



**destea**

department of  
Economic, Small Business Development,  
Tourism and Environmental Affairs  
FREE STATE PROVINCE

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### DESTEA SET UP PROVINCIAL COVID-19 BUSINESS RELIEF TASK TEAM

07 May 2020

**Bloemfontein.** The declaration of the national state of disaster on the 15<sup>th</sup> March and the subsequent announcement of the national lockdown from 27 March 2020 by President Cyril Ramaphosa to curb the spread of COVID 19 would inevitably have serious impact on the economy of the Country.

Many businesses, particularly small business are already feeling the harsh consequences of the lockdown and might find it difficult to come out of the situation without the intervention of the government. The challenge, during this pandemic, as President Cyril Ramaphosa alludes, is how to look after all South Africans, especially the poor, while minimising infection rates, keeping firms alive, and saving as many jobs as possible.

In response to the devastation of the pandemic to small businesses, different national departments have announced relief packages for different sectors. Working with different national departments, the Free State Provincial Government is developing systems to ensure that Free State enterprises also get the opportunity to participate in the supply of goods and services required in the fight against the spread of Covid-19.

At a recent meeting with chambers of business in the Free State, the low number of Free State companies benefiting from the relief packages, as they are currently designed was raised sharply. The challenge with businesses migrating to e-commerce as a new normal – digital divide was highlighted as one of the biggest stumbling blocks for Free State enterprises applying for incentives.

The meeting agreed, among others, that DESTEA must take a centre stage in communication funding opportunities whilst also ensuring that there is better funding for FS enterprises. To enhance these efforts, it was further agreed that a **Provincial Covid-19 Business Relief Task Team** which will consist of representatives from DESTEA, Provincial Treasury, SALGA and Chambers be established.

This task team, led by DESTEA, will meet weekly to monitor progress and ensure that where urgent interventions are needed, they are made.

**[END]**

**Issued by the Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism**

**Media enquiries: Kgotso Tau – 082 833 9595 / [tauk@destea.gov.za](mailto:tauk@destea.gov.za)**