



**merSETA**

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING  
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

ISO 9001:2015

# Achieve

THOUGHT LEADER IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

MARCH 2020 | ISSUE 45



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**Hardest Working Sales  
Person Hails the Merseta  
for his Achievements**  
—

**Against All Odds, an Orphan  
Became a Mechanical Lecturer**  
—

**Business Venture Blossomed  
Under The Sun**  
—



**higher education  
& training**

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SETA NEWS | VIEW FROM THE TOP  
FEATURES | EVENTS OF THE QUARTER**



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## VALUES

### **WE CARE:**

It's about caring for people we render services to.

### **WE BELONG:**

It's about working together with colleagues.

### **WE SERVE:**

It's about going beyond the call of duty.



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## VISION

Leaders in closing the skills gap.

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## MISSION

To increase access to high quality and relevant skills development and training opportunities to support economic growth in order to reduce inequalities and unemployment and to promote employability and participation in the economy.

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# TALKING NOTES



**C** OVID-19 has taken over the streets of every village, every city and every town in all parts of the world and life as we know it has changed drastically in a short space of time!

These are extraordinary times, with extraordinary challenges. South Africa suffered a double-impact during this unfortunate period as ratings agency Moody's cut the country's sovereign rating to sub-investment grade. This means the country now has a junk rating from all three major international ratings agencies.

Businesses and organisations around the world have taken a hard-knock as a result of imposed lockdowns to contain the spread of the virus. Unemployment is skyrocketing, poverty-stricken communities are battling to put food on the table and many people cannot help but wonder, what is next?

According to an article published on the World Economic Forum website in April 2020, confirmed

cases of the COVID-19 coronavirus have surpassed 2.6 million globally. Businesses are battling with lost revenue and disrupted supply chains as factory shutdowns and quarantine measures spread across the globe, restricting movement and commerce.

This is an indication of how an economic crisis is unfolding globally. The automotive industry in South Africa has taken a heavy blow as a result of restrictions imposed by this pandemic, due to the swift and severe impact on the globally integrated automotive industry.

A report by Deloitte titled: "The impact of COVID-19 on the South African Automotive Sector" states that the automotive industry is already grappling with rapid change and disruption:...congested cities with inadequate infrastructure deterring car purchasing; technological shifts toward embracing new battery elective vehicle (BEV) power; and the rise of new competitors moving into the mobility industry."

A small beacon of hope for the industry in South Africa is that the report states the newly created Automotive Industry Transformation Fund (AITF) – currently capitalised to the tune of R6bn, with a mandate to support black participation in the automotive supply chain -- could serve as a support mechanism for the industry over the medium-term.

As the merSETA, we are not immune to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. However, we have put measures in place to ensure we continue to provide our stakeholders with support and services.

These measures include the fact we have setup remote working arrangements to ensure staff are able to work from home and remain contactable during this lockdown period.

As citizens, the best we can do is to heed the call by governments to comply with restrictions put in place as world leaders work tirelessly to defuse this ticking time-bomb that has the potential to bring economies to their knees.

Our success stories in this issue of Achieve speak to the great work that we do as an organisation and will continue to do during these unprecedented circumstances.

One such story is that of Rachel Matlhamela, a young woman from Limpopo, who launched a successful business, operating from the side of the road.

The partnerships we have forged with various institutions to ensure South African youth receive training remain intact. These include one with the Office of the Premier in the Free State to ensure orphans, who leave orphanages, are trained and equipped with the skills to find employment and launch businesses.

We will emerge from the constraints and challenges of this pandemic and the merSETA continues to work tirelessly to ensure that it's all hands on deck once we resume normal operations post the lockdown period.

**Temana Masekela**

# VIEW FROM THE TOP

## The merSETA Takes Precautionary Measures Against COVID-19

As the world reels from the impact of COVID-19, the merSETA has embarked on a host of precautionary measures to stem the tide of this vicious pandemic.

But at the same time, I must state upfront that we are continuing our digital business as usual, processing mandatory and discretionary grant applications and tending to all stakeholder needs.

In light of the national state of disaster announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa and after careful consideration, we have found it necessary to implement the following actions towards mitigating the COVID-19 risks:

### STAKEHOLDER RELATED MEETINGS AND EVENTS:

All regional and national stakeholder meetings and events have been suspended with effect from March 19 until further notice.

### CONTAMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE:

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 places an obligation on employers to ensure a healthy work environment. In line with this, a decision has been taken that the merSETA Quality Assurers (QAs) and Client Liaison Officers (CLOs) will be office-bound with immediate effect and will no longer perform site visits.

All our staff, including QAs and CLOs, will remain available telephonically

on either landlines or cellular telephones or digitally via email so as to continue to provide stakeholder support.

In the interest of the community at large, our stakeholders are requested to refrain from physically visiting any one of our offices. Stakeholders are requested to contact us telephonically and digitally. If, in exceptional circumstance, a stakeholder has a need to enter our premises they will be required to arrive with their own computer and telephone equipment for purposes of accessing the merSETA NSDM System. They will also need to comply with strict sanitisation measures upon arrival and whilst on our premises.

While our commitment to offering our stakeholders with support and service excellence remains unchanged, we believe these decisions can contribute to keeping both our stakeholders and employees healthy for longer.

We realise that this may cause some inconvenience. However, we are committed to immediate and responsible actions in order to support the government's initiatives to curb the COVID-19 infections.

We will regularly review the necessity of the abovementioned measures and will return to normal as soon as it is safe.

Stakeholders are also reminded that the window for our discretionary grants applications remains open until May 31 2020.



“

We are committed to immediate and responsible actions in order to support the government's initiatives to curb the COVID-19 infections.

”

You are reminded to use our NSDMS to apply for such grants.

I wish you the best during these trying times.

'Till next month.

**Mr Wayne Adams**  
merSETA Acting CEO

# HARDEST WORKING SALES PERSON HAILS THE MERSETA FOR HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

By Penelope Dlamini



» Selaelo Ramaru at his office in Polokwane.

**H**ard-work and determination made him an expert in what he does, and Selaelo Ramaru says he has the merSETA to thank for this.

Ramaru had no qualifications nor the skills required to find suitable employment, because there were no funds for him to further his studies after matric. Despite this, he was determined to launch a successful career for himself so that he could support his single mother and two siblings.

“My father, who was the only bread-winner passed away when I was only 13-years-old. My mother had to find a job to support us and it was a struggle for her,” explains Ramaru.

It was through the merSETA-funded learnership that he was able to get a head-start and has since made great strides which led to him being



» Ramaru with his manager, Wade May.

regarded as the hardest working employee at Conways Polokwane, Limpopo Province.

"After finishing matric, I stayed home for three years without employment. It is hard for one to find a proper job without qualifications and skills. This is when I realised that I had to do something that would make me employable," Ramaru explains.

In 2006, he received a fabrication learnership opportunity at WISPECO Aluminium, funded by the merSETA. Upon completion of the learnership, he was offered an Internal Sales Assistant position at Conways Polokwane.

"This became a stepping stone for me. I worked very hard in enhancing my communication skills because my job entails interaction with different customers and when customers are happy, the company flourishes," he says.

This positive attitude led to him being promoted to Internal Sales Person, a task which he executed with excellence for 12 years. He is responsible for taking and processing customer orders, assists in inducting customers on the systems of Conways and providing

“

I started from the bottom, with no doubt in my mind that I would make something great of my life. Now that I have, my dream is to work harder, grow stronger and become a customer service manager and ultimately a branch manager in the future

”

technical advice as and when required.

His manager, Wade May, speaks very highly of him. "Selaelo is a very hard-working person, always gets the work done to perfection and on time. We are certainly privileged to have an employee of his calibre and foresee a very bright future for him," says May.

Ramaru says that he is deeply humbled by the recognition he receives from his employer, which motivates him to perform at his best at all times. "Having worked for the company for as long as I have, I get great satisfaction when I see it growing from strength to strength year after year," he says.

Growing up in the dusty village of Indermark, North-West of Polokwane, Ramaru explains that he never imagined that he would secure a sustainable employment.

"The merSETA learnership gave me the opportunity of a life time. I am able to provide for my family because of this opportunity and I am very grateful," says Ramaru.

He advises young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds to look beyond their poverty and work hard to achieve their dreams.

"I started from the bottom, with no doubt in my mind that I would make something great of my life. Now that I have, my dream is to work harder, grow stronger and become a customer service manager and ultimately a branch manager in the future," he concludes.



» Ramaru with his colleagues, observing the packaging of material to be delivered to customers.



» Ramaru with one of his colleagues, Maphuti Mashilo.

# AGAINST ALL ODDS, AN ORPHAN BECAME A MECHANICAL LECTURER

By Geozann Matthyssen



» Dimakatso Tsamai.

**G**rowing up as an orphan in a child-headed household would normally be a deterring factor for many young people to finish school.

But Dimakatso Tsamai refused to use this as an excuse. She is now a Mechanical Lecturer at Four Tops Academy in Mogwase in the North West province.

Tsamai's mother passed away when she was four-years-old. Five years later, when she was nine, her father also passed away. This made growing up with her seven siblings, none of whom were employed, an unimaginable difficulty. Luckily, three of her older brothers got jobs and they were able to take care of them.

"My siblings, though older, had no parental skills and although they tried their best to advise me to do better, the decision ultimately hung on my shoulders. I learnt to make

“ This is a completely new ball game for me. I was used to working with grinders in the workshop and had to quickly adjust to working in the office and classroom. ”

decisions that would determine my future at a very young age," explains Tsamai.

Tsamai completed her N6 Mechanical Technology at Orbit TVET College in 2017. In 2018, she received a Mechanical Technology

learnership opportunity at Tlhabane Technical High School in Rustenburg, funded by the merSETA.

Tlhabane Technical High School provided her with theoretical knowledge, while she had to do practical lessons at Four Tops Mechanical Engineering Workshop in Mogwase. Seeing her hard-work and resilience, Four Tops offered her permanent employment as a Mechanical Lecturer at their newly established Four Tops Academy, which started operations in the last trimester of 2019.

"This is a completely new ball game for me. I was used to working with grinders in the workshop and had to quickly adjust to working in the office and classroom," says Tsamai.

Tsamai teaches mechanical subjects at N1 level. She explains that when she chose to study mechanical technology, she was not certain she



would succeed. She soon got into the swing of things and is well on her way to a successful career.

"I learnt to work hard and appreciate every opportunity given to me in life. During practicals, I was always the first to complete tasks and when I felt left behind, I would sacrifice my lunch hour to catch-up. Greater things in life do not come to us because we want them, they come to us because we work for them," she says.

She continues: "Growing up, I was surrounded by intelligent friends who were older and ahead of me in terms of studies. They rarely had time to spend with me because they were busy with their studies. This is when I decided that instead of changing friends, I should align my academic aspirations with theirs, because for me to spend time with them, I had to do what they did."

Tsamai applauds the good work that the merSETA is doing and says she hopes the organisation can reach more young people like herself.

“ I used to hand out pamphlets on the streets promoting products. Had it not been for the opportunity given to me by the merSETA, Tlhabane Technical High School and Four Tops Engineering Workshop, I would probably still be stuck in the streets. ”

This, she says, is because there are many young people desperate to be pulled out of poverty through the



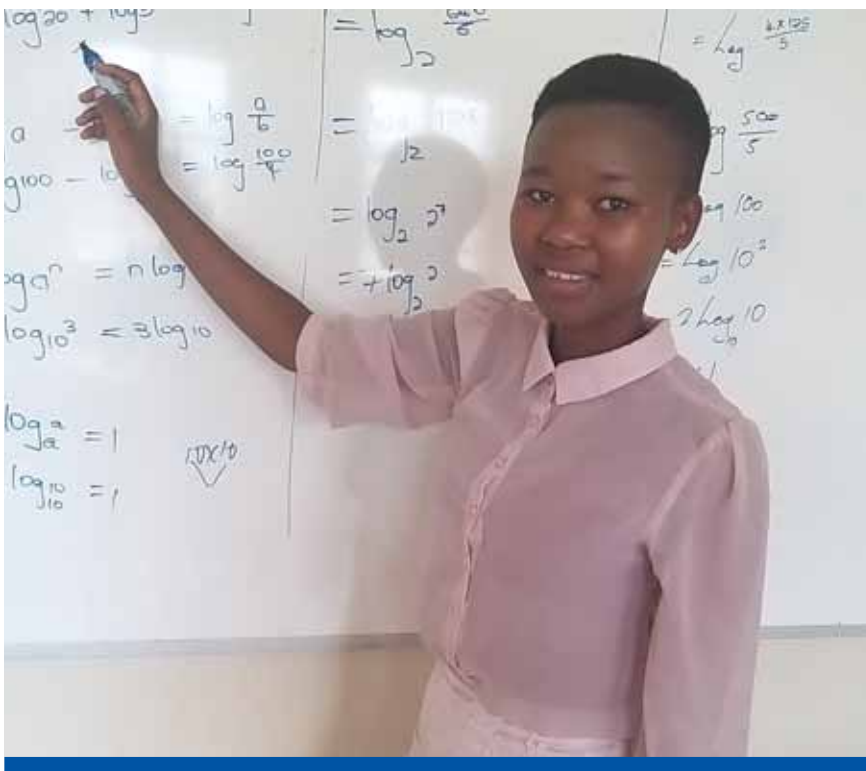
» Tsamai with her Manager, Manaka Mosana.

training opportunity such as the one she received.

"I used to hand out pamphlets on the streets promoting products. Had it not been for the opportunity given to me by the merSETA, Tlhabane Technical High School and Four Tops Engineering Workshop, I would probably still be stuck in the streets," says Tsamai.

Tsamai advises young women who would like to pursue mechanics as a career to let their passion lead the way. "There is no such thing as a male-dominated field. People should stop making decisions based on societal beliefs and the experiences of others," she says.

She concludes: "One does not choose one's fate. You can only choose where you want to go with the help you are provided by others. Growing up was hard and there were times when I wanted to give up, but I always told myself that I did not choose where my journey in life began, but I am certainly choosing where it is going."



» Tsamai demonstrating how she teaches mathematics to her learners.



## BUSINESS VENTURE BLOSSOMED UNDER THE SUN

By Temana Masekela

No amount of heat could stop a highly motivated woman from following her dream of becoming an entrepreneur, despite her working from a pavement, under the blazing hot sun of Thohoyandou in Venda, Limpopo.

Rachel Matthamela began her career journey in 2007 at Skills College in Eersterust, east of Pretoria, studying boiler-making. In 2009, she was offered a Metal Engineering learnership opportunity by WISPECO Aluminium, funded by the merSETA.



» Rachel Matthamela with Masilo Duba, cutting aluminium glass.



» Matthamela with Phumudzo Leboko, taking measurements on aluminium glass before cutting.

“The stipend I received was only enough to cover transport and food. Because I had plans of creating a better life for myself through the experience, I soldiered on,” she says.

Matlhamela had planned on becoming an entrepreneur upon completion of her learnership. Due to lack of funds and having stayed home for a year without an income, with three kids to support, she had to search for a job.

“WISPECO Aluminium always reiterated that they were not training us to become employees but employers, but I realised that I needed capital to start a business,” says Matlhamela.

She managed to secure employment at Raymond Glass in Louis Trichardt, a small town north of Polokwane. This is when she began putting her entrepreneurial aspirations in motion.

“I worked very hard and gained the trust of my clients. It came as no surprise that when I started marketing my business, even with no place to operate, I received an order within a week. The client gave me a deposit, with which I bought material and started working on the street, with no shade,” explains Matlhamela.

Proud of having successfully completed work for one client, Matlhamela contacted WISPECO and

“ I worked very hard and gained the trust of my clients. It came as no surprise that when I started marketing my business, even with no place to operate, I received an order within a week. ”

informed them of her achievement. “They were very proud and sponsored me with a container workshop, fully equipped for me to continue my work,” she explains.

As if this wasn't enough, Matlhamela says WISPECO ran a competition where she won R55 000 worth of equipment, and they gave her a brand new bakkie branded with her name, which made her prosper.

“It was from this moment that my life changed for the better. I lived in an RDP house which I was able to extend and renovate with the profit from my business,” explains Matlhamela.

She adds: “This was one of the greatest moments in my life and I can never thank the merSETA and WISPECO enough. I started getting more customers and knew that my business had taken off and there was no time to look back.”

Matlhamela now runs a successful Spazal in Senwabarwana, north-west of Polokwane, providing aluminium glass, windows and doors to the local community.

She has now employed five people at her spazal.

“As my business started growing, I realised I needed to get assistance. I had to start teaching my staff how to do the work and so far, everything is running like a well-oiled machine,” she explains.

Matlhamela adds: “my biggest challenge at the moment is that I am renting the land from which I operate my business. My plan is to purchase a piece of land so that my business can expand further.”

Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to never give up on their dreams and to explore every opportunity at their disposal. “I made it this far as an orphan, having lost both my parents at a very young age, so I can confidently say that nothing in life is impossible if one is determined enough,” she concludes.



Matlhamela with Tshilisanani Rakhutsi, putting hinges on an aluminium door.



Rachel Matlhamela (back-right), with her employees at her Spazal in Senwabarwana.



## A UNIQUE APPROACH TO STUDYING MATHS AND SCIENCE

By Mbofholowo Maphidzhe



Many learners do not fail mathematics and science because it is difficult or that they are not taught well in schools. They fail because of their attitudes towards them, which is derived from years of deep-rooted society perception on the subjects.

This is according to Dr Joleen Hamilton, Basic Mathematics for Law and Humanities students' lecturer at the University of the Free State.



This is one of the reasons the university, in partnership with the merSETA, established the Creative Clubs programme, which aims to shift this perception and change learners' attitudes towards the subject through creativity, fun and interaction in the learning process.

"Attitude is very important in achieving success. It is a determining factor for any outcome. We engage the learners in maths and science problem-solving, by playing games and through less complex methods," explains Dr Hamilton.

The Creative Clubs programme started last year and is offered to Grade 10 learners from nine schools in Bloemfontein. The programme will run for three years, with a different intake each year.

Dr Hamilton explains that the main focus of the programme is to assist high achieving learners in

improving their problem solving, critical thinking and reasoning skills by exposing them to activities in mathematics, science and coding.

By using creativity, fun and interaction, the attitude towards maths and science as well as the self-belief of the learners are changed and this has a huge impact on performance and achievement, by closing the gap between high performing and struggling students on the subject.

"We have found that the mix between learners, who are well versed in the subject and those who are struggling, is a great strategy for creating balance. We also focus on learner insights to ensure we build their confidence and make them realise that with focus and the right attitude, they can achieve great results in science and mathematics or any other subject for that matter," says Dr Hamilton.

“

We have found that the mix between learners, who are well versed in the subject and those who are struggling, is a great strategy for creating balance.

”

She continues: “Mathematics and science are important subjects, particularly for learners who want to pursue study fields such as engineering. Industry 4.0 requires that we adequately prepare our learners in these subjects. It is, therefore, important that as a country and educators, we continuously devise ways in which we can encourage learners to take up the subjects and succeed in them.”

The learners are transported from their schools to the university

once a week to participate in the programme. “Many of the learners appeared sceptical and uncertain as to what they stand to benefit from the programme when they first started. However, I found that after a few sessions, they soon got into the swing of things and became more engaged. Even the shy ones started gaining confidence,” Dr Hamilton explains.

She adds: “We conducted a survey with the schools and received great feedback, indicating that the learners’ attitudes and behaviours in

interaction with their teachers had positively improved.”

Due to the positive feedback, the university plans to include Grade 11 learners in the programme, which they believe will have a great impact on the Mathematics pass rate.

“Drive is a great way of ensuring success in the learning process and this is what the Creative Clubs programme aims to achieve. As Richard Bach puts it, ‘sooner or later, those who win are those who think they can’,” she concludes.



Dr Joleen Hamilton.



Dr Hamilton showcasing how she uses creative art to teach maths and science.



## NO PLACE TOO REMOTE FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TO REACH

By Temana Masekela

**D**eep in the rural areas east of the Eastern Cape, lies an extraordinary college that has given meaning to the saying: “Where there is a will, there is a way.”

Ingwe TVET College, which serves three district municipalities and has five campuses across the region, entered into a partnership with the merSETA to place 10 learners on an apprenticeship programme in Mechanical Engineering-related fields.

“This was a very exciting development

“  
We had already established relationships with some of the workplaces and forged new ones, highlighting the dire need for the country to have a skilled workforce.”

for the college, especially since it is the first time we work with a SETA,” says Mzomhle Rodolo, Curriculum Manager at the college.

The training, which takes place over 24 months, started in May last year and is offered to learners who have passed NCV L4 or N3 to N6.

What separates the college from the rest is that they took it upon themselves to approach workplaces where learners could be placed, something that would usually be done with the aid of the merSETA.



*Apprentice Siyabonga Jafta replacing clutch at Tyres and More.*



*Apprentices Siyabonga Dzingwe and Avusiwe Gova performing service on a car at Tyres and More.*



One of our apprentices has already been offered permanent employment, with more companies promising to absorb others once they complete the programme.



“We had already established relationships with some of the workplaces and forged new ones, highlighting the dire need for the country to have a skilled workforce. This initiative was welcomed with both hands by all the workplaces we approached. Some even indicated that this would assist

them in creating a pool of reliable skilled workers, which is something they would need when some of their employees exit the industry,” explains Rodolo.

He continues: “Team work, between the merSETA and the college, played a pivotal role in the success of this programme. One of the requirements from the workplaces was that the apprentices had to be insured against injuries on duty, something which the college swiftly put together through our Supply Chain Management processes.”

The success of the apprenticeship programme since its inception is astonishing. The college managed to place all apprentices in workplaces within a short period of time and according to Rodolo, more workplaces are on stand-by for a greater intake.

“One of our apprentices has already been offered permanent

employment, with more companies promising to absorb others once they complete the programme. Two companies took additional apprentices from the college pool on to their company payroll. This is an achievement the college is very proud of,” says Rodolo.

He adds: “Although the college faced contractual, operational and geographical challenges, we are confident that through continuous engagements with the merSETA, we will be able to surpass these numbers because we share the primary objective of preparing a skilled workforce for the country.”

With the first programme having reached such unexpected success, Rodolo says the college plans to train more apprentices in partnership with the merSETA. “We have many learners who could not make it into the first pool but who are desperate for skills development opportunities. In his State of the Nation Address,



*A lubrication service performed by Kano Mohlohlo at Fedauto Kokstad.*



“

The college aims to maintain good relations with employer organisations as these interventions give hope to the youth, particularly in remote rural areas.

”

President Cyril Ramaphosa reiterated the need to bridge the skills gap for the youth so that they are able to partake in boosting economic growth. This is a call which the college is fully prepared to heed,” Rodolo explains.

The merSETA skills development funding has a double-impact, which is both beneficial for learners and companies.

“Learners get exposure to the workplace environment, which presents them with opportunities of permanent employment and



*Mr Zwele Ngayeka, the merSETA Regional Manager with Mr Elton Jansen, Workshop Manager at FedAuto Ford Kokstad.*

self-employment once they qualify as artisans, while employers get an additional workforce which maximises their outputs, at no cost to them,” explains Rodolo.

He concludes by saying the college aims to maintain good relations with employer organisations as these interventions give hope to the youth, particularly in remote rural areas.



# QUALITY

IS MUCH BETTER THAN QUANTITY.  
ONE HOME RUN IS MUCH BETTER THAN TWO DOUBLES.

- STEVE JOBS -

*Spa Kabane, Director for Skills Development in the Free State Office of the Premier.*



## ORPHANS GIVEN A HEAD-START TO BECOMING ARTISANS

By Temana Masekela

Scattered in different orphanages and foster homes since losing their parents, the period of independence draws nearer and these young people wonder what the future holds for them.

This is a predicament that the merSETA, in partnership with the Free State Office of the Premier, are tackling head-on. The pair have created an initiative for matriculants from orphanages, foster homes and child-headed households to train them in different engineering-related fields such as welding, suspension fitting, automotive body repairs and spray painting. The programme runs for six months and so far, 60 learners have completed the training.

“The idea behind this initiative is the fact that the Department of Social Development funds orphans at orphanages and foster homes until they reach the age of 18. After this period, the youngsters have

“The idea behind this initiative is the fact that the Department of Social Development funds orphans at orphanages and foster homes until they reach the age of 18.

to fend for themselves,” explains Spa Kabane, Director for Skills Development in the Free State Office of the Premier.

Growing up without parents, according to Kabane, is difficult for any child. What is more difficult is the thought of not knowing what to do once you reach the age of maturity. For this reason, she

explains, her office has undertaken to arrange for the learners to meet and have sessions with social workers before they embark on the skills programme journey, so as to adequately prepare them for any challenges they may face in life.

“In this programme, we specifically targeted orphans, particularly those from small towns because we understand that although all young people need skills development to get a head-start towards career opportunities, they (orphans) are more vulnerable and prone to a life of crime in order to provide for themselves and their families,” explains Kabane.

Furthermore, Kabane explains that the office has also developed a programme that assists them to secure employment once they complete their training.

“We have a central database for unemployed graduates.

“

In this programme, we specifically targeted orphans, particularly those from small towns because we understand that although all young people need skills development to get a head-start towards career opportunities, they (orphans) are more vulnerable and prone to a life of crime in order to provide for themselves and their families.

”

In collaboration with local municipalities, government departments and the private sector,

we place them in graduate internship programmes,” she says.

Boitumelo Mokhoa is a 30-year-old young woman from Thaba Nchu in the Free State province. She explains that after her mother passed away, her life became difficult.

“Although I struggled throughout my life, I knew that I wanted to create a better life for myself. This is why the skills programme was a very exciting opportunity for me. I can now see light at the end of the tunnel,” says Mokhoa.

Lebohlang Mokoena from Botshabelo says that growing up without parents, he had to hop around to make ends meet - from working at a car wash to construction, and building RDP houses. “Getting this learnership brought hope to what I once thought was a hopeless life,” he says.

The Project Manager for this programme, Thantaswa Dlepu, says she has always had a passion for working with the youth. “It gives me great satisfaction to see the difference we make in these young people’s lives. Many of them have

truly defied the odds and are now employed,” she says.

Kabane says that collaboration with all stakeholders for programmes such as these is of paramount importance. The merSETA provides funding, the Office of the Premier coordinates the programme, the Free State Department of Social Development assists in identifying orphanage homes and child-headed households as well as providing them with some essentials, and the Free State Training and Development Institute assisted in providing the learners with soft skills. This shows that working together as a nation, we can do more.

After the successful execution of the first programme, the merSETA decided to continue funding more orphans on the programme.

“The merSETA continues to play an instrumental role in making this initiative a success. The orphanage programme is different from the many others that the office deals with. This has in a way fuelled the passion I have in working with young people,” Kabane concludes.



*Thantaswa Dlepu, Programme Manager for Skills Development in the Free State Office of the Premier.*



# South African PSET CLOUD Project

## What is the South African PSET CLOUD Project?

The South African Post School Education Training Collaboration and Learning Opportunities Utilization of Data (PSET CLOUD) project is an innovative project to create an interoperable ecosystem for PSET institutions in South Africa to share their data. This interoperable ecosystem will allow a number of stakeholders access to valuable data for informed decision making.

Currently the South African PSET ecosystem is characterised by fragmentation of data, duplication of resources and low levels of coherence of information leading to ineffective systems for planning and decision making. The PSET CLOUD Project was designed to address the need for a cohesive interoperable ecosystem.

## Who are the contributors to this project?

The PSET CLOUD Project is a co-creation project between the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (merSETA) and Joint Education Trust (JET) Education Services in South Africa. The greater project team involves advisors from around the globe, creating a collaborative and dynamic project team.

## What are the objectives of the PSET CLOUD Project?

The South African PSET CLOUD Project is working towards an interoperable ecosystem for valuable data to align skills and training requirements regarding life-long learning, career decisions and the implementation of plans that lead to leveraging opportunities within the labour market. Critical to the system would be organisation and individual access, ownership and exchange of data for decision making purposes.

## Where are we now in the PSET CLOUD Project timeline?

The project comprises of four phases: (i) feasibility study; (ii) design develop and testing; (iii) piloting and implementation; (iv), sustainability, steady state and handover. As the end of 2019 approaches, the project is ending off the feasibility study, while the presentation at the ETF Conference will focus on emerging findings, conclusions and insights that point to the feasibility of implementing the interoperable ecosystem envisaged.

Please follow the link to access our publication on interoperable data ecosystems:

<http://bit.ly/InteroperableDataEcosystems>



To find out about another exciting data driven project in South Africa, called Indeginious Career Management Interventions, please see the back of this brochure. Indeginious Career Management Interventions relies on the data and services of the PSET CLOUD Project.



Currently there is volatility in a number of economic sectors in South Africa. Unemployment is higher than it has been for a number of years, with the majority of the labour force working with low to medium skills. There is a real potential risk of unemployment with further integration of technology in industries.

The South African Career Development Association (SACDA) in collaboration with University of South Africa (UNISA), the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (merSETA) and the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) have embarked on a project termed; 'indigenous career management interventions for youth and adults'.

The objective of the indigenous career management project is to empower people to identify life patterns, design career objectives and manage their careers. Phase 1 of this project focused on working adults in the South African manufacturing, engineering and related (mer) sectors. As part of this project a feasibility study was conducted to identify indigenous career management interventions that empower people to identify life patterns, design career objectives and manage their careers. Thus enabling such people to become agile and adaptable in an effort to live meaningful and purposeful career lives.

**Phase 1:** feasibility study, consisted of 40 participants in a face-to-face workshop. Findings from Phase 1 revealed workshops conducted gave attendees an enhanced sense of career identity and career adaptability along with an improved confidence in managing their own career. Recommendations from Phase 1 included limiting the size of future workshops to 30 or less participants and packaging the workshops as personal development programs, while incorporating a blended learning approach.

To find out about another exciting data driven project in South Africa, please see the back of this brochure. The PSET CLOUD Project is an essential component in the indigenous career management project, which relies on accurate and up-to-date data for effective career management.



**merSETA**  
MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING  
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

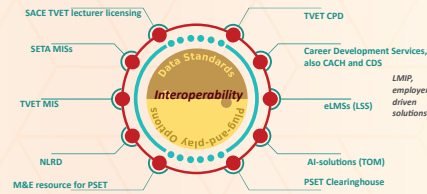
LEADERS IN CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

# DIGITAL INTEROPERABILITY

Moving towards data-driven planning in the post-school education and training system

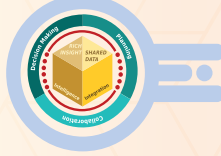
## PSET CLOUD

Post-School Education and Training  
Collaboration and Learning Opportunities for the Utilisation of Data



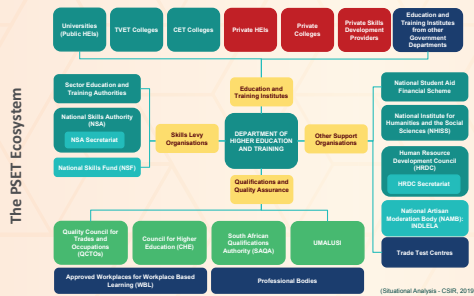
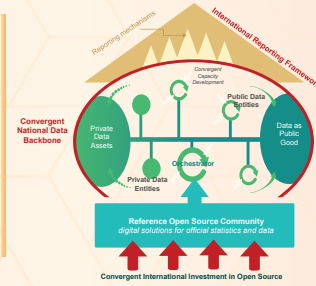
## WHY INTEROPERABILITY?

The main aim is to **develop a platform that enables users to share and use data for decision-making for a more efficient and responsive post-school education system**

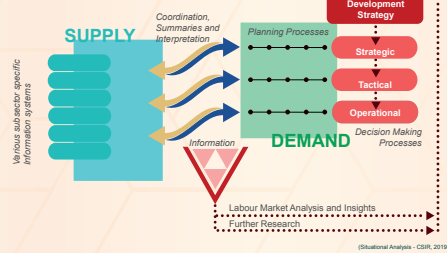


Being responsive to **NATIONAL PRIORITIES and LABOUR MARKET NEEDS**

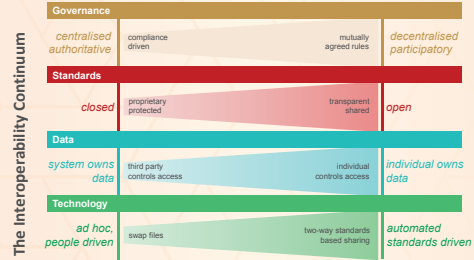
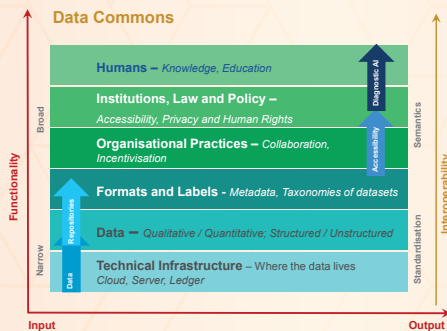
## National Data Backbone Conceptual Model



## System and Stakeholder Mapping

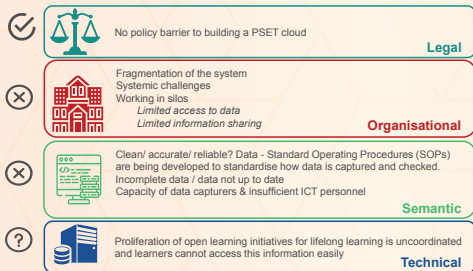


## Levels of Interoperability



## Findings: Readiness

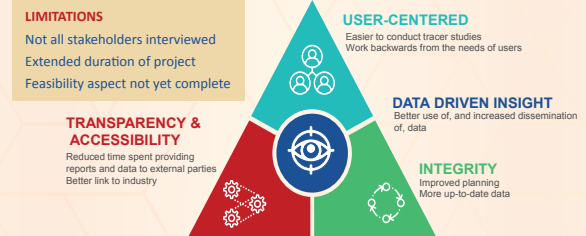
International benchmarking confirms our approach to conducting the feasibility study



## Findings and Limitations

Overall support for the PSET CLOUD

Stakeholders envisage the following benefits:

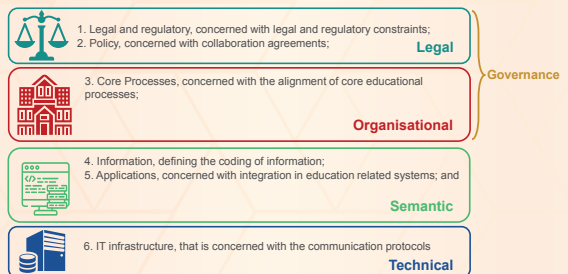


## Key Consideration

- ✓ Work backwards from the needs of users
- ✓ Leveraging on existing systems
- ✓ Capability - resource needs
- ✓ Building the interoperable system will be an iterative process and a continuous cycle of innovation

## Key Insights

Types of interoperability need to be taken account of:



What is next?  
**Alignment**



Unemployment Context

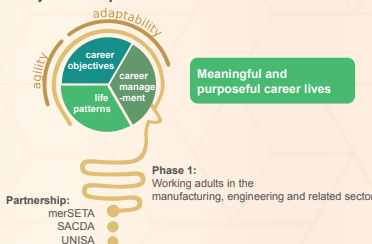


- 1 Volatile and uncertain economy
- 2 High unemployment, especially youth
- 3 Low to medium level skill base
- 4 Automation of medium skill jobs

Indigenous Career Management Project Context



Project Concept



Career Development Practitioner

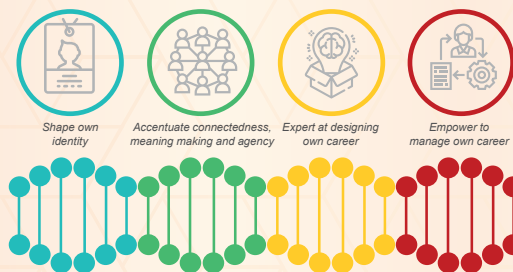


- Give clients:
- Someone representing their interests
  - Someone who will fight for their future
- Advice  
• Guidance  
• Use and knowledge of tools

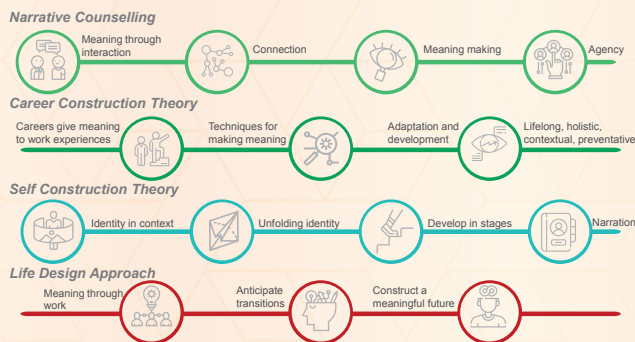
Changing Perspective



Empowering Perspective



Enabling Theory and Practice

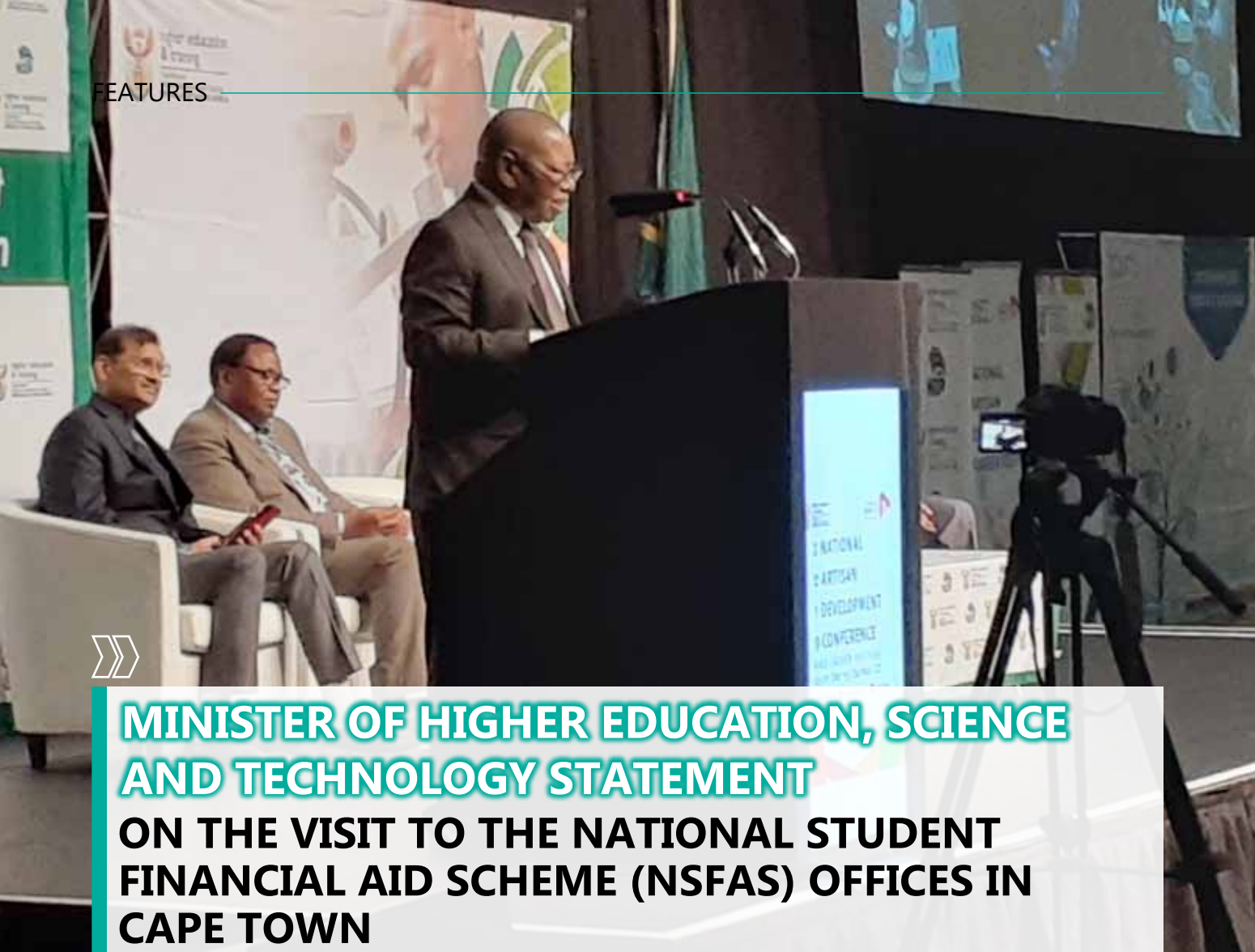


Supporting Tools



Feasibility Study





## MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STATEMENT ON THE VISIT TO THE NATIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID SCHEME (NSFAS) OFFICES IN CAPE TOWN

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dr Blade Nzimande, visited the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) office as part of his oversight responsibility of the entity.

Minister Nzimande interacted with students and staff at the NSFAS walk-in centre particularly those staff members that manage the NSFAS interface and case management services. The Minister also interacted, through the NSFAS Contact Centre, with two (2) students whose funding had been approved for the 2020 academic year.

Minister Nzimande said that over five hundred and eighty thousand four hundred and thirteen (580,413) NSFAS applications were received, with four hundred and eighty-four thousand and thirty-eight (484,038)

being new students and ninety-six thousand three hundred and seventy-five (96,375) being returning students.

Two hundred and sixty-four thousand six hundred and forty-two (264,642) applications were from SASSA beneficiaries.

One hundred and forty-one thousand three hundred and seventy-two (141,372) applications were from KwaZulu-Natal, with the Northern Cape recording the least applications at around five-thousand (5,000).

“For the beginning of this 2020 academic year NSFAS paid R3,6 billion to Universities and R1,6 billion to TVET Colleges as an upfront payment to ease the institutions’ cash flow and allow NSFAS-funded

students to register seamlessly,” confirmed Minister Nzimande.

Minister Nzimande is concerned about the number of both University and TVET College applicants who have submitted incomplete applications, particularly those with outstanding documents.

Out of the four hundred and sixty-five thousand three hundred and one (465,301) University applications received, twenty-two thousand three hundred and eighteen (22,318) are yet to submit outstanding documents.

With the ninety-seven thousand two hundred and thirty-one (97,231) TVET applications received, sixty thousand eight hundred and twenty-two (60,822) applicants are yet to submit outstanding documents.



“

The report confirmed that NSFAS received one hundred and twenty-nine thousand four hundred and four (129,404) TVET applications and six thousand six hundred and ninety-seven (6,697) from universities.

”

“NSFAS has been in consultation with the students and institutions whose applications are missing critical documentation to enable NSFAS to make the funding decision,” confirmed the Minister.

The Minister received an update on the NSFAS 2020 application cycle covering the January to February 2020 walk-in period at TVET Colleges.

“The report confirmed that NSFAS received one hundred and twenty-nine thousand four hundred and four (129,404) TVET applications and

six thousand six hundred and ninety-seven (6,697) from universities,” said Minister Nzimande.

The Administrator indicated that R600 million of the 2018 Historic Debt has been paid and NSFAS continues to process the claims as submitted by institutions. An updated report will be released once all claims and processes are completed.

Minister Nzimande confirmed that over four thousand (4,000) appeals were received directly through the myNSFAS portal.

“Applicants with an appeal status had until 28 February 2020 to submit an appeal through their myNSFAS accounts on [www.nsfas.org.za](http://www.nsfas.org.za). Students who are in their second or senior years of studying and are not approved for 2020 funding are required to appeal at the Financial Aid Offices at their respective institutions,” said the Minister.

“One of the biggest achievements by NSFAS is that for the first time ever, (at the beginning of the year) all applications that were received between September and November 2019 with an approved funding status were processed, and applicants informed through the applicants’ myNSFAS accounts,” said Minister Nzimande.

At the end of the visit, the Minister applauded the enormity of the work done by the Administrator, Dr. Randall Carolissen and his team and acknowledged the importance of the work of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme within government in providing financial academic support to thousands of South Africans, many between the ages of 18 and 24.

The Minister further said that new applicants who are still without confirmation are urged to log into their myNSFAS accounts to easily track their application statuses.

“To access progress on their applications, students are required to create a myNSFAS account online and upload an ID copy which is requested to further secure the users account,” emphasised the Minister.

The Minister further thanked the Administrator for his dedication and continued commitment to steering the entity in the right direction. He indicated that he will soon be appointing a Ministerial Task Team whose responsibility will be to look into the operations of NSFAS in its entirety.

“This will be done sooner in order to afford them an opportunity to engage the Administrator and the team,” said the Minister.



Delegates

## GLOBAL AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY EXPERIENCES HARDSHIP DUE TO COVID-19

Source: NAAMSA



**T**he National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa [NAAMSA] says that the automotive industry across the world is currently experiencing unprecedented challenges due to the global lockdowns implemented across all major auto manufacturing countries and cities to flatten the COVID-19 curve. South Africa is not an exception and the local automotive industry supports all measures announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the implementation of the country's lockdown.

As expected, the aggregate domestic new vehicle sales numbers continue to decline at the back of the recent developments around the coronavirus and challenging economic conditions in the country. The new vehicle sales

statistics for March 2020 reflects a substantial decline of 14 150 units or 29,7% from the 47 695 vehicles sold in March last year to the aggregate domestic sales of 33 545 units in March 2020.

Equally, export sales at 28 883 units also registered a huge fall of 7 905 units or a decline of 21,5% compared to the 36 788 vehicles exported in March last year. The performance of vehicle exports over the course of 2020 is linked to the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the global economy.

Overall, out of the total reported industry sales of 33 545 vehicles, an estimated 28 042 units or 83,6% represented dealer sales, an estimated 6,2% represented sales to the vehicle rental industry, 5,8% to government,

and 4,4% to industry corporate fleets.

The March 2020 new passenger car market had registered a sizeable decline of 8 139 cars or a fall of 26,8% to 22 200 units compared to the 30 339 new cars sold in March last year. The car rental Industry's contribution accounted for 8,4% of new car sales in March 2020.

Domestic sales of new light commercial vehicles, bakkies and mini-buses at 9 425 units during March 2020 had recorded a significant decline of 5 570 units or a fall of 37,1% from the 14 995 light commercial vehicles sold during the corresponding month last year.

Sales for medium and heavy truck segments of the industry also performed weaker and at 631 units and 1 289 units, respectively, reflected



a decline of 146 vehicles or a fall of 18,8% in the case of medium commercial vehicles, and, in the case of heavy trucks and buses a decline of 295 vehicles or a fall of 18,6% compared to the corresponding month last year.

COVID-19 has a huge macro and micro economic impact globally as well as in South Africa. In line with the temporary closure of global facilities, the entire domestic motor industry also suspended production in view of the nationwide lockdown imposed on midnight, 26 March 2020. As a result, the industry lost three working days during the month impacting negatively on the March 2020 domestic new vehicle sales and export sales.

South Africa was already in a recession before the COVID-19 had any significant impact. In exacerbating the situation further, the Moody's rating downgrade during March 2020 comes at a time that the country is in the midst of

pulling all its resources and capacity together to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 across the economy. The country's resources and capacity are being stretched in addressing this extraordinary situation and the downgrade opens another major challenge for South Africa.

The ABSA Purchasing Managers' Index [PMI] experienced the weakest quarterly performance since 2009. The index tracking expected business conditions in 6 months' time fell in March 2020 to below the lowest reading recorded during the 2008/09 global financial crisis and, in fact, the lowest level on record. This means that the worst is yet to come for the manufacturing sector.

A glimmer of good news is that the South African Reserve Bank has cut its benchmark interest rate during March 2020 by the biggest margin in more than 10 years aiming to support an already fragile economy and to ease the financial conditions of households and firms to the short-

term economic implications of the COVID-19.

The global automotive industry is contributing immensely with several initiatives during lockdown period across the world. Collectively, we are working with our respective Governments to support our country's essential services, such as offering factories to produce ventilators and other medical equipment urgently required to fight against COVID-19. The NAAMSA CEO Council will be meeting regularly to consider what else the South African automotive industry can do to support Government efforts to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in South Africa.

The performance of exports would remain a function of the performance and direction of global markets. The fall in global vehicle demand as a result of restrictions on consumer movement would become clearer in the industry's export sales over the short term.

**Aggregate domestic sales**

**33,545**  
a substantial decline of  
**14,150**  
units or 29,7% from the  
**47,695**  
vehicles sold in March  
last year.

**Total reported industry sales**

Overall, out of the total reported industry sales of  
**33,545**  
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**New car market**

New passenger car market had registered a sizeable decline of  
**8,139**  
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units compared to the  
**30 339**  
sold in March last year.

## The opening of the Welding CoS Facility and the Robotic Welding Machine donation took place in February 2020 at Boland TVET College, Worcester Campus in Cape Town.



Deputy Minister Buti Manamela and other officials during a tour of the workshop.



Delegates



Programme Director.



Mrs Johanna Coetzee, Principal of Boland College welcoming delegates.



Ebrahim Peters, Vice Principal (Education and Training) of Boland College giving an overview of the CoS establishment.



Ester van der Linde, the merSETA Executive: Corporate Services.



Boland College learners.



Mr Buti Manamela, Deputy Minister for the Department of Higher Education and Training.

## The opening of the Welding CoS Facility and the Robotic Welding Machine donation took place in February 2020 at Boland TVET College, Worcester Campus in Cape Town...Cont



Officials with learners of Boland College during a photoshoot session.



Welding CoS workshop.



Deputy Minister Buti Manamela and other officials given information of how the learners are going to work with the equipment.



Officials preparing for the cutting of the ribbon to symbolise the official opening.



Boland College learners.



Deputy Minister Buti Manamela and Boland College Principal cutting the ribbon.

## The opening of the Welding CoS Facility and the Robotic Welding Machine donation took place in February 2020 at Boland TVET College, Worcester Campus in Cape Town...cont



Deputy Minister Buti Manamela interacting with other speakers.



Deputy Minister Buti Manamela and other officials during a tour of the workshop.



Officials



Boland College learners.



Programme director giving an opening address.



Delegates



Delegates

**The opening of the Welding CoS Facility and the Robotic Welding Machine donation took place in February 2020 at Boland TVET College, Worcester Campus in Cape Town...cont**



*Delegates*



*Delegates*



*Delegates*



*Delegates*

**The Marula Festival Exhibition took place in February 2020 at Impala Park Stadium in Phalaborwa. The aim of the event was to give learners career guidance.**



*Learners from different high schools in Phalaborwa attending the festival.*



## Vula Careers Day

The Vula Careers day took place in February 2020 at the Hilton College in Pietermaritzburg. The purpose of the event was to provide career guidance to learners.

### Vula Careers Day 2020



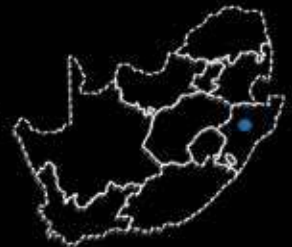
**merSETA**

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING  
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

Hilton College  
Pietermaritzburg, Hilton  
14<sup>th</sup> February



Targeting over 450 grade 12 learners from different rural high schools in and around Pietermaritzburg



*Learners from different high schools in Pietermaritzburg.*

# Vula Careers Day...Cont



*Groups of learners during a photoshoot session.*

# REGIONAL OFFICES

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## WESTERN CAPE


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Fax: 086 670 0299

 [www.merseta.org.za](http://www.merseta.org.za)

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**merSETA**

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING  
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

ISO 9001:2015

# LEADERS IN CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP.

The merSETA is one of 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998 (as amended). The 21 SETAs broadly reflect different sectors of the South African economy. The merSETA encompasses Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services. The various industry sectors are covered by six chambers within the merSETA: Metal and Engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Automotive Components Manufacturing, New Tyre Manufacturing and Plastic industries.

