

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**DUE IN PARLIAMENT ON FRIDAY, 19 MAY 2023**

**“1520. Mr H C C Krüger (DA) to ask the Minister of Small Business Development**

**What steps is her department taking to raise awareness among rural entrepreneurs about the availability of the services and benefits offered by the Small Enterprise Finance Agency and Small Enterprise Development Agency to small businesses, particularly in terms of access to finance, business development support and skills training?” NW1763E**

**REPLY:**

The Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) and Small Enterprise Finance Agency (Sefa) raise awareness of their products and services particularly in rural communities through entrepreneurship awareness sessions, these are organized by the branches of the entity and in collaboration with municipalities and private sector partners.

Our agencies also use community radio stations, social media platforms, sector specific webinars, and pop-up markets to expose their products and services. Seda will now also use its access points to send out information to the nearby communities particularly in the rural areas where there is no direct presence.

During the 2022/23 year, Seda trained more than fifteen thousand one hundred and nineteen (15,119) SMMEs on various programmes and courses. These includes courses amongst many other Basic Business Skills, Business Start-Up 1, Cybercrimes, HACCP Awareness, Food Safety, QMS, SARS Incentives, Export Awareness, Costing, Empretec, Business Planning, Business Model Canvas, Community Public Private Partnership, Art of Pitching, Customer Care, Retail Management, Design Thinking, Green Economy, etc. Training are needs based and often presented in collaboration with our partners.

As part of reclaiming components of the township economy Seda has also forged key skills development partnerships namely:

* A 3-year partnership with the National Skills Fund (NSF) and W&R Seta to benefit 15 000 beneficiaries. The aim of the project is to recruit unemployed graduates with Accounting and Business Management qualifications to be trained on New Venture Creation, Coaching, and Mentorship Programme to enhance their skills to provide support to Micro Enterprises. Seda will use coaching as an innovative methodology to facilitate and reinforce learning and development support to Micro Enterprises and the unemployed graduates will be trained on new venture creation as well as business coaching to enable them to transfer skills and knowledge to Micro Enterprise owners..

In 2021, DSBD, Seda and Merseta signed an agreement for Merseta to release a discretionary grant to Seda to the value of R 50 million. The funding will be provided in phased approach over a 3-year period. The purpose is to train small enterprises in the Automotive Trade Sector as well as facilitate Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL).

Furthermore, information is also provided through the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), Seda and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (**sefa**) websites and contact centres. The DSBD also participates in Municipal LED Forums organised by the Municipalities / Provincial and National Government in various Provinces across the country. These include Business Forums, Izimbizo, Summits / Conferences, Community Outreach Programmes, Road Shows and other programmes. The DSBD uses these platforms to share information regarding the services that are available to SMMEs and Co-operatives offered through sefa and Seda. Participants at these engagements are also directed to Seda and sefa offices that are found across the country to acquire further assistance regarding the initiatives of the Department and its agencies.