

F.R.I.D.G.E

What is Fridge?

In 1995, the Japanese government made a grant of approximately R8.1 million, which formed the basis of a research fund under the auspices of Nedlac. It was used to fund investigations that aimed to:

- Improve competitiveness
- Be implementable
- Inject international and local expertise
- Build individual and institutional capacity among key stakeholders
- Contribute to collaboration on policy and development issues.

In late 1998, the Japanese Grant Funds were exhausted. However, because of the benefits of Nedlac managing research, the Department of Trade and Industry made available funds to continue to work of the JGF. This new fund, also a sub-committee of Nedlac's Trade and Industry Chamber, was called the Fund for Research into Industrial Development, Growth and Equity. Fridge's objectives and manner of operation are the same as those developed under the Japanese Grant Fund.

How does Fridge work?

When the need for a study is accepted by the sub-committee, a counterpart group, consisting of representatives of the Nedlac parties (government, business, labour and community), is set up. These groups manage Fridge's research agenda. Researchers that are contracted by Fridge are obligated to report to the counterpart groups on a

regular basis. By virtue of Nedlac's nature, the representatives on the counterpart groups have a range of divergent experiences and knowledge. This wide scope of knowledge adds to the research process in a number of ways:

- By drawing in the experiential knowledge of constituencies, additional information is continually added to the final research product.
- The many different roles that Nedlac representatives occupy in society enable them to strategically locate research in relation to existing process and information.

The focus of Nedlac's constituencies on furthering the goals of growth and equity means that they are continually pushing researchers to focus on how the research results will enable South Africa to further those goals.

Throughout the duration of a study, there are report-backs to Fridge sub-committee meetings and to Nedlac's Trade and Industry Chamber. After completion, the study is submitted to the sub-committee which may ask for refinements, but once accepted by this committee, the report becomes a public document.

All Fridge and JGF studies may be obtained from Nedlac. A full listing of studies is available on: www.nedlac.org.za. The Fridge Manager, Tebogo Molefe, works under the auspices of the Industrial Development Corporation, and can be contacted on: 269-3635. The Nedlac secretariat member responsible for Fridge is Itumeleng Masege.

Nedlac Summit 2001

The Nedlac Summit was not able to take place on 1 September due to clashes with the International Racism Conference. It will now take place on 27 October, at the Sandton Convention Centre.

The Nedlac Summit brings together 60 representatives from each of the four Nedlac constituencies, with a further 150 invited guests, local and international, representing Parliament, NGOs, academics, labour movements in other SADC countries and foreign embassies.

There will be four commissions at the summit. Each will have a chairperson, presenter and respondent. The four commission topics will be:

- The African initiative (MAP): SA and the African response to globalisation
- Globalisation, unemployment and decent work
- Nedlac, social dialogue and the multi-lateral institutions WTO, IMF, WB, ILO
- Globalisation and the prospects for investment and growth