



Johannesburg, Wednesday 18 July 2012 – The South African Institute of Chartered Accounts (SAICA) and the Economic Development Department have launched the Business Hub and Skills Training Programme. This collaborative initiative will provide training to unemployed accounting graduates to enhance their practical accounting skills and workplace readiness.

Contributing towards economic transformation in the country, the Skills Training Programme will recruit unemployed accounting graduates to participate in the training component of the project. The first intake of graduates all hold BCom Accounting or equivalent university qualifications, and will receive training provided by Guarantee Trust, which will cover both life skills and technical skills, incorporating simulated training of real work in real companies.

Speaking at the launch event, Economic Development Department Minister Ebrahim Patel said;

“To achieve the vision that we have set ourselves in the [New Growth Path](#) ([NGP](#)) of creating five million new jobs by 2020, we need a collaborative effort by all stakeholders in our society to respond to this massive task. The launch of this Business Hub and Training Centre initiative is part of that response as it brings together a range of stakeholders who will contribute to increasing skills, creating jobs, and supporting small business development. As we celebrate Mandela Day today, we must recognise that it is this kind of public interest role that we need more organisations to play, as it contributes towards creating the kind of society that we are striving for.”

Central to addressing the challenges of unemployment, inequality and poor growth is an improvement in the quality of support to the small business sector. In considering the potential sources of employment growth, the NGP makes mention of the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in job creation.

SAICA's CEO Matsobane Matlwa added that "South Africa needs to provide opportunities to all, yet historical economic disadvantages continue to have an adverse effect on tens of millions of citizens". He explained this is particularly true in education and employment, which are identified as pressing challenges facing the country.

"As the chartered accountancy profession, we have decided to play a leading role in addressing the high unemployment levels in the country, and at the same time, growing the nation's economy. We are proud of the fact that Government, through the Economic Development Department, considered working with us on this job-creation project. We are aware that one of the challenges we have in the country is unemployed graduates. It is sad to see these youths who have dedicated three or more years towards acquiring a skill, only to be unemployed," Matlwa said.

SAICA's strategic partners *Softline Pastel* will fund the capital set up costs of the Business Hub as well as providing the required accounting software. SoftlinePastel, has played an integral part in many of SAICA's development and upliftment projects and initiatives.

Speaking at the same event, Guarantee Trust Joint MD Alan Murray said Guarantee Trust is responsible for the training content of this program. "The graduates will be put through a well-tested skills program covering both Life Skills and Technical Skills training modules as mentioned above. An interesting part of this process will be a 'Virtual Office' module where graduates will deal with real companies using their original accounting documents. This will be ideal preparation for what lies ahead in the Business Hub. Completing these various simulation training modules will provide the 'work experience' so needed by the marketplace."

Completion: On completion of the training, at least 70% of the graduates will be placed in employment.

"The training program will be completed by early December 2012 with placement into the Business Hub and into employment thereafter. This is an exciting initiative showing deep foresight by both SAICA and the Department of Economic Development into the needs of small business in South Africa at the same time providing employment opportunities for unemployed

graduates”, Murray concluded.

On completion of the training, at least 70% of the graduates will be placed in employment. The remaining graduates will be placed in the Business Hub which will offer back-office accounting support to Entrepreneurs and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the country, with a turnover of up to R10 million per annum, as well as within small and medium enterprises within the accounting sector. The SME Accounting and Auditing firms as well as commerce and industry training offices will therefore also benefit from placement of work-ready graduates. The effective achievement of the overall transformation objectives for the accountancy profession can only be brought about through the consolidated efforts of all stakeholders, from funders to training institutions, to the students themselves and by SAICA.

Picture gallery for the Business Hub and Skills Training Programm

{rokbox album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/001.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/002.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/003.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/004.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/005.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/006.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/007.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/008.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/009.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/010.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/011.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/012.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/013.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/014.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/015.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/016.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/017.jpg{/rokbox} {rokbox
album=|BusinessHub|}images/stories/bizhub/018.jpg{/rokbox}