

# Partnership to improve indigenous food products

Pretoria - The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Botswana's National Food Technology Research Centre (NFTRC) have signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to address nutrition and food security challenges in the SADC region.

The CSIR is the hub of the Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBio), a NEPAD flagship programme implementing the African Union's Science Technology and Innovation Strategy (STISA 2024). Botswana is also a member of the SANBio Network.

## It is critical to foster partnerships



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Executive director, CSIR Biosciences, Dr Boitumelo Semete-Makokotlela said there is great value that can be derived by fostering partnerships across the continent and joining efforts to address food security and malnutrition challenges faced by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and Africa as a whole.

"It is critical to us as the CSIR that we foster partnerships across the continent because there is definitely great value that can be derived from working together.

"It is also important to join our efforts in addressing eminent challenges that are faced by the continent," Dr Semete-Makokotlela said.

NFTRC acting managing director, Dr Martin Kebakile emphasised the importance of scientists collaborating together.

"We may be having ideas, but for us to come up with great ideas we have to work with other research institutions to come up with better products, approaches and programmes that can go a long way in solving the challenges faced by the continent in food science and technology sector," Kebakile said.

## Focus area of the MoU

Focus areas of the MoU are food science and technology research to support the development of novel and nutritious food ingredients, as well as product prototypes using indigenous knowledge and biodiversity.

This also includes collaboration in the development of analytical support and skills to facilitate the creation of quality scientifically researched natural product prototypes based on commonly found and used edible plant species.

The CSIR and NFTRC also intend to work together towards providing training and capacity building support to communities in agro-processing, post-harvest technologies and development of processes and products.

The two institutes will also be involved in the development and implementation of quality management systems which will promote technical proficiency.

Acting network manager for SANBio, Dr Ereck Chakauya, said that one of the objectives of the network is to encourage institutions within the SADC region to collaborate.

"This MoU should make an impact in the SADC region as I believe the CSIR and NFTRC have the resources and capabilities to make such an impact in the areas of collaboration.

"However, what comes out of this collaboration is what really matters, and at the end of the day we want to see products," Dr Chakauya said.

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