

Notes from the COTII Forum meeting

This meeting took place on the 25 October 2013 and was hosted by SEDA, in their new offices located in Hatfield. There were a number of organisations represented at the meeting including SEDA, SEFA, CIPC, SABSA, Proudly SA and CSIR. The guest speaker was Michelle Viljoen from the Department of Economic Development (EDD).

- Outstanding matters - clarification of a home for COTII, will this be under EDD or the dti still?
- Refinement of the terms of reference for COTII. e.g. will they be the new provincial coordinators?

Michelle provided an informal presentation indicating that she is part of a task team that has been mandated by the two DGs from dti and EDD to look at the following issues:

- * how services purchased by government from SMMEs can be increased?
- * how can efficiencies and support measures on SMMEs be improved?
- * how can the regulatory on SMMEs be reduced?
- * how can development of SMMEs be upscaled especially in the areas of youth, women and people with disabilities?

Members of the task team are SEDA, SEFA, IDC, the dti and EDD. Looking at a FORUM that coordinates government thinking around small business. There is need to manage duplication that is currently taking place. Provincial coordination is seen as an essential component of such a process. A comprehensive review is being done on government spending on small businesses and cooperatives.

EDD interested in knowing how much is going where and how much of that is going around and have a sense that it is not creating the right impact. There is an informal strategy to support the informal sector and that the dti has developed a township strategy that focuses on the informal sector. EDD developing an SMME toolkit (focuses on government agencies and departments on the support they are providing for small business). Final version will be out on the 14 November 2013. She indicated that government was looking at setting up an SMME hotline and that government was also researching on red tape reduction and SMME taxes.

* Don Mashele from SEFA reported that his organisation together with the IDC and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) had set up a R1 billion fund for the next three years to assist youth owned enterprises. They will follow established criteria except that there will be some flexibility in the following areas - own contribution, security and interest rate. The assessment of the deals will strictly be based on financial viability, and the NYDA will provide strong business support.

* Presentations were made by the outstanding institutions that had not made presentations i.e. SEDA, SABS, Proudly SA.

Follow up meeting to look at finalisation of the department to have custody of COTII and refinement of the Terms of Reference will take place possibly first week of December 2013.