

R650m for Gauteng, Massmart partnership

PRETORIA: A partnership between the Gauteng province and Massmart will result in the establishment of 500 retail shops within the province's townships...

"Massmart partnership will result in a R650 million cash injection into various townships across Gauteng," said the Gauteng MEC for Economic Development, Environment, Agriculture and Rural Development, Lebogang Maile.

Speaking on Tuesday during a media briefing, before his Budget Vote at the Gauteng Provincial Legislature, he said the partnership will give township entrepreneurs ownership opportunities in the shops.

The project will be piloted across the six townships - Katlehong, Atteridgeville, Sharpville, Randfontein, Alexandra and Khutsong.

More than 1,000 jobs are expected to be created as part of the project.



Image credit: <http://www.massmart.co.za/>

MEC Maile's Budget Vote outlines the key priorities of the two departments for the 2015/16 financial year, in line with Gauteng government's ten-pillar program for radical transformation, modernisation and reindustrialisation of the economy.

He said more than 280 township businesses in construction and building maintenance companies are undertaking government construction projects, maintenance of electricity as well as lighting, plumbing and the structural upkeep of government buildings which include schools, hospitals and police stations.

A total of 53 townships based and black-owned clothing and textile businesses are currently supplying linen to public hospitals in Gauteng.

"Gauteng will introduce a new and completely automated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system that will allow prospective investors to submit their applications with supporting documents online while receiving online feedback about the status of their application as it goes through various phases," MEC Maile said.

The new automated system will significantly reduce the turnaround time for environmental impact assessments and decision making.

It will reduce the turnaround time from an average of 18 months to 90 days.

"This new system will allow everyone, including communities and prospective investors to understand the planned land use patterns and government's plans when it comes to land use in Gauteng," he said.

Some of the key projects for 2015/16 included an investment of R222 million for an incubation facility through which eight black owned small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) will supply parts and components for the Nissan Pickup which is due for production in 2018.

"This project will create 27,000 jobs in the medium to long term and increase black participation in the automotive industry," MEC Maile said.

The province has also allocated R8 million while the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) allocated R200 million to kick-start the OR Tambo IDZ project.

"The IDZ will boost manufacturing capability in targeted, export driven sectors such as pharmaceuticals and electronics assembly," she said.

MEC Maile said an amount of R3 billion has been allocated to spur the industrialisation of the Western and Southern Corridors through agro-processing, green industries and tourism.

Public hospitals will source 40% of their fresh produce supplies from black emerging farmers.

Gauteng aims to increase this to 80% by the year 2016.



Image credit: <http://www.massmart.co.za/>

"Seven-million rand has been committed to infrastructure upgrades at the Vereeniging Fresh Produce Market," he said.

MEC Maile's department is also leading the work to establish four agri-parks in Bekkersdal, Khutsong, Sebokeng and Eikenhof.

"The agri-parks will not only increase the volume of economic activity in townships but will expose unemployed youths to farming opportunities, provide economic infrastructure for clustered agricultural production and encourage agricultural value-adding activities in townships," he said.

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