

FABI WELCOMES DTI DELEGATION

Last week FABI welcomed a visiting delegation from the South African Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the National Research Foundation (NRF). The delegates, led by Nkosiwabonga Zungu along with Mlungisi Mthimunye, Portia Maila, Thabiso Khalo and Etrisia Diedericks from the NRF, met with FABI Director, Prof. Mike Wingfield, and several senior academics.

The delegation were briefed how the Institute serves the forestry industry specifically via the Tree Protection Co-operative Programme (TPCP) and how the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme – THRIP funding has aided this successful programme over the past 17 years. They also visited the FABI Biocontrol Centre at the University of Pretoria's Experimental Farm where they were shown first-hand the Institute's technology driven research work on forestry insect pests and their biocontrol agents.

The DTI has taken over responsibility for the THRIP funding initiative from the National Research Foundation and the team were acquainting themselves first hand with TPCP research activities. This was as part of their process of relaunching the programme by the third quarter of 2015 when the TPCP/THRIP association would enter a new three year funding cycle.

THRIP funding forms an important funding stream supporting technology-driven advances for the South African Forestry Industry. In the past together with the TPCP as well as other FABI projects, the South African Forestry Industry, with support from THRIP, have enjoyed many new technology advances that have ensured long-term sustainability of the Industry. This support has also advanced many student projects contributing substantially to human capacity development in South Africa. In this regard, it is also important to note that the TPCP has received awards on two occasions from THRIP for its contribution to human capacity development in South Africa.

