

PRESS RELEASE

(Date)

TIA Joins and invests in Innovation Agencies in Africa Network advancing continental cooperation, for innovation

The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), an entity of the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), is honoured to have joined as one of the founding members, of the Innovation Agencies in Africa (IAA) Network further strengthening its commitment to cross border collaboration and expanding partnerships across the continent.

The IAA Network is a collaborative initiative among African Innovation Agencies established with funding support from Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), to address key systemic challenges facing National Innovation Agencies in Africa. These include policy incoherence, incongruent funding instruments, limited collaboration, capacity constraints, and lack of access to regional markets, all of which hinder commercialisation of innovation from and in Africa, growth, and scaling up of startups and innovative SMEs. The Network currently comprises nine member countries across East, West, Central, and Southern Africa represented by their respective national innovation agencies.

In South Africa, TIA is mandated through the Technology Innovation Agency Act, No. 26 of 2008, to promote the development and exploitation of innovations and technologies in the public interest. Over the past 15 years, TIA has been central to advancing South Africa's innovation agenda both locally and beyond borders.

TIA joins this network of innovation agencies to participate in building an enabling environment for innovation initiatives/activities on the continent. Thus, TIA has also invested by seeding and leading the establishment of a Pan African Innovation Fund, as one of the strategic outcomes of the IAA Network. In this, TIA is supporting the government's agenda to elevate the voice of Africa in innovation and the realisation of the innovation aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Joining the IAA Network presents a valuable opportunity for innovation agencies on the continent to exchange knowledge, strengthen collaborations, and contribute to shaping sustainable research commercialisation strategies with other innovation actors in the African Continent.

For years, TIA has worked in collaboration with governments and innovation organisations across Africa on a range of innovation initiatives and programmes. TIA is also in a cross-border joint innovation funding partnership with Egypt, wherein SA and Egypt institutions are pooling intellectual capital and property to develop optimised competitive products at addressing continental and global challenges in the energy and agricultural sectors.

TIA's Technology Stations Programme (TSP) has also been modelled for replication in countries such as Ghana, Tanzania, Namibia. This forms part of a broader effort to support Africa to develop innovation enabling infrastructure.

Another example of continental collaboration is the SA-Ethiopia IKS Programme, an initiative bringing together South African and Ethiopian institutions for Indigenous Knowledge based innovations in areas such as nutraceuticals, antidiabetic product development, and traditional medicine.

The TIA funded Holistic Drug Discovery and Development (H3D) Centre, Africa's only integrated drug discovery and development centre, actively partners with organisations on the African continent and beyond to build drug discovery capacity across the continent. This includes offering access to the H3D platform assays, providing training workshops, and collaborating on projects such as the Grand Challenges Africa Drug Discovery Flagship projects.

The establishment and participation in this network also supports the South African G20 presidency declaration, which has a declaration on partnerships for Africa, which also aligns with TIA's on-going strategy to advance cross-border investment and trade, continental cooperation, innovation leadership, capacity building thus ensuring that the Agency remains a key contributor to Africa's collaborative growth agenda.

Ends.

Issued by TIA