

FP&M SETA reveals the way forward

The Fibre Processing & Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (FP&M SETA) is currently being repositioned, and at the core of this strategy are efficient and effective skills development processes.



Strategy-driven services and partnerships will be used and created to contribute to sector competitiveness, transformation and ultimately, economic growth. Central to the repositioning of the FP&M SETA, is the implementation of a new business model designed to optimise organisational performance through high performing staff, meticulous planning and professional execution of strategic projects including the requisite risk mitigation measures. A further priority will be to build and strengthen relationships with stakeholders across all sub-sectors of the FP&M SETA.

"The vision of the FP&M SETA is to be recognized as a credible and effective skills development partner ensuring the delivery of service excellence that yields a highly-skilled world-class workforce through specific skills development interventions", says Felling Yende, FP&M SETA chief executive officer.

"FP&M SETA will essentially be driving sector competitiveness, transformation and economic growth amongst related industries, however it must always be remembered that the SETA will only ever be as strong as its partnerships with employers and labour organisations."

Considering that FP&M SETA's key mandate is to implement the objectives of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS III), it is essential that the intention of NSDS III is clearly understood, as follows:

- Increase access to training and skills development opportunities
- Transform inequities linked to class, race, gender, age and disability
- Address the challenges of skills shortages and mismatches
- Improve productivity in the economy
- Increase the focus on skills development linked to rural development

"Our role is to facilitate skills development in the sub-sectors that we represent in line with the objectives of NSDS III," says Yende. "During 2014/15, our main focus is the placement of learners and graduates in work integrated learning (WIL) programmes through partnerships between FP&M SETA employers and public learning institutions, particularly the training and placement of artisans. There is no value in training unemployed youth if they are not given the opportunity to apply the skills they have learnt."

A further priority is to provide skills development support to small and new ventures operating in the FP&M sector in order to grow their businesses.

"In addition, we have to address the critical and scarce skills required in the FP&M sector, through a consolidated skills development approach so that the capacity of the sector can be supported to become economically sustainable and globally competitive and therefore respond to learner placements." said Yende.

The FP&M SETA constitutes thirteen sub-sectors that are classified individually and managed as a value chain. This SETA represents and services the following economic and industrial sectors - clothing, footwear, forestry, furniture, general goods, leather, packaging, print media, printing, publishing, pulp & paper, textiles and wood products.

Together the sub-sectors of the FP&M SETA create enormous value in the lives of consumers. By converting lumber, pulp natural or synthetic fibres, animal skins and hides, the resultant manufactured products include furniture, clothing, shoes, protective equipment, paper, printed products and industrial fabrics, to name but a few.

"The scope of coverage of the FP&M SETA is vast and the future success depends on our capacity to master advanced technology domains, to innovate and to meet the needs of customers in terms of quality, price and delivery," comments Yende.

Numerous projects, addressing the scarce and critical skills needs of the FP&M sector are currently underway, which are funded through FP&M SETA discretionary grants.

These projects include the provision of artisan training, learnership initiatives and skills programmes that are offered by public training institutions, accredited manufacturing companies as well as accredited CBOs, NGOs or NPOs.

Successful partnerships between the FP&M SETA, employers and public training providers, make it possible for graduates to be placed in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programmes.

Further opportunities to apply for discretionary grants from FP&M SETA will be advertised in August 2014.

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