

Initiative launched to support to women-owned enterprises in the transport sector

A unique project focused on providing technical business support to women-owned enterprises in the transport sector in South Africa has been launched.



Lebo Letsoalo, founder of Sincpoint

Initiated by the United Nations (UN) Women's South Africa Multi-Country Office (SAMCO), in partnership with the National Women Advancement Establishment (NAMA), the aim of the flagship programme is to stimulate equal opportunities for women entrepreneurs through affirmative procurement, investment and supply chain policies.

Local female black-owned consulting company Sincpoint has been selected as the implementation arm of this project. Lebo Letsoalo, founder of Sincpoint explains: "We are excited at the opportunities this project offers. It will provide women-owned businesses in the transport sector with much-needed, tailor-made technical support, in addition to coaching and mentorship. The support will focus on strengthening their capacity to sustain their businesses, access new opportunities and grow their businesses."

Sincpoint will be working closely with local membership-based association The African Women in Supply Chain Association (AWISCA) in the roll-out of the programme to ensure long-term support for the women.

Partnerships for prosperity

AWISCA is collaborating with a number of industry bodies including universities, training providers, industry associations,

organised business, as well as private companies.

The planned project implementation is eight months, with 200 women being selected. The project is being implemented in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, with the aim of expanding this to other provinces over time.

“What makes this programme unique and particularly effective is that the mentorship and coaching component will continue beyond the completion of the programme,” explains Letsoalo.

“ Through AWSICA, our women will have ongoing access to industry networks and knowledge through coaching circles, site visits, round table discussions, workshops and the many-other opportunities for growth and newbusiness that AWISCA facilitates. ”

“Although women are currently severely under-represented in transport, more and more women are making their way into this exciting sector,” continues Letsoalo.

“Transport is a dynamic, fast-changing and broad sector, ranging from rail and road transport, to shipping, aviation, import and export, cargo operations, domestic freight and containerisation, through to comprehensive, integrated door-to-door intermodal transport services. Each aspect requires skilled and competent people – women have multi-business opportunities at various levels within the industry. That’s what makes it such an exciting sector in which to work!”

The programme will target and equip selected women-owned enterprises that are suppliers or can potentially become suppliers of government and larger companies across the transport value chain.

Letsoalo added: “This project will assist in developing a much-needed pipeline of women who have the technical expertise and broader skills to thrive in this industry. The project’s focus is on creating sustainable skills transfer through practical coaching and mentorship”.

Support from Business

Letsoalo urges transport businesses to support women in the transport industry by making business opportunities available to them. “AWISCA has an extensive database of women in transport with whom it can share information on the opportunities available”.

“Transport accounts for 9% of South Africa’s GDP,” concludes Letsoalo. “It is the lifeblood of our economy and is essential for the development of our nation. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is critical to all sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and pharmaceuticals. Without effective transport, we cannot be competitive in the future. To build an industry and a thriving economy requires that we build key skills and competencies in this sector.”

For updates, go to <http://www.awisca.org/>

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