Swiss Economic Cooperation and Development (SECO)

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SECO Newsletter
- Updates from Pretoria -

Unlocking knowledge through synergies

Message from the Head of SECO Pretoria, Mr. Daniel Lauchenauer

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts". This admittedly hackneyed quote from Aristotle comes to mind as I look back over the past quarter. I firmly believe that there is magic in people working together and, in our case, in bringing projects together. Two highlights of the many you will find in this newsletter were the inaugural African Biotrade Festival and the Switzerland Connects event on accelerating green industrial development.

The Biotrade Festival was the culmination of the collaboration of four SECO-supported projects: the Access and Benefit Sharing Compliant Biotrade in South(ern) Africa, the Global Quality and Standards Programme, the Swiss Import Promotion Programme and the Swiss-South African Intellectual Property Project. All these projects aim to strengthen the vegetable and essential oil sector. I was impressed by the diversity and richness of African plant biodiversity and its potential to contribute economic development and sustainable growth.

Switzerland Connects is a series of panel discussions organised by various units of the Embassy, namely the Diplomatic Division, the Swiss Business Hub to Southern Africa, the Science and Technology Office in South Africa and us at Swiss Economic Cooperation and Development. The recent event showed that green industrial development is a process that requires cooperation, partnerships, coordination, synergies and the removal of red tape.

Our colleagues at the City of Tshwane and National School of Government have embarked on a Change Leadership Programme. Congratulations, we are proud of you!

In closing, I am also pleased to introduce a new team member. Yayeri Kisaame has taken up her position as National Program Officer for Private Sector Development. We look forward to the collaboration.

SECO Ghana and South Africa's NPOs meet

Ghana and South Africa are priority countries for Switzerland's economic development cooperation in Africa. The National Programme Officer (NPO) for the Macroeconomic Division of SECO in Accra, Dr. Hamza Bukari Zakaria, conducted a one-week peer-to-peer exchange mission to the Swiss Cooperation Office in Pretoria from 4-8 September 2023.

The aim of the mission was to establish bilateral peer exchange with the SECO Pretoria NPO, Mr. Seabelo Nyawo, and colleagues at the local office. We used the opportunity to also show Hamza the dynamics of the partnership landscape for Switzerland's economic development cooperation in South Africa, as well as how we approach the design of our flagship programmes in a sustained and high-impact manner. More importantly, the mission allowed the respective NPOs to explore strategic measures for optimizing opportunities and mitigating risks in a worsening macroeconomic context.

During this exchange, we were able to take the opportunity to attend the 2nd Network of Tax Organizations Conference hosted by the Africa Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) in Cape Town. We met with the Asivikelane team, who were very pleased to host us, coupled with an eye- opening field visit to Khayelitsha. Strong lessons are to be taken forward. We also met with National Treasury colleagues across all the different programmes that SECO supports, such as PINK, CSP and GDRM. The Capacity Building and the International Development Cooperation (IDC) units played a crucial role in the mission wherein they provided an understanding of the partnership landscape and conditions for effective cooperation, as well as to discuss reform commitment and implications of political economy on sustainability of development cooperation. We remain grateful to all partners who made this mission possible and a true success.

Collaborating to drive productivity ecosystems for decent work

It is increasingly recognised that challenges that limit productivity growth and decent job creation can be tackled by adopting a sector-wide ecosystems approach. The Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work (PE4DW) Programme in South Africa focuses on two key industries: leather and footwear, and the automotive industry. These were selected in line with the South African government's sectoral development priorities and with the participation of an advisory committee, including employers' and workers' organisations.

Having completed the inception phase, and now at the implementation stage, it was important for the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to visit some of the enterprises in the two sectors to understand how the companies operate, what are the challenges they experience, and explore what needs to be done to unlock the challenges and exploit the opportunities.

The PAC met from 25-27 July 2023 in Durban, with the first two days focusing on company visits, and the last day was a meeting to review project progress and map the way forward. The PAC visited five companies, three in the leather and footwear sector (Planet Events, Hopewell Footwear, and Angel Footware), and two in the automotive sector (Expert Auto Trim and Profibre Siyaphambile).

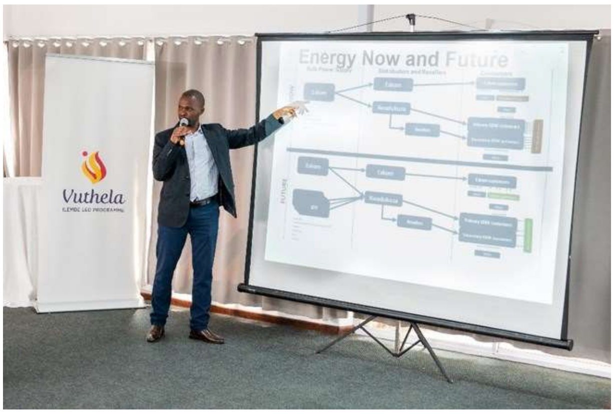
PE4DW seeks to achieve a virtuous cycle between productivity and decent work that can lead to economic growth, poverty alleviation and higher living standards. The ecosystems approach requires complementary interventions at different levels (macro, meso, and micro) to address the root causes; and promotes the capacity and ownership of local and national actors that can result in lasting change.

At the macro (or national) level, it relates to the legislative and regulatory environment and includes laws, policies, voluntary standards, and social norms. At the meso (or sector) level, it includes sector-specific functions that inform, support and shape productivity potential, such as industrial policies, information, skills, physical, regulatory, and social infrastructure, finance, raw materials, intermediate inputs, and access to markets. At the micro (or enterprise) level, it relates to internal factors at the firm-level such as organizational and management processes that shape productivity and working conditions.

The PAC of the programme is comprised of the relevant stakeholders in the ecosystem : the government (Department of Labour, the dtic, National Treasury, the Department of Small Business Development, the Presidency); Productivity SA; labour unions (COSATU, FEDUSA, NACTU); and business associations (BUSA, SAFLEC, NAACAM). The PE4DW programme is implemented by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), with funding support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

The programme is being piloted in South Africa, Ghana, and Vietnam from 2022 to 2025.

Electricity is everyone's business



The Vuthela iLembe Local Economic Development Programme hosted the second Policy and Practice Seminar on the topic of "Synergy for Energy" on 15 September. The seminar explored ways to secure a more reliable electricity supply for the KwaDukuza Local Municipality. This dialogue comes on the heels of the recently adopted Energy Policy and regulations that are being drafted to manage the implementation of alternative energy sources to supplement the ESKOM supply.

Attended by senior officials from KwaDukuza Local Municipality, SALGA, ESKOM, other municipalities (with key inputs from the City of Cape Town) and the private sector, the dialogue deliberated on aspects such as the new Energy Policy, small scale electricity generation and embedded power systems, metering, tariff setting, reselling of electricity and cost of supply.

The municipal energy sector is developing at a fast pace, given the challenges being experienced nationally at present. Not only has the Electricity Regulation Amendment Bill 2023, which seeks to create a competitive multi-market electricity industry, been formally introduced, the process of receiving public comments on the South African Renewable Energy Masterplan (SAREM) has also been completed. The plan is expected to be finalised by November 2023 and implementation will begin immediately.

These developments require that public and private stakeholders engage on a regular basis and coordinate efforts to produce alternative energy supplies and to discuss developmental challenges that will arise. This makes the KwaDukuza dialogue very timely and valuable.

SECO and Vuthela iLembe are providing support to the municipalities of KwaDukuza and Mandeni in a series of non-revenue electricity projects and with the implementation of a SCADA monitoring system, with financial support from the EU.

A dialogue on accelerating green industrial development

How do you accelerate green industrial development on a wider scale? This is the key question that panelists and participants grappled with at the Swiss Connects Panel Discussion held on 13 September 2023. The event was organized by the Embassy of Switzerland, together with SECO and the National Cleaner Production of South Africa (NCPC-SA).

In their opening remarks, Mr. Marino Cuenat, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Switzerland and Mr. Daniel Lauchenauer, Head of Cooperation SECO in South Africa, emphasized the importance of the topic for Switzerland and its economic cooperation and development program.

The panel discussion, moderated by Mr Bernd Oellermann of the NCPC-SA, comprised Mr Thami Klassen (the dtic), Mr Philipp Ischer (SECO Bern), Ms Thobile Mkhonta (Hitachi Zosen Inova), and Ms Rhoanda Jansen van Rensburg (Independent Consultant). Representatives from embassies, government departments, the private sector, industry experts, academia and non-profit organisations attended the event and exchanged with the panel on lessons learnt, challenges experienced as well as solutions and opportunities for collaboration and partnerships. Transforming industry towards a circular way of doing business is crucial for a more sustainable and greener planet. The discussion noted the important role of the *eco-industrial parks approach* in accelerating green industrial development paying attention to three critical dimensions – economy, environment, and society. The key message that emerged from the discussion was that the transition and acceleration of green industrial development is a process that needs collaboration, partnerships, coordination, synergies and removal of red tape.

Bringing students closer to the anti-corruption agenda

The Transparency, Integrity and Accountability Programme (TIP), co-commissioned by SECO, supports and promotes an active citizenry in anti-corruption. Ending corruption in South Africa requires a society that actively rejects it and people that uphold integrity. Active citizenry is a key component of the TIP, especially as all people have a stake in building a corruption-free South Africa.

South Africa has a rich history of art and culture being key mediums for such an active citizenry, propagating important messaging and driving conversations about difficult social issues. TIP is collaborating with the University of Johannesburg's undergraduate Multimedia Design cohort of nearly 50 students to work on a project that requires them to design creatively for the future of corruption in South Africa. To help in their design process, TIP supported the university with running a Futures Literacy Lab on the theme of trust on 7-8 August 2023. According to UNESCO, being 'futures literate' enables one to better prepare for change and invent for the future by empowering the imagination. It encourages people to think more actively about their role in the future, rather than simply responding to a future that is inevitable.

The Futures Literacy Lab empowered students to think critically about localised South African issues as they relate to corruption, and ultimately trust at a national, community and individual level. It highlighted the nuances through which trust navigates in a society with a loaded history. The methodology encouraged them to think more actively about the role they can play as young people and designers in influencing the future itself. A key result of the lab was the students' realisation that they had a new capacity to be active citizens, and as designers could *"actually have a real impact on the future."* As one of the students said: *"I hope to garner change through design, because it's become clear that that's the responsibility I have now."*

In November 2023, the students will showcase their final projects (at the University of Johannesburg) as an outcome of the Futures Literacy Lab and their work throughout the semester. TIP will invite stakeholders and partners to the showcase, which will include a panel discussion on the process, thinking and purpose behind the students' projects to highlight the potential of futures thinking as a corruption prevention tool and its capacity to foster civic engagement among South Africa's youth.

Watch this video for students' perspectives on the Futures Literacy Lab: https://youtu.be/Dm46q7XYWxE

National Treasury hosts its 3rd PFM Conference

The 2023 Public Financial Management (PFM) Conference was hosted by the National Treasury in Johannesburg, Kempton Park from 20 to 22 September 2023 under the theme: *Innovative and Ethical Public Finance Management in Challenging Times.* The National Treasury held two successful PFM conferences in May 2016 and May 2018.

In addition to creating a culture of accountability in PFM sectors, the conference also provides a platform for PFM officials to keep up with trends and developments in financial management. In his opening remarks, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Enoch Godongwana, acknowledged and appreciated the support that development partners such as SECO and the EU play in bolstering the capacity of the public financial management sector across all spheres of government. Complementary to this, the Embassy of Switzerland's Charge d` Affairs, Mr. Marino Cuenat, stated that, *"Switzerland, through SECO, has built a partnership with South Africa to support the National Treasury, provinces and municipalities in addressing these challenges. By supporting initiatives like the PINK programme, the Vuthela iLembe Local Economic Development Programme, the Asivikelane initiative and the Cities Support Programme, Switzerland contributes to strengthening the country's capability to manage public finances effectively."*

The Conference has managed to successfully play a significant role in enhancing PFM reforms in South Africa, and brought together all PFM practitioners to learn and exchange on different PFM topics, in an attempt to improve service delivery.

Learning to Lead for Impact—a message from our beneficiaries

The City of Tshwane and the National School of Government (NSG) are deliberate about how it uses learning and development as a powerful intervention to build its people, activate responsive systems, and serve the community with pride. The Tshwane Leadership and Management Academy together with the NSG assembled a team of sixteen facilitators from across the city's line departments and special service delivery trainers to complete an eight-month intensive mentorship training in Gestalt Organisational Development with a team of highly experienced and sought after international and local Gestalt experts.

We are delighted to do this in partnership with the National Treasury City Support Programme and with the generous support of SECO and the World Bank. This team of facilitators successfully delivered its first cohort of change leaders on 20-22 September, hosted by the City of Tshwane.

The investment by SECO has a multiplier effect, by growing a multi-disciplinary, intergenerational team of skilled facilitators to penetrate and impact organisational systems from various entry points to unlock service delivery 'stuckness'. In addition, the facilitators serve as internal 'awareness agents' to add value beyond their roles and make a difference with their presence within the city and country. This in turn has increased levels of engagement and their career growth trajectory. A wonderful compliment that one of the youngest facilitators on the team received from a delegate was *"you pop up everywhere in the system"*. The team is helping the delegates and their organisations become aware of what leaders need to pay attention to, for change to become real.

We are especially enthusiastic about the prospects of our joined efforts with the NSG, given their tremendous reach into the public service at large, their footprint on the continent of Africa and leveraging their international partnerships to scale up our roll out and delivery of the Leading Change Program to every public servant and elected official. Learning to lead in new ways will revolutionise the way citizens experience service and rebuild trust.

We asked the delegates on the course to give us a taste of their learning - What is the impact of your learning on you personally and what promise does it hold for application in your own organisation? And this is what they said:

"I will apply the lessons to build more resourceful and effective teams".

"I will understand my space better and not always try to work in the background. I possess strong leadership qualities and my team sees that and they want me to see that and equip myself even more so that I can lead comfortably and confidently in my space".

We believe that change at the level of the group holds the greatest possibility for sustained change in organizations. We are confident that our collective investments in building strong institutions are already showing emergent results within the City of Tshwane and from the delegates of a few other metros and national and provincial government departments.

We thank you for your work in support of us and service delivery in South Africa.

Message written by Ms Shanaaz Majiet

Divisional Head of Learning and Development in the City of Tshwane and heads the Tshwane Leadership and Management Academy

The African Biotrade Festival roars into life

The diversity and richness of African plant biodiversity is just magnificent and there is vast potential for it to contribute to increased investments, expanding trade opportunities, socio-economic development, and sustainable growth. This is the message that continued to reverberate throughout the three-day, first African Biotrade Festival (ABF) that was held at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa from 14 to 16 September 2023. The festival was an enriching event that gave visitors and participants a blend of experience through product exhibitions, demonstrations and tastings by numerous companies and organisations.

The conference and workshops facilitated knowledge sharing and exchange on the latest developments, research and trends in the biotrade sector. The exhibition area was a hive of activity with buyers, producers, researchers, cosmetics and food enthusiasts, and other stakeholders interacting and exchanging information. Some of the indigenous ingredients and products that were being showcased are derived from Baobab, Marula, Sceletium, Buchu, Honeybush, and many other essential and vegetable oils. The cocktail reception at the Festival had Mr Philipp Ischer, Programme Manager from SECO Bern giving welcoming remarks, followed by Ms Jessica Suplie, Counsellor for Environmental and Climate Affairs at the German Embassy and Mr Khorommbi Matibe, Chief Director (Biodiversity Economy and Sustainable Use) at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE). An important milestone was the signing of the industry-wide access and benefit-sharing agreement for the Buchu sector. The African Biotrade Festival was organised in collaboration with Organic & Natural Products Expo Africa. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH was in the lead on two of its projects namely the Access and Benefit Sharing Compliant Bio-trade in South(ern) Africa (ABioSA) project and the BioInnovation Africa (BIA) project. The lead government departments were the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) and the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition (the dtic). There were many other partners involved in the ABF.

SECO was strongly involved through active participation in four projects that it funded namely: ABioSA; the Global Quality and Standards Programme – South Africa (GQSP-SA); the Swiss Import Promotion Programme (SIPPO); and the Swiss-South African Intellectual Property Project (SSAIP). The projects had dedicated sessions in which they presented how their work is contributing to the development of the biotrade sector in the country and the region.

Here's a big hello and welcome to our new SECO NPO

Tell us a bit about yourself

My name is Yayeri Kisaame. I consider myself to be a pan-African who is proud of her Ugandan ancestry, and embraces her lived experiences in Kenya, Eswatini, and South Africa as part of who I am. I believe life is not meant to be lived in one place, hence my decision to go across the globe to further my education in the *Land of the Rising Sun*. I hold an MBA from the International University of Japan, and I'm passionate about innovation, growth and inclusion.

What is your role in SECO?

I am the National Program Officer for Private Sector Development. My portfolio focuses on four thematic areas; (i) financial inclusion (ii) skills and capacity building, (iii) addressing climate change/resource efficiency, and (iv) fostering an innovation-friendly business environment.

Why did you decide to work at SECO?

I have always sought roles that prioritized environmental, economic, and social impact. SECO presented an opportunity to pivot into areas outside of my comfort zone, and grow in the field of sustainability.

What are you looking forward to in your work?

Impact! From contributing to policy dialogue, to re-thinking education and skills, to creating sustainable cities.

Swiss Economic Cooperation and Development (SECO)

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About SECO

SECO is responsible for the planning and implementation of economic cooperation and development activities with middle-income developing countries, with countries of Eastern Europe as well as the new Member States of the European Union. It coordinates Switzerland's relations with the World Bank Group, the regional development banks and the economic organisations of the United Nations. SECO is part of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research.

Switzerland's international cooperation efforts as defined in the International Cooperation Strategy 2021–2024 aim to alleviate poverty worldwide, improve respect for human rights, promote democracy and protect the environment. Accordingly, SECO's economic and trade policy measures strive to support sustainable and inclusive growth. The Economic Cooperation and Development division focuses its activities on its specific areas of competencies and experience in two target outcomes aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 1) Access to markets and opportunities and 2) Income opportunities. Special emphasis is placed on issues related to climate and resource efficiency as well as gender equality.

Towards a competitive economy for sustainable growth

SECO Team in South Africa (from left to right)

Yayeri Kisaame, Daniel Lauchenauer, Shakespear Mudombi, Seabelo Nyawo, Nompumelelo Sihlali and Gerhard Pienaar