

MEDIA STATEMENT

MEC MAKALO MOHALE SHARES DESTEA'S ACHIEVEMENTS AS PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S REPORT BACK CAMPAIGN

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The current Free State Provincial Government administration entered into office just after the May 2019 elections. This year marks 3 years of office and the Executive Council (EXCO), led by Premier Sefora Ntombela, decided to embark on a massive report back campaign as part of a transparency and accountability initiative.

The MEC for DESTEA Mr. Makalo Mohale became the first Free State MEC to participate in the provincial "Administration Report Back" awareness and public education campaign. His report was aimed at publicizing DESTEA's service delivery achievements as part of the Free State Government.

Listing achievements under his portfolio, which include economic and small business development, tourism, and environmental affairs and conservation, MEC Mohale highlighted the progress made since 2019.

MEC Mohale detailed progress in the following programs:

- Trade and investment promotion;
- Enterprise support programs (including the rolling out of the Industrialization Support Incentive);
- Business regulation;
- Economic infrastructure;
- Economic research and funding.

In October 2019, the Department hosted the inaugural Investment Summit, which culminated in the development of an Investment Booklet. These initiatives have attracted massive investment into our Industrial Parks and the Maluti-a-Phofung SEZ. To date, investments amounting to **R1. 325 billion** have been invested into the Free State resulting in a potential to breed **2 391** job opportunities.

The achievements involving the enterprise support programmes are divided into the Business Development Support Incentive, the Industrial Support Incentives (which has to date spent over **R7 million** for rental subsidies and machinery aimed at supporting manufacturing enterprises) and the Economic Recovery Incentives which saw over **R74 million** in funding being awarded to Free State business to combat the financial impact of the lockdown regulations enforced due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Department has also funded the YES 4 Youth Programme, aimed at empowering the Free State's youth, to the value of **R1 million**. Other programmes and initiatives implemented by the Department include the Retail Initiatives Programme, the Supplier Development Initiatives, the Stokvel Support Programme and the Access to markets initiative which educates consumers on available local products.



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FREE STATE PROVINCE

As part of the compliance inspections enforced by the Department under the Business Act of 1991, **88** businesses and **602** businesses were inspected for compliance. These inspections led to the arrests of **44** individuals by the South African Police Service (SAPS) after it was found that they were in contravention with the Act. With the interests of both businesses and consumers at heart, the Department has resolved **35** Consumer Affairs Court cases resulting in the resolved value of over **R1.5 million**. The Department will also be publishing the Free State Local Economic Development and Transformation Bill aimed at ensuring business compliance while creating a conducive environment for economic development for all industries.

Economic infrastructure is crucial for the development of the Free State economy and DESTEA continues to support SMME hubs in Botshabelo, Parys, Ficksburg and Mangaung. The Department has also implemented a Rent-A-Desk Programme aimed at providing SMME's with office space.

Tourism and Environmental Affairs are also part of the Department's portfolio and various strides have been made under both to signify the achievements of the Department, and to elevate its image nationally and internationally. Ten **Kasi Tourism** campaigns were facilitated in towns all over the Free State aimed at marketing and promoting local tourism. DESTEA is also currently procuring an **Online Booking and Revenue Management System** for state-owned reserves and resorts and will be introducing **billboard advertising** to increase the visibility of the Free State as a tourism destination of choice.

The Good Green Deeds programme, aimed at environmental management, has led to the cleaning up of **38** Free State towns and the approximate creation of **735** jobs. The province's **6** reserves and resorts have also received upgrades and the Bill to donate game to **40** black game ranchers has been approved by the Free State Legislature. **90** SMMEs have been supported so far as part of the Department's promotion of black business entrepreneurship within the waste economy and **233** waste pickers have been trained on Social Enterprise Development.

"Our goal as this administration is to see the transformation of the Free State economy in totality. We want to see the Free State economy less reliant on the primary sector, but one which is able to see a raw material being moved from the soil to the shelves without it leaving the shores of this province. We would also like to see black people, youth, women and people with disabilities playing a practical role in all value chains of the sectors of our economy" – MEC Mohale said.

Broadcasted on 7 community stations, as well national radio, the report back sessions, were implemented under the theme "Building the Free State We Want", and are part of a three-week campaign aimed at ensuring that residents of the Free State are informed and updated on the Free State's Provincial Government's achievements since the beginning of the 6th administration.

"The time when the people of the Free State participated in the economy only as employees is over" – MEC Mohale concluded.

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