



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

**PROF MANDLA MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
COMMEMORATING THE SIGNING OF THE 3-YEAR MOA BETWEEN UNISA
AND NEMISA
OR TAMBO BUILDING, 13TH FLOOR, VIP LOUNGE
13 MAY 2019**

Unisa, as a leading academic institution in Africa and South Africa, is proud to sign this 3-year Memorandum of Agreement with NEMISA. The investment into ‘Knowledge for Innovation’ – also known as K4i – aligns closely with the strategic aims of our university.

K4i focuses on research around digital skills. NEMISA and the South African digital skills agenda has the overall aim to embed digital skills into the lives of South Africans... for individual and community development,

wealth equity, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, and competitive advantage.

Not only is Unisa an Open Distance and e-learning institution with a national presence, but its operation is contingent on ICT. One of our core research areas is information and communication technologies for development (known as ICT4D). ICT4D refers to the use of ICTs for development aimed at improving the human condition. ICT4D is also one of Unisa's five flagship research projects.

Unisa's research considers:

- Knowledge generation and human capital development in response to the needs of South Africa and the African continent;
- The promotion of democracy, human rights and responsible citizenship;
- Innovation and capacity building in science and technology;
- Economic and environmental sustainability; and,
- Open distance learning.

It is clear that research on digital skills is part of this greater focus.

The collaboration with NEMISA around K4i represents true collaboration. K4i is a research entity linked to the national digital skills agenda through NEMISA which falls under the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (DTPS).

The research in digital skills involves multiple partnerships. Nine other South African universities are part of the NEMISA provincial network and these universities host digital skills CoLabs. These provincial CoLabs play many roles and this includes research. K4i, as the digital skills research arm, provides coordination and guidance for digital skills research nationally. The Unisa digital skills research arm, K4i, aims to provide findings for evidence-based decision making.

Unisa is proud to work in this multi-stakeholder environment, showing that research and collaboration can work and drives South Africa forward. The digital skills CoLabs are at the following universities:

- University of the Western Cape
- Durban University of Technology
- Walter Sisulu University
- University of Limpopo
- Vaal University of Technology
- North-West University

- University of Mpumalanga
- Central University of Technology

Unisa truly appreciates that NEMISA has chosen Unisa to lead the digital skills research arm.

It is clear from the work that is being done – by Unisa and all the other academic institutions – that tertiary institutions have an important role to play in South Africa’s development. We are no longer isolated ivory towers that guard knowledge but essential team players contributing positively to society. We do not work alone. As seen from the work being done by K4i, we are engaging with government, civil society, academia and business.

The impact of the K4i research work as part of the overall digital skills initiative leads to growing digital skills capacity... at all levels... within South Africa. Digital skills are essential if South Africa is to participate fully in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Research into digital skills is essential if we are to have evidence-based decision making around the digital skills agenda.

We thank NEMISA and all the stakeholders for the work that has been put in so far. We also thank NEMISA for the ongoing support and trust in Unisa. The MoA shows that NEMISA has doubled the funding for the work done by K4i and Unisa. NEMISA has increased the funding money from R5.85mn over the last 2 years to investing R6.1mn for this coming year. This shows that we are providing value and critical skills to the larger digital skills agenda.

Together – with all the partners – we will continue to grow the development of South Africa and her people.