

PRESS RELEASE

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BLACK INDUSTRIALIST AWARD FOR TIA-FUNDED CAPEBIO™

CapeBio Technologies Pty Ltd (Cape Bio) won the Innovation and Technology Award for its innovative Bio-Discovery research and development technologies at the recently held Presidential Black Industrialist Conference Awards. The Innovation and Technology award recognises companies who have made use of technology in innovative ways or have designed novel innovative technology, demonstrating exceptional technical excellence for their sector or the South African economy.

Cape Bio is a leading South African biotechnology company. The company has a proprietary large-scale biomanufacturing process for reagent enzymes used in molecular research and in vitro Diagnostics (IVD).

The company was nominated in three categories, namely, the Black Industrialist Award, the Young Black Industrialist Award and the Innovation and Technology Award. CapeBio was a finalist in all three categories and won the Innovation and Technology Award. The Presidential Black Industrialist Conference highlights how broad-based empowerment enables the growth and job-creation strategy, specifically on the value it adds to the economy. The programme has to date empowered over 800 black industrialists inclusive of new entrants, women, and youth in competitive industries.

The technology developed by CapeBio is a novel and proprietary AI-powered biologics and enzymes discovery platform, whose use in developing diagnostic technologies for various diseases converges the tools of the 4th Industrial Revolution and biology.

The Technology Innovation Agency, an entity of the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) is funding the further development and ultimate commercialisation of the technology developed by CapeBio™. In addition to diagnostic tools, the technology uses AI and biology to develop therapeutics and can enhance local bio-manufacturing capability for various biomolecules.

This award-winning technology and platform has been regarded as an important national competency area by the DSI for the enhancement of biotechnology research and development in the country. The funding and support for this technology is in line with the DSI's Bio-economy Strategy, with TIA being an implementing agent of the strategy. One of the benefits was its involvement in the company's design and development of the bespoke local COVID-19 PCR test kit among other products developed.

With the support of TIA and the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), the company was the first local manufacturer of COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests to get South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) approval for its in vitro diagnostic medical device.

The test kit was co-developed by CapeBio and the CSIR and validated by the NHLS. CapeBio has already commenced industrial-scale manufacturing of the test kits at its Centurion facilities. At full operational capacity, the company is able to produce up to 5 000 kits a day, with each kit providing for 1 000 tests.

“We are proud of this achievement and credit must go to CapeBio expert scientists and all stakeholders that supported the technology from its conceptualisation. We are delighted to be extending its repertoire by working with TIA towards unleashing its full potential in the global market. We will be partnering with local scientists who seek to improve their research outputs using bioinformatics, machine learning, deep learning, and digital molecular biology techniques in solving the country and the world’s complex scientific challenges, including drugs and diagnostic enzymes discoveries amongst other research interests,” says Daniel Ndimma, CEO CapeBio.

“As the TIA we are honoured that one of our investees and their technology received such an award. Our goal in investing in innovative and cutting-edge Health technologies on behalf of the people of South Africa, is to ensure that the excellent pool of skills we have locally, is stimulated and supported to make local manufacture of key medicines, medical devices, and diagnostics a reality,” says Mr Osmond Muroyiwa, Head: Health at TIA.

“The COVID19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions and the subsequent disruption of global supply chains have served as a reminder that the development of local capacity to meet health needs is no longer an option but an imperative as it not only ensures security of supply but also creates jobs and help grow the economy,” concludes Muroyiwa.

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