

## MEDIA RELEASE

### STUDENTS CLINCH LICENCE AGREEMENTS FOR INNOVATION PROJECTS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**11 September 2017**

**Windhoek, Namibia** – The Demola Network is a Finnish initiative that operates in over a dozen countries across the globe. The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) signed an agreement with the Demola Network in 2016, making it the first African country to host a Demola chapter. Recently, the Demola Namibia and NCRST teams hosted the Final Pitch for university students that worked on their innovation projects for a period of 3-and a half months.

After a successful first season in 2016, Demola Namibia kicked off on the 22nd of April 2017 with the season 2. This season took the teams to the south of Namibia with 2 challenges, one provided by the Keetmanshoop Municipality to solve their waste treatment crisis, and the second one from a Finnish Consortium of Smart Communities piloting smart housing in Keetmanshoop. The two project partners have decided to license the projects for the next stage of research and development and eventual implementation.

The final pitch that was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017, was merely the culmination of a series of milestone and hard work by two groups of eight (8) students. The project not only exposed students to their peers, but also helped to facilitate co-creation projects between businesses, researchers and the students themselves.

During the event, NCRST Acting CEO, Enid Keramen challenged local businesses and industry leaders to bring forth their innovation challenges to the Demola team for local, customised and relevant solutions that are driven by the concept of co-creation, creativity and hands-on innovation work. “This will help us in cultivating and growing the love of doing things for ourselves as a Nation and solving our own unique problems, eventually escalating us to the level of competitiveness. This way we will achieve much more by growing deeper relations, and fostering stronger collaboration, between the Industry, Government and Academia.” Keramen stated.

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For each participating company, getting started with Demola is free of charge. After the initial setup and once the work is complete, the project team will present the results, if the company/business find the results useful and valuable, they have the options to either license or purchase the rights from the team. “Together with our partners, we have created and validated an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) model that has been designed to meet the legal requirements of global corporations” says Ockert Jansen, Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing at NCRST.

With regards to the next season, “there will be an increase in the number of challenges received from the industry” Keramen said. According to the Acting CEO, this will not only provide an opportunity for more students to gain the much-needed exposure and experience from co-creating with industry experts, but also lead to more industry challenges being solved. The NCRST, by virtue of its mandate, coordinates the entire Demola Namibia activities, collaborations and facilitate research and innovation for each qualifying project.

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**Issued by:**

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About NCRST: ([www.ncrst.na/about-us/background](http://www.ncrst.na/about-us/background))

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.