasury Representative at the NASTEC Commission.

## NASTEC STAFF – 2020

<b>Prof. Kshanika Hiriburegama</b>	<b>Chairperson</b>
<b>Mrs. Nazeema Ahamed</b>	Acting Director/CEO (From 01 <sup>st</sup> June 2020)
<b>Dr. Thamara F Dias</b>	Acting Director/CEO (from January 27 <sup>th</sup> to May 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2020).
<b>Mrs. Nandanie Samarawickrama</b>	Acting Director/CEO (up to January 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2020)
<b>Dr. Kalpa W. Samarakoon</b>	Senior Scientist
<b>Mr. Seyed Shahmy</b>	Senior Scientist
<b>Mrs. G.C. Kumari Peiris</b>	Deputy Director - Finance and Administration
<b>Mrs Rasitha Perera</b>	Scientist
<b>Ms M. D. Thilini</b>	Scientist
<b>Ms. U.K.D.L.H.K. Udugama</b>	Administrative Officer
<b>Mr. S.A.D.S.P. Senanayake</b>	ICT/Database Associate Officer
<b>Mr. R. M. T. Ratnayake</b>	Programme Assistant - Finance
<b>Mrs. G. M. C. N. Maharage</b>	Management Assistant
<b>Mrs. W. M. I. K. Wedamulla</b>	Management Assistant
<b>Mr. Anil Hettiarachchi</b>	Driver
<b>Mr. Jayashantha Prabath</b>	Driver
<b>Mr. Pradeep Eranda</b>	Driver
<b>Mr. A.D. Danapala</b>	Office Aide
<b>Mr. Kanishka Gimhan</b>	Office Aide (Up to 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2020)

# PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS - 2020

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

### **01. National Policy on Mineral Resources**

The National Science and Technology Commission initiated the preparation of the National Policy on Mineral Resources in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation and the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment and Wildlife Resources. The policy was approved in principle by the Cabinet of Ministers. However, the subject Ministry was requested to resubmit the policy with appropriate strategies and action plans to implement the policy. With this decision, the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB) took over the responsibility of finalizing the policy, indicating that the preparation of the policy on mineral resources comes under their purview. NASTEC, under the guidance of the line ministry, had several discussions on finalizing the policy. This policy will provide an enabling environment for the mineral based-industries to expand their scope of value addition, thereby increasing the return on investments while bringing more foreign exchange to the country by exporting value added products using our mineral resources. Considering the importance of the policy, NASTEC continued to work with relevant ministries to expedite the finalization of the policy.

### **02. Domestic Seed Policy**

Based on the institutional review of Seed Certification Services Centre undertaken by the National Science and Technology Commission in 2020, the need for a National Seed Policy has been recommended. In fact, the importance of a domestic seed policy has also been highlighted in the Saubhagyaye Dekma. The National Policy Framework. Accordingly, NASTEC has initiated the process of developing a National Seed Policy in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. However, it was learned that the formulation of a policy on this has already been initiated by a committee under the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture. Hence, to avoid duplicity in the process, it was decided after consulting with relevant authorities that NASTEC would not directly be involved in facilitating this policy. However, wherever NASTEC's input is required, NASTEC will continue to provide it.

### **03. Incorporating indigenous perspectives into National Health Policy**

Based on the institutional review of the Bandaranaike Memorial Ayurvedic Research Institute (BMARI) undertaken by NASTEC in 2020, a recommendation has been given by the Panel of reviewers that there is a need to incorporate Indigenous health/Ayurveda policy aspects into the National Health Policy. This will give provisions to develop an Indigenous Medicine/Ayurveda Pharmacopeia as stated in Saubhagyayae Dekma; National Policy Framework. Accordingly, NASTEC has already informed the findings of the review to relevant authorities in the health



sector for necessary follow up. NASTEC intends to facilitate stakeholder consultation in the formulation of health-related policies by the relevant line ministry.

#### **04. Collaborative Project on STI Policy with the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI), South Korea**

NASTEC initiated introducing Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) policy instruments to improve the productivity, process, and agri-entrepreneurship of the agriculture sector under the policy consultation project between the Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) of South Korea and NASTEC in 2020. The agriculture sector was considered under this project as a priority area within the context of the negative impact of COVID 19 on the agriculture sector. A concept paper was prepared on the subject after several online discussions with NASTEC and STEPI counterparts. Accordingly, three local project consultants were appointed along with NASTEC officials to develop the ‘Science, Technology and Innovation driven (STI) Action Plan for the Improvement of Productivity, Process and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture in Sri Lanka (for Prioritized 6 Export Crops)’. The first and second drafts of the Action Plan were prepared with further review from STEPI consultants during several online meetings and an online workshop. The Action Plan and future implementation activities were further discussed with the relevant local stakeholders, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, Department of National Planning, External Resources Department, and Ministry of Youth. The Action Plan finalized with the inputs from STEPI and local experts will be sent to the Department of Agriculture to consider implementation.



*Figure 3: Stakeholder Meeting of STEPI Project*

## ***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 public sector and private sector undertakings.

### **01. Science and Technology Status Report 2018**

In line with the objective, NASTEC has reviewed the status of 40 state sector S&T institutions during the year 2018. In relation to this, data was collected in five broad areas: i) Human resources, ii) Physical resources, iii) Research inputs, iv) Research outputs, and v) S & T institutes' services in the form of a questionnaire survey. Based on the information received from the respective institutes, NASTEC was able to complete the data analysis and is in the process of finalizing the report. The report will be published in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of this year.



*Figure 4: Science and Technology Status Report 2018*

### **02. 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.

Hence, the 2019/2020 report will be published during 2021 with a new methodology adopted to address the ministry concerns, with the concurrence of the Commission, through a holistic approach that will reflect the actual S & T status of the country with an outlook. In line with this, NASTEC is in the process of identifying the issues in preparing a comprehensive sector report, especially in relation to obtaining the required data and information.

### ***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 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 a manual and required information is collected from the institutes and through 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
- Preparation and submission of the final review report by the review team to NASTEC

Current COVID 19 pandemic situations greatly affected the Performance Review of Science and Technology institutions in 2020 since this whole process is based on field observations and discussions. However, NASTEC managed to initiate 7 reviews during 2020.

NASTEC received the following review reports from the respective review panels in 2020 and submitted them for the Commission's approval. In line with the process, the Commission appointed two subcommittees comprising the Commission members to study the respective reports to recommend the Commission.

1. Plant Protection Services (PPS), Department of Agriculture
2. Bandaranaike Memorial Ayurvedic Research Institute (BMARI)



Figure 5 : Performance review Reports of PPS & BMARI

NASTEC used to send the recommendations of institutional review to the subject Ministry and to the respective S & T Institutes in the past. However, most of the time, the recommendations are not taken seriously for implementation. In order to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the institutional review, NASTEC had a discussion with the Auditor General's Department so as to establish an effective performance monitoring system. The Auditor Generals' Department positively agreed to include this into their performance auditing process and requested NASTEC to send the copies of the review reports to the Treasury and to the line Ministry in addition to the respective institutes.

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

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

NERDC was established in 1974 in accordance with the provisions of the State Industrial Corporations Act No. 49 of 1957 and now functions under the purview of the State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovations. NERDC is one of the premier institutes established under the aforesaid Act with the primary objective of promoting and facilitating the development of the Domestic Engineering and Technological Research Industry.

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 made the review visits on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2020 to NERDC, Ekala and had discussions with the senior staff. The panel also paid a visit to the testing facilities available, workshops and the technology park. A stakeholder meeting was held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020

as an online workshop using the zoom app, with the participation of 37 stakeholders representing licensees, clients, and suppliers of different technology categories.



*Figure 6 : National Engineering Research and Development Centre (NERDC) Performance Review*

## **2. National Science Foundation (NSF)**

The National Science Foundation (NSF), established by Parliament Act No. 11 of 1994, is essentially a service organization mandated to serve and strengthen the science and technology sector in Sri Lanka. Through several grant programs, the organization promotes and supports research, development, and innovation, as well as S&T capacity. It also conducts various programmes and activities to popularize science and promote science education in the country, while taking a leading role in the dissemination of S&T information.

NASTEC commenced the review process of NSF on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020, after conducting the 1<sup>st</sup> Review Panel meeting. The Review Panel includes,

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

The panel made the review visit on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to NSF and had discussions with the Chairman, Acting Director-General, and the senior staff of the institution. The stakeholders' consultation meetings were conducted virtually with the respective parties identified by the review panel. The panel is expected to complete the review process in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021.





*Figure 7 : National Science Foundation (NSF) Performance Review*

### **3. Sri Lanka Institute of Nano Technology (SLINTEC)**

SLINTEC's mandate is to build a world-class Research & Development center specialized in Nanotechnology & Advanced Technologies and attract both local and international clients to locate their research facilities at the Nanotechnology and Science Park for the furtherance of science and technology knowledge in Sri Lanka.

The SLINTEC review started on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 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 panel conducted the review visit on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and had discussions with the senior staff and also observed the testing facilities available. This review process is expected to be completed in the 1st quarter of 2021.



*Figure 8 : Sri Lanka Institute of Nano Technology (SLINTEC) Performance Review*

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

The National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA), coming under the purview of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, was established in 1999 by the Parliamentary Act

(No.53 of 1998). It is the main state-sponsored organization mandated for the development of the aquaculture and inland fisheries sector in Sri Lanka.

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 panel made a review visit on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and met with the management of the institution for further discussion.



*Figure 9 : National Aquaculture Development Authority of Sri Lanka (NAQDA)  
Performance Review*

## **5. Industrial Technology Institute (ITI)**

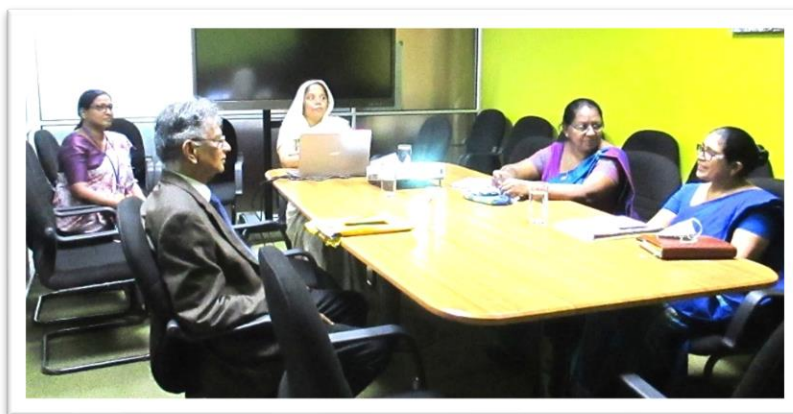
The Industrial Technology Institute (ITI) is a government-owned multidisciplinary R&D institution, which conducts demand-driven R&D and internationally competitive technical services. ITI is the successor to the Ceylon Institute of Scientific and Industrial Research (CISIR), which was established in 1955.

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

On the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the panel visited the institution and conducted several virtual meetings with relevant staff. The review of ITI is expected to be completed in the 1st quarter of 2021.

As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, reviews initiated in early 2020 are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2021.



*Figure 10 : Industrial Technology Institute (ITI)  
Performance Review*

## **6. Rubber Research Institute (RRI)**

The Rubber Research Institute of Sri Lanka (RRISL) is the oldest research institute on rubber in the world and is the nodal agency in Sri Lanka with the statutory responsibility for research and development on all aspects of rubber cultivation and processing for the benefit of the rubber industry.

The review of RRI was initiated on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 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

As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic situation, some areas were locked down and the panel was unable to continue the review visits as per the planned time period. Therefore, the review of RRI will be completed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021.



*Figure 11 : Rubber Research Institute (RRI) Performance  
Review*



## **7. Registrar of Pesticide (ROP)**

Although NASTEC intended to initiate the review of ROP, due to the COVID pandemic, it was unable to be initiated as planned and will be initiated in 2021.

***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 Young Scientists' Forum (YSF)**

The Young Scientists Forum (YSF) of Sri Lanka has been hosted by NASTEC since 2000, to provide an opportunity for young scientists in Sri Lanka to voice their opinions on S&T related issues. YSF currently consists of more than 400 members, young scientists 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 along with two Joint Secretaries. Each year, a new SC is elected during the Annual General Meeting (AGM), usually held along with the YSF Symposium. The 2019 Steering Committee also acted as the SC for 2020 since the AGM was not held as a result of the COVID pandemic.

### **2020 YSF Steering Committee**

Chairman	Dr. Lasantha Weerasinghe	Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
Joint Secretary	Dr. Upanith Liyanaarachchi	Faculty of Technology, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Joint Secretary	Dr. Kasun Meegahakumbura	Coconut Research Institute, Lunuwila
Committee Member	Prof. Usha Hettiaratchi	Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenapura
Committee Member	Dr. Dinesh Attygalle	Faculty of Engineering, University of Moratuwa
Committee Member	Prof. Rangika Halwatura	Faculty of Engineering, University of Moratuwa
Committee Member	Dr. Samantha Dissanayake	Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
Committee Member	Dr. Kandiah Pakeerathan	Faculty of Agriculture, University of Jaffna
Committee Member	Dr. Sameera Samarakoon	Institute of Biochemistry Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of Colombo
Committee Member	Dr. Niroshima Withanage	Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
Committee Member	Dr. Janaka Wijesinghe	Faculty of Animal Science & Export Agriculture, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka
Committee Member	Ms. E.M.S. Isanka	Industrial Technology Institute, Colombo 07
Committee Member	Mr. N.Y. Jayanath	Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
NASTEC Coordinator	Ms. Thilini Munagamage	National Science and Technology Commission



*Figure 12 : YSF Steering Committee meeting*

## **II. 9<sup>th</sup> YSF Annual Research Symposium 2020**

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.

In response to the call for abstracts, NASTEC received 85 Extended Abstracts (EA) from YSF members in 2019. Each EA was evaluated by two senior scientists in a double-blind review process. Based on their recommendations, 52 extended abstracts were selected for oral presentations. The abstracts selected to be presented were published in the proceedings.

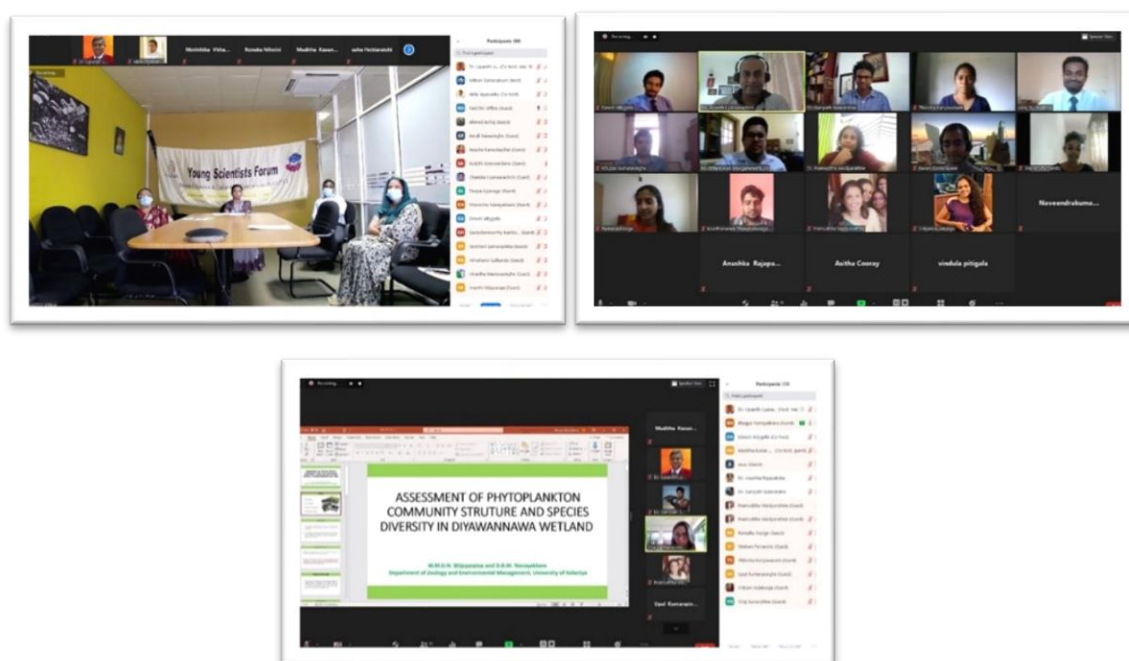
NASTEC organized its 9th YSF Research Symposium on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 as an online programme via Zoom Video conference facility, parallel to the commemoration of World Science Day and National Science Week organized by the Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation.

The symposium was initiated with an Inauguration Ceremony with the participation of a large number of guests on a virtual platform, and Mrs. Padma Rajapaksha, Secretary to the Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation, addressed the gathering as the Guest of Honor. Dr. Ravi Liyanage, Chairman/CEO of Kingdom of the Raigam and Commission Member of NASTEC, delivered the keynote speech and Prof. Meththika Vithanage, winner of the 2018 Young Scientist Award, delivered the guest speech to the virtual gathering.

The symposium progressed with the presentation of 51 extended abstracts presented online in seven parallel Technical Sessions. The ICT Centre of Wayamba University of Sri Lanka provided the technical support for the virtual symposium.

**Online oral presentations were made under the following thrust areas of the National Research & Development Framework (NRDF);**

- Health,
- Food, Nutrition & Agriculture,
- Environment,
- Energy,
- Textile & Apparel,
- ICT & Knowledge Services,
- Basic Science, and Emerging Technologies & Indigenous Knowledge



*Figure 133 : Virtual 09th YSF Symposium*

## **II. YSF Workshop on Statistics for Research**

The Young Scientists Forum (YSF) of NASTEC organized a two-day skill development workshop for early career researchers under the title of “Workshop on Statistics for Research” on January 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 at the Information Communication Technology Centre (ICTC), Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Kuliyaipitiya. The workshop consisted of lectures and practical sessions conducted by the following resource persons on the subject areas of “Steps to Successful Data Analysis”, “Hypothesis Testing”, “Sampling and Experimental designs”, “Test to Look at the Differences” and “Relationships and Tests for Data Explorations”.

- Prof. R.O. Thattil, Emeritus Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
- Prof. S. Samitha, Senior Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya
- Prof. N.R. Abeynayake, Professor, Department of Agribusiness Management, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

■ Dr. K.W.L.K. Weerasinghe, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya



*Figure 14 : YSF Workshop on Statistics for Research*

#### **IV. The Senior Scientists' Forum (SSF)**

The Senior Scientists Forum (SSF) is one of the consultative fora initiated by NASTEC with the objectives of encouraging and strengthening cooperation in the science and technology sector among senior scientists in Sri Lanka, and involving them in the formulation and review of science, technology and innovation (STI) related policies. The SSF, which was inaugurated in 2001, had been active for a decade until 2010. However, due to various obstacles, the SSF has not been active for 10 years, and the NASTEC took steps to reactivate the SSF in 2020, especially to support NASTEC initiatives in achieving national priority goals.

As the initial programme, a half-day workshop was scheduled to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to discuss the way forward of the forum and its related activities for which more than 125 senior scientists/engineers/academics from Science and Technology Institutions and Universities registered to participate. However, due to the sudden onset of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic at the beginning of October 2020 and a government decision to avoid large scale public gatherings, the workshop was postponed to 2021.

## 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](http://www.namstct.org)), an inter-governmental organization hosted by the Government of 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 collaborations with mutual benefits among scientists, technologists, and scientific organizations that are non-aligned with other developing countries.

So far, the NAM S&T Centre has organized around 80 international workshops and 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 benefitted 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 to 2021 due to the prevailing situation in the majority of member countries due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

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. The Center provides the airfare and the hosting country provides the accommodations for the participants.

During 2020, the following Sri Lankan scientists participated in the events organized by the Center.

■ **International Workshop on ‘Air Pollution and Public Health: Challenges and Interventions’, New Delhi, India, 5-7 February, 2020**

Dr. Thammita A.S. Anuruddha, Principal Research Scientist, National Engineering Research and Development Center (NERDC)

■ **International Training Program on "Generic Drugs", 19th November 2020 (Virtual Mode)**

Dr. Nayana Wijayawardhane, Senior Lecturer, Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine & Animal Science, University of Peradeniya  
AND

Dr. KGAP Attanayake, Head and Senior Lecturer, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna

■ **International Workshop on, 'Technopreneurship for Developing Countries: Challenges and Opportunities in Technology Transfer and Commercialization for Developing Countries', 24-25 November 2020 (Virtual Mode)**

Mrs. Nazeema Ahamed, Director (Planning), State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation

Ms. P.A.M.J. Wijepala, Scientist, National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency

AND

Dr. K.W. Sujeewa Ariyawansa, Principal Scientist, National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation, most of the NAM Centre Workshops and Fellowship Programmes scheduled for 2020 were either postponed or held in virtual mode.



## 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 towards 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. 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. Financial Management of NASTEC is undertaken under the supervision of a Deputy Director. The supporting staff comprises of an Administrative Officer, two Program Assistants (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 31.12.2020

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

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



## STAFF NEWS

- NASTEC warmly welcomed Prof. Kshanika Hirimburegama as the Chairperson of NASTEC on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and she served in the position until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. We are thankful to her for the active contribution she made towards improving the performance of NASTEC, especially in resolving the internal administration issue.
- Prof. Niranjanie Rathnayake resigned from her position as a Commission member on December 31, 2020, and we thank her for her service as a Commission member.
- Mrs. Nandanie Samarawickrama, Acting Director from 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2020, and we are grateful to Mrs. Samarawickrama for her service during her tenure.
- Dr. Thamara F. Dias, Acting Director from 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020, and we are grateful to Dr. Dias for her service.
- Mr. Kanishka Gimhan resigned from his post as the Office Aide on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020, and we are grateful to Mr. Gimhan for his service.
- Dr. Kalpa W. Samarakoon resigned from his post as a Senior Scientist on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, and we are grateful for his service during the period of his tenure, especially in coordinating the project with the Korean Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI).

## CAPACITY BUILDING/IN-HOUSE AND OUTBOUND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The scheduled training programmes of NASTEC were postponed due to the COVID -19 pandemic situation in the country, considering the health guidelines issued by the government.

## WELFARE ACTIVITIES

The following are the programs and events carried out by the Welfare Society of NASTEC during 2020.

### ■ 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.

### ■ Programs

Printed NASTEC t-shirts are distributed among the staff free of charge.

## PARTICIPATION IN FOREIGN TRAININGS / WORKSHOPS / SEMINARS / SYMPOSIUMS

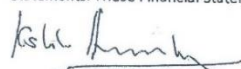
No programmes were held as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2020 (all amounts are given in Sri Lanka Rupees)

	Notes	2020	2019
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	1	2,203,844	2,365,493
Inventories / Stocks	2	81,905	93,110
Prepayments	3	19,009	128,513
Staff Loans - Short-term	4	223,195	225,792
		<u>2,527,953</u>	<u>2,812,908</u>
Non - current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	1,690,478	5,087,612
Refundable Deposit	6	75,500	260,670
Staff Loans - Long-term	7	264,948	425,511
		<u>2,030,926</u>	<u>5,773,793</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u><b>4,558,879</b></u>	<u><b>8,586,701</b></u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
Current liabilities			
Accrued expenses	8	7,330,862	5,508,452
Non - current liabilities			
Differed Income	9	783,915	1,444,461
Provision for Gratuity	10	4,002,944	3,489,111
		<u>4,786,859</u>	<u>4,933,572</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<u><b>12,117,721</b></u>	<u><b>10,442,024</b></u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<u><b>(7,558,842)</b></u>	<u><b>(1,855,323)</b></u>
<b>NET ASSETS/EQUITY</b>			
Accumulated fund		1,907,071	1,907,071
Revaluation Surplus		3,763,824	6,159,307
Reserves		<u>(13,229,737)</u>	<u>(9,921,701)</u>
<b>Total Net assets/equity</b>		<u><b>(7,558,842)</b></u>	<u><b>(1,855,323)</b></u>

The Accounting policies on pages 01 to 02 and Notes on pages 07 to 12 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.

  
Chairperson

  
Actg. Director

  
Administrative Officer

(From 16th Jan, 2020 to 31st December, 2020)  
Signed from Paris on 1st April, 2021

  
Member of the Commission

Figure 155 : Statements of Financial Position

**NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**  
(all amounts are given in Sri Lanka Rupees)

		2020	2019
<b>Revenue</b>			
Recurrent Grant	Notes	25,264,065	25,579,500
Capital Grant - Research and Development		1,096,000	3,160,500
Capital Grant - Capacity Building		-	430,000
Amortization of Government Grants - Depreciation		3,056,029	4,317,572
Income	11	<u>101,358</u>	<u>111,538</u>
		<b>29,517,452</b>	<b>33,599,110</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Personal Emoluments	12	13,361,306	14,092,911
Traveling	13	15,531	461,916
Supplies and consumables used	14	320,496	675,097
Maintenance	15	677,742	1,875,013
Contractual services	16	6,663,219	9,655,675
Transfers	17	4,443,935	4,335,387
Capacity Building	18	-	439,225
Research and Development	19	2,948,607	2,932,708
Meeting Expenses	20	997,519	161,471
Depreciation and amortization expenses	5	<u>3,056,029</u>	<u>4,317,572</u>
Total expenses		<b>32,484,384</b>	<b>38,946,975</b>
Surplus/(Deficit) from operating activities		<b><u>(2,966,932)</u></b>	<b><u>(5,347,865)</u></b>
<b>Financial Cost</b>			
Gain on sales of property plant and equipment		(341,104.00)	-
Net surplus/(deficit) for the period		<b><u>(3,308,036)</u></b>	<b><u>(5,347,865)</u></b>

*Figure 166 : Statement of Financial Performance*

# REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

TEC/B/NASTEC/1/20/23

August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Chairman  
National Science and Technology Commission

The Auditor General's Report in terms of Section 12 of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018 on the Financial Statements and other legal regulatory requirements for the year ended on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 of the National Science and Technology Commission.

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## **1. Financial Statements**

### **1.1 Qualified Opinion**

The Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, consisting of summarized important accounting policies of the National Science and Technology Commission, were audited under my supervision in accordance with the provisions of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018 and the Finance Act No. 38 of 1971, to be read in conjunction with Article 154 (1) of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka's Constitution. My report will be tabled in Parliament in due course in terms of Article 154(6) of the Constitution.

It is my opinion that, except for the impact of the facts described in the section titled Basis for the Qualified Opinion in my report, the Financial Statements of the Commission reflect a true and fair situation of its financial position as at December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended, in conformity with Sri Lanka Accounting Standards.

### **1.2 Basis for the Qualified Opinion**

Although the outstanding value and useful life of any asset should be reviewed at least on the last day of every annual period of reporting in terms of Section 65 of Sri Lanka Public Service Accounting Standards No. 7, the institution had not fairly estimated the life time of assets and it was observed that assets costing Rs. 2,266,336 with a zero holding value remained in use even thereafter. For this reason, no depreciation value had been calculated for those assets, and the surplus of the current year had been overstated with that addition.

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

### **1.3 Other information contained in Annual Report – 2020**

Other information means information contained in the 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 this 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 the 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 2020 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 for determining the internal administration required to enable the preparation of these financial statements in conformity with Sri Lanka Public Accounting Standards and their fair presentation and preparation without quantitative false statements likely to occur due to fraud or faults.

The Management is responsible for the 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 a continuation basis and revealing facts pertaining to the continuation of the Commission.

The parties of administration are responsible for checking the reporting process of the Commission.

Registers and reports should be properly maintained on its revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities, enabling the preparation of annual and timely financial statements of the Commission in terms of Sub-Section 16(1) of the National Audit Commission 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 that occurred due to fraud 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 fraud and faults and their quantity depends on their 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 fraud or faults in forming the 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.
- The appropriateness of accounting policies used, the fairness of accounting estimates and connected revelations by the management were evaluated.
- The relevance of the use of the basis of the continuation of the institution for the accounting was decided based on audit evidence gathered on whether there is a quantitative uncertainty about 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 that formed the basis of the structure and content of financial statements and the total presentation of financial statements, including revelations, were evaluated.

The parties to the administration will be informed of the significant findings of my audit, the vital shortcomings of internal administration, and other facts.

## **2. Report on other legal and regulatory requirements**

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

2.1.1 I gathered all of the information and clarifications required for the audit in accordance with Section 12(A) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, and subject to the observation made in the paragraph titled Basis for Qualified Opinion in this report, the Commission has maintained proper financial records, as stated 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 made last year are contained in the financial statements presented.
- 2.2 Based on measures adopted and evidence collected, and due to restrictions to quantitative matters, nothing worthy of making the following statements attracted my attention.
- 2.2.1 According to Section 12(D) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, any member of the Commission's Board of Administration has a direct or indirect connection with any agreement affiliated with the Commission that is not of a general business nature.
- 2.2.2 Except for the following observations, action has been taken in contravention of any relevant written law or any other general or special provisions issued by the Board of Administration of the Commission, as required by Section 12(E) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018.

<b>Reference to rules and regulations/ direction</b>	<b>Observations</b>
(A) Financial Regulation 133	Although provisions have been made that an Internal Audit Division should be established to check the duties of the Commission, the Commission has not adhered to these provisions.
(B) Section 5(B) of Science and Technology Development Act No. 11 of 1994	Although a review report should be prepared on the use of Science and Technology by public and private institutions and Science and Technology activities carried out in Sri Lanka last year, the report for the year 2019 has not been submitted even by 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2021.
(C) Paragraph 7.4.1 of the Public Enterprise Circular No. PED 12 of 02 <sup>nd</sup> June 2003.	Although the Audit and Management Committee should be convened at least once every three months, the Commission conducted only one meeting of the Audit Committee during the year 2020.



(D) Section 1(E) of the  
Circular No. 1/2010 of 10<sup>th</sup>  
December 2010 of the  
Secretary to the Treasury

Although it has been specified that Executive Officers in Senior Level post in the non-academic staff of public enterprises and Universities who have completed a period of service of 12 years are entitled to receive a duty-free vehicle permit, the Director of the Commission imported a vehicle on June 08<sup>th</sup>, 2011 on a duty-free permit, contrary to that provision. However, his date of appointment was July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003 and the period of his service amounted to some 8 years by the date of the importation of that duty-free vehicle. The Commission had failed, even by the end of the year under review, to conduct a formal enquiry into the matter and either take disciplinary action or to recover the loss incurred to the government from 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 the powers, duties, and functions of the Commission.

2.2.4 That, in accordance with Section 12(H) of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018, the Board's assets were not procured and used economically, efficiently, and effectively during the relevant time periods in accordance with relevant rules and regulations.

Signed by: W.P.C. Wickramaratne  
Auditor General

Auditor General  
National Audit Office  
No. 306/72  
Polduwa Road  
Battaramulla.

Dear Sir,

**Answers to the Auditor General's Report in terms of Section 12 of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018 on Financial Statements for the year ended on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 and other Legal and Regulatory requirements of the National Science and Technology Commission.**

The explanations for the above said report No. TEC/B/NASTEC/1/20/23 of August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, which you have sent are as follows:

**2.2.2**

(A) The Ministry's Internal Audit Staff has been notified by letter No. MTR/2/14/NASTEC/Car/Vol II dated 11.08.2020 to obtain internal auditing activities of the National Science and Technology Commission. Accordingly, it has been decided to increase the number of staff in the institution in due course, and it is also expected to include the post of internal auditor.

(B) Collection of information for year 2019 was delayed over the expected period due to the Covid epidemic prevailed in year 2020. As a result, data for the years 2019 and 2020 are being collected concurrently in the year 2021, and plans have been made to complete those works in due course.

(C) The Audit Committee's meetings for the year 2020 were not held due to government health regulations and instructions amidst the Covid epidemic during the first and second quarters of the year. However, the meeting for the third quarter was held on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Although the meeting for the final quarter was scheduled in December, it was not held due to the re-emergence of Covid epidemic.

(D) A Preliminary Enquiry was held to look into this matter and the relevant officer was interdicted without pay on July 01<sup>st</sup>, 2020 upon its recommendations. A Charge Sheet was also issued. A formal disciplinary enquiry has already been conducted following the preliminary enquiry and steps will be taken to take further action after its completion.

Signed by: Nazeema Ahamed  
Acting Director

For Chairman