



On-line EPWP reporting system piloted on homesoil...

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2008

North West province is amongst the three hand-picked provinces to pilot and test the new Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) web-based data capturing system.

Head of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, from the National Department of Public Works, Stanley Henderson announced this during a two-day workshop to pilot and test the system at the Mmabatho Tusk Resort this week.

The other two provinces where the system will be piloted are Western Cape and the Free State.

The new web-based reporting system is to be used by data capturers to collect, collates, verify, analyse and interpret performance data from EPWP projects. It will further evaluate the impact of EPWP in terms of job-creation and poverty alleviation.

According to Henderson, data capturers encounter a lot of challenges with the current reporting system where an Excel Spreadsheet is used.

“With the web-based reporting system, we will address deficiencies in the Excel Spreadsheet template which include lack of security, lack of beneficiary information and long lag time between the reports,” he said.

Henderson said the other problem with the current system is the submission of duplicate reports by data capturers – something that leads to inaccurate statistical figures about the projects.

“We hope to eliminate the duplication of reports because it ends up giving us wrong figures about projects,” he said.

He added that data capturers are expected to help the developers of the new system ascertain whether the new system would be user friendly for data capturing. Information collected in such reports is important as it helps paint a national picture of how the EPWP programme is doing in terms of meeting its objectives in all the provinces. In terms of the set targets, EPWP as one of the programmes identified to help address unemployment and poverty eradication has to create a million job opportunities for the unskilled, marginalized and unemployed people in the country over a five-year period (2004-2009).

These job opportunities should target at least 40% women, 30% youth and 2% disabled. The EPWP is a nationwide programme covering all spheres of government and state-owned enterprises that aims to draw significant numbers of unemployed into productive work, accompanied by training, so that they increase their capacity to earn an income. President Thabo Mbeki formally announced it in his State of the Nation Address in February 2003. The programme was agreed to at the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) held in June 2003. Cabinet finally adopted the programme in November 2003 and it focuses on the following four sectors:

- Infrastructure
- Economic
- Environmental
- Social development

The workshop was attended by representatives from departments, municipalities, and public bodies across the province.

Depending on the success of the pilot project, the on-line system could kick-in as early as June this year.

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