A) WORK IN PROGRESS:

Prof Wilma Viviers and Prof Leila Baghdadi (WTO Chair in Tunisia) are the principal investigators in a South Africa NRF (National Research Foundation) and Tunisia Science and Technology Collaboration research project. The title of the project is: An analysis of the trade opportunities between South African and Tunisian SMEs: The TRADE-DSM® approach.

This research project is focused on the following key activities:

a) The development of an approach to investigate and identify the most realistic export opportunities for exporters and importers between South Africa and Tunisia;

b) The application of a methodology referred to as the TRADE-Decision Support Model (DSM) for the

identification of realistic export opportunities;

c) A TRADE-DSM needs to be constructed for Tunisia – we already have an existing model for South

Africa constructed at the North-West University;

d) Once the Tunisia model is constructed, various research questions can be analysed to help inform

the identification of realistic export opportunities to be pursued between the two countries as well as to develop possible trade promotion strategies for South Africa and Tunisia and export strategies for selected Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) exporters;

e) Research needs to be conducted on the applicability and potential contribution of the findings to the export success - if such information is available - to help inform decision-making and business case development for SME exporters.

The research project will therefore consist of a combination of desktop quantitative modelling and

analysis, combined with industry focus group research for testing the practicality and usefulness of the findings for exporters, with a specific focus on SMEs in South Africa and Tunisia.