

FOREWORD



“The Innovation Hub, one of a number of Blue IQ initiatives, is fulfilling a key role in nurturing commercial and technological innovation that, in any dynamic and truly competitive economy, must form the foundation of stable development and future growth. As such, it is integral to successful change in the Gauteng economy.”

- Paul Mashatile, Gauteng MEC for Finance and Economic Affairs

The Innovation Hub is a key intervention in the Blue IQ network of projects. It caters for the needs of knowledge-age entrepreneurs and companies involved in research and development, technology commercialisation, testing and piloting activities. It is thus a critical component of Blue IQ's ability to achieve its over-arching objective of fundamentally altering the direction and make-up of the Gauteng economy.

The Innovation Hub's basic role is to link South African innovators of all types. It is creating an environment conducive for innovators to develop new technologies and commercialise products, thereby contributing to accelerated economic growth, skills development and job creation. It also allows innovators to deliver on the needs of an evolving and technology-hungry market.

Critically, through The Innovation Hub, innovators are given access to major industry players, key global companies and the resource they offer in terms of the development of ideas, products and services.

The presence of a powerful innovation network locally and the consequent ability to link into the global innovation network is vital for South Africa's emerging business people, scientists and high-tech entrepreneurs. Active engagement with local and international innovations will be a driving force behind our ability as the Gauteng province to continue to innovate scientifically and technologically for economic growth.

The geographic positioning of The Innovation Hub and its physical links to the academic and research worlds reinforce the importance of the relationship between business and science in the province. It is within this environment that our young scientists and innovators can be nurtured and can expand their skills in a manner that is commercially viable and sustainable in the long term.

The Innovation Hub is the first internationally accredited Science Park on the African continent and a full member of the International Association of Science Parks (IASP). It has been nominated as a finalist in the annual Intelligent Community Awards presented by the international Intelligent Community Forum. In addition, the Hub has been invited by the IASP to collaborate in the hosting of the 2008 IASP World Conference. These achievements all speak to the success of the institution in its first years, and its future role in linking South Africa's innovative ability to the innovation drives currently afoot across the globe.

The Hub is also on track with regard to tenancy. It is attracting high quality local and international attention, both in terms of broad working relationships and actual tenancy within the precinct, which once again speaks clearly to the important role the Hub will play in the Gauteng economy. Although The Innovation Hub is only in the first phase of its establishment and is still locking down tenancy and partnerships, this Annual Report indicates that important Public Private Partnerships have already been formed. Consistent with its role, the Hub has played an important linking role in the formation of these partnerships.

The challenge that lies ahead for The Innovation Hub will be to continue the facilitation of working relationships with key local and international players. The importance of this function cannot be underestimated, forming as it does the foundation of Gauteng's active participation in mutually beneficial exchanges of intellectual capital in the global economy.

Based on the evidence provided in this Report, I am convinced that The Innovation Hub has an important contribution to make in improving the competitiveness of our industries, encouraging innovation and accelerating economic growth.

Paul Mashatile
MEC for Finance and Economic Affairs
Gauteng Provincial Government
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