

The Technology Station in Chemicals (TSC) is an initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) aimed at assisting Small Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) in the chemical manufacturing sector in Kwa-Zulu Natal. TSC is housed at Mangosuthu Technikon and collaborates with the Departments of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering of the Technikon in transferring technology to SMMEs.

The TSC assists SMMEs by providing technology and support on such areas as product development and improvement, process improvement, setting product quality in line with South African National Standards and also provide information support and consultancy on Safety, Health, Environment and Quality Management areas. In order to adequately address development issues of emerging enterprises, the TSC provides tailor-made training programmes for individuals or a group of clients.

The TSC hosted a Chemical Management Workshop on campus in May from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> (Module 1) and Module 2 in July from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> for SMMEs. There were two aspects to this training programme. One aspect was aimed at training SMMEs in proper handling and management of chemicals and the other to capacitate both Station and Technikon staff to provide similar training and services to SMMEs. Dr Kerstin Bark and Ms Vera Weick through The Germany Technical Agency (GTZ) facilitated these workshops. The GTZ is in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DST), in capacitating Technology Stations and Technikons, and thereby improve the capacity to service the SMMEs.

Six (6) SMMEs, with a total of fifteen (15) participants successfully completed this training programme. We therefore had a Certificate and Award ceremony befitting this event.

We invited major role players in the Chemical Industry and relevant stakeholders, so that more organizations would become aware of the capacity that is being

built by TSC. This ceremony was held at the Durban Hilton Hotel on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2005.

This function was attended by the Senior Management of the Technikon, Prof A M Ndlovu (Vice-Chancellor and Principal), Prof E.C Zingu (Vice-Principal Academic), Senior Directors and Directors of different Departments. Amongst distinguished guests were Dr. U Tessmar and Dr. W Heitmann both from GTZ, Mr. V Zondi (Deputy Director- Technology and Strategies, Dept of Science and Technology), Mr. P Siyo (SABS-SMME Consultant - Eastern Cape) and Mr. T van der Merwe (Perkin Elmer KZN),

The SMMEs gave testimonies on how much success they had because of the training they got from the TSC. These testimonies were confirmed by the presentation of photos of their companies before and after the training. Some of the companies even highlighted the fact that they have minimized economic losses from 5% to about 1%. The companies who showed most improvements were given awards:



**Gugulethu Cleaning Services** received an award for being the most improved emerging SMME.



**Colortrade Paints** received an award for being the most improved established SMME.



**Themzak Cleaning Chemicals** received an award for second improved established SMME.

Industrial Oleo Products (IOP) and Perkin Elmer companies sponsored these awards.

The next training is scheduled for January 2006.