



UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY

COLLABORATION COLLOQUIUM

SEASON VI

The Collaboration Dividend: Who Gets the Value?



3–4 December 2026

Cape Town Marriott Hotel Crystal Towers

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CONFIRMED SPEAKERS



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Research – University of
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Dr Murray Gardner

Head of Strategic
Engagement & Regional
Partnerships - University of
Oxford, UK



Dr Dumisa Ngwenya

Head of Research &
Innovation – Sentech



Dr Joanne van Harmelen

Patent Partner – Adams &
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Nontombi Maseko

Director: Innovation and
Technology – Department of
Trade, Industry and Competition,
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Dr Sanae Okamoto

Senior Researcher – United
Nations University,
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Anita Nel

Chief Director: Innovation &
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Stellenbosch University



Dr Ouma Bosaletsi

General Manager:
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Development - Eskom



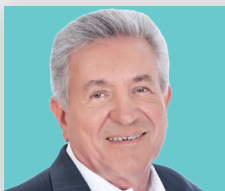
Meekness Lunga

Regional Director of Higher
Education: Sub-Saharan Africa -
British Council



Alexandra Miszewski

CEO & Co-founder – Altera
Biosciences Inc. (Africa's First
Cell & Gene Therapy Startup)



Prof Owen Dean

Consultant – Spoor &
Fisher



Letlotlo Phohole

Director – Wits
Innovation Centre



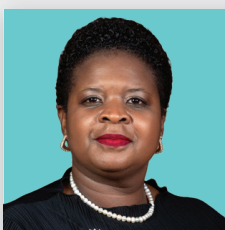
Paulo Andrez

Venture Advisor –
Connectology



Prof Eugene Cloete

Chief Executive Officer –
Cape Higher Education
Consortium



Dr Mimmy Gondwe

Erstwhile Deputy Minister of
Higher Education – Republic of
South Africa

Event Synopsis

The 6th edition of Africa's longest-running university-industry collaboration gathering convenes at the Cape Town Marriott Hotel Crystal Towers. The conversation now shifts from intent to industrial consequence: whether the partnerships actually produce returns that justify the effort—research that reaches the market; intellectual property that withstands commercial scrutiny; talent pipelines that survive first contact with the workplace; and joint ventures that outlast the press conference announcement.

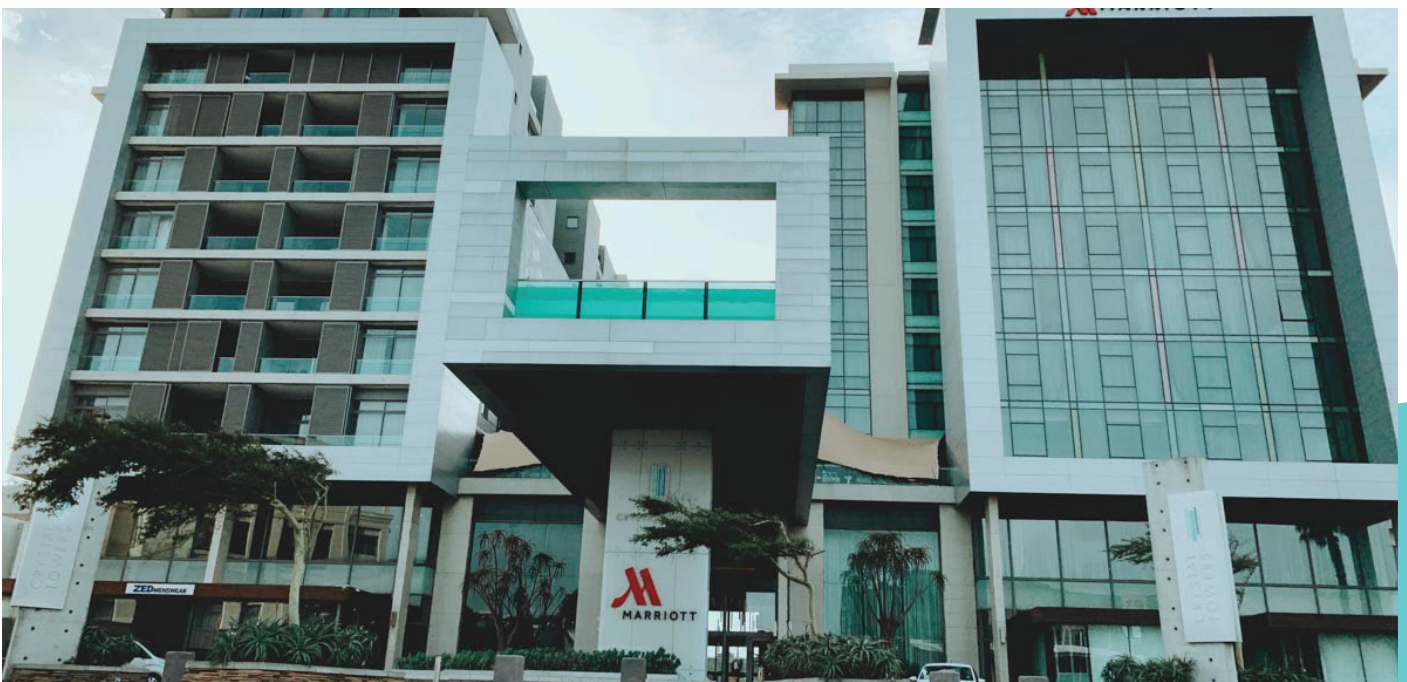
The colloquium brings together researchers, technology-transfer professionals, corporate innovation leaders, policymakers, legal specialists, entrepreneurs, and practitioners from across the sciences, engineering, health, the creative industries, business, and the social sciences. The programme is designed for anyone whose work sits at the intersection of knowledge and application, regardless of disciplinary home.

Sessions will move beyond principle to practice. Participants will examine how partnerships are structured, how risk and reward are allocated, how confidential information is protected, and how ideas move from laboratory or studio to product, policy, or performance. Case studies will include both successes and instructive failures, because the dividend is rarely automatic.

Academia and industry still operate with different incentives, timelines and vocabularies. The former still speaks in method and publication; the latter still speaks in margin, speed and time-to-market. Season VI is for those who must work across that divide every week and who need clearer, more honest evidence of what the collaboration is actually worth on the ground.

P.S

The Western Cape is not a neutral backdrop. It is one of the continent's densest corridors of research universities, technology transfer offices, medical-device clusters, Agri-tech and green-energy ventures, and a labour market that still cannot absorb the graduates those same institutions produce. The colloquium uses that tension as its working material.



Who Should Attend?



Academia

Professors and lecturers who want impact beyond the journal. Deans, DVCs, research directors, technology-transfer practitioners, curriculum designers, WIL educators and postgraduate supervisors expected to deliver both papers and pipelines.



Industry & Business

CEOs and MDs looking for the next advantage. R&D and innovation leads. HR and L&D leaders responsible for graduate talent. CSI/ESG managers who need partnerships that are more than branding. Business-development executives who treat universities as more than a “nice to have.”



Government & Policy

Officials and advisors who write the rules that either enable or quietly strangle collaboration. Public-private partnership coordinators who have to make the theory work on the ground.



Support Ecosystems

Incubator and accelerator managers. Technology-transfer officers. Founders already working with universities (or who want to). Skills and youth-employability leaders. Anyone building the connective tissue between lab and market.

The Value of Presence

- ✓ **Africa's collaboration problem is specific.**
Risk-averse capital, thin early-stage funding for university IP, and curricula that still treat industry as a guest lecturer. The colloquium is built for that stack of constraints, not a generic “innovation ecosystem” template imported from silicon valley.
- ✓ **This is where the “collaboration dividend” actually gets priced.**
Most university–industry events celebrate partnership. This one asks the harder question: what is the return on those partnerships — for graduates, firms, and institutions — and how do you design for it instead of hoping it appears.
- ✓ **You leave with methods, not just slides.**
Sessions include pitching research to industry funders, protecting confidential information under South African law and practical IP-to-market routes (licensing, spin outs, joint ventures).
- ✓ **The culture clash is on the agenda.**
Academia speaks journals and methodology. Industry speaks deadlines and ROI. The “Publish or Perish / Profit or Pivot” panel treats that gap as the main problem to solve, not a footnote.
- ✓ **It addresses the parts people usually skip.**
Trade-secret protection, accessibility as design principle rather than afterthought, the gig economy's effect on entrepreneurial ecosystems, and decentralised finance as a new set of rules for founders.
- ✓ **Cape Town is not the backdrop. It is the case study that does half the work.**
The Western Cape is one of the few African ecosystems where research commercialisation, start-up spinouts, and graduate pipelines are happening at the same time. Attendees who want continental partnerships get a working laboratory instead of another panel on “potential.” Somerset West puts that ecosystem in one room, away from the usual CBD noise.
- ✓ **Missing it means waiting another cycle.**
A year spent outside this room is a year of graduates designed for a labour market that has already shifted, and of research that never finds a buyer.



AGENDA

DAY 1: THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER

7:45 AM – 8:30 AM

Registration, Welcome Coffee & Collaboration Connections –

An informal networking session with a twist: participants identify one challenge they would like industry or academia to help solve.

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM

Welcome and introduction to Season VI – The Collaboration Dividend: Who gets the value?

8:45 AM – 9:15 AM

Opening Keynote

The collaboration dividend is real. So is the collaboration tax.

Universities and industry keep calling this arrangement a partnership, as if the word settles the account. It does not. Universities bring time, theory, and a calendar that runs on semesters. Industry brings money, urgency, and a calendar that runs on quarters. The dividend is graduates who can do the work and problems solved faster because theory and practice share a room. The tax is the friction neither side budgets: mismatched clocks, unpaid coordination, contested ownership, and placements that turn political. Too often the cost falls on the academic, the graduate, and the partner who quietly opts out next time. Who pays, and who still gets to call it partnership?

9:15 AM – 10:00 AM

The Uncomfortable Conversation: Why Do Great University Ideas Struggle to Become Great Businesses?

An impressive paper, prototype, or patent is not a business. Universities reward publication, grants, and prestige; markets reward speed, sales, and customers.

Unclear IP and founder equity slow deals before a venture forms, and lab success rarely answers who will buy, what they will pay, or why they would switch. The people who made the idea are not always the ones who should run it, and early support often ends before the venture is viable. This session asks what must change in incentives, ownership, and support if more university ideas are to survive contact with a customer.

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Morning Coffee/Tea Break: Fuel for the Trenches

10:30 AM – 11:45 AM

We Keep Building Bridges, but Nobody Maintains the Road

Another project that dies the moment its champion leaves. Partnerships are launched with fanfare and quietly abandoned with the next funding cycle. What does a university industry collaboration actually look like in year three, after the launch photos have faded, the memorandum is filed, and the real work begins: shared governance, placements that outlast a single semester, data that someone still reads, and accountability that does not depend on one enthusiastic person? This session asks who owns the maintenance, and what (if anything) survives the ribbon-cutting.

11:45 AM – 12:30 PM

Translating Research into Deployable Solutions

- Moving beyond research outputs and pilots towards technologies that can be demonstrated, validated and adopted in operational environments
- Eskom RT&D's applied research, specialised testing and technology evaluation, with recent deployments demonstrating the value of this approach.

CONTINUE.....



12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Lunch & Networking Buffet

Purposeful Mingling with a Side of Satire
(Themed tables)

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

PANEL DISCUSSION: The Copyright Amendment Bill: Balancing Access, Innovation and the Economic Rights of Creatives

The propensity of the currently pending Copyright Amendment Bill to diminish or mutilate the scope of copyright protection under our law by introducing the American doctrine of Fair Use into our law is detrimental to the rights and commercial viability of creatives in South Africa. This applies to both authors (in the broad sense) and publishers and the like who disseminate and conduct economic activity in creative works of all natures. This will potentially have a detrimental effect on the production and commercialisation of creative works, particularly of local origin, and is unacceptable.

The panel will examine whether the proposed framework strikes the appropriate balance between access to and use of creative works, and the need to preserve meaningful copyright protection and commercial incentives for the creation, publication and dissemination of South African creative works.

2:30 PM – 3:15 PM

Building Effective Academia–Industry Alliances for the energy transition

How research partnerships can be structured around clearly defined industry challenges, shared outcomes and credible pathways to implementation. The session examines practical models for aligning academic capability with real operational needs in digital and AI systems, resilient grids, energy storage, decarbonised energy supply and evolving energy markets — so that collaboration produces usable insight, not just co-authored papers.

3:15 PM – 3:30 PM

Afternoon Refreshment Break

Recharge

3:30 PM – 4:15 PM

COLLABORATION LAB: If We Could Start Again, What Would We Do Differently?

An interactive session where mixed university–industry teams design the ideal collaboration model.

4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

Day closes with three ideas, three challenges and three commitments to take forward.

DAY 2: FRIDAY, 4 DECEMBER

7:45 AM – 8:30 AM

Morning Coffee & Collaboration Networking – Reconnecting and sharing reflections from Day 1.

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM

Recap and Reflections: The most important insights from Day 1

8:45 AM – 9:30 AM

Keynote

The Missing Middle: Who Connects Universities, Entrepreneurs and Industry?

Universities produce talent and research, entrepreneurs spot markets, and industry scales both - yet the people who stitch those worlds together are rarely funded, titled, or invited into the room. The “missing middle” is less a policy gap than a profession that does not yet exist: translators who move between grant, founder, and procurement language without losing the plot. Placement offices, incubators, and corporate innovation units each claim the bridge, but most stop at the water’s edge. When that middle stays empty, collaboration remains ceremonial — memoranda without mobility, pilots without pathways. The discussion asks who should occupy that space, and what changes when connection is treated as a craft rather than a courtesy.

CONTINUE..... ↓



9:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Rural Innovation & Sustainable Agri-Food Systems

- Agri-tech innovation ecosystems; strategic role of universities
- Regional policy gaps; enhancing public-private partnerships
- Connecting rural entrepreneurs; university-driven community projects; corporate R&D and university expertise.

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Morning Tea Break

Networking or Strategic Napping — Your Choice

10:30 AM – 11:15 AM

Who Owns the Idea? Intellectual Property, Innovation and the University-Industry Bargain

When a placement or joint project produces something valuable, whose name is on it? This session examines how ownership is set before the work begins, where student and supervisor rights sit against funders and hosts, and what a fair bargain looks like when the university supplies the talent, industry supplies the problem, and the idea belongs, awkwardly, to both.

11:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Adjusting to Increasing Compliance and Regulatory Policies

Projects stall, partners walk away, and postgraduate placements disappear because the paperwork cannot keep up with the science. This session treats rising regulation as a design problem, not merely a cost. It looks at how research offices, innovation units and industry partners can use principle-based policies, single evidence packs that satisfy several funders and regulators at once, and clear ownership of regulatory change. The goal is environments that protect integrity and public trust while remaining fast enough for collaboration, commercialisation and the graduate talent pipeline.

12:00 PM – 12:30 PM

Developing Models of Co-mentoring and Funding the Future STEM Workforce

- Mentorship left to chance is not a STEM talent strategy
- A placement is not co-mentoring until the mentors share responsibility
- Funding without a mentoring design buys headcount; mentoring without funding dies when the grant ends
- Build one funded triad on one priority pathway, then scale

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Networking Lunch

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

WORKSHOP: Zero Risk Start-Up

A practical masterclass on systematically reducing the risks that stop most people from starting or scaling a business. Drawing on his MEFLO framework (market, entrepreneur/team, financial, legal and operational), serial entrepreneur and angel investor Paulo Andrez shows how to test demand, shrink capital exposure, strengthen the founding team and become more investable — so ventures can move forward with far less personal and financial downside.

3:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Afternoon Refreshment Break

Last Chance for Caffeine & Connections

3:15 PM – 4:00 PM

MOUs Don't Make Widgets: Converting Collaboration into Capability

Why, despite South Africa having strong universities, sophisticated industries and significant public investment in research and innovation, do so few university-industry collaborations progress from research and pilot initiatives into scaled industrial solutions?

The discussion would explore what is required to move collaboration beyond agreements and isolated projects towards sustained partnerships that produce deployable technologies, commercial outcomes, institutional capability and measurable societal impact.

4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

Presentation of key recommendations, commitments and closing remarks.



The Collaboration Dividend: Who Gets the Value?



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Standard Registration Fee is R8,499

PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK LETTERS

Authorizing Person:

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Postal Code			
E-mail Address		Department	
Person Dealing with Payment		Contact Number	

Signature:

By completing & signing this form, the authorizing signatory accepts the terms and conditions as stated on the registration form

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