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UNESCO Chair in African Integration and Innovation gains momentum

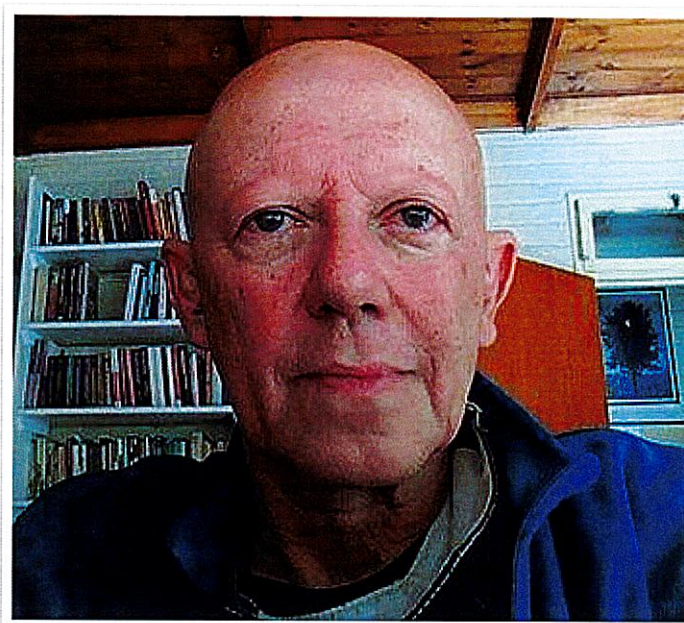
by Tebogo Tabane

The UNESCO Chair in African Integration and Innovation, headed by Prof Mario Scerri, Prof in Economics at the Tshwane University of Technology, is steadily gaining momentum. Among others, Prof Scerri is in the process of setting up local, regional, continental, and global research networks focussed on the integration of innovation systems in Africa.

The research programme developed by the Chair, is based on a new theoretical approach to the analysis and evaluation of innovation systems. The concept was published in an international journal in 2021 and forms the basis for the establishment of a long-term collaborative research programme under the title: The Viability Project.

Two of the Chair's related research outputs have already been accepted for publication; a journal article on human capital and human capabilities, as well as a chapter in a book on innovation for inclusive development.

The capacity building role of the Chair is also gathering speed. The first leg of the UNESCO/SADC/TUT STI (*Science, Technology and Innovation*) Training Programme that was launched last year, was delivered to 44 representatives of state-related STI agencies from 15 SADC countries and 23 other participants, comprising representatives from UNESCO, the SADC Secretariat, AU-NEPAD, as well as a number of universities.



Prof Mario Scerri, Prof in Economics and Finance at the Tshwane University of Technology.

Prof Scerri explained that this is an ongoing capacity building programme, which will eventually extend across the African continent.

In addition, the Chair has been liaising with the only other UNESCO STI Chair in Africa, based in Tunisia. As a first joint initiative, he has presented public lectures, as a guest speaker, for a master's programme on STI policy, offered by the *Ecole Nationale d'Ingénieurs de Tunis and the Université de Tunis El Manar*.

He added that this relationship will be extended over the longer term through the chair's involvement in collaborative research programmes.



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