

# COFISA Online Update



August  
2009

**COFISA** (Cooperation Framework on Innovation Systems between Finland and South Africa) is a partnership between the Finnish and South African governments to enhance South Africa's Innovation System. The overall objective is to enhance the effectiveness of the South African National System of Innovation contributing to economic growth and poverty alleviation.

COFISA was launched in September 2006 and was envisaged to be a 30 month programme. The programme was due to end in March 2009, however has been extended until February 2010. In preparing for closure, COFISA would like to further engage with you, our stakeholders utilizing the online update as a platform to keep you abreast with current activities building up to the closure. COFISA will deliver the update in your mailbox by the second week of every second month.

Hope you will enjoy reading our update, which is also available online at [www.cofisa.org.za](http://www.cofisa.org.za)

## SIYAKHULA LIVING LAB

focusing on ICT for development solutions.

A living lab is a place where users, industry, public institutions and academia work together to create new services that increase the well being of the community hosting it, and they are natural settings for user driven innovation. With the help of COFISA, an ICT field test site in Dwesa (Transkei) is transforming into a full featured Living Lab.

The field test site was established at the end of 2005 by the Telkom Centres of Excellence hosted by the Computer Science departments of the Universities of Rhodes and Fort Hare. It is an ambitious, long term experiment on the introduction of ICT (and particularly the Internet) into a marginalized rural area, with the focus on understanding how appropriate connectivity infrastructure and relevant e-services can foster and support sustainable local economic growth and improvement of the quality of life.

Recently, the footprint of the experiment has increased, via the joining of a project in Nkwalini operated by e-Khaya ICT, a start-up

COFISA in addition has offered financial support to two projects in the Eastern Cape, Village Connection and SiLLMU (Siyakhula Living Lab Management Unit). Village Connection was started in 2008 and aims to integrate cell phones in the core systems in Dwesa, leveraging the diffusion of cell phones in the area to make the Internet and Siyakhula Living Lab e-services closer to the users. SiLLMU is due to start in August 2009 and puts in place an essential mechanism to bootstrap Dwesa into a full featured Living Lab.

Results achieved to date include the establishment of the communication infrastructure, the creation of e-commerce and e-government websites, together with continuous training in ICT for the local community.

For more information on the Siyakhula Living Lab visit: [www.dwesa.org](http://www.dwesa.org)

### Networking to the future...



SIYAKHULA  
Living Lab



# COFISA Projects that commenced in 2009

The following is a list of COFISA Projects that commenced in 2009. COFISA will provide updates on these during the course of the year.

- Science Park-Potential Assessment – Port Elizabeth
- Proposal for the Assessment of Active Knowledge and Innovation Networks in the Western Cape Region
- A Feasibility Study and the Development of a Model and Business Plan for a National Foresight Programme (NFP)
- Development of a Business Plan and Roadmap for BioSA
- Study of the Regional Economic Impact of Eastern Cape Universities
- Knowledge and Innovation for Rural Development (KIRD)
- Living Labs in South Africa (LLISA)
- South African Innovation Network (SAINe)
- Global Millennium Project
- Application of Local Level Foresight within the Provincial Foresight Context in the Eastern Cape – King Sabato Dalinyebo Municipality.

## Activator™

The Activator™ programme was borne of an initiative to establish a Centre of Expertise (CoE) programme in the Gauteng province in partnership between The Innovation Hub and COFISA. The aim is to carry out COFISA's objective of supporting innovation in Gauteng by implementing pilot projects that foster collaborative research engaging business, the research community and government.

The key objective of the Activator™ is to develop the context, policies, methodologies

and know-how to stimulate collaborative projects that ultimately result in creating sustainable opportunities for high-tech SME development and job opportunities in South Africa. Activator™ also intends to bridge gaps, build functional networks, transform organizational cultures and establish a critical mass of expertise in the high-tech sector.

The Activator™ programme is modeled along the Finnish CoE Programme which is a model that utilises top level knowledge

and expertise as a resource for business operations, job creation and regional development, with the aim of identifying the region's strengths and creating economic growth. The Finnish CoE programme was developed in the 1980's in Finland to promote regional development and had a profound impact on the development of the Finnish Innovation System. Finland is now regularly ranking amongst the top global economies in respect of innovation,

competitiveness and efficiency. In order to attain envisaged socio-economic outcomes a shift in emphasis will see Activator™ focus on market-driven projects, whereby market needs will be established first, followed by accessing the relevant project consortia to meet actual needs. In addition, innovation projects that address efficiency and service delivery in government will be a key focus of the programme. In an attempt to enhance sustainability of the programme, an initiative to roll

out Activator™ to municipalities in Gauteng was presented to the Gauteng Provincial Government.

**ACTIVATOR™ Programme** – a collaborative innovation tool for regional economic development.



## Upcoming Events

COFISA will be hosting a series of **Technology Transfer Workshops** themed '*learning through sharing*'. The aim of the workshops is to give an overview of ways to build up and manage Technology Transfer Offices (TTO's) utilizing the Finnish successful experiences, as well as to share practical tools in the management of TTO's. The workshops are targeted at public officers mandated to build and manage IPR and those responsible in publicly funded institutions for developing innovation capacity.

- 11 August 2009, Eastern Cape, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
- 12 August 2009, Western Cape, The Spier Hotel – Stellenbosch
- 14 August 2009, Gauteng, The Department of Science and Technology

For more information visit: [www.cofisa.org.za](http://www.cofisa.org.za) or contact Ms. Grace Baloyi – COFISA Project Officer: [mgbaloyi@csir.co.za](mailto:mgbaloyi@csir.co.za)