

DST announces plan to improve technology base in local foundries

The Minister of Science and Technology, Mrs Naledi Pandor, has launched a R26 million programme to boost the technology base in 28 companies that manufacture castings in South Africa.

Launched at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Pretoria on 1 March 2010, the Technology Localisation Programme of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) supports the Government's Competitive Supplier Development Programme (CSDP), which is aimed at increasing the competitiveness of local suppliers through a range of demand and supply-side measures. This will assist local companies to leverage procurement opportunities from government's large-scale infrastructure recapitalisation programme over the next 20 years.

The DST Technology Localisation Programme also supports other high-level government initiatives such as the Industrial Policy Action Programme (IPAP) that are set to help South Africa reduce its trade deficit while improving its long-term manufacturing capacity – a significant step towards scaling up efforts to promote long-term industrialisation and industrial diversification beyond the current reliance on traditional commodities and non-tradable services.

It is important for local foundries to be globally competitive as they form the backbone upon which the country's supply chains can be further developed for big infrastructure programmes, such as those of Eskom and Transnet, to support and drive localisation.

The Programme began with the identification of components for localisation in Eskom and Transnet's CSDPs, and benchmarking of foundries with the technology to manufacture these components. Technology gaps were identified and Technology Assistance Packages developed to support localisation in the foundry industry.

Through this initiative, the foundries will be able to access expertise from DST activities in Advanced Manufacturing and Light Metals.

The DST is working in partnership with the Departments of Trade and Industry, and Public Enterprises, the industry, and development agencies such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to drive localisation in the country.

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