

FUNDING FOR ARTISANS: The DHET, together with other departments in the economic cluster, is at the forefront in dealing with the national priority of artisan training and development in the defence, aerospace and engineering sectors through funding initiatives.

RANI PADAYACHEY

FINANCIAL aid from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the National Skills Fund (NSF) continues to support Denel's efforts to train artisans for South Africa's defence, aerospace and engineering sectors.

The DHET, together with other departments in the economic cluster, is at the forefront in dealing with this national priority of artisan training and development through funding initiatives.

This is achieved through skills development funding bodies such as Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the NSF.

These entities have taken up the cudgels and are at the forefront of artisan development funding.

For example, the NSF alone has approved funding for artisan development, to some of the major parastatals (South African Airways Technical, Eskom, Denel and Transnet).

The parastatals are re-orientating to resume the national service of training artisans for the economy.

This is also in line with the developmental state objective.

Through the parastatals artisan development programme, the state is asserting its role in skills development for sustained and inclusive growth.

Denel is one of the State Owned Companies that were recommended by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) for funding by the NSF artisans development programme.

The funding for Denel and other SOCs is in pursuit of the objectives

National Skills Fund and Denel **PARTNER** to train Artisans



of the Memorandum of Understanding between the DHET and DPE which entails cooperation in skills development.

The funding to Denel is to assist the company to leverage its existing capabilities to significantly increase the number of qualified artisans and professionals produced through their training programmes targeting the unemployed and underemployed.

Over the past two years the DHET through the NSF has funded more than 160 students who trained as Artisans at the Denel Technical Academy.

The Academy located at Denel's campus in Kempton Park is the main hub for Artisan training at Denel. Approximately 20% of these Artisans are absorbed by Denel and the rest are trained for the broader industry.

Denel invests more than R50-million a year in skills development programmes. This includes bursaries and internships for engineers and artisans, career

development within Denel and enrichment courses for high school learners in the critical subjects of mathematics, science and technology.

The funding from the DHET through the NSF has enabled us to increase our throughput to 355, thereby exceeding our shareholder compact target, and making a contribution towards the training of future artisans and technicians that can meet South Africa's broader needs for skilled human resources.

The first grant of R42.5-million was awarded in 2014 and was fully funded to train 124 apprentices up to qualification.

In 2015, a second grant of R15-million was awarded and was co-funded by the NSF and Denel to train 73 apprentices up to qualification.

During the first year the students receive academic and practical training before they are placed within industry to gain work place

experience in the 2nd and 3rd year and then qualify.

As Denel we value the partnership we have built with the National Skills Fund since the awarding of the first grant in 2014.

More than 90% of the beneficiaries come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. The impact of this funding has been phenomenal on the lives of our learners.

Selogadi Mokwele, a beneficiary of this funding, wrote as follows: "I would like to get the opportunity to give gratitude for the NSF bursary.

The impact that this bursary has had on my life is very huge and it is unforgettable. At home we are a family of 11 – six children, two parents and three grandchildren.

Both parents are unemployed and four of the children are schooling.

Before this bursary we were all depending on the Unemployment Insurance Fund money, which was

given to my father from the company he previously worked for.

My other siblings quit school in order for me to go to school. The impact of this bursary made a huge difference not only in my life but in my family's lives.

I will be eternally grateful for it. I hope this letter shows my gratitude towards this opportunity. I can't thank you more."

The funding from the NSF contributes greatly to Denel's ability to attract quality students and support them to follow careers in high-technology or advanced manufacturing industries.

The regular inflow of new artisans and technicians also enables Denel to remain a leader in the highly competitive global defence and security sectors.

The Denel Group is the country's leading enterprise in defence and advanced technology and is globally recognised as among the top 100 defence companies in the world – and the second largest in the southern hemisphere.

During the past decade alone, the DTA has trained skilled artisans at a rate of more than 250 a year and offered advanced technical training to more than 520 others in specialised courses.

Padayachey says the Denel Training Academy is well-known in the industry for its high academic standards and the quality of its technical training.

In the last five years the academy achieved a pass rate of over 90%.

Ms R Padayachey is the Head of the Denel Technical Academy – DTA



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DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

THREE new South African research chairs have been awarded in a United Kingdom-South Africa initiative that will foster research and academic co-operation between the two countries and strengthen their research and innovation capacities.

At the British Council's annual Going Global conference held in Cape Town recently, it was announced that the British Council's Newton Fund and South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF) are supporting three bilateral chairs in food security; oceans economy; and political theory.

Dr Stephen Devereux was awarded a research chair in food security, based at the University of the Western Cape's Institute for Social Development, and affiliated to the Department of Science and Technology (DST) – NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security.

He is also research fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK, which is the UK partner in this research.



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Three new SA Research Chairs **AWARDED**



SCRUTINISING RESEARCH: A Bilateral Chair Initiative is implemented by the British Council and the NRF and provides additional support for the South African Research Chairs initiative, a DST/NRF programme.

UWC research director Thandi Mgwebi said the research will include, among other things, research into why food insecurity remains a challenge despite various social protection policies, and how the impact of social protection on hunger can be improved.

At the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) Institute of Coastal and Marine Research, in conjunction with Southampton University,

oceanographer, researcher and NMMU professor Michael Roberts will research food security and the oceans economy.

Professor Andrew Leitch, deputy vice-chancellor (research and engagement), said NMMU had identified marine and maritime as a major focus area and there was a particular interest in ocean science and food security and the effect of overfishing and climate change.

The bilateral chair will include research expeditions and training of postgraduate and early career researchers in oceanography and food security.

Professor Lawrence Hamilton was awarded a chair in political theory, working between Wits University and the University of Cambridge.

Dame Judith Macgregor, British High Commissioner in South Africa, said SA-UK co-operation has included the

Square Kilometre Array project, an agreement on space co-operation and partnerships between universities including scholarship schemes.

The Newton initiative is focused on co-ownership and co-investment in areas including public health, food security, science and technology capacity building and innovation straddled by big data and regional cooperation.

The joint programme will be implemented through the British Council (chairs in food security and the oceans economy) and the British Academy (chair in political theory).

The Newton Fund programme is contributing £300 000 per chair over three years, which is match funded by the NRF.

The British Council said higher education institutions will be able to increase the quality and production of Master's and PhD graduates by supporting research excellence in response to key socio-economic and development priorities.

The Bilateral Chair Initiative is implemented by the British Council and the NRF and provides additional support for the South African Research Chairs (SARChI) initiative, a DST/NRF programme building research capacity at higher education institutions.