



MASDT
MOBILE AGRI SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING (NPC)

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NATIONAL SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM AWARDS

The national watchdog for influencing the formulation and delivery of science, engineering, technology (SET) and innovation public policy in South Africa, the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF), in partnership with South32, held its annual awards ceremony in Gauteng on June 30. The prestigious Awards Gala dinner is also known as the 'Science Oscars' of the industry and the cream of the crop of scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs attended the event.

This year, the non-governmental organisation (NGO) category was changed to include technology transfer and education/training contributions to science, engineering and technology. The broader scope opens up the NSTF Awards to a wider range of organisations and allows for recognition of social innovation efforts. This would include worthy projects run by professional bodies. To even be considered a finalist for the awards is a testimony of success and excellence achieved. Potchefstroom University nominated MASDT for the NGO Award and MASDT was subsequently chosen to stand as a finalist. The company faced stern competition and in the end SmartXchange won the coveted prize. Nevertheless, it was an honour to be part of the Awards and to be recognised by the Forum as an outstanding company.



AFRICAN ACHIEVERS AWARDS 2016

MADST Director - Dr. Mathews Phosa is no stranger to hard work. He has become a leading figure in South African business and is also a well known philanthropist, making every effort to answer Nelson Mandela's call to action of a better future for all. Born and raised in Mpumalanga, Phosa opened up his first law practise in Nelspruit in 1981 and practised law until he was forced into exile five years later.

Since the 1994 election, he has dedicated his life to transforming the political climate in South Africa. He was recently awarded the 'Excellence in Leadership' Award at the African Achievers Awards, for the recognition of the role he played in transformation. Dr. Phosa has over the years earned the respect of everyone, friend and foe alike. He is only the third person to be presented this award, and said he was shocked by it as he did not expect the award at all. "When you work, you are not looking for awards, you work because you are committed to a service, a cause or a people". He added that he was humbled by the experience - " This award is dedicated to democracy and good governance".

MASDT and its Board of Directors would like to extend their congratulations to Dr. Phosa for receiving this distinguished award.



SEKORORO WORKSHOP

As reported in our previous newsletter of July 2016, Wilson Nkosi's projects in Sekororo near Tzaneen was in dire need of a workshop on Poultry Health and Management. The workshop was presented in the Maruleng C.H.B.C near Tzaneen by Mr.Nkosi and two extension officers from the Department of Agriculture also accompanied him. The turnout was phenomenal with 40 people attending instead of the expected 24. The purpose of the workshop was to address the challenges the farmers faced, and farmers were asked to nominate topics that were to be discussed. Out of the extensive list, ten topics were chosen and discussed in detail.

They included;

- * Housing broiler chickens
- * External parasites
- * Effects of heat stress
- * Stocking density
- * Ventilation
- * Feeding and hygiene
- * Good housekeeping
- * Management of heat stress
- * Drinkers and feeders
- * Brooding

The group felt that these topics addressed their problems directly while the extension officers also discussed the problems they saw during their visits. All in all Wilson reports that the workshop was very successful and he left Sekororo satisfied that his clients have been informed and educated , ready to face the challenges of poultry production.

WIKWIO PROJECT

knowledge & interaction

In a world where agriculture has become more knowledge and technology intensive, it is imperative to include proper weed control into this statement. Weeds cause enormous economic losses in food and cash cropping systems, and can contribute up to 70% yield loss due to ineffective weed management. One can almost say that weeds are standing in the way of food security. Weed identification and knowledge aims to strengthen science and technology orientation to achieving food security, but access to information and its effective use still remains constrained in Africa and other countries in the Indian Ocean region.

Thus the Weed Identification and Knowledge in the Western Indian Ocean (WIKWIO) project was established by a group of dedicated scientists and weeds- and information experts. It is a project that aims to build a science and technology network in this region that will consolidate existing scientific knowledge. The project launched a participatory portal in which members can contribute participate and anyone is welcome to join, from the botanist to the rural farmer. It can be used by the public for consultation, but in order to contribute, one has to register as a member at no cost. It is as easy as taking a photo of a weed and looking it up on the species list on the portal.

The portal is available at <http://portal.wikwio.org>.

The portal allow users to;

- * consult or contribute to species information spreadsheets;
- * supply weed observations;
- * supply maps;
- * share information, working documents, checklists of species;
- * access the IDAO identification tool online;
- * manage working groups on specific topics such as cropping systems(sugar cane),orchards etc.) or general topics (weed science, communication);
- * create, animate and participate in online discussions

At the moment the portal include:

- * information on 345 weed species;
- * 2 299 field observations
- * 19 documents (protocols, guidelines, technical brochures)
- * four check lists corresponding to tables of weed status of the species according to the main cropping systems of each country, and;
- * an IDAO identification tool for the 345 weed species available online.
- * manage working groups on specific topics such as cropping systems (sugar cane, orchards etc.) or general topics (weed science, communication)
- * create, animate and participate to online discussions.



The project holds various workshops in the region and Dr. Azaad Gaungoo , founder of the WIKWIO project, was in Mpumalanga recently to present the workshop at the Mpumalanga University during July where MASDT personnel and other interested parties attended the workshop. Pieter Jordaan - MASDT IT and Fleet Manager - said it was extremely interesting and found that the portal was easy to use and could be very useful for MASDT clients. The participants went out into the field with their phones to put the portal to the test and was amazed by the simplicity of it.

...Weed Identification and Knowledge in the Western Indian Ocean....