



PRESS RELEASE

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GRASSROOTS INNOVATION PROGRAMME LAUNCHES FIVE MARKET-READY INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS

The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) an entity of the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) has announced five market-ready innovations, that have developed by young innovators in South Africa.

The innovators are supported through the Grassroots Innovation Programme (GIP), a programme run by the agency in collaboration with the DSI. The programme is aimed at commercialising local innovations from ordinary citizens.

The five innovations are targeted at various sectors including education, insurance, municipalities and property management, e-commerce and people living with disabilities.

Through the GIP, innovators are linked to subject matter experts and advanced facilities, such as technology stations, where their innovations and inventions are further developed towards commercialisation.

For example, Siphwe Zuma from Inanda, in KwaZulu-Natal was supported through the Reinforced and Moulded Plastics Technology Station (RMPTS) at the Durban University of Technology.

His idea developed from a car accident, which left him disabled. This experience inspired his innovation of a wheelchair fitted with an umbrella holder. The retractable umbrella can be retrofitted to a wheelchair, protecting the user from the rain or harmful UV rays. The umbrella's mechanism allows the user to pull a strap to open the umbrella and adjust its height, and to retract the device back into the holder attached to the wheelchair.

Thulani Khumalo from Soweto, founder of Technical Plumbing Solutions (TPS), developed a technology solution to detect and report sewage blockages and missing manhole covers. His Prev Leak Plumbing mobile application encourages easy reporting, improving service delivery in the provision of clean water and proper sanitation.

Ownedby is a digital platform that helps households and businesses to trace lost or stolen appliances and devices was developed by Philasande Bongo of Johannesburg. The digital platform gives appliances and devices a unique online profile and history that permanently links it to the owner. The link makes it possible for these items to be traced and retrieved in the case of loss or theft. The innovation will be a boon for the insurance industry and reduce crime by preventing illegal sales.



Altonjunior Maropeng also from Johannesburg, developed S-Store, an online grocery shopping platform for students to remotely purchase their groceries and have them delivered directly to their doorstep, giving them enough time to focus on their studies.

Sisanda App Universe allows learners to perform science experiments using the camera of their smartphone or tablet. This was developed by Mbangiso Mabaso, a 30-year-old from Botshabelo in the Free State. This bundle of science applications can be used by grade 4 to 12 learners and makes science engaging, fun and accessible to thousands of learners.

Speaking at the launch of the market-ready innovations, TIA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr Patrick Krappie said the agency's primary concern is to make sure that young people, the research community and universities have a supportive environment to conduct their innovation activities and make sure that these get scaled up.

"Here we have young, talented people who have been able to identify societal challenges and responding to those using their creative abilities. These are solutions that have been developed by people who are in touch with the realities and challenges of our country, wanting to bring solutions that respond to practical challenges around crime, education, sanitation and disabilities, said Mr Krappie.

TIA is tasked with scaling up the implementation and growth of the GIP with a dual focus on increasing the participation of innovators and promoting their access to key development, funding and innovation enabling initiatives nationally.

Mr Imraan Patel, Deputy Director General for Socio-economic Innovation Partnerships at the DSI, said the GIP was increasingly attracting more collaborations through various initiatives and interventions within government.

"As we get to the end of Youth Month, we need to look at this programme and the five innovations being launched and ask ourselves how we can upscale these and multiply these five into a thousand and more."

Ends.

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About TIA

The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) is a public entity in South Africa that serves as the key institutional intervention to bridge the innovation chasm (gap) between research and development from higher education institutions, science councils, public entities, and private sector, and commercialisation (beneficiation). TIA was established in 2010 and has a national reach with



offices in KwaZulu Natal, Western Cape and Gauteng. The main thrust of the mandate of TIA is funding and supporting innovative technologies that show potential to be commercialised. The organisation also has programmes that provide non-financial support to innovators and SMMEs. Lastly, TIA is a catalyst and enabler of innovation through various partnership initiatives locally, in the African continent and globally.

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