

The FP&M SETA participated in career exhibitions across the country including Mitchells Plain, Thohoyandou, Lichtenburg, Pietermaritzburg, Mbizana, Emalahleni, Soshanguve, Phuthaditjaba, Marianhill, Nkugumathe, Sterkspruit, Tsolo, Siyabuswa, Alexandra and Mthatha where we engaged with learners and unemployed youth on the learning and career opportunities in the FP&M sector.

During 2014, the FP&M SETA undertook a campaign to reposition itself. This process involved the implementation of a new business model designed to optimise organisational performance through high performing staff, meticulous planning and professional execution of strategic projects including the requisite risk mitigation measures. We have implemented a restructuring process which included significant changes to the management structure and resulted in the establishment of a Research Unit as well as a Governance, Risk, Compliance and Legal Division. We also focused on building and strengthening relationships with stakeholders across all sub-sectors of the FP&M SETA.

At the same time, the FP&M SETA undertook a rebranding exercise which resulted in a fresh new look for the SETA. Our new website was launched during our AGM on 30 October 2014 and social media sites were activated to get the conversation going around issues of skills development in the FP&M sector.

Underpinning the ongoing sustainability and competitiveness of most of the FP&M SETA's sub-sectors, is the requirement for innovative design, new product development and the discovery of niche markets and the FP&M SETA believes that the South African design community plays an important role in increasing the local industry's ability to compete in the global arena.

It is with this in mind that the FP&M SETA supported various design initiatives during 2014. This included funding of the 2014 Furniture Design competition (winners announced during the 2014 Design Indaba in Cape Town), funding of Cape Town Fashion Council Local Designer Showcase (also during the Design Indaba) and funding of the Vukani! Fashion Awards, which promoted local and international design expertise and provided an opportunity for young designers to learn from established designers and business leaders. The event was initiated by the South African Fashion Design Agency (SAFDA) under the leadership of their president, Mr Sonwabile Ndamase. The highlights of the week-long event were the African Pride Awards Gala Dinner on 17 October and the Young Designers Awards Fashion Extravaganza on 18 October. The Gala Dinner was attended by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Mduduzi Manana who commended the FP&M SETA for its vision in supporting upcoming design talent in South Africa.

During 2014, the FP&M SETA in partnership with employer and labour organisations commenced with an intensive programme to develop occupationally-directed qualifications to address the scarce and critical skills gaps across all FP&M sub-sectors. The FP&M SETA Board approved R50 million in support of this undertaking. The outcome of this flagship project would see the realization of 50 occupational qualifications aligned to QCTO requirements and registered with the QCTO and SAQA. It is envisaged that this project would see industry organisations partner with higher education institutions, TVET colleges, communities of expert practitioners and the QCTO in developing occupational learning systems aligned to a career pathing framework that would address articulation and progression within the National Qualifications Framework.

The FP&M SETA also recognises the important role that is played by new entrepreneurs and small businesses in terms of job creation and economic growth, specifically in labour-absorbing economic sectors such as the FP&M sector. To this end, the FP&M SETA has funded an intervention offered by the Wits Business School and project managed by Mtiya

Dynamics to provide new venture creation and entrepreneurial skills to up-an-coming entrepreneurs. This project was a sterling example of the results that can be achieved when the FP&M SETA partners with public and private institutions that are focused on achieving results that will have a sustainable impact on the lives of all participants.

In the same vein, the FP&M SETA also funded the participation of small publishers in the South African Book Fair, providing them with an opportunity to network with their more established counterparts and to participate in workshops on best practices in publishing, presented by experts in the publishing industry.

2014 had been a busy year and we have learnt a few lessons that we will take forward with us into the New Year. These lessons include strengthened collaboration with industry partners, the integration of efforts to ensure a sustained impact that will allow communities to grow and alignment of our skills development initiatives with industry needs to ensure that we address our scarce and critical skills needs sufficiently.

We are looking forward to having an even busier and more exciting year in 2015 and we depend on our partners (employers, public and private skills development providers, employer associations, labour unions and other government departments) to help us achieve our key objectives which include -

- “ Upliftment of local communities specifically those in rural areas;
- “ Increased support of previously disadvantaged individuals and those with disabilities;
- “ Promotion of artisan training ;
- “ Facilitation of work integrated learning initiatives for graduates from TVETs and HETs;
- “ Maximising skills development at company level through effective workplace skills planning; and
- “ Impacting on the economic growth of our industry and communities.

In addition to the above, the FP&M SETA will -

- “ Execute new strategically aligned projects during 2015 which include the International Leadership Development Programme, the Research Chair execution and Evaluation Research / Impact Assessment
- “ Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all funded projects
- “ Implementing a fully functional MIS

The above are firsts in the history of the FP&M SETA

I appeal to stakeholders to participate in sector skills development interventions and to execute discretionary grant projects on time and to budget. The SETA team is committed and ready to assist and we are approaching the remainder of 2014/15 with great confidence.

Let us together maximise skills development for a sustainable future!

Sincere greetings and may you and yours enjoy a peaceful and relaxing festive season!

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FP&M SETA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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