

## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

### NCRST AND AMTA SUPPORTS MSC AND BSC STUDENT RESEARCH STUDY IN POST-HARVEST LOSSES AT NATIONAL STRATEGIC FOOD RESERVE – SILOS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**21 MARCH 2018**

**Windhoek, Namibia** – The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) together with the AGRO Marketing and Trade Agency (AMTA) launched a joint-research study which will investigate the magnitude and causes of post-harvest losses of grain during storage at the national silos.

The research study which will be led by a Master of Science student from the University of Namibia (UNAM) is expected to take place over a 2-year period and will start as soon as new grain is loaded into the silos. The need for such a research project, especially in the midst of discourse surrounding food security and sustainability, has been identified by both the NCRST and AMTA and this culminated into a signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016.

AMTA Senior Manager for National Strategic Food Reserves, Wilhelmina Handunge was confident that this research will assist the entity to “develop standardized methods/procedures of loss assessment and control that can easily be applied by grain handlers at our grain storage facilities country wide.”

The purpose of the MoU was to establish a strategic partnership between the two organisations, with the aim of facilitating research, development and innovation in the agro-processing sector. As part of the initiatives of the partnership, the two agencies therefore joined hands to fund a research study which will look at post-harvest losses of grain at the storage facilities managed by AMTA.

“Research in the agro-processing sector has been limited and as the Commission, we wish to coordinate and support research output, which will in turn aid capacity development and serve as data for future studies” noted Lovisa Kambonde-Immanuel, the Manager for Innovation and Industrial Research at the NCRST.

An inception meeting was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2018, where one MSc student, Mr. Jonas Shimbwadala and two BSc students Mr. Petrus Haitembu and Ms. Sabine Tjikumbaize signed their grant/funding

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agreements to undertake the research for the period 2018-2019. The selection criteria were based on the areas of study as was stipulated in the initial call of funding. The selected students will meet with the AMTA technical staff members to develop a research work plan and timeline. The study will be carried out at the National Strategic Food Reserves (NSFR) grain storage facilities managed by AMTA.

Jonas noted that “This is a stepping stone toward the reduction of chronic poverty and hunger in Namibia. I hope and believe that upon the completion of this project, we will have a robust solution on how to end postharvest losses of agricultural commodities.”

The Joint research call is envisaged to have a total value of N\$62,000.00, which includes N\$32,000.00 for a Master’s student and N\$30,000.00 (N\$15,000.00 each) for the two Bachelor Degree students. The funding goes towards both tuition and travelling costs.

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**Issued by:**

National Commission on Research, Science and Technology  
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About NCRST: (<http://www.ncrst.na/about-us/background/1/> )

The NCRST was established through the Research, Science and Technology Act, 2004 (Act no 23 of 2004). The NCRST fosters excellence through knowledge and innovation by ensuring adequate coordination, monitoring and supervision of research, science and technology in Namibia. Our strategic themes are centered around 1. Operational Excellence, 2. Organizational Sustainability, 3. Strategic Partnerships and 4. Innovation Excellence. The NCRST further strives to provide direction and policy guidance to the research, science and technology innovation systems in Namibia.

About AMTA: (<http://www.amta.na/pages/aboutus.php>)

AMTA was established under the Company Act 21 as a Non-Profit Association incorporated under Section 21. AMTA is an agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF), which coordinates and manages the marketing and trading of Agricultural Produce in Namibia. AMTA’s mandate is to manage the Fresh Produce Business Hubs (FPBHs) and National Strategic Food Reserve (NSFR) infrastructure, towards the attainment of food safety and security. In performing its role, AMTA works closely with AgriBusDev and the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB).