

Western Cape continues call centre focus

The Western Cape provincial government and call centre company Capita will be investing R800m this financial year to support growth of the call centre sector in the province.



The industry in the Western Cape generates about R8bn for the provincial economy and employs 38,000 people.

The Western Cape economic development and tourism department aims to create an additional 10,000 call centre seats over the next three years.

Western Cape finance, economic development and tourism MEC Alan Winde said on Tuesday (30 April) the province already had the critical success factors in place to become a leading call centre hub in the country because it offered exceptional services to clients at a competitive price.

"This sector is delivering a huge boost to growth and jobs, especially for our youth, which is the demographic with the highest rate of unemployment," Winde said.

"We are focusing on this sector, which has an average entry level salary of R6,500, because it is labour intensive and has a relatively low barrier to entry.

"Indeed, 70% of all employees are between the ages of 18 and 35 and have matriculated. Creating opportunities for our youth to become employed is my top priority," he said.

Winde pointed out that SA recently received the European Outsourcing Association's Destination of the Year Award, an achievement in which the Western Cape government played a major role.

Capita's investment

"This award followed shortly after the country earned the National Outsourcing Association's UK Destination of the Year Award. The traction we are gaining in this sector positions the Western Cape and SA as a leading call centre destination,"

he said.

In this financial year, the Western Cape government intends to support business process outsourcing investments by making a R300m investment in various projects.

"These projects will create 2,500 jobs in the call centre sector over the next few months," said Winde.

Capita, which has a client base that includes international companies such as Amazon, Bloomberg and O2 and has more than 100-million customers in the UK, would invest R500m in the Western Cape's economy.

Gareth Pritchard, chief executive of the trade promotion association Business Process Enabling SA Western Cape, said more than 4,500 jobs had been created last year. About 65% of these were as a result of foreign investment, with three of the world's biggest operators - Capita, WNS and Serco - setting up operations in Cape Town in the past year.

"During 2013 we expect this growth to continue, with international brands across various verticals looking to the Western Cape as a strategic customer service base," said Pritchard.

Source: Business Day via I-Net Bridge

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