

FABI WINS A THRIP EXCELLENCE AWARD

At a function held on 5 October 2006 at the Midrand Conference Centre, the 2005/2006 THRIP Annual Report was launched. Dr Willem Barnard, Chairman of the THRIP Board, said that THRIP is unique in its ability to stimulate the kind of collaboration needed to create an integrated science system in South Africa. One measures the real value of public investment in scientific research through the academics who conduct it, the inventors who pay for it and the individuals who benefit from it.

In recognising the efforts of the project leaders, students and industry partners, the THRIP Excellence Awards winners were announced at this function. The winners were presented with trophies designed by a student from the Central University of Technology, who had gained experience in rapid prototyping and design while working on one of the THRIP projects.

Nine award winners were announced for the following categories:

1. Human Resource Development (Quality and quantity of students; Best black or female student): 2. Research collaboration: 3. Competitiveness of the industry partner: 4. Technology (Advanced hi-technology; Social development): 5. SMME development: 6. Outstanding black researcher/project leader: and 7. Best exhibition.

It was unexpected and with great pride that we heard that the Tree Protection Co-operative Programme team at FABI were the winners of the “Quality and Quantity of Students” sub-category of the Human Resource Development Category. Their project title is “Sustainable fibre production/enhanced wood quality” where the team is in partnership with the South African forestry industry. The criteria for judging the winner in this category is “a Project Leader who has trained a large number of students and has on average a significant number of graduates”. The award was presented by Mr Mandisi Mpahlwa, the Honorable Minister of Trade and Industry, and received by Dr Bernard Slippers and Prof Brenda Wingfield of the TPCP team.

This award to the TPCP Team recognises not only the students trained, but the contribution that the TPCP members and most forestry companies in South Africa are making to human capital development in the country. While world-class research on tree health issues is being conducted, and member companies are receiving services and advice linked to their financial contributions, the human resource development component of THRIP is often overlooked. In all ways, this award comes to the South African Forestry Industry, as much as it does to the TPCP research group.

Congratulations and thanks to the South African Forestry Industry, members of the TPCP and to the whole TPCP/THRIP team at FABI, University of Pretoria, on yet another prize for excellence in science and service to South Africa.



(For more photographs of the awards event see <http://www.nrf.ac.za/thrip/news.html>)