

Title:	1. Deutsch-Südafrikanischer Schulpreis 2012 Materialforschung 1st German-South African school prize 2012 – materials research
German partner:	Yorck Sievers German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Day (DIHK)
South African partner:	Silke Partner Southern African-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAGCC)
Event:	Award ceremony, South Africa, 5 October 2012 Study trip to Germany for prize-winners in 2013

Brief description:

In many fields, the lack of specialists in Germany and South Africa is viewed as a risk to economic development. There is a particular bottleneck of specialists in the so-called MINT professions (mathematics, IT, natural sciences, technology). Companies' demand for MINT specialists is expected to continue to increase in both countries in the coming years: in Germany because an increased number of older employees will retire and the demand for replacements will increase along with it, and also in South Africa because the interest in these disciplines is lower compared to humanities and social sciences or economic sciences. It is therefore important to raise interest among young people – especially young women – for MINT professions and the corresponding subjects in schools and to inspire enthusiasm for natural sciences and technology among children and young people at an early age. This way, the next generation of potential scientists can be introduced to MINT subjects and the future of the subjects can be safeguarded.

As a result, the "1st German-South African school prize 2012 – Materials science" was called into being as part of the German-South African Year of Science. The prize was organised by the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Day (DIHK) and the Southern African-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAGCC) together with the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Strong Materials (CoE-SM) as the South African partner.

The competition was held among South African schools selected by the Centre of Excellence in Strong Materials (CoE-SM). Teams of up to four members submitted a video in which they had to explain the properties of a material and link the macroscopic properties of the individual materials to their microscopic structure.

The first award ceremony for the school prize took place as part of the celebrations surrounding the 60-year anniversary of the Southern African-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAGCC) on 5 October 2012. The German Minister for Economic Affairs, the South African Vice President and the German ambassador took part in the award ceremony as guests of honour. The winning team and its supervisor are now invited to visit research institutes in Germany in March/April 2013. The aim of the initiative is to stimulate interest among South African school pupils and young

scientists of the future in taking part in an exchange programme or spending a study period in Germany in its capacity as a research location.

The German-South African school prize is intended to be awarded for three years. In the next two years, the prize will be organised and financed by the SAGCC with support from its local partners and members.