



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **MEDIA STATEMENT: PROMOTING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REPORTING THROUGH COMMUNITY MEDIA**

**Johannesburg, South Africa, 19 March 2018.** Some 47 representatives of community media, from all nine provinces, attended a Youth Science Journalism Workshop held by the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) and supported by the Media Development & Diversity Agency (MDDA), as part of a Memorandum of Understanding to promote science journalism.

The workshop, held from 14 – 15 March 2018 and attended by interns, new community media hosts and community media partners, covered topics pertinent to Science Journalism from the responsible management of scientific information to ZACube-2, South Africa's next technology demonstrator. Workshop participants also visited the mineral processing research body, Mintek, touring the Nanotechnology Innovation Centre and HySA Catalysis facility.

MDDA Acting CEO, Mr William Baloyi, who spoke on behalf of the Agency at the workshop, commented that: "Community media is one of the most important platforms for improving public understanding and awareness of science and technology. Promoting and communicating the value and impact of science, technology, and innovation is critical to a developing economy, as is building a science, engineering, and technology human resource base. The MDDA is proud to be part of such an initiative."

The Science and Technology Youth Journalist Programme was launched in 2015/2016, as part of the Innovation Partnership for Rural Development Programme (IPRDP) Science and Technology Journalism programme, to promote science journalism through an internship programme hosted by community media. The programme is being implemented within district municipalities where IPRDP technologies are demonstrated and primarily accommodates unemployed graduates in Science, Technology, Communication and Journalism, between the ages of 18 and 35 years.



The Programme has been rolled out progressively, commencing with 17 interns during the 2015/2016 financial year. With a further eight candidates contracted into the programme in 2016/2017, and 27 interns in 2017/2018, the programme now covers seven of the nine provinces of South Africa, with plans to extend it to the remaining provinces of the Western Cape and Free State next year.

To date the programme has seen a significant amount of media coverage, especially in indigenous languages, generated through community media, as well as various capacity building opportunities provided to the interns from reporting on Algae-based Wastewater Treatment, to the launch of Low Pour Flush Sanitation Technology, and a SKA Media Tour.

The MDDA is a statutory development agency, deriving its mandate, from Section 16 and 32 of the Constitution Act No. 108 of 1996, thereby providing for freedom of expression and access to information. As a partnership between the South African Government and major print and broadcasting companies, it promotes and assists in the development of community media and small commercial media in South Africa and the transformation of the media, by providing support (financial, capacity building, etc.) in terms of the MDDA Act No 14 of 2002. It also aims to raise public awareness with regard to media development and diversity issues, and to encourage media literacy and a culture of reading. For further information: [www.mdda.org.za](http://www.mdda.org.za) and <http://www.saasta.ac.za/programmes/nurturing-talent/youth-journalism-programme/>

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