

Future skills roadmap for food, beverage sector launches

The FoodBev Manufacturing Seta and BRICS Business Council Skills Development Working Group (SDWG) launched the *Atlas of Emerging Jobs* on Thursday, 8 June 2023, as part of a structured plan to develop future skills for economic growth.



Sherrie Donaldson, project director for the Atlas project and BRICS Business Council Skills Development Working Group member

Sherrie Donaldson, project director for the Atlas project and BRICS Business Council Skills Development Working Group member, explains that the *Atlas of Emerging Jobs* is a map which details possible future, redundant and transforming jobs. “The SDWG is partnering with various sector bodies to create a pipeline of skills for future and emerging jobs that will ensure that South African businesses can be competitive against our BRICS counterparts.

The first *Atlas of Emerging Jobs* was developed with the FoodBev Manufacturing Seta and is focused on the food and beverage manufacturing sector. It highlights 21 possible new job occupations, including circular economy designer, food waste recycling specialist and food manufacturing cyber security specialist. Seven job occupations have been identified as changing, for instance a farm worker, for instance, will transform to a farm technician; food scientists and nutritionists’ job occupations will merge into a bio-nutritionist function and a logistics planner will become a personalised logistician.

Adaptation and direction

There are 10 occupations at risk in the food and beverage sector due to automation and robotics. The sector’s vision is to upskill and re-skill workers so that workforce reduction is minimised. With clear and credible direction from the *Atlas*, the sector is now able to develop new curricula for emerging jobs and adapt current programmes for needed future skills. Career guidance tools can be developed to attract people to emerging jobs.

“The methodology can be replicated by other sectors, provinces and even cities. A special economic zone (SEZ) for instance could commission an *Atlas* for the zone to inform investment and improve employment opportunities,” says Donaldson.

Says Nokuthula Selamolela, CEO at FoodBev Manufacturing Seta, “We have focused on understanding the future of our sector, which challenges must be addressed and the necessary steps that need to be taken to build this future. With this process complete, we are now prioritising skills development to avoid future skills gaps.”

An advanced workforce will also make South Africa an attractive investment destination and allow us to stop importing skills. It is critical that South Africa implements these skills at BRICS standards.

Leveraging external skills, knowledge

“We can leverage BRICS relationships to develop curricula and standards for training in future skills,” says Donaldson. “One of the ways to do this is by participating in the annual BRICS Future Skills Challenge. This international challenge is being hosted in South Africa this year and we are going to enter 120 competitors.”

SA’s team of competitors are young professionals and students aged between 16 and 35 who are skilled in robotic process automation, mobile app development, data science and digital factory skills amongst others.

Online training camps are held for SA teams ahead of the competition. Each skills area has the support of at least one dedicated expert with deep working knowledge in their specific field of expertise. Those selected to participate from BRICS countries solve real-world problems and devised solutions using their specific skills.

“It is time for companies and government agencies in all sectors to take proactive steps in their respective industries. Each sector needs to look critically at the skills currently available and those that are needed in the future. Contact BRICS Future Skills to see how we can help to develop the roadmap for your sector and to learn more about sponsorship of the BRICS Skills Challenge 2023 which is being hosted in South Africa,” concludes Donaldson.

Ends

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