



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Speech by Deputy Minister Mahlalela during Food Safety Pre-Budget Vote 2022, Cape Town

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Programme Director, Sipho Ngomane
Representatives of Food Safety Training
Programme Implementing Agency,
The Tourism & Business
Institute of South Africa (TTBISA)
Trainees and Host employers
Ladies and Gentleman

I greet you

Our government's drive is to create access to safe and nutritious food in order to sustain life, promote good health because these food diseases disrupt socioeconomic development by straining health care systems, tourism and trade.

The advent of COVID-19, made us even more vigilant about food safety and has led to our reinforcement of safety protocols.

Paying special attention to food hygiene including food, beverage and hospitality industry becomes extremely crucial. Failure to adhere to food safety not only compromise lives but can also be damaging to the reputation of the business. This often leads to recalls of items and also a possibility of a health crisis and litigation.

As we prepare for the budget vote this week, let us also critically look at our Food Safety Programme which targets unemployed youth with a view to broaden employment opportunities in the hospitality and tourism sector, in line with the SONA imperatives of expanding public and social employment.

Department of Tourism implements the skills programmes in line with the National Tourism Sector Strategy and the Tourism Human Resource Development Strategy, to strategically support the tourism sector's developmental objectives. The training further promotes inclusivity of black person's participation nationwide. The recruitment and selection of participants considers the geographical spread of all municipalities, with a particular focus on villages, towns and small dorpiess (VTSD).

This programme is implemented under the auspices of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) wherein participants are paid a stipend of R150 per day. The training covers 30% of theoretical and 70% of the workplace to acquire practical experience within the relevant workplaces.

The President in his SONA alluded to the fact that the path we choose now will determine the course for future generations hence we entered into an agreement with The Tourism Business Institute in Southern Africa (TTBISA) on 19 June 2021 to manage training of 170 unemployed and retrenched youth on Food Safety Quality Assures programme in Western Cape Province, and place them in relevant hospitality establishments for experiential learning for the duration of the Project.

Training also includes norms and standards for safe tourism operations, including implementation of COVID-19 protocols. In terms of the geographical spread, enrolled beneficiaries are from the Cape Metropole, Overberg, Winelands and the West Coast regions.

The Food Safety Quality Assurers programme seeks to ensure high skills sets within the hospitality and tourism sector. This programme is recognised by all cookery or food related sectors in South Africa, from small restaurants to large scale hotels. It promotes beneficiaries for career development.

During training, the beneficiaries were introduced to the fundamentals, core and electives unit standards particular to the Food industry. They are also trained in four different skills programmes accredited by FoodBev SETA and a level 4 Customer Services programme accredited by Culture, Arts, and Tourism Hospitality Sports Sector Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA).

The skills programmes from FoodBev SETA covered the following:

- Food Safety Practices and Procedures: NQF Level 1
- Personal Hygiene and Food Safety Practices: NQF Level 2
- Health and Safety Skills Programme: NQF Level 3
- Conduct audits and optimise product and process quality within a quality management system in a Food Processing Environment: NQF Level 5

Every project encounters its challenges and barriers, numerous challenges were encountered during the implementation of the programme:

- About 80% of learners were previously retrenched employees during Covid-19. Most of them were on a higher salary scale prior to retrenchment or lay off, they had to adapt to a leaner salary plus including nearly 60 days of training into their schedule was a challenge as they had to adjust to the training requirement.
- The Western Cape is one of the most expensive provinces to live in. Learners continually complained that stipend is not enough to cover their living costs.

Once challenges were identified, there was a need to redress them. This is done through looking at lessons learnt:

- Improvement on the orientation process that makes provision for a short life skills course prior commencement including the objectives of the training to minimise absenteeism and rate of drop-outs;
- Change of mind-set and attitude to perceive the stipend payment as an income generating opportunity instead of a stepping stone to a career advancement, hence they are quick to resign.
- Unfortunately, quite a few learners see learnerships as an income generating opportunity instead of a steppingstone to a career, hence when the realities of the financial implications and long working/studying hours set in they are quick to resign.
- Department to explore the possibility of paying stipend rate similar to other EPWP programmes implemented internally
- The beneficiaries' skills have influenced better hygiene and healthier eating practices in their families and communities.

Finally, working together in collaboration with our critical social partners we can avoid this vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition particularly affecting infants, elderly and the sick, and also build a resource base of skills required to sustain food safety across the country. President Cyril Ramaphosa remarked in his SONA that we are faced with this moment and in this moment, there is both prospect of great progress and the risk of reversal.

I trust all of us take these words to heart as we know the risks associated with reversal are to ghastly to contemplate. In conclusion, I would to encourage the public in general and the sector in particular yourselves as trainees and host employers to watch and listen to the Tourism Budget Vote Speeches as they are delivered by the Minister and myself.

I thank you