

# Pharmaceutical & Cosmetic review

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## Biodiversity, cosmetics and rural business opportunities

President Cyril Ramaphosa says opportunities in the biodiversity economy have the potential to unlock the country's rural economy and lift rural people out of poverty.

'If properly developed, the biodiversity economy can assist in accelerating transformation by providing not only employment, but also business opportunities, for black South Africans. It is also an opportunity for innovation,' he said.



The President was speaking at the Biodiversity Economy Conference, which took place in Thohoyandou, Limpopo on 25 August. The conference theme was centred on 'Innovating and Accelerating – with the people, for the people'.

## **Innovation and job creation**

Will Coetsee, MD of [Botanica Natural Products](#), spoke at the conference on the Department of Environmental Affairs' approval of Botanica's integrated biotrade and bioprospecting permit. He also met President Ramaphosa.

'I explained our business model, which is focused on indigenous and other plants that could be produced in rural Limpopo to the benefit of the company and the communities living in close proximity to Botanica,' Coetsee explained. 'I told him about our plantation and processing of *Bulbine Frutescens*, which is included in various international cosmetics products. I also shared the progress achieved in our Moringa Project along with our partners, GIZ, the IDC, De Beers Mine, Agri Limpopo and the Old Mutual Foundation.'

The President was especially interested to learn how Botanica would create a further 300 jobs by establishing outgrower cooperatives in the remote, rural northern Limpopo Province.

'We are collaborating with Professor Namrita Lall from the Department of Plant Science at the University of Pretoria, to licence their research and offer exciting new products to the South African cosmetics market and further afield,' he added.

Coetsee also gave the President a copy of the [Q2/June 2016 edition of P&C Review Africa](#), in which Botanica Natural Products is featured, to provide him with more information on the company, Africa's cosmetics industry and Botanica's biotrade efforts.

## **Good for pharma and cosmetics**

President Ramaphosa said by drawing on traditional knowledge about the use of indigenous plants, the country's scientists and researchers could develop products to be manufactured in rural areas and sold worldwide.

The conference was a collaborative effort between the various governmental departments to harness opportunities presented by biodiversity. The scope of innovation products in the biodiversity economy include bioprospecting and bio-

trade, products such as cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, wildlife and ecotourism.

Stakeholders brainstormed ideas that promote sustainable utilisation and conservation of the country's biological resources.

## **Empowering communities**

Through the development of the biodiversity economy, it is anticipated that 162 000 jobs can be created and R47 billion generated by 2030.

'We aim to increase business and land ownership by previously disadvantaged individuals, boosting participation by communities, expanding cultivation of key indigenous plants by 500 hectares a year, and having 100 Blue Flag beaches designated across South Africa by 2030,' said President Ramaphosa.

The National Biodiversity Economy Strategy, which is currently being considered by Cabinet, provides the guiding framework through which government, the private sector and development partners will coordinate for the inclusive growth of the sector.

President Ramaphosa said the strategy sets out the measures required to develop the wildlife, bio-trade and eco-tourism sectors, some of which are already being implemented through the Operation Phakisa framework.

## **Infrastructure boost to pave the way**

Over the next five years, government plans to spend about R1.18 billion to supply the underlying infrastructure required to grow the biodiversity economy and ensure that it contributes meaningfully to the South African economy.

'Much of government's support is centred on market development locally, regionally and internationally. This support includes a package of support incentives for emerging farmers and producers in the primary and secondary value chains,' the President said.

Communities were a central focus of biodiversity and should not be left behind. He urged the youth to get involved in these initiatives to ensure sustainable growth of the economy.

'Equally important, is the involvement of young people. Without the commitment of our youth to a sustainable economy and protection of the environment through the preservation of our cultural and natural heritage, our economy cannot grow,' he concluded.

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