



ABOUT THE INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY NETWORK

MISSION STATEMENT

To establish an international innovation and technology network to assist with the commercialisation of technology to address the needs of industry and the community at large, focusing on especially herbal products from Southern Africa.

STRATEGIC STATEMENT

I&TN has set as its goal to bridge the gap between research done by academic institutions and the commercial requirements of industry, focusing on herbal products from southern Africa. I&TN aims to take the technology from the farm to pharma, thus from the cultivation right through to the final pharmaceutical product, for maximum beneficiation and to benefit the community.

BACKGROUND

South Africa, with its large natural biodiversity, has seen a number of attempts at bio-prospecting for medicinal compounds. International pharma have screened upwards of 10 000 natural plants with limited success, mostly due to secrecy by practitioners, but also due to the lack of proper historical and scientific data.

I&TN's unique positioning between the research institutions and industry, with strong links to both, creates an opportunity of finding synergy, but more importantly providing credibility to both parties. One of the key aspects in "crossing the chasm" from research, to sold products lies in the ability of the buyers (pharma), to trust the sellers (researchers), and for the sellers to understand real need of the buyers. By interfacing and providing fast tracking development support, as well as funding, a multitude of projects from Universities can be identified and aligned with market (and pharma) needs. This equates to a value chain where each of the parties play their specialized role to create the final product; University as researcher, I&TN as developer and productize, pharma as brand owner and seller, and the consumer as final buyer or user.

Many additional benefits arise from building a platform in South Africa for the identification and development of new herbal medicines. South Africa is in many ways the gateway to Africa with its vast unexplored biodiversities. I&TN can successfully act as a facilitating body between a network of related companies, appointed specialists, pharmaceutical industry and academic institutions.