



CONCEPT NOTE

POLICY DIALOGUE: INVESTING IN DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND TECH ENTREPRENEURS FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Date: 26 November

Venue: Online

Time: 13h30 to 16h00

Context

A century ago, the world would not have been able to remain connected if travel restrictions and lockdowns were put into place. We have now entered an era where just about anything is possible, given the right platform. Business models enabled by technology that solve real problems, and which can add value in existing well-performing industries or for service delivery are thriving. The playing field is now more levelled as long-established brands and SMMEs share the same (digital) marketplace, opening up new opportunities to both.

Concept

Topic: Enhancing South Africa – European Union cooperation to harness investment in disruptive technology¹ entrepreneurs for sustainable economic recovery

The objective is to stimulate policy learning/dialogue around partnerships, funding and investment in disruptive technologies or business models, high-tech entrepreneurs and SMMEs by starting a conversation, with practitioners, around the following themes:

Key questions to interrogate:

- Which interventions including policy reform are required to enable greater and more efficient investment in South African entrepreneurs developing disruptive technology innovations?
- What are the investment instruments best suited for strategic European investment in South African disruptive technology entrepreneurs?
- Which partnership models best enable joint investments by South Africa and Europe in projects supporting entrepreneurs and the development of disruptive technology innovations?

¹ Disruptive technology is as an innovation that significantly alters the way that governments, consumers, industries, or businesses operate.

EU INVESTMENT FOR TRANSFORMATION

Concept note: Investment in Disruptive Technology and Tech Entrepreneurs for a Sustainable Economic Recovery

Programme

Programme Director: **Dr Mlungisi Cele**, CEO of the National Advisory Council,

13:30 Opening session

Strategic policy context described by high-level DSI / EU Delegation representatives

- **Mr Raul de Luzenberger, Charge d’Affaires, European Union Delegation to South Africa**
- **Mr Daan du Toit, DD-G: International Cooperation and Resources, DSI**

13:50 Panel 1: Lessons learnt, challenges and opportunities identified from current experiences

- **Dr Imelda Lambkin, Enterprise Ireland:** The experience of the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund of the Irish Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment – does South Africa need a similar instrument?
- **Mr Ilari Lindy, SAIS Programme:** Southern Africa Innovation Support (SAIS) Programme – what are the challenges experienced (South African and European) in attracting investment for such projects?
- **Dr Daan Goosen/Sihle sibiya, Eurostars Programme:** Lessons learnt from South African participation in the Eurostars funding programme supporting R&D collaboration between SMEs – should this be more actively promoted?

14:30 Panel 2: Interventions required to enhance public-private investment partnerships

Panel discussion with provocative questions to public and private investors on what steps required to enhance investment partnerships; panel comprising representatives of:

- TIA’s Innovation Fund (**Mr Patrick Krappie, Technology Innovation Agency**)
- South African private sector: (**Dr Audrey Verhaeghe, SA Innovation Summit**)
- Venture Capital & Technology Start-up: (**Ms Zanele Mavuso Mbatha, Bambili Energy**)
- EU Member State perspectives: Belgium (**Dr Michel Morant, LIEU - Liaison Entreprise Université**)
- European Innovation Council (**Mr Eric-Olivier Pallu, DG Research and Innovation**)

15:30 Critical reflection by respondents

Views on discussions by representatives from **Nelson Mandela University (Dr Thandi Mgwebi); World Bank (Mr Ganesh Rasagam); Tshimologong Precint (Ms Khwezi Cenenda)** and **SA entrepreneur Dr Thabang Mokgethi-Morule**.

15:50 Closing remarks

- **Mrs Anne Lammila, Ambassador of Finland to South Africa**
- **Mr Daan du Toit, DD-G: International Cooperation and Resources, DSI**