

**Media Invitation
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For Immediate Release**

Female-owned bio-businesses to pitch during finale of the FemBioBiz Acceleration Programme at SA Innovation Summit, with the chance to win a trip to Finland to the SLUSH start-up event – one of Europe’s biggest start-up competitions.

The FemBioBiz Acceleration Program is an AU NEPAD Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBio) initiative supported by the Finnish-Southern African Partnership Programme - BioFISA II. The FemBioBiz program was launched in 2017 and targets women in the health and nutrition sector with the aim to empower them with leadership and entrepreneurial skills.

FemBioBiz, currently in its second season, has reached over 650 women and trained over 250 women from 10 nationalities since inception. While the programme works with in-country partners and supports country ecosystems that work with female bio-entrepreneurs, it also connects all stakeholders involved to regional and international networks by bringing them to platforms such as the SA Innovation Summit in South Africa and SLUSH - one of Europe's biggest start-up competitions in Finland.

At this year's SA Innovation Summit, 32 female bio-entrepreneurs and female students from 10 SADC countries working to address Africa's health and nutrition challenges will be pitching their innovative businesses and ideas to investors and funders at the FemBioBiz pitching den on the 12th of September, starting at 11am. This is a deal making platform where businesses and funders meet, providing an opportunity for the female bio-entrepreneurs to access financing that will enable them to continue creating impact at country, regional and international levels.

The best performers will receive prizes from SAB Foundation, Merck and other partners to move their businesses forward and a trip to attend Europe’s leading start-up event Slush 2018 in Helsinki, Finland.

Media is invited to attend the FemBioBiz pitching sessions at the [SA Innovation Summit](#).

For more information and coverage on FemBioBiz Season 2, visit:
<http://nepadsanbio.org/FBB2>

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About SANBio

The Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBio) is a shared biosciences research, development and innovation platform for working collaboratively to address some of Southern Africa's key biosciences issues in health, nutrition and health-related intervention areas such as agriculture and environment. The platform provides access to world-class laboratories for African and international scientists conducting research on Africa's biosciences challenges. It is one of the five Networks under the Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology (African Biosciences Initiative) and was officially launched in August 2005. The NEPAD SANBio Network was reconfigured in response to the 4 Pillars and 6 Priority Areas of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024 - a 10-year strategy which is part of the long-term African Union Agenda 2063). STISA-2024 envisages the accelerated transition of largely commodity-based African economies to innovation-led, knowledge-based economies.

About BioFISA II

Since 2009, the BioFISA Programme, established between the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in South Africa and the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), has supported the NEPAD SANBio Network. The first phase of the programme was launched in the beginning of 2009 and lasted until the end of September 2012. The second phase, BioFISA II, is a four year programme that is being implemented since 2015 to 2019 with a total budget of EUR 7.82 million, contributed from Finland, South Africa and participating SADC member states.

About the SA Innovation Summit

The SA Innovation Summit is a platform for nurturing, developing and showcasing African innovation. Created to support and promote innovation and facilitate collaboration within its own eco-system, the initiative brings together corporates, thought leaders, inventors, entrepreneurs, and academia and policy makers to amplify South Africa's renowned competitive edge

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