



BIOPROSPECTING MEDIA ROUND TABLE

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Public Understanding of Biotechnology Programme

PROF ESTA VAN HEERDEN

Esta Van Heerden is Associate Professor in the Department of Microbial, Biochemical and Food Biotechnology at the University of the Free State.

The aim of her research is to tap into the unique genetic material in South African extreme biomes and to discover new genes and their products by applying the most modern genetic and microbiological technologies, creating a metagenomic library for bioprospecting.

She is a member of the South African Society of Biochemistry and Molecular biology, the South African Woman in Science and Engineering, NUSEL (National Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory, IPTAI (Indiana Princeton Tennessee Astrobiology Institute Partner, NELSAM (National Earthquake Laboratory in South African Mines), The International Astrobiology Society (ABS).

She has received nominations and awards for her work, including nomination for National Young Scientist of the Year Award in 2004 and South African Women in Science Nomination in 2005. she received the WISC award in 2003, partnered with Mary DeFlaun from Geosyntec, USA, the Honorary Educational award from Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences in 2003 and the Entrepreneurial Research Award in 2007.

Esta has given numerous presentations at international and local conferences, has been invited to give lectures internationally and has 25 peer-reviewed scientific publications. She currently has 6 Master's students and 6 PhD students under her wing, having had 20 Honours, 13 MSc and 7 PhD students graduate through her laboratory.



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