



MEDIA STATEMENT:

Progress report for the Limpopo Provincial Government Economic Sector Cluster

The Economic Sector Cluster was formed by the Limpopo Provincial Government in order to co-ordinate efforts, aimed at improving Limpopo's economic conditions, by various government institutions and the private sector. These areas will advance the course for the realisation of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS).

PROGRESS REGARDING THE VARIOUS CLUSTER TARGETS

Airport development

At the beginning of the current financial year, the Airport Terminal Building was 99% complete. There has been significant progress. As we speak, the terminal building is practically complete.

Inter-modal facilities

The cluster has targeted to complete seven (7) intermodal facilities in seven municipalities. These are Polokwane (Capricorn District), Makhado (Vhembe District), Thohoyandou (Vhembe District), Northam (Waterberg District), Giyani (Mopani District), Jane Furse and Tubatse (Greater Sekhukhune District).

Contracts for the designs and infrastructure cost for all the seven (7) areas were awarded in May 2008. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with the

Intersite Property Management Company to do these as well as stakeholder consultations.

Passenger Rail Development

A MOU was signed with the South African Rail Commuters Company (SARCC) to conduct a full feasibility study into the rail development.

An investigation is also underway to consider the possibility of introducing trains that will ferry passengers in areas surrounding Polokwane and Seshego. This will assist to alleviate the current traffic congestion in the targeted areas.

Moloto Corridor Rail Development Initiative

The target for this quarter is to link the Moloto Corridor Rail Development Initiative in Mpumalanga Province with Limpopo Province in Sekhukhune area. This will be used as a launching pad in linking Limpopo with the rest of Southern African Development Community (SADC) areas.

A MOU has already been signed with the Mpumalanga Provincial Government and the National Department of Transport. An amount of R1.9m has been allocated by National to start with a feasibility study for the Sekhukhune District.

Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

EPWP continues to be a source of skilling and job creation.

In the past financial year, 54,428 employment opportunities were created in areas of infrastructure development, social sector, environmental and economic management.

In the first quarter of the current financial year, 7,376 employment opportunities as well 3,708 learnership opportunities in the afore-mentioned areas have been created.

Commercialization of Game Farms

Tourism activity operating permits have been awarded in seven nature reserves, namely; Doorndraai, Schuinsdraai, Witvinger, Mokolo Dam, Rust De Venter, Tzaneen Dam and Manombe.

Preferred bidders for Lekgalameetse and Rust De Winter projects have been appointed. Lodge development plans have also been submitted to Limpopo Tourism and Parks (LTP) and the Evaluation Committee still has to approve.

Three bids have to be re-advertised because, at this stage, no suitable bidders could be found.

BEE and SME support

The target for this financial year is to channel R50 million financial and technical support to 900 SMEs.

In line with this, 23 small businesses in the services sector and 1 small business in the construction sector were granted loans. This was done through LimDev to the value of R7,1m.

Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA) assisted 12 cooperatives to obtain grants worth R5,6m from various strategic funders. LIBSA also assisted 1618 small businesses in business registration as well as a further 105 to obtain business opportunities to the value of R54m

Revitalisation of the Irrigation Schemes (RESIS)

- The Tshiombo power-line is currently 80% complete.
- Mbahela & Mapela in-field irrigation bid adjudication has been completed.
- The Upper Flag Boshielo Scheme is at Bid stage.

Black Tea Production

The target for this financial year is to process and package black tea so that the new tea brand is launched by February 2009.

Currently, a total of 7885 kg of tea has, through this process been produced. A new easy pack line has also been delivered to Mukumbani tea estate and is awaiting installation in the factory once all operations have stopped.

Conclusion

This is work in progress and it continues to ensure that the cluster facilitates investment in public infrastructure, advances local economic development and enhances the competitiveness of the provincial economy.

The success of the PGDS demands a deliberate commitment to work together from the private sector, government and other stakeholders that will ensure that we achieve what is best for the province.

Issued by: Economic Sector Cluster

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