

MEDIA RELEASE

INNOVATION HUB REVAMP - TO HOST NATIONAL BIO-TECH TESTING AND GMO LABS

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Windhoek, Namibia – The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) is in the process of establishing a Biotechnology and Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) testing laboratory to facilitate full implementation of Namibia’s Biosafety Framework. The facilities will be designed to ensure compliance to international standards and would be prepared for accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025. The Innovation Hub, formerly the Head office of the NCRST is currently undergoing renovations to host the laboratories as well as other national projects such as the Science Demonstration Centre, Incubation Centre for Innovators and Entrepreneurs, Demola Namibia and the Southern African Innovation Support (SAIS) II Programme.

As part of the NCRST’s very distinct mandate to provide national facilities that could further enhance the promotion of research, science, technology and innovation in the country, the idea of hosting these facilities and projects also ties in well with the NCRST’s strategy on national science technology and innovation infrastructure provision. The first phase of the renovations at the Innovation Hub will mainly establish the Biotechnology and GMO laboratories. These laboratories will provide testing services for GMO’s as is required by the Biosafety Act, 2006 (Act no. 7 of 2006). Biotechnology research facilities through coordinated research efforts, will aim to stimulate the transformation of knowledge to enhance food security through agricultural production, improve livelihoods and helping national entities to expand agricultural growth.

“The bigger aim is to establish the National Research, Science, Technology and Innovation (RSTI) Valley, a project that is envisaged to be completed by 2020. Upon completion of the RSTI Valley, all current projects being hosted at the Innovation Hub will be transferred to the Valley and the Innovation Hub will be used as a satellite site” says Vincent Nowaseb, General Manager Innovation and Technology Development at the NCRST.

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The Innovation Hub will provide entrepreneurs and innovators a suitable environment in which they can attain high quality standards in terms of their innovative products and services that can compete in the market. Furthermore, the hub will promote technology innovation and incubation, capacity building on RSTI and will house facilities for exhibition and market place development. The Hub also aims at promoting research and development of academia in partnership with industry to assist in the growth of new ventures. Other facilities such the Research and testing laboratory will allow academia and industry to have access to state -of -the art equipment for their research as well as product and technology development initiatives. The facilities will enable users to undertake excellent research and deliver innovative outcomes.

Renovations to the Innovation Hub started on 09th August and is scheduled to be completed on 09th December 2017.

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About NCRST: (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.