**Progress with African Laser Centre programs**

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**1. Introduction (section 1) 10 pt Bold**

The African Laser Centre is a virtual centre of excellence which consists of nodes of research institutes all over the African continent. The concept of the ALC as a virtual pan-African organization was formally adopted at an international meeting organized by the National Laser Centre with delegates from around the world in 2002. In 2003 plans were formally adopted to launch a number of programs to assist the development, mobility and support of research activities in photonics related sciences as a key implementation vehicle for the African Laser Centre.

For the past 20 years, the African Laser Centre program in South African has been graciously funded by the South African government’s Department of Science and Innovation. The ALC concept is structured on regional nodes, with South Africa responsible for the Southern African node. Within the South African node, 4 pan African programs are hosted to support mobility of researchers actively involved in photonics based research collaborations, an ALC scholarship program for African students to enrol for post graduate degrees at South African Higher Education Institutions, an ALC training program and a new program called the ALC Knowledge Exchange Program that allow longer term visits between collaborators with a specific emphasize on knowledge transfer projects to strengthen the photonics research capabilities across the African continent.

The presentation will touch on the four programs, eligibility criteria and timelines for calls and the outputs from the programs.