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Signing of agreement on bioprospecting platform for indigenous knowledge systems

26 Jun 2013

The Minister of Science and Technology, Derek Hanekom, will deliver a keynote address at the signing of an agreement by partners in his department's bioprospecting and product development platform for indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) at Casa Toscana Lodge, Pretoria, on Tuesday, 25 June 2013, from 13h30.

The Department of Science and Technology's National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Office (NIKSO) is responsible for interfacing IKS with other knowledge systems in areas such as food technology, cosmetology and pharmacology. This is being done in the context of the Bioeconomy Strategy.

The platform was first piloted in 2008, and has three flagship programmes (on African traditional medicines, cosmeceuticals and nutraceuticals). These are being implemented in partnership with government departments, science councils, universities, community-based organisation, trusts and business.

The University of Pretoria coordinates the cosmeceuticals flagship, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) manages the nutraceuticals flagship, and the Medical Research Council (MRC) manages the African traditional medicines flagship.

The African traditional medicines flagship coordinates four projects. Two are on HIV/Aids, one on prevention (led by the CSIR) and one on management (led by the MRC). The others are on tuberculosis (led by the University of Pretoria) and on diabetes (led by the University of KwaZulu-Natal). All of these are at the preclinical studies phase for safety and toxicity testing, and will be ready for clinical trial in the next financial year.

Under the nutraceuticals flagship, NIKSO manages two projects on tea, one on honeybush (led by the Agricultural Research Council) and one on a supernutritious tea indigenous to the North West (led by the MRC). Both products are at the final stages of development and will be ready for propagation and commercialisation in the next financial year. Facilities for cultivation and agroprocessing plants will be established in the Western Cape and North West.

All media are welcome to attend.

For more information and to confirm attendance, please contact:

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