

Media Release

NIPDB Launches Capacity Building Campaign for MSMEs

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Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises play an integral part in stimulating socioeconomic development in emerging markets, and Namibia is no exception. With a conducive environment, targeted support programmes and access to empowering information, MSMEs can contribute towards the attainment of national developmental goals. When elevating the role of MSME to the Presidency on 16 March 2020 during the introduction of the new government, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Namibia Dr. Hage G. Geingob stated that MSMEs have a great potential to create jobs, thus the elevation to Office of the President under the NIPDB.

The NIPDB is mandated, among other things, to build institutional mechanisms and to serve as the primary coordinator across all MSME development levers on a national level. Additionally, the Board, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, is tasked with facilitating collaborative roles between the public and private sectors in order to boost Namibia's economic growth, expansion, and development. In order to achieve this mandate and create a conducive business environment in which MSMEs can flourish, it is important for the NIPDB to be fully cognizant of their needs and pain points.

It was against this background that the NIPDB embarked on a nationwide familiarisation tour last year - engaging with stakeholders including MSMEs, local and regional leaders across all 14 regions to understand their experiences, barriers to success and explore areas of collaboration. Lack of access to market intelligence, funding and markets were identified as some of the key challenges for MSMEs in the country.

In order to address the challenges identified as impeding factors for MSME growth, the NIPDB on Friday launched the Know2Grow campaign. With the aptly named slogan '*accelerating MSMEs*', Know2Grow is a regional knowledge dissemination, capacity building, and networking initiative that strives to provide MSMEs with critical information including how to scale their businesses by gaining domestic and international market access. The campaign was piloted in Gobabis in December last year (2021) and will be rolled out nationwide over the next six months.

Speaking at the launch, NIPDB Chairperson and CEO, Nangula Uaandja, said the Board recognises the potential impact of MSMEs on the economy if given the opportunities that enhances their market participation. As the lead facilitating agency for MSME development

in the country, Uaandja said the NIPDB has the core responsibility of bringing all stakeholders together with the common purpose of providing support to MSMEs in terms of access to funding, mentorship and training programmes and facilitating market access for locally produced products. These efforts will enable the country to build a resilient and sustainable MSME ecosystem.

“Knowledge is power. Therefore the NIPDB in collaboration with stakeholders from the public and private sectors is committed to facilitating the empowerment of MSMEs with the right skills, knowledge and opportunities that will enable them to become active role players in building the economy of Namibia”, said Uaandja.

Through Know2Grow, the NIPDB seeks to enable MSMEs to:

- Access domestic and international markets wherever possible through value addition and knowledge impartation;
- Improve their product standards and production;
- Scale their operations to sustainable levels;
- Create decent and sustainable employment;
- Benefit from free marketing through business profiling initiative in partnership with BDO
- Benefit from potential co-operatives, networks and resources that are available within the MSME ecosystem, including the Ecosystem Optimisation initiatives and interventions of NIPDB.

On his part, NIPDB’s Executive Director for MSME Development, Innovation & Acceleration, Dino Ballotti said that in order to align the campaign content to the target audience needs, the Board took into consideration the diversity of the MSME sector across the country. “To ensure sustainable regional impact of K2G, the project was designed to have a sector focused approach, which highlights the economic potential of each region in Namibia,” said Ballotti.

To provide tailored assistance to the regions, Know2Grow has identified six (6) industry sectors as key focus areas of the first phase of the campaign. This decision was informed by the engagements with regional leaders, who highlighted their respective regions’ economic areas of focus. These include:

1. Textile manufacturing
2. Agriculture, Horticulture and Food Processing
3. Aquaculture
4. Electronics and Information, Communication & Technology (ICT)
5. Renewable Energy and Green Hydrogen
6. Pharmaceuticals

Officially launching the campaign, Minister of Industrialisation and Trade, Hon. Lucia lipumbu, commended the NIPDB for initiating the Know2Grow campaign as a vital intervention particularly in times like this when the economy is uncertain and businesses are under pressure due to the prolonged impact of COVID 19. “This will surely assist many

MSMEs to grow and acquire the much-needed information in terms of funding and other opportunities which will aid them to grow and access market space for their products both; locally and internationally”, said Hon lipumbu.

Highlighting the role the Know2Grow campaign will play in ensuring long-term economic prosperity for Namibia, Hon. lipumbu called on collaboration between the Government and private sector at all levels to ensure that “businesses take full advantage of various available opportunities and thus boost economic growth, to achieve our developmental agenda as enshrined in short and long - term development plans such as the Harambee Prosperity Plan, National Development Plans and Vision 2030”.

The first phase of the campaign will kick off in Karasburg on 28 February, followed by Keetmanshoop on 01 March and thereafter Bethanie (02 March 2022) and Lüderitz (03 March 2022).

For more information about the Know2Grow campaign, queries may be directed to:
K2G@nipdb.com.

About NIPDB:

The Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (“NIPDB”), is a Non-profit association incorporated under section 21 of the Companies Act, Act No. 28 of 2004 (“the Companies Act”). The Board was established as an autonomous entity in the Office of the President and is declared a Public Enterprise in accordance with section 2 of the Public Enterprise Governance Act, Act No 1 of 2019. The NIPDB is mandated to promote and facilitate investment by foreign and Namibian investors, and coordinate MSMEs activities across all levers of the economy, with the aim of contributing to economic development and job creation.

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