



the dtic

Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 1082

Mr M Khoza (EFF) to ask the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition:

In light of projected slow economic growth and persistent infrastructure backlogs affecting rural municipalities, what targeted industrial and trade interventions will directly stimulate (a) rural production, (b) agro-processing and (c) small enterprise development to prevent the further economic decline of rural communities? NW1212E

REPLY

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (**the dtic**) has managed and undertaken a number of trade interventions during the 2025/26 financial year to stimulate South African exports, which also contribute to rural production, agro-processing and small enterprise developments. These interventions include market access negotiations, export promotion and exporter development initiatives which are in line with the adopted 'butterfly strategy', aimed at expanding exports to existing markets and gaining access to new and emerging markets globally, including in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Middle East. Furthermore, the strategy prioritizes the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). More specifically the following were undertaken during the 2025/26 financial year, and is planned to take forward in the new financial year:

(a) Stimulate rural production

the dtic supports the development of the agro-processing sector through targeted programmes and industrial policy aimed at strengthening rural value chains and stimulating economic growth. Through initiatives such as the Agro-Processing Support Scheme, the department provides financial incentives for investment in processing



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infrastructure, machinery and technology to expand productive capacity and create jobs. In addition, localisation policies under the Industrial Policy and sector initiatives such as the Sectorial Plans encourage greater domestic sourcing of raw materials and agricultural inputs, thereby creating market opportunities for rural producers and increasing the participation of emerging enterprises in formal value chains.

These initiatives aim to strengthen value chains and increase the participation of emerging producers in the formal economy.

Through the Export Marketing and Investment Assistance scheme (EMIA), **the dtic** has financially assisted 132 South African companies in the rural areas and municipalities outside the main metros to participate in export promotion exhibitions and missions.

(b) Agro-Processing

To increase value addition and employment in rural areas, **the dtic** promotes investment in agro-processing industries through financial and non-financial support programmes. **The dtic** also facilitates market access through export promotion programmes such as the Export Marketing and Investment Assistance Scheme, while ensuring fair trade through instruments administered by the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa (ITAC), including trade remedies, standards and tariff measures. In addition, participation in regional and global trade frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area further expands export opportunities for agro-processed products and supports the growth of rural industries.

The department also supports the development of industrial hubs and Special Economic Zones that link rural producers with processors, thereby strengthening agricultural value chains and expanding access to domestic and export markets. These hubs integrate agricultural production with processing, packaging, storage and logistics to improve value addition and market access for rural producers.



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A total of 207 South African entities in the Agro-Processing sector were assisted to participate in export promotion events, which included the China Africa Economic Trade Expo (CAETE); Outward Selling Mission (OSM) to Brazil; OSM to Colombia; OSM to Ghana and Nigeria; FACIM – Maputo International Trade Fair; Gulfood in the UAE; OSM to India; OSM to Qatar; Intra Africa Trade Fair (IATF) in Algeria, Anuga in Germany; the China International Import Expo; OSM to Saudi Arabia, Fruit Logistica; OSM to Indonesia and Singapore; and an OSM to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

(c) Support Small Enterprise Development

Recognising the critical role that small businesses play in rural economies, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (**the dtic**) implements a range of programmes to improve access to finance and market opportunities for small enterprises. Through partnerships with development finance institutions such as the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), the department facilitates funding and investment support for emerging entrepreneurs, including those operating in rural and agro-processing sectors.

In addition, **the dtic** implements enterprise and supplier development initiatives that assist small businesses to build capacity, improve competitiveness and integrate into domestic value chains. Localisation measures and industrial incentives are intended to support increased participation of small enterprises in local markets and, where possible, integration into private sector supply chains.

To assist new exporters, **the dtic** capacitated 345 South African SMMEs through exporter development programmes which focused on export awareness, training and mentoring initiatives.

From a trade negotiation perspective, linked to small enterprise development, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) includes an unprecedented dedicated Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade. The broad objectives of the



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Protocol are to maximise the opportunities presented through the implementation of the Agreement by addressing some of the challenges facing women and youth in trade with a focus on:

- Supporting and enhancing the effective participation of Women and Youth in intra-Africa trade;
- improving the inclusion of Women and Youth in Trade in the implementation of the AfCFTA to achieve sustainable economic development at the national, regional, and continental levels;
- strengthening the capacity of and access to opportunities for Women and Youth in Trade;
- promoting value addition and innovation for increased imports and exports by Women and Youth in Trade;
- supporting the inclusion of Women and Youth in regional and continental value chains; and
- supporting measures that promote the formalisation of trade activities of Women and Youth.

This Protocol was adopted by the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in February 2024. South Africa has concluded its domestic processes for the ratification of the Protocol and will deposit the instrument of ratification in the near future. South Africa is the first member state to ratify this Protocol.

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