



**economic
development**

Economic Development Department
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Economic Development Department (EDD) Knowledge Network e-bulletin

What is the impact of the knowledge networks on government and the South African economy?

The Economic Development Department (EDD) as a coordinating department is tasked with catalysing the transformation of the South African economic landscape and has adopted in 2010 the New Growth Path (NGP) as the key policy in this regard. A key feature of the NGP is that economic growth needs to be underpinned by net employment creation and greater equity in how socio-economic benefits are spread.

A number of departments and social partners have been identified as key to the success of the NGP and more recently with the signing of the accords namely; national skills accord, green economy accord, basic education and partnerships with schools accord, local procurement accord, and youth employment accord have become critical. In order for interventions and policy proposals in this regard to be suitably tested there needs to be a platform for dialogue.

Since 1994, the South African state has witnessed some social and economic structural changes that can be attributed to engagements and debates on how to enhance competition in certain sectors of the economy; how to increase productivity of smallholder farmers; how to adequately provide small business support and how to build capacity for service delivery across all spheres and sectors of government. The EDD coordinated Knowledge Network sessions thus provides important platforms for critical discussions on these areas pertinent to economic development. The following themes have been internally identified for the development of Knowledge Networks in this regard and these themes are; small business, African development, green economy, competition policy, spatial planning, and infrastructure development. These themes indicate areas where impact will be created through the development and maintenance of a knowledge network.

So if these processes are organically occurring within the society why then do we need a network? The EDD coordinated Knowledge Network is an approach that is aimed to broaden the participation and representation of all social partners and pool together knowledge and resources that enhance dialogue on economic issues. The Knowledge Networks will stimulate the sharing of information, concepts, plans and strategies regarding economic development issues within the context of the NGP. The networks will promote interaction by providing a platform for government and its social partners to strengthen their communication. Knowledge networks will be a result of sustained engagement on key economic development themes identified by the department. This theme based engagement supported by periodic network sessions with key social partners relevant to the theme will ultimately assist in identifying and packaging issues, concepts and approaches that may ultimately influence policy, plans and strategies that relate to the thematic area. The creation and sustaining of knowledge networks requires hard work, time and commitment. But the magnitude of the challenge that lies ahead to create and sustain decent jobs for the sake of our future generations requires us to engage in an ongoing and robust matter.

To express interest in being involved in any of the Economic Development Department Knowledge Networks themes, please contact Leslie Nyagah on LNyagah@economic.go.za.