



JOINT PRESS RELEASE FROM CAPE WINELANDS AIRPORT AND STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Image caption: Find an image and accompanying caption below:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1C3u9CJHhSePIWX1Bu4t4keudXZ1QVWM/view?usp=drive_link

Download **soundbites** from:

- Deon Cloete, Managing Director – Cape Winelands Airport
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ksly3urbDVbJofNqj3PfZi0hP7kbC9uM/view?usp=drive_link
- Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L8yPH6Ja4ZLY-94aiU3S5XgkeQ_qvVA7/view?usp=drive_link

Cape Winelands Airport and Stellenbosch University Forge Strategic Partnership for Smart and Sustainable Development

Cape Town, South Africa – 26 March 2026 Cape Winelands Airport and Stellenbosch University (SU) have entered into a cooperation agreement aimed at advancing innovation under the shared themes of “Smart” and “Green” development. The partnership reflects a joint commitment to foster sustainable growth and drive academic advancement.

The agreement outlines a broad range of collaborative focus areas, including agriculture and food processing, spatial planning, transport and logistics, space and aviation research, and the integration of airport operations with urban development. Through this partnership, both parties will actively seek opportunities to align academic research, industry expertise, and infrastructure development to address real-world challenges and unlock new opportunities.

Importantly, the collaboration aligns with the planned expansion of Cape Winelands Airport estimated to cost in the region of R8bn. It is anticipated that the airport expansion will transport the airport into a significant economic hub over the coming years. The scale and long-term nature of the project present a unique platform for practical learning, applied research, innovation, and industry collaboration across multiple disciplines. Engineering collaboration is expected to play a central role in the partnership, with both parties identifying opportunities for technical cooperation, infrastructure innovation, operational efficiency, and future-focused engineering solutions linked to airport expansion and aviation infrastructure development.

“This initiative speaks directly to the kind of partnership-driven development we believe in, where infrastructure, innovation and skills come together to create real impact. The Cape Winelands Airport project offers an opportunity to build a dynamic ecosystem that can unlock economic growth, support emerging industries, and position the region as a hub of innovation and opportunity,” said Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University.



Deon Cloete, Managing Director for Cape Winelands Airport said, "This cooperation marks an important milestone for the airport. The airport expansion presents a unique long-term opportunity to connect academia and industry in a way that creates meaningful economic and educational impact. By working closely with Stellenbosch University, we are creating a platform to explore future-focused solutions that benefit the aviation sector, students, and the broader regional economy."

The initial areas of potential collaboration include building student capacity through applied research opportunities linked to the airport's development and operational environment. This may include research projects for master's students within Stellenbosch University's Engineering Management programme focused on areas of strategic interest to Cape Winelands Airport. The partnership will further explore opportunities to establish facilities and spaces that support testing, innovation, prototyping, and future production-related activities linked to aviation, infrastructure, logistics, and smart technologies.

"The airport expansion also presents opportunities to contribute towards the development of future aviation talent pipelines within South Africa. Through collaboration with Stellenbosch University and broader industry stakeholders, Cape Winelands Airport is interested to explore opportunities linked to aviation skills development, pilot training pathways, airport operations, engineering disciplines, and future-focused transport and logistics capabilities. The intention is to create a long-term skills ecosystem that supports both economic growth and human capital development in the Western Cape," said Cloete.

"From a research and innovation perspective, this collaboration creates valuable opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement across fields ranging from engineering to agriculture. By strengthening partnerships between academia and industry, we can foster knowledge exchange and contribute to innovative solutions that benefit both the region and society more broadly," said Prof Sibusiso Moyo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Internationalisation at Stellenbosch University.

Commented [AG1]: I added this quote from prof Moyo.

As the airport evolves over the coming decades, the partnership aims to ensure that academic research, innovation, and skills development remain closely connected to the practical realities and opportunities emerging from one of the country's most ambitious aviation infrastructure projects.

Beyond its aviation role, the airport expansion is expected to become a major driver of regional economic development and job creation within the Western Cape. Current projections indicate that the development could sustain approximately 35,000 direct and indirect jobs during the construction and expansion phases, while supporting just over 100,000 direct and indirect jobs during its first 20 years of operation. This positions the project as one of the most significant long-term infrastructure and economic development initiatives in the region.



"The development of a modern airport ecosystem of this scale creates substantial opportunities for collaboration between academia, industry, government, and the broader aviation sector. It provides a real-world environment in which students, researchers, and industry specialists can engage directly with complex challenges related to aviation operations, infrastructure planning, engineering, logistics, sustainability, environmental management, transport systems, smart technologies, and regional development" concluded Cloete.

-ENDS-

ABOUT CAPE WINELANDS AIRPORT:

Cape Winelands Airport, formerly Fisantekraal Airfield, is a privately led airport development located 13 kilometres northeast of Durbanville. Originally established in 1943 as a South African Air Force base for Lockheed Ventura bombers, it was renamed in 2020 to reflect its location in the Cape Winelands. Currently serving as a general aviation facility and a popular base for flight training, plans are underway to expand and to develop a state-of-the-art, green, smart, and innovative aviation precinct that will redefine Cape Winelands Airport as a modern gateway for the region. Visit capewinelands.aero for more information.

ABOUT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY:

Stellenbosch University (SU) is a proudly African knowledge hub that serves our country and continent through excellent education, research and innovation. Our [vision](#) is to be Africa's leading research-intensive university, globally recognised as excellent, inclusive and innovative, where we advance knowledge in service of society. With our 35 000 students, 3 600 staff and world-class academic environment, we not only count among South Africa's leading higher education institutions, but among the top universities in the world. Our ten faculties – AgriSciences, Arts and Social Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine and Health Sciences, Military Science, Science, and Theology, as well as the School for Climate Studies, the School for Data Science and Computational Thinking and the Stellenbosch Business School – are located across five campuses in the Western Cape province of South Africa. Visit www.su.ac.za for more information.

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