

Coega, DTI hosts workshop to stimulate investment in agro-processing

More than 20 companies from the Eastern Cape's agriculture/agro-processing sector attended a workshop conducted by the Coega Development Corporation (CDC) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) focusing on the Agro-Processing Support Scheme (APPS) - an incentive scheme created by the DTI to develop and grow the agro-processing sector.

Held at the CDC Business Centre the workshop also aimed to inform the Eastern Cape-based companies of the opening of the second application window of the APSS that will remain open until January 2018.



Mark Alard, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Customer Care, DTI

The Coega SEZ is home to a number of agro-processing companies such as Coega Dairy, Dynamic Commodities, and Famous Brands, to name but a few. Mark Alard, director of Strategic Partnerships and Customer Care from the DTI highlighted that if companies wanted to grow their businesses “Coega is the right place to be.”

The workshop emphasized that the DTI’s core objective for the incentive scheme was to stimulate investment by South African agro-processing and agribusiness enterprises.

Alard in the workshop identified five key sub-sectors that the incentive scheme is targeting:

1. Food and beverage processing: this includes black winemakers;
2. Furniture manufacturing;
3. Fibre processing;
4. Feed production; and
5. Fertiliser production

Transforming and revitalising the agro-processing sector

“The scheme aims to increase capacity, create employment, boost competitiveness and contribute to transformation in these agro-processing sub-sectors,” says Alard. In support of this approach, Dr. Keith du Plessis, project development manager of the agro-processing sector for the Coega SEZ highlighted that “the agro-processing industry is vital for

development in the Eastern Cape as it has the potential to create sustainable employment up and downstream.”

The effect of the APSS is to revitalise the potential of the South African agro-processing sector. The workshop identified backward linkages with primary sectors and forward linkages with downstream industries.

The workshop highlighted the benefits of APPS to offer support to new business entities as well as existing businesses on a cost-sharing basis of between 20% and 30% based on the applicants business plan to a maximum of R20m.

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