

# IN THE news

## September 2017



**MASDT**  
MOBILE AGRI SKILLS  
DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING (NPC)

### MASDT GRADUATION 2017



This year, MASDT decided to couple its annual Graduation Ceremony for projects who successfully completed the intensive Incubation Programme with Seda's Innovation Knowledge Sharing Forum. The event was held at the Nelsville Community Hall in Mbombela on the 18th of August where approximately 102 delegates attended.

Mr. Manase Netshisaulu - the Branch Manager of Seda in Mpumalanga - was the appointed Program Director and opened proceedings by welcoming all the guests and sharing some inspirational anecdotes. The first speaker of the day - Mrs. Caryn-Leigh Lombard, the Chief Financial Officer of MASDT - discussed the purpose of the day and was followed by seven presentations by various stakeholders and interested parties. The aim of the day was not just to graduate the MASDT incubatees, but also impart on them information of other institutions and services that they can utilise after their Incubation period.

Two researchers from the Agricultural Research Institute (ARC) held extremely interesting talks about the opportunities in Agro- processing of various indigenous flora. Dr Obiro Wokadala spoke about the many uses of the Cassava plant, or Umjumbula as it is known locally, while Dr Ashwell Ndhala advocated the advantages of growing and processing of the medicinal Moringa tree. Both these crops are indigenous to the region and the demand for their products are increasing in the modern world.

The General Manager of Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) - Mr. J G Dladla - reminded the farmers of the funding opportunities and market assistance that MEGA provides. The flamboyant Regional Manager of the Industrial Development Commission (IDC) in Mpumalanga - Mr Matsiela Mashweu - inspired the crowd with his presentation on the funding opportunities available to them through the IDC if they want to further expand their enterprises. Other speakers included the business

Development Manager of Timbali, Ms Mylene Torres, Ms Patheka Mbombiso - Senior Researcher for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Ms Nosiseko Mashiyi from the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) who explained the advantages of satellite imagery in the agricultural sector. Ms. Mashiyi showed different examples of images to establish certain nutrient deficiencies in crops through satellite imaging. This service is available from SANSA to farmers at a minimal fee.

After the presentations the delegates had a chance to direct questions to the speakers before the commencement of the graduation ceremony. Ms Caryn-Leigh Lombard welcomed the 15 farmers and thanked them for their participation in the Incubation Programme while congratulating them on behalf of MASDT for successfully graduating. She reminded them that although they are no longer part of the Incubation Programme, MASDT is always a phone call away for advice and support. Each graduate was presented with a certificate and congratulated by Ms. Lombard of MASDT, Mr Manashe Netshisaulu and Mr Ishmael Mmbadi - Manager : STP Incubation - of Seda. After the ceremony former MASDT clients from Smatane Co-operative, Nhlangua lthemba Lethu Co-operative addressed the new graduates by inspiring them with their success stories, motivating them for the future. The event culminated with a hearty lunch where the guests could relax and enjoy their achievement among their peers.

The list of projects that graduated is as follows ;

- Mongo Consultancy - Bushbuckridge
- Nduma Trading - Bushbuckridge
- Pulaboswana Poultry Agricultural Co-operative - Bushbuckridge
- Ahichivirikeni Co-operative - Hazyview
- Hosanna Hospice and Community Project - Hazyview
- Lazarus Nyatseng Legau - Phiring
- Mahlake Farming and Transport - Phiring
- Mashiyane Klass Phios - Phiring
- Kholompho Farmer (Pty) Ltd - Phiring
- Frans Van Farm - Phiring
- Sisonke Sustainable Farming - Nkomazi
- Phezulu Kom'khono - Nkomazi
- Sabelosemusa 2001 Investments - Nkomazi
- Asikhutulisanane Bakitsi Agri Co-operative - Nkomazi
- Tlhakanelo Trading and Projects (Pty) Ltd - Nelspruit





## SUCCESS STORY : MAMOJELE BUSINESS TRADING (PTY) LTD

On the escarpment of the luscious Blydepoort Canyon in the Limpopo Province, lies a small picturesque village called Phiring. It is a landscape with rich, fertile soil that is fed by clean mountain water. Despite this, the village is poor as it is remote and far removed from any cities and industry.

MASDT has taken the rural farmers under their wing and currently serves 11 projects in the area. Mrs Patricia Magate lives as a small-scale farmer in Phiring on her own piece of 3ha land. Besides providing for her family, she supplies the local shops within the village with butternut, cabbage, tomatoes and spinach. But Mrs Magate wanted more out of life than merely existing. She wanted to be a successful farmer, and she believed that she had the drive and ambition to reach her goal but soon realised that she lacked the business and technical skills in order to make her business grow, she then approached MASDT for assistance.

MASDT aided her in registering her company with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) and in 2015 Mamojele Business Trading (Pty) Ltd was established and incorporated into the Incubation Programme.

For someone with no formal agricultural background, Mrs Magate caught on easily and absorbed every drop of information she received. She is also lucky to have a small team of dedicated employees by her side who share her enthusiasm.

Mrs Magate was provided with Business Management and Marketing skills training through workshops which provided her with information about business- and Cash flow Management and the importance that marketing plays in a successful venture.

The Mamojele employees received technical skills training workshops which taught them the effect of proper record keeping, how to apply the right fertilisers and weed control to name but a few.

Mrs Magate used the knowledge she has gained, and being a woman of good standing in her community, she secured major contracts from the local shops to which she can now deliver top quality vegetables. This lady has certainly proved her worth as she has managed to make profit after only one production cycle. The company no longer struggles with cash flow problems in just over the two years that Mamojele Business Trading (Pty) Ltd has been under Incubation. The farm made a staggering turnover of R162 000 during the 2016/2017 financial year.

'Mama Pat' took to heart the advice that has been given to her by the project's Business Development Officer Collen Mashigo, by drilling a borehole and obtaining a 5 000 litre JoJo water tank to irrigate her fields with and utilised the rest of the profit by securing her farm with fencing and a secure gate.

It is clear to see that Mamojele is thriving under MASDT's supervision and guidance and has managed to increase the number of permanent employees from three to seven. This project's journey is by no means over and things are looking great for the venture. The demand for her delicious vegetables is increasing everyday and she is currently in negotiation with a neighbour to lease some of his land to expand her booming business.

Farming surely is a tough business, but Mama Pat is a shining example that neither gender, colour nor creed stands in the way of becoming successful. All you need is ambition, passion and a little help from MASDT.





# SHOWCASE MONTH



## NWU TRIP

Laboratory Technician - Collen Mashigo - travelled with the Mobile Lab to Potchefstroom for the Expo and reports that it surely was a busy yet lucrative four days. "The first two days were spent demonstrating the water and soil testing procedure to numerous secondary school pupils within the region. Most of these kids are from poor, rural communities and some of them had no clue about the technological advances that has been made in the agricultural sector" Collen explained. While Collen did the experiments, he emphasised how important water and soil testing is to see what nutrients are lacking in plant production and how important it is to ensure a healthy crop for bigger yields. He inspired them to choose a career in agriculture, construing that the future of South Africa's food security lies in the hands of the youth.

The North West University (NWU) showcased its 4th Annual Science, Engineering, Technology, Health and Innovation (SETHI) Explosions Expo on campus in Potchefstroom between the 21st and 24th of August. It was a massive event to promote science and technology advances within the country while creating a platform for different faculties to network and was even covered by the media (SABC and local radio stations) and attracted hundreds of professionals, farmers, schools, delegates and stakeholders from all over South Africa.

The Expo started in 2013 as an Engineering Expo only and in 2015 the Science Faculty joined the event to showcase the research and innovation development at the University. The collaboration between MASDT and the NWU to promote science and technology advances within the rural agricultural sector in the region started in 2015 after an agreement was signed between the two institutions. Since then, MASDT has been part of the SETHI Explosions Expo with the Mobile Laboratory being a star attraction at the event.

Collen employed the rest of the last two days entertaining copious amounts of guests and interested parties with guided tours of the Laboratory, information about other MASDT services and answering a floodgate of questions. He even conducted an interview with a local radio station about the Mobile Lab and how it is used in the field. The Lab certainly draws attention wherever it goes as it is the first of its kind in the country. The CEO of Rand Water showed particular interest in the concept during the Expo.

After the Expo, the Mobile Lab travelled via Pretoria and drew crowds of curious onlookers whenever it stopped and made a stop at the AgriSA Headquarters in Centurion where Collen conducted yet another guided tour for top officials of the institution. Mr. Mashigo reports that although it was a busy few days for him, he cannot wait for next year's Expo and that he is so proud to represent a company that takes big steps to ensure that the latest agricultural technology trends reaches even the most remote areas in South Africa, equalling the playing field and ensuring the future of South Africa's food security.



## MPUMALANGA AGRI SHOW

Nelspruit hosted the first ever Mpumalanga Agricultural, Forestry, Tourism and Wildlife Show at the Mbombela Stadium between the 31st of August and the 3rd of September 2017. Thousands from all over the country flocked to the Lowveld for this special event. The show was not only a platform to showcase the latest in technological advances in South Africa in the respective industries, but also a fun-filled event with a plethora of activities that included live entertainment, a range of competitions and even a polo match, truly catering for every taste. MASDT attended as exhibitor and presented the Mobile Laboratory as their main attraction. As usual, the 'big orange truck' was a favourite at the show and the MASDT stand drew a lot of crowds to inspect it. Staff report that they were awash with enquiries and didn't have a moment to spare. The Mpumalanga Agri Show was a great way to advertise the company's services. One of MASDT's clients - Nhlangule lthemba Lethu Agri Co-operative also displayed their goats at the show in the livestock arena. It is great to see that clients take the initiative to use the opportunity to promote their businesses.



## MONSANTO IMBEWU EMPOWERMENT FUND

Monsanto SA recently announced the name of its Imbewu Seedling Success Fund at a grand affair at the Fairways Hotel & Spa, Johannesburg on the 4th of August 2017. The fund forms part of the Development Programme that Monsanto SA offers farmers. The event was attended by MASDT's Business Development Manager, Mr Innocent Makuwaza.

## Staff Feature



- What do you do at MASDT?** I am a Junior Business Development Officer supporting emerging farmers by giving them Technical support and business skills in plant and animal production through a 3 year mentorship program.
- How long have you been with the organisation?** I've been in the organization since the 3th of April 2017 and planning to have more enjoyable successful years to come.
- How long have you been working in corporate and what did you do before you joined MASDT?** It's my first Job. I did experimental training for one year as a student at Neos Estate farm
- What is your experience like at the organisation?** The unity among the staff and management are excellent, working with creative people where I get to understand their inputs in the organization and also learning skills from them.
- What's the best part about your job?** Helping small emerging farmers through the distribution of agricultural information, giving them new agricultural skills and also advising them to increase the productivity of their farms and improve their standard of living.
- Tell us a bit about your family?** I live with my mother and I have 3 sisters, two married and one at university. I was born and raised at Nkomazi.
- What are your hobbies?** Playing soccer, reading books and surfing the internet.
- What do you enjoy for relaxation?** I love listening to music and also watching movies