



## COMMENTARY PIECE

Friday, 06 February 2025

### TIA applauds the vision set forth in the 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA)

The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), an entity of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), welcomes the vision outlined by President Cyril Ramaphosa in the 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA).

The address reaffirms South Africa's commitment to progress, stability, and inclusive growth. It is a testament to the resilience of our democracy and sets a clear course for the country's political, social, and economic future. Reflecting on key achievements while addressing challenges, the President outlined critical policy priorities and strategic interventions aimed at unlocking South Africa's vast potential. His message resonates deeply with TIA's mission of driving impactful innovation and technological advancements that fuel economic growth and social transformation.

To drive job creation, we must harness our unique strengths and untapped opportunities, fostering industries of the future such as green manufacturing, renewable energy, electric mobility, and the digital economy. The announcement of a modernised and comprehensive industrial policy that focuses on localisation, digitisation, and decarbonisation aligns with TIA's initiatives to support sustainable development. The agency stands ready to accelerate innovation and commercialisation efforts that position South Africa as a leader in sectors that will drive future economic growth and job creation. By investing in these high-growth sectors, we can build a dynamic and inclusive economy that benefits all South Africans.

South Africa's economic transformation relies on the full potential of its people. This requires an inclusive approach that empowers black people, women, and persons with disabilities who were historically excluded from meaningful participation in the economy. TIA, as the national innovation agency, plays a crucial role in addressing this objective by supporting black-owned startups, empowering women and youth in technology, and fostering innovation in historically disadvantaged communities. Through targeted funding, skills development, and access to cutting-edge research and markets, TIA is ensuring that innovation becomes a true driver of economic justice and shared prosperity.

Additionally, the government's renewed focus on science, technology, and infrastructure development—including investments in water security, smart public services, and advanced manufacturing—will play a crucial role in shaping a resilient economy. By supporting innovative solutions in these areas, TIA ensures that South African entrepreneurs, researchers, and industry leaders have the tools and funding necessary to bring world-class innovations to market, transforming both industries and communities.

To position South Africa as a global leader, TIA is committed to commercialising locally developed technologies. With a goal to more than double its past success, TIA targets the commercialization of 600 innovations—300 from publicly funded research and 360 from designated groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Investments in emerging technologies, AI, and green energy will create sustainable jobs and enhance service delivery.

Venture capital is critical for economic growth and job creation. TIA will launch a Fund of Funds Programme to establish 15 new venture capital fund managers, ensuring broader access to funding for black-owned, women-led, and youth-driven investment firms. Furthermore, through strategic partnerships, TIA aims to attract R1.5 billion in investments to fast-track research and development into market-ready solutions, fuelling economic transformation.

As government works to reform the public service and build the capability of the state, technology will be vital to transforming the way that government works. TIA will play an instrumental role in ensuring that government departments leverage innovative solutions for public service optimisation. Through this, 30 new

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innovations will be developed and deployed across government services, enhancing service delivery in key sectors such as health, education, and security.

"As South Africa works toward a more inclusive and innovative economy, TIA stands ready as a partner in the National System of Innovation (NSI). By fostering collaboration and partnerships with other government entities, the private sector, and academic institutions to create an enabling ecosystem that supports commercialisation and technology deployment for national benefit. We are committed to delivering transformative solutions that empower communities and drive sustainable development," says Ismail Abdoola, the Acting CEO at TIA.

TIA remains dedicated to supporting the government's vision by accelerating cutting-edge research, technological advancements, and innovations. Together, we can shape a future where science, technology, and innovation are catalysts for real, meaningful change creating opportunities and improving the lives of all South Africans.

**Issued by Alkemi Collective on behalf of the Technology Innovation Agency.**

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