

COOPERATION FRAMEWORK ON INNOVATION SYSTEMS BETWEEN FINLAND AND SOUTH AFRICA



BACKGROUND

The Government of South Africa (SA) is emphasizing the future importance of science, technology and innovation to all sectors of society in the belief that sustainable development of technology and human capital will generate economic growth and wealth as well as promote poverty alleviation. This has led to a science and technology (S&T) policy based on the development of a South African National System of Innovation (SANSI).

Finland's success in the development of its National System of Innovation (NSI) has contributed to its technological pre-eminence and economic growth, making it a global leader in competitiveness.

The Governments of SA, through the Department of Science and Technology, and Finland, through the Embassy of Finland in Pretoria have jointly launched a cooperation framework with the overall objective of strengthening the SANSI.

The 30-month COFISA programme will focus on capacity development of key stakeholders and knowledge transfer between the first and second economy. However, a critical focus of COFISA will be on provincial and local government level innovation challenges, in particular in Gauteng, Western Cape and Eastern Cape, providing appropriate policy

advice and identifying a range of strategic interventions to address these challenges, drawing on Finland's experience in innovation, science and technology.

COFISA will also seek to foster a spirit of collaboration between national public agencies, provincial/municipal level government, the private sector, and academia in order to generate sustainable economic growth and employment.

OBJECTIVE

The *overall objective* of the COFISA Programme is:

Enhanced effectiveness of the South African National System of Innovation contributing to economic growth and poverty alleviation.

This objective has been derived from South Africa's National Research and Development Strategy which gives expression to the national goals of economic development, the improvement of the quality of life for all citizens, and in particular the three strategic objectives:

- Achieving mastery of technological change in the South African economy and society (Innovation)
- Increasing investment in South Africa's science base (Human Capital and Transformation)
- Creating an effective government science and technology system (Alignment and Delivery)

SCOPE

COFISA focus on the following:

- Enhancing and strengthening the SANSI, targeting economic growth and poverty alleviation;
- Supporting the SANSI through a range of strategic interventions based on Finland's experience in innovation, science and

technology;

- Promoting and enhancing collaboration among national, provincial and local players across the public, private and academic sectors;
- Placing emphasis on critical innovation challenges in Gauteng, Western Cape and Eastern Cape; and
- Facilitating contacts and partnerships between South African and Finnish innovation institutions and experts.

FOUR-TIER APPROACH

To achieve its overall objective and purpose, COFISA has been designed around four interdependent components.

Component 1: Enhancement of the SANSI

Component 2: Supporting innovation in Gauteng, Western Cape and Eastern Cape

Component 3: Piloting rural innovation mechanisms

Component 4: Knowledge sharing and learning with sub-Saharan Africa on systems of innovation

THE TEAM

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