

SAVCA VC CONFERENCE AGENDA

Thursday, 10 September 2026

07:30 – 08:50	Registration & Welcome Refreshments
08:50 – 09:00	MC Welcome Samke Mhlongo
09:00 – 09:10	Opening Address Anusha Naidu, SAVCA CEO
09:15 – 10:00	KEYNOTE: Four Future Seasons Dr Wing will introduce his acclaimed Four Future Seasons framework, a powerful approach to planning for multiple futures by working backwards from tomorrow. Blending insights from behavioural psychology, military strategy and Japanese philosophy, the framework offers practical tools for navigating shifting market conditions and capital cycles. As private capital looks to unlock the next era of innovation and growth, this keynote promises to challenge conventional thinking and provide a fresh perspective on what it takes to stay ahead. Craig Wing, Futurist
10:05 – 10:45	FIRESIDE CHAT: From hype to fundamentals: SA VC ecosystem state of play including early stage maturity & exits. After years of ecosystem building, South African venture capital is entering a new chapter. With increased AUM, fund managers are scaling, portfolio companies are maturing, institutional investment is growing and exits are beginning to validate the investment thesis demonstrating realised returns. This conversation will unpack the current state of play, examine key indicators of ecosystem maturity, exits and highlight the next growth cycle. Moderator: Stephan Lamprecht, VS Nova Speakers: Ketso Gordhan, SA SME Fund Gladwyn Leeuw, ESquared Investments Ian Lessem, HAVAIC
10:45 – 11:10	MORNING REFRESHMENT BREAK

11:10 – 11:50

Backing SA Ventures: Capital allocation trends, including institutional, family office, local vs international, asset consultant perspectives and venture debt

The ecosystem is showing signs of maturity, with follow-on and secondary investments now accounting for most transactions. But who is backing the country's most promising startups, and where are the untapped opportunities for growth?

This session will unpack the latest capital allocation trends, exploring the roles of institutional investors, family offices, international capital, asset consultants, and venture debt in shaping the future of the asset class.

Moderator:

Paula Mokwena, Fireball Capital

Speakers:

Anne-Marie Chidzero, FSD Africa
Zach George, Launch Africa Ventures
Noluvo Nela, Edge Growth Ventures
Cuma Dube, Kruthum

11:55 – 12:30

SHOWCASE: Sector Deep Dive

This session shines a spotlight on two sectors shaping the next wave of venture-backed growth in South Africa:

AgriTech:

Karidas will share his journey building a leading agritech platform - the problem he set out to solve, the role venture capital has played in scaling the business, and the impact this is having on smallholder farmers and the broader agricultural value chain.

Karidas Tshintsholo, Khula Founder

Climate Finance & Circular Economy:

Mike will bring a climate finance and circular economy lens, exploring how green innovation and capital allocation are converging to unlock sustainable growth.

Mike Mulcahy, CEO Green Cape, GOF

12:35 – 13:05

FIRESIDE CHAT: Innovation Meets Regulation: Can Policy Unlock Venture Growth?

Moderator:

Safeera Mayet, SAVCA

Speakers:

Shelley Lotz, SA Start Up Act & Simodisa
Aalia Manie, Webber Wentzel Fusion

13:05 – 13:55

LUNCH

14:00 – 14:45

KEYNOTE: AI and the New Scale Advantage

Jason's keynote will focus on the intersection of AI and scaling, harnessing AI strategically to leapfrog competition and scale. By making the 4 key AI Shifts: personal, people, strategy, and operating system, the keynote focuses on how fund managers can support portfolio companies in adapting to the new AI paradigm.

As AI moves from hype to business reality, this session will have investors, fund managers, and founders rethink growth, capital and competitive edge.

Jason Golberg, The Art of Scale

14:50 – 15:30

Panel Discussion: From Lab to Market: Scaling Deep Tech Investments

While software and ICT dominate venture capital activity, South Africa possesses significant untapped potential in science-driven innovation. From biotechnology and health innovation to clean energy, advanced materials and frontier technologies, the country is producing intellectual property with global relevance.

This panel explores whether South Africa's innovation ecosystem is ready to unlock that potential. What is needed to bridge the gap between research and commercial success?

Moderator:

Mathew Marsden, Start Up Club ZA

Speakers:

Brigitte Binneman, DSTI

Justice Kganyago, TIA

Gian-Marco Melfi, One Bio

Nick Allen, SAVANT

15:35 – 16:15

Fireside Chat: The Next Investment Cycle: What are the real gaps – Capital, Capability or Connection?

The future success of South African venture capital will be determined not only by the capital available for investment, but by the quality and depth of the companies seeking it. As the ecosystem matures, attention is increasingly turning toward founder development, market readiness, talent, commercialisation and the support structures required to help businesses scale successfully.

This conversation explores where the ecosystem's true gaps lie today and what is needed to develop a stronger pipeline of investment-ready companies capable of delivering sustainable growth and future exits.

Moderator:

Alison Collier, Endeavor

Speakers:

Karl Westwig, Founder Como Capital

Mitch Adams, AIONS Ventures

Anthony Costa, B20

16:20 – 16:30

Closing Address

Janice Johnson, SAVCA VC Committee Chair and Edge Growth Ventures

16:30 – 16:40

MC Recap and Closing Remarks

16:40 – 18:40

Networking Cocktail Function

18:40

End of Event

