

CSIR tech entity to commercialise SA innovation

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has officially launched a commercialisation enterprise to accelerate the pace and increase the scale of the commercialisation of its technologies and intellectual property.



CSIR-C³, pronounced as CSIR C-Cubed, will drive all aspects of technology commercialisation and provide adequate financial resources along the technology de-risking process through to commercialisation.

According to the research organisation, the standalone enterprise will hold all CSIR IP and act as an incubator for start-up enterprises underpinned by strong technical and non-financial support.



SA Innovation Summit is important third place for the startup ecosystem

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It will enable the commercialisation of CSIR IP through the development of a network of investors and entrepreneurs.

In keeping with the CSIR's industrialisation strategy and its vision, the organisation said the initiative is intended to enhance efforts to drive industrialisation to grow the economy to catalyse South Africa's re-industrialisation.

This, according to the CSIR, will be driven by establishing new technology-based enterprises.

Ready to scale up

CSIR board chairperson, Vuyani Jarana, said the CSIR developed many technologies and products that are ready to be de-risked, scaled up, and taken to the market.

He believes that the establishment of CSIR-C³ is an important turning point for the organisation.

“The CSIR has sustained a track record of contributing to industrial development through the development of technologies that improve the performance and competitiveness of existing industrial products, processes and services,” he explained.

Some of the technologies, Jarana said, require funding to take the final step towards commercialisation, while others are ready to be taken up by the market.

The CSIR has since raised R100m as an initial investment into the commercialisation enterprise to de-risk CSIR technologies to improve market readiness.

Meanwhile, about 18 of the CSIR’s top technologies ranging from health, logistics, and earth observation to defence and security and potential investors have since been unveiled.

The first technologies that are available for commercial uptake have since been displayed to private sector players, investors, and government stakeholders.

These include formulations for biodegradable plastic, a biomanufacturing process for lactic acid from sugar by-products, “green” cement technologies, a kit for the early detection of kidney injury, a smartphone-based diagnostic tool to detect diseases, a gunshot detection camera, and a tool that forecasts the motion of moored ships in a port.

'Seize the opportunity'

In addition, CSIR CEO, Dr Thulani Dlamini, said the commercialisation enterprise will seize the opportunity to monetise the organisation’s IP at a greater scale and pace to achieve impact.

“Through this initiative, we will collaborate with various partners to create innovation-based companies, to support the reindustrialisation of our economy,” said Dlamini.

Dlamini added that the entity will unlock new opportunities for the CSIR and industry partners to collaborate in developing and commercialising technologies in South Africa and abroad.

He also noted that the move is in keeping with the country's science, technology, and innovation [Decadal Plan](#).

The model and approach, the CSIR said, are said to have been informed by global best practices and draw on valuable lessons learnt.