

Plastics SA to research its industry

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The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Education and Training Authority (merSETA), in association with Plastics SA, has launched a pilot study aimed at developing a better understanding of the shape and size of the plastics industry in SA.

SA is trying to re-industrialise and thereby create jobs and infrastructure, the Department of Trade and Industry has said this year.

Chairman of the merSETA Plastics Chamber, Danny Sour, said on Monday that there were "various factors impacting on the industry's future".

"We are hoping to identify the key drivers for change, with particular reference to skills priorities and possible growth scenarios with this industry-wide research project," he said.

Plastics SA is an umbrella body for employers in the plastics industry. MerSETA is one of the 23 SETAs established through the Skills Development Act.

It facilitates skills development in sub sectors including metal and engineering, auto manufacturing, motor retail and component manufacturing, tyre manufacturing and plastics industries.

Together the five sub-sectors comprise approximately 44,000 companies, with a workforce of approximately 600,000. The total levy income is approximately R600m.

It was tasked with the responsibility of managing the communication to industry partners and for collecting information and feedback from its members.

"The growth we have experienced in the plastics manufacturing, recycling and related industries during the past five years has left us with a knowledge gap regarding the exact shape and size of our industry," Anton Hanekom, Executive Director of Plastics SA said.

"We are hoping to gather up to date and vitally important information about our industry with this research project," he said.

The industry employs between 45,000 and 63,000 people, but Hanekom said he approached employers to help Plastics SA attain accurate numbers.

Similarly, information about industry demographics such as race, age, gender and disability, or about the skills profile and needs of employees was either non-existent or outdated.

"This project has the potential to benefit all industry partners as it will provide the information needed to improve the Government's grant system which incentivises companies to train in skills which will add the most value to the plastics sector," Hanekom said.

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