

## The NEF delivers information to the Northern Cape Entrepreneurs



Attendees at the Northern Cape NEF Empowerment Expo

On 10 October 2017, as part of its nationwide outreach campaign, the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) in partnership with the Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism, hosted an **Empowerment Expo** in Kimberly at Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre. The Expo was attended by 240 entrepreneurs seeking information on access to funding and opportunities for business within both the private and public sectors.

Delivering presentations at the seminar were representatives from various oil companies which included Caltex, Engen and Sasol as well as the Department of Energy, *the dti*, Sol Plaatje Municipality, Department of Public Works, Independent Development Trust, Northern Cape Provincial Treasury, Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) and the Small



**Mr Sam Mabilo**  
Acting HOD, Department of  
Economic Development and Tourism

Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA).

In his opening remarks Mr Sam Mabilo, the acting Head of the Department for Economic Development and Tourism in the Northern Cape, welcomed "the initiative by the NEF in the province to partner with us in hosting this historic Empowerment Expo which promotes access to information on funding, franchising and supplier development".

"As a department we are pleased that the NEF already operates an office in our province which caters for the needs of our entrepreneurs. Gone are the days when our people had to travel miles to access these services. This serves as an indication that the NEF is serious about assisting with anticipated future funding and investment requirements to help black individuals, communities and businesses," said Mr Mabilo.

In his economic overview he indicated that as the smallest in the country the provincial economy had delivered growth of 09% and contributed 2.1% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and lamented the fact that the province was heavily reliant on the primary sectors which are mining and agriculture.

Mr Setlakalane Molepo, the NEF's Divisional Executive for SME and Rural Development, urged

other development finance institutions to do more in supporting entrepreneurs to "help address key market failures that typically confront black entrepreneurs. These market failures include the lack of access to affordable finance, lack of accurate and reliable information and the lack of business-planning skills. Others include the challenges in accessing local and international markets, poor or inadequate specific industry-knowledge, as well as limited or no equity contribution and a low asset base. Another key challenge is low bargaining power with suppliers and customers, and stiff competition against well-established businesses."

He said the NEF "offers an online tool available on the website in order to help entrepreneurs to put together business plans and financial projections. These may be used to approach other financiers for funding".



**Mr Setlakalane Molepo**  
Divisional Executive SME and  
Rural Development

## The NEF delivers information to the Northern Cape Entrepreneurs *(continued)*

"We invite the Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism to join the NEF in some of the Enterprise Development initiatives so that we may jointly do more to help propel more and more black entrepreneurs into the economic mainstream. We have a very successful model that we have piloted with the Western Cape Provincial Government where the province has partnered with the NEF to reduce interest charged on the loans extended to businesses," added Mr Molepo.

Ms Sebatso Mohapi, the General Energy Director at the Department of Energy focused her presentation on



**Ms Sebatso Mohapi**  
General Energy Director, Department of Energy

He cited other partnerships between the NEF and some of the big players in the retail sector such as Pick n Pay and Shoprite, which are aimed at revitalising the township economy.

Commenting after the event, Mr Daryl Christiaan, Chief Director for Integrated Economic Development Services in the province, said "the Expo was very successful and well attended and offered valuable information from the private sector, specifically the oil companies that took the entrepreneurs through the criteria to qualify for a filling station, as well as the requirements to access retail opportunities in the petroleum retail space. Entrepreneurs also appreciated the input of the Department of Energy on the relevant policies and licensing processes regulating the fuel retail sector".

key elements to consider before submitting a petrol station site proposal, the different types of licenses that can be applied for and approved by the Department as well as the opportunities available across the petroleum industry value-chain.

NEF-funded entrepreneur, Mr Andrew Keisimang of Africa Devo, a Kimberly-based construction and property-development company, shared his experiences of the NEF's funding application process as well as his challenges with other mainstream commercial funders. "Despite the fact that I had already developed 22 high-end and well finished units with 80% pre-sale agreements, the banks were still reluctant to fund the development. However, after a very thorough due diligence process undertaken by NEF staff whom I found were

eager to assist, I was able to secure funding to the tune of R15 million," he said.

Mr Bongumusa Biyela, NEF Regional Manager in the province, challenged attendees to submit bankable business plans to help grow inclusive growth in the Northern Cape.

Among the key requirements shared by the oil companies were the importance of entrepreneurial and commercial thinking, the ability to build relationships and stakeholder engagements

and the willingness to be a brand ambassador as well as commitment and passion.

All the speakers at the Expo were in agreement that as set out in the National Development Plan, the support and growth of SMEs is one of the key job drivers and is pivotal to creating meaningful and sustainable employment by 2030. The next Empowerment Expo will be held on Tuesday, 24 October 2017, at the East London IDZ in the Eastern Cape.

### Stakeholder gallery



The National Empowerment fund used one of the newest convention centers in South Africa. This conference venue can accommodate up to 2500 delegates. It has an outdoor auditorium, on site chef and dedicated staff. The Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre has the capacity to host big meetings, including international conferences. To top it all this conference venue is situated directly opposite the world renowned Kimberley Big Hole and 4 star accommodation. The facility was designed to be multifunctional and can provide a large flat floor area suitable for events such as: ballroom dancing, boxing, martial arts and gymnastics. It is also an ideal venue for religious gatherings, mass performances and graduation ceremonies. The convention center was named after Mittah Seperepere, who was a significant political leader in the province. Mme Mittah was also the provincial chairwoman of the ANC Women's League.