

President, Cannabis Expo gives SA's cannabis industry high hopes

 By [Sibusiso Xaba](#)

25 Mar 2022

The Cannabis Expo taking place in Cape Town from 24 to 27 March 2022, is regarded as an ideal platform for education, networking and introducing innovative products and businesses to the cannabis industry that covers medicinal, agricultural, financial and lifestyle products and services.



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Following a commitment by President Cyril Ramaposa during the 2022 SONA that the production of cannabis in the country would soon be industrialised and government would be seeking to "harness" the economic benefits of this burgeoning sector – it's no wonder the tone leading up to this year's Cannabis Expo has been extremely positive.

Furthermore, the fact that the first Cannabis Expo since the pandemic hit is taking place in Cape Town, with the Western Cape region beginning to emerge as one of the leading provinces in the industry after being recorded in 2021 as having the most exports for cannabis originating from here – I am confident the attendance and interest by businesses and consumers alike will be significant, to say the least.

As mentioned in the 2022 State of the Nation Address, Cannabis is now a priority industry that can create approximately 130,000 jobs in South Africa and contribute to economic growth. As a result, we are seeing strategic interventions by government such as the full legalisation of this lucrative herb and the drafting of the National Cannabis Masterplan.



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South Africa is a sleeping giant that has the potential to become a major player in the global cannabis market. Regulatory

rules drive outcomes in cannabis, impacting everything from product diversification to growing your consumer base, to revenue growth rates. The net result is strong growth in a global market that grew 42% to \$21.7bn in 2020 and was forecast to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 19% to \$51.7bn in 2021.

However, to tap into the exciting potential that the global market offers to the cannabis industry – the key lies in the cultivation and risks associated with the cultivation of this crop and how the quality of crop grown is critical for South Africa to be a global exporter and to bring about meaningful growth for this sector. One key challenge that growers face around the world, is how to tackle the formidable powdery mildew issue.

Not surprisingly, this burning issue has been spoken about timelessly with powdery mildew being the most destructive in cultivating and growing successful cannabis crops. We hear discussions all the time, on how to tackle this serious issue. Some solutions for growers include using a number of oils and sprays to help temper contamination. However, one new solution to counter powdery mildew that stems from a very unexpected place (space in fact) and is sure to turn heads at this year's expo, is Airocide.



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Airocide units were introduced into Africa only recently and use optimised photocatalytic oxidation ("PCO") technology developed for NASA to control and kill infections. Already successfully used in the US and other areas around the world to help mitigate the problem of powdery mildew – it has sparked interest in local growers.

Trials are already underway with more planned in the Western Cape and Gauteng region this year using this innovative air purification technology on their licensed crops with some growers already exclaiming a marked improvement and success using the Airocide units. The intended outcome is that by using this technology in areas where crops are grown indoors that growers can significantly reduce mould and other airborne pathogens that negatively impact the cannabis crop's growth and quality.

With Cape Town being the first venue to host the Cannabis Expo this year, and others planned to happen later in the year in areas like Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg – it will be exciting to see what other interesting innovations come to the fore at this year's events to support the growing cannabis industry; and which province will stake and secure their claim to be the nucleus of SA's and Africa's cannabis industry.

ABOUT SIBUSISO XABA

Sibusiso Xaba is the co-founder and CEO of Africa Cannabis Advisory Group, a leading services provider specialised in the medical cannabis and hemp industries. He is working closely with companies like 3Sixty Biopharmaceutical and key cannabis stakeholders to help connect and introduce exciting technology and innovations like Airocide to the industry.

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