

Operation Phakisa momentum grows

26 August 2015 – Since the announcement of Phakisa in 2014, much work has been done to fast-track some of the key initiatives of the programme, including the education agenda within the blue economy stream.

The eight milestones include:

1. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) having activated the South African Maritime Institute (SAMI) as the vehicle to coordinate skills.
2. The Skills Initiative Working Group Leaders have been appointed for each of the lab areas.
3. A process has been initiated to recruit and appoint a CEO for SAMI.
4. Workplace-based Learning Programme Agreement Regulations for placement of 2550 TVET College graduates is under development by DHET to allow for a broader, more effective legal basis for funding of learners by SETAs and the National Skills Fund.
5. Occupational Teams have been established for the Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIPs) being utilised for Operation Phakisa.
6. West Coast TVET College (Saldanha) and Umfolozi TVET College (Richards Bay) to be allocated Marine Industry Learner Programme Specialisation as an integral part of 2015 public TVET College Strategic Planning.
7. DHET has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Labour to increase usage of the ESSA system.
8. An interim draft Skills Strategy Roadmap has been completed for the oil and gas sector.

DHET says that specific skills have been identified as in demand in the maritime sector in three occupational categories:

- Seafarers and technically skilled occupations (artisans, engineers, technicians): South Africa has approximately 3,500 seafarers and has set a target of 12,000 qualified by 2019.
- Management and technical professionals in demand in each of the primary maritime sub-sectors
- Occupations within operational support services: stevedoring, clearing and forwarding, logistics, port operations, ships' chandlery, amongst others.

A host of other skills are also in short supply:

- **Shipping and Ports:** Navigation Officers, Ship's Engineers, Engine and Deck Ratings, Hydrographers, Oceanographers, Maritime Technologists, Meteorologists, Dockmaster, Transport and Logistics Management, Vessel Traffic Management, Sea-watch and rescue operators, Port Captain/Harbour Manager

- **Offshore Oil and Gas:** Geologists/Geophysicists, Engineers (Chemical, Geotechnical, Drilling, Structural, Marine, Mechanical,; Deck Officers, Artisans
- **Fisheries and Aquaculture:** Engineers, Artisans, Ratings, Engine
- **Vessel Construction and Repairs:** Naval Architects, Production Managers, Designers, Electricians, Electronics, Metal fabricators, Fitter, boiler makers and welders, Riggers, Technicians, Boat builder and repairer
- **Commercial Services:** Marine Attorneys/Lawyers, Marine and Environmental Lawyers, Maritime Economists, Marine Financiers/Underwriters, Maritime Consultants, Crewing, Training, Research and innovation, business
- **Marine Tourism:** Hospitality Officers (Chefs, Stewards), Marine Conservation Officers; Dive Videographers/Photographers.

It is clear from the above that there is vast opportunity to boost the South African economy as well as to augment job creation through the implementation of Operation Phakisa.

More about Phakisa

President Zuma first announced Operation Phakisa during his reply to the State of the Nation Address debate in June 2014.

Operation Phakisa is an adaptation of the Big Fast Results methodology that was first successfully applied by the Malaysian Government.

The operation addressed their national key priority areas such as poverty, crime and unemployment. It involved setting up clear targets and follow-ups with ongoing monitoring processes which make the results public.

During a State visit to China in December 2014, President Zuma and his counterpart President Xi Jinping agreed on and adopted the 5-10 year Strategic Programme on Cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa for the development of the 'Blue Economy' as a growth point for practical cooperation in the following broad areas:

- Maritime transport
- Ship building
- Offshore oil and gas exploration
- Aquaculture and
- Port and industrial zone development.

Additional areas of cooperation include earth observation and satellite technology, scientific surveys to support marine spatial planning, and skills development and capacity-building.

Operation Phakisa: Blue Economy is the first of possibly many sector-based Phakisa processes initiated by Government; others already being implemented are Health, Mining and ICT in Education.

A standardised framework that includes governance of all Operation Phakisa processes has been developed by the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and has been submitted to Cabinet for approval.