

GEP support puts Gauteng Tooling Industry back on the road

The Gauteng Enterprise Propeller's (GEP) investment into the Gauteng Tooling Initiative (GTI) has enabled tooling companies to benefit from global benchmarking practices as well as the development of an incubator environment that will allow them to successfully compete with the massive volume of tooling that is currently being imported into the country.



Since 2011, financial support provided by the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP), has given GTI the opportunity to fulfil its mission of revitalising the local tooling industry by enabling the participation of small tooling companies in the local economy and also providing access to the huge market for automotive tooling that is currently being imported.

To date, initial funding during the pilot phase has facilitated the benchmarking of more than ten companies in Gauteng, using methodologies developed by the internationally renowned Fraunhofer Institute at the University of Aachen in Germany. The aim of these benchmarking practices is to allow individual tool making companies to identify exactly how competitive they are and what their strengths and weaknesses are.

This is followed by a gap analysis to understand what needs to be improved and what support they would need to implement the required changes. External service providers such as ThinkTank Engineering then assist participating companies to implement these simple visual but paradigm shifting manufacturing techniques.

As a result of the benchmarking and gap analysis exercises, those tooling companies in Gauteng that have implemented the required changes have been able to improve their focus on client requirements with positive results for both the participating companies and its clients. This new thinking has also significantly increased the confidence of management to compete in international markets.

Furthermore, the economy as a whole has also benefitted from this initiative through the creation of employment opportunities and an increased awareness of tool making as a career amongst the youth of South Africa.

In addition to the initial funding, the GEP and GTI have also signed a funding agreement earlier this year to establish a viable tool making cluster to ensure market access to SMME and B-BBEE companies now entering the industry. These companies will in future drive the localisation for the future of the tool making industry to contribute to the manufacturing environment.