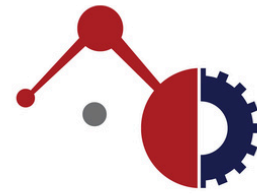


# MKRI MONTHLY

April 2026 Issue



**Moses Kotane  
Research Institute**

Research · Innovation · Excellence



**RESEARCH ON THE USE OF  
TOBACCO IN AFRICA**  
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## Top News

- National Local Economic Development Summit 2026
- The Skills Empowerment Drive for Beauty & Salon Owners
- UMzumbwe Future-Oriented Career Expo Summit

## "The knowledge hub for economic growth in KZN"

This newsletter highlights the key events and strategic engagements undertaken by the Moses Kotane Research Institute (MKRI) during April 2026.

The activities align with the institute's mission of advancing research-driven solutions, skills development, digital innovation, and socio-economic empowerment in KwaZulu-Natal.



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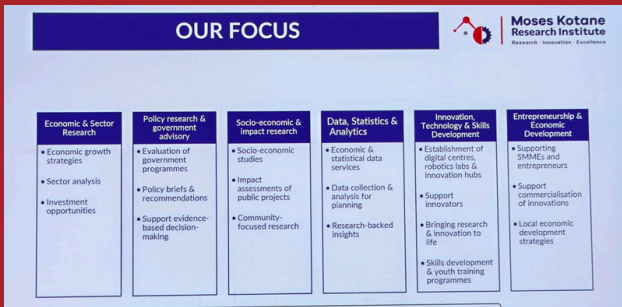
# MKRI EXPANDS ITS RESEARCH FOOTPRINT ACROSS AFRICA

As part of its strategic vision to become a globally recognised research institute, MKRI continues to strengthen its presence within the international research landscape.

At the UCT Business School, MKRI CEO Dr Thandeka Ellenson led an MKRI delegation to advance the Institute's global research agenda and foster regional collaboration.

The engagement focused on the DYTA research project, which examines the economic factors affected by the prevalence of tobacco use. The study forms part of a broader global research initiative with a particular focus on Africa, and in particular South Africa.

Through initiatives such as these, MKRI continues to position itself as a leading research institution committed to producing impactful research that contributes to policy development, economic transformation, and sustainable development across the continent.



## UNISA CAREER FAIR 2026



MKRI participated in the Unisa Career Fair, an impactful event that aimed to bridge the gap between higher education and the professional world. Hosted by the University of South Africa (UNISA), the fair served as a dynamic hub for students and graduates to explore career pathways, gain industry insights, and connect with potential employers.

MKRI utilised the platform to engage with the next generation of researchers, innovators, and professionals. The team focused on highlighting a diverse range of services, including postgraduate student development, internships, and digital skills programmes. By interacting directly with Unisa students, the Institute provided valuable guidance on the research ecosystem and the evolving requirements of the modern job market.

## UMZUMBE FUTURE-ORIENTED CAREER EXPO SUMMIT



MKRI partnered with the BRICS Student Commission (KZN Region) to host the uMzumbe Career Expo Summit at the Mthwalume Inkanini Sports Centre.

This career expo focused on empowering young people through career guidance, skills development, and exposure to opportunities across various industries. It created a valuable platform for learners to engage with professionals and gain insights into education pathways, innovation, and the world of work.

# NATIONAL LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2026

MKRI CEO, Dr Thandeka Ellenson, facilitated a panel discussion on spatial equity at the National Local Economic Development Summit 2026, which took place in Johannesburg. The panel emphasised the need to bridge the divide between metropolitan and rural economies to unlock inclusive growth, attract investment, and drive sustainable job creation across municipalities. The Summit focused on advancing Local Economic Development from policy to practical implementation.

Resolutions from the Summit included prioritising infrastructure investment to create more economic nodes and close the rural-urban gap; capacitating Local Economic Development offices with offices, budgets, and staff; removing regulatory barriers; and urging entrepreneurs to take initiative rather than wait for government support, given limited state resources.



## THE SKILLS EMPOWERMENT DRIVE FOR BEAUTY & SALON OWNERS

The Skills Empowerment Drive for Beauty & Salon Owners, hosted by the Wear Your Brand Foundation in partnership with the Moses Kotane Research Institute, was held at the MKRI Conference Centre, bringing together beauty professionals, entrepreneurs and industry stakeholders for a day of impactful engagement and learning. The programme focused on key areas including industry trends, business compliance, access to funding, branding and digital innovation within the beauty sector.

The initiative also integrated structured capacity-building and enterprise development support, strengthening practical understanding of business formalisation, innovation, mentorship and access to relevant resources. Through these engagements, participants were equipped with tools and insights aimed at supporting sustainable growth and strengthening participation within the beauty and wellness industry.



# FREEDOM DAY COMMEMORATION

The Moses Kotane Research Institute participated in the Freedom Day Commemoration held at the Alfred Duma Indoor Sports Centre in Ladysmith, where government, stakeholders, and community members gathered to reflect on South Africa's democratic journey. As part of the programme, the Institute hosted an exhibition, engaging with attendees and showcasing its work in advancing research, policy support, and community development.

Through the programme which included community engagement, exhibitions, and a formal commemoration. The significance of Freedom Day was brought to life by promoting dialogue, unity, and active citizenship. The event not only honoured the sacrifices of liberation heroes but also reinforced a shared commitment to upholding the values of human dignity, equality, and inclusive development in present day South Africa.



## AMAJUBA DISTRICT OSS/DDM CABINET DAY IMBIZO



Moses Kotane Research Institute proudly attended the Operation Sukuma Sakhe Cabinet Day in Amajuba District, led by the KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Honourable Thamsanqa Ntuli. The event focused on direct engagement between government leaders and communities, including inspections of development projects, assessments of government programmes, and discussions with residents and service providers. A public session allowed community members to raise concerns, with leaders outlining actions to address service delivery and social issues.

MKRI exhibited on-site, where it actively showcased its diverse portfolio of services and programmes. Through this platform, the Institute engaged directly with community members, offering insights into its work while fostering opportunities for collaboration and the exchange of knowledge.

## DATA & CONNECT: WHERE INSIGHTS MEET OPPORTUNITY ENGAGEMENT



MKRI hosted the Data & Connect: Where Insights Meet Opportunity engagement, bringing together entrepreneurs, industry stakeholders, and thought leaders to explore the value of data in driving business growth.

The session included a Connect & Solve activity, highlighting how data can be used to increase sales, reduce costs, plan for the future, and unlock funding opportunities. The programme featured contributions from ZDM Solutions, Tropical Paradise, Zee Organics, and PARTIDOS, fostering practical insights and meaningful connections.